

1.01 original scientific article

DOI: 10.55692/D.18564.25.9

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Hrvoje Čapo *

*The Slovenian Lands in Documents
of the Personal Representative of the US
President to Pope Pius XII, 1944–45*

Abstract

The author utilizes documents from the archival fonds of the personal representative of the US president to Pope Pius XII, detailing the Holy See's intense diplomatic activity concerning the Slovenian lands in 1944–45. The paper's purpose is to outline how the Holy See informed the American mission about the situation in Slovenia, detail the causes of its profound concern, and reveal the motives behind the communication with the US mission in the Vatican. The Vatican's core intention was to protect the clergy and citizenry and preserve human and religious rights amidst the complex political upheavals and the threat of communist totalitarianism. Reports forwarded to the Americans consistently described the ruthless, repressive character of the emerging Yugoslav regime, highlighting executions of priests and intellectuals, mass arrests, property confiscation, and methods used by the political police in order to seek a reaction from the Western Allies. The documents reveal the Holy See's foresight and the limitations of its influence in altering the postwar geopolitical fate of Yugoslavia.

KEYWORDS: *Holy See, USA, Slovenia, communist repression, diplomatic interventionism, 1944–45*

* Dr. Hrvoje Čapo, Senior Research Associate, Hrvatski institut za povijest/The Croatian Institute of History, Opatička 10, HR-10000 Zagreb, hrvoje.capo@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0001-6834-0878.

The research was conducted as part of the project "International Diplomatic Sources for Croatian History Between the Two World Wars," funded by the European Union through the NextGenerationEU program, project number 380-01-02-23-43.

Izvleček

Avtor na podlagi dokumentov iz arhivskega fonda osebnega predstavnika predsednika ZDA pri papežu Piju XII. podrobno opiše intenzivno diplomatsko delovanje Svetega sedeža v zvezi s slovenskim ozemljem v letih 1944 in 1945. Namen članka je orisati, kako je Sveti sedež obveščal ameriško misijo o razmerah v Sloveniji, podrobno predstaviti razloge za njegovo globoko zaskrbljenost in razkriti motive za komuniciranje z misijo ZDA v Vatikanu. Glavni namen Vatikana je bil zaščititi duhovništvo in državljane ter ohraniti človekove in verske pravice v času kompleksnih političnih pretresov in grožnje komunističnega totalitarizma. V poročilih, posredovanih Američanom, se dosledno opisuje neusmiljen, represiven značaj nastajajočega jugoslovanskega režima, poudarjene so usmrtnitve duhovnikov in intelektualcev, množične aretacije, zaplembe premoženja in metode, ki jih je uporabljala politična policija, da bi se vzbudil odziv zahodnih zaveznikov. Dokumenti razkrivajo daljnovidnost Svetega sedeža in omejitve njegovega vplivanja na oblikovanje povojne geopolitične usode Jugoslavije.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: Sveti sedež, ZDA, Slovenija, komunistična represija, diplomatski intervencionizem, 1944–1945

Introduction

During the Second World War, the Holy See also paid attention to the Slovenian lands, directing its interventions toward the protection of the clergy and citizenry under Italian and German occupation and the emerging communist government and repression.¹ It worked to protect the clergy and seminarians, provided material and humanitarian aid, and intervened

1 The most comprehensive overview of Vatican documents about Slovenia during the Second World War was provided by Janko Pleterski, "Vatikanski dokumenti o Slovencih in Sloveniji 1940–1945," in: *Grafenauerjev zbornik*, ed. Vincenc Rajšp (Ljubljana: Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, Znanstvenoraziskovalni center SAZU, Filozofska fakulteta; Maribor: Pedagoška akademija, 1996), 635–48. Pleterski based his paper on an examination of Vatican documents from 11 volumes of document collections "Acts and Documents of the Holy See Relative to the Second World War" published by the Holy See's Secretary of State from 1965 onwards, the digitized versions of which are available on the website: "Acts and Documents of the Holy See Relative to the Second World War," Vatican, accessed October 15, 2025, https://www.vatican.va/archive/actes/index_en.htm.

on behalf of internees and prisoners in concentration camps.² From 1944, increasing attention was paid to warnings about the goals of the communist revolution and revolutionary violence.³ During this period, the Holy See sought to provide aid to the persecuted, protect the clergy, and preserve the spiritual and human rights of the Slovenian people amidst war suffering and complex political upheavals, and toward the end of the war, it increasingly emphasized the danger and character of communist totalitarianism. In its diplomatic activity, the Holy See sought to maintain neutrality and contacts with all parties involved. However, the relationship with the United States had a special position, which was realized through the personal representative of the US president to the pope.

