

Viribus Unitis - Croatian Political Emigration under the Critical View of Zarko Vlaho

Summary

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Croatian Catholic Movement was founded in the Triune Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia, as well as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the countries within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. In 1912/1913 the Croatian Catholic Seniority was established, the leading organization of the entire Catholic movement in Croatian countries. Part of the Seniors (so called "nationals") opted for Yugoslav ideology and actively engaged in the demolition of the Monarchy and the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes / Yugoslavia during the First World War. After the establishment of a new state, Seniority for Herzegovina (1919) was organized in Mostar, under the leadership of Fr. Dominik Mandic (senior national). One of the most important members of the Seniority was Zarko Vlaho (1895-1960), Mandic's friend and associate. Seniors sought to realize their political ideas through the Croatian People's Party. In the period of multi-party parliamentary democracy, their members were the most controversial opponents of Stjepan Radic and his Croatian Peasant Party.

After the end of World War II, Vlaho, after shorter detention in Italy, joined his family in Argentina (1947). Reflecting on the Croatian political emigration, in his book *Viribus Unitis* (1950), he fiercely criticized the attempts of former Ustashi movement members to organize their parties. Putting under his Catholic scalpel Vladko Macek, the president of HSS, Vlaho took up the task of gathering all the Croatian emigrant forces around him, holding that Macek was the only person who could, through his political authority and Catholic worldview and international reputation, lead to the creation of an independent Croatian state. In his endeavor, Vlaho deliberately neglected the facts that did not support his claims (Macek's non-transparent political statements, his civil marriage etc.). Vlaho's thoughts did not echo among a wider circle of political emigrants scattered from Europe and Africa to North and South America.

Keywords: Zarko Vlaho; Dominik Mandic; Vladko Macek; Aloysius Stepinac; *Viribus Unitis*; Croatia; Catholic church; Croatian Catholic Movement; Ustashi movement; totalitarianism; political emigration; political parties.