The function and unusual diplomatic framework of this representative to the pope was first established by Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1939.⁴ The main reason for establishing direct relations with the Catholic state arose from American domestic political needs.⁵ However, the international circumstances of the new global conflict that started in 1939 created the need for the US to formalize and strengthen mutual relations with the Vatican, a state that Americans presumed had good intelligence sources and contacts with neutral states.⁶

The personal representative of Franklin D. Roosevelt to the Holy See was Myron Charles Taylor. He continued to perform his duty for President Harry S. Truman as well. Due to domestic political reasons concerning

2 Pleterski, "Vatikanski dokumenti o Slovencih," 636–37, 642–45.

3 Ibid., 646–47.

4 The United States had consular relations with the Papal States from 1797 to 1870. Informal diplomatic relations with the Holy See were renewed in 1939, when American presidents began sending their personal representatives to the pope. Official diplomatic relations between the United States and the Holy See were not established until 1984.

5 Catholics were a key voting group within the New Deal coalition, as well as close supporters of Franklin D. Roosevelt's campaign, such as Joseph P. Kennedy. Alongside this support, there was also Catholic opposition to Roosevelt, the most influential figure being Father Charles Coughlin. Therefore, the possibility of exerting political influence over American Catholics was a strong motivation for Roosevelt to restore diplomatic relations with the Vatican. More about this in: C. Evan Stewart, *Myron Taylor: The Man Nobody Knew* (New York: Twelve Tables Press, 2023), 126–27.

6 John S. Conway, "Pope Pius XII and the Myron Taylor Mission: The Vatican and American Wartime Diplomacy," in: *FDR, the Vatican, and the Roman Catholic Church in America, 1933–1945*, eds. David B. Woolner and Richard G. Kurial (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 143–51.

the appeasement of Protestant groups that strongly opposed the renewal of diplomatic ties with the Vatican, it was extremely important that the personal representative of the US president not be Catholic.⁷ Myron C. Taylor was a Protestant, a member of the American Episcopal Church.⁸ This American industrialist who led the world's largest steel factory in the 1930s, the United States Steel Corporation, immediately established a very close relationship with Pope Pius XII.⁹ Taylor did not stay in the Vatican the entire time but visited during his several missions throughout the war. His assistant, and later diplomatic advisor, American career diplomat Harold H. Tittmann, who had previously served as Consul General in Geneva, was in the Vatican the entire time.¹⁰

During 1945, the primary preoccupation and concern of the Holy See became the emerging rule of communist totalitarianism, in which there was no place for civil and religious freedoms. During that year, the Holy See invested significant efforts and attempts to convince the American authorities of the character of communist forces under Soviet influence and to secure a reaction from the Western Allies in favor of preserving the Catholic Church in Eastern Europe. During the war and the mandate of President Roosevelt, this concern met with pragmatic sympathy without active action from the American side, while during President Truman's tenure, it received greater attention, and the American side moved toward condemning communist regimes.

Based on the documents from the archival fonds of the personal representative of the US president to Pope Pius XII, held by the National Archives at College Park, MD, USA, the goal of this paper is to show how the Holy See reported to the American side on the situation in Slovenia and what the main causes of the Holy See's concern for the situation in that area and the motives for communicating with the American mission in the Vatican were.

7 Stewart, *Myron Taylor*, 134–35.

8 Harold H. Tittmann, Jr., *Inside the Vatican of Pius XII: The Memoir of an American Diplomat During World War II* (New York: Image Books; Doubleday, 2004), 129.

9 Ibid., 10.

10 Ibid., X.

The personal representative of the president of the United States to Pope Pius XII – a promoter of American interests and a non-committal listener to the Vatican's concerns

Taylor's first mission to the Vatican in 1939 was aimed at preventing Mussolini from entering the war on the side of the Axis powers.¹¹ The USA saw the Vatican as a key place from which efforts to avoid the escalation of war could be coordinated, and the Vatican readily accepted this role. Although this mission of Taylor's was unsuccessful, his second mission in the autumn of 1941 was of a much more sensitive nature and directly related to the consequences of the war in Europe in 1945. During this mission, the USA sought to obtain papal approval for American aid to the communist USSR, given the anti-communist encyclical *Divini Redemptoris* from 1937 by Pope Pius XI.

After the Third Reich attacked the USSR on June 22, 1941, Roosevelt estimated that, if he conquered Soviet territory, Hitler would gain control over enormous natural and labor resources, which would make him a global threat.¹² He also estimated that without Soviet aid, he could do nothing to save Great Britain, and he had already decided that the "*United States would not allow the Germans to defeat England.*"¹³ Although both the USA and the Vatican shared the same view toward communism as an unacceptable totalitarian regime, they nevertheless differed in their interests. The USA needed the communist USSR for victory over Nazism, while the Vatican wanted the defeat of both ideologies. Monsignor Domenico Tardini, Secretary of the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, explained the Vatican's position to Myron Taylor in his letter of September 17, 1941: "*If the war now in progress were to mean the end of both dangers, a period of tranquility would be possible for Europe.*"¹⁴ However, the Vatican predicted that in case communism survived,

All the countries (Balkan, Latin, Germanic) would be knocked out. Communism would be triumphant and would permeate all the nations. There would thus be within continental Europe an enormous militaristic power

11 Ibid., 149.

12 Susan Butler, *Roosevelt and Stalin: Portrait of a Partnership* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), 229–30.

13 Statement by Myron Taylor to Monsignor Tardini at the meeting held on September 16, 1941. Tittmann, Jr., *Inside the Vatican of Pius XII*, 61.

14 Tittmann, Jr., *Inside the Vatican of Pius XII*, 60.

(because communism has demonstrated its ability and willingness to arm itself) as aggressive as Nazism (because it is well known that communism tends to overrun everything).¹⁵

Although it seemed that such an assessment completely surprised Taylor at the time, US intelligence data already considered at that time that there would be no change in communist goals and ideology.¹⁶ Roosevelt, however, ignored such intelligence data and warnings, believing that the primary goal was to defeat Nazism and that the power and goals of the USSR could ultimately be contained. Communism was, for Roosevelt, a “*Russian form of brutality*” and exhibited no difference in relation to Nazism.¹⁷ Roosevelt assumed Soviet dominance in Eastern Europe very early, believing that it would be necessary only for the purpose of protecting Soviet borders and that there was no danger of a Soviet military threat to the area of Western Europe.¹⁸ Nevertheless, to secure papal blessing for the American Lend-Lease Program toward the USSR, Roosevelt wrote to Pope Pius XII:

I believe, however, that this Russian dictatorship is less dangerous to the safety of other nations than is the German form of dictatorship. [...] I believe that the survival of Russia is less dangerous to religion, to the church as such, and to humanity in general than would be the survival of the German form of the dictatorship.¹⁹

Although it was unclear to many experts on Soviet policy in Washington, as well as in the Vatican, why anyone would genuinely advocate such an opinion, the pope granted Roosevelt’s request.²⁰ Soon, the American Archbishop McNicholas of Cincinnati, a convinced isolationist, was ordered to announce a message to American Catholics stating that the instructions of the papal anti-communist encyclical do not apply to the Russian people.²¹

The Holy See had dedicated a significant part of its communication with Washington to describing the character of communist ideology and

15 Ibid., 62.

16 Ibid.

17 Butler, *Roosevelt and Stalin*, 214.

18 Ibid., 582.

19 *Wartime correspondence between President Roosevelt and Pope Pius XII* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), 61–62.

20 Stewart, *Myron Taylor*, 173.

21 Ibid., 178–79.

its plans after the victory over Nazism. After D-Day, such communication intensified. The Holy See was particularly interested in the fate of Poland and sought to familiarize the Americans with its analysis of the attitudes and postwar goals of the USSR, in the sense that “*its intention to occupy the Baltic countries, a part of Poland, and the Balkans does not agree with the Atlantic Charter and could seriously compromise the cause of peace.*”²² However, it became clear that after the Yalta Conference the USSR had been allowed the “*domination of Poland and hegemony in Eastern Europe.*”²³

The Americans did not consider the Vatican’s warnings about communist supremacy unfounded or exaggerated, including those about Yugoslav communists. American analyses showed that communists, including the Yugoslav ones, could not be trusted. The most detailed assessment of Yugoslav communists had been prepared by the Americans for the Yalta Conference, most likely in November 1944.²⁴ The analysis showed that the Partisans’ intention was to establish a totalitarian regime and that Tito and his associates showed no willingness, “*or even common civility,*” or readiness to cooperate with the Western Allies.²⁵ All American investigations and information confirmed that the Partisans practiced mass executions and confiscation of opponents’ property, and they therefore expressed concern that the same terror would spread to Croatia and Slovenia after liberation.²⁶ However, Roosevelt’s view that the Soviets, and thus their Yugoslav protégés, deserved concessions for their part in the victory over Nazism superseded all warnings and assessments about communist goals.

Although there were some contacts between the USSR and the Holy See, they were broken off due to the persistent communist failure to allow religious freedom in practice.²⁷ In April 1943, a group of Catholics from the Slovenian Liberation Front also addressed the Holy See with a memorandum, attempting to present the Liberation Front not as a communist organization but as one that was not anti-religious and that united

22 Ibid., 236, 243.

23 Ibid., 249.

24 *FRUS: Diplomatic Papers, Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945*, ed. Bryton Barron (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1955), Document 180, accessed October 2, 2025, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945Malta/d180>.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

27 Peter C. Kent, “Toward the Reconstitution of Europe: The War Aims of the Papacy, 1938–45,” in: *FDR, the Vatican, and the Roman Catholic Church in America, 1933–1945*, eds. David B. Woolner and Richard G. Kurial (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 163–78.

all political groups in the anti-fascist struggle. They also sought to prove that the growing antagonism among Slovenians was caused precisely by the Slovenian clergy, which had acted against them.²⁸

The Vatican nonetheless did not cease to warn the Roosevelt administration about communist repression, but the American decision on this problem was quite clear as early as February 1944 when Roosevelt sent a direct warning to the pope “*to expect that sacrifices would have to be made to obtain Soviet support for a peaceful world after the war,*”²⁹ as well as that the Soviets, due to the fight against the Germans, “*earned the right to participate in arrangements for peace.*”³⁰

*Reports on the Slovenian and Croatian lands
as a reflection of the Holy See's desires
for American anti-communist interventionism*

Five documents in the archival fonds of the personal representative of the US president to Pope Pius XII show that the Vatican sought to inform the Americans about its own knowledge concerning the clashes of Yugoslav Partisans with non-communists, primarily the Catholic Church. It seems that the Americans considered these reports very well-founded because Myron Taylor or Harold Tittmann, his assistant and advisor, regularly sent them to Washington as well as to the American ambassador to Yugoslavia. Information about Slovenia was always within the same reports as Croatia, and they showed that the Partisans, just like in the rest of the area under their control, carried out executions of the clergy, as well as intellectuals and industrialists. It was clear that a clash with dissenters was being carried out for the purpose of facilitating the establishment of the communist regime. There was information about pre-established lists of people for arrests, executions, and rigged trials, all of which were actually methods of operation of the political police, the People's Protection Department (OZNA), established in May 1944.³¹

28 Bojan Godeša, “O spomenici katoliške skupine v Osvobodilni fronti papežu Piju XII. aprila 1943,” in: *Grafenauerjev zbornik*, ed. Vincenc Rajšp (Ljubljana: Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, Znanstvenoraziskovalni center SAZU, Filozofska fakulteta; Maribor: Pedagoška akademija, 1996), 657–63.

29 Ibid., 168.

30 Ibid., 168.

31 For more on OZNA and its methods of work, see: Srđan Cvetković, “The ‘Savage Purges’ in Serbia in 1944–1945, with a Brief Consideration of Yugoslavia as a Whole,” *Review of Croatian History* 12, no. 1 (2016): 67–102.

The first document in the fonds of the personal representative that refers to the Slovenian lands is a report in Italian on communist activities in the Julian March (Venezia Giulia), which the Holy See received in February 1945, but was written back in October 1944.³² Although the author of this report was not named to the members of the American mission in the Vatican, Myron Taylor believed “*that the report was submitted to the Holy See through neutral channels by a member of the Italian clergy in Trieste.*”³³ In the report, the situation was analyzed through several topics: opposing political groups in Slovenian and Italian politics, communist power, violence, and goals, and German administration and strategy in the area of the Adriatic Littoral Operational Zone. The report on communist activity in the Julian March had an extremely anti-communist character and was consistent with the general view of the Holy See towards the dangers of communist totalitarianism.

The author of this report described that the mentioned area was overwhelmed by extreme political violence and deep insecurity. The author stated that within the “*Slav camp*,” the gap between the Liberation Front, which was entirely in the hands of Slovenian communists, and the “*bitterly anti-Communist*” National Democratic League supported by a “*Slav clergy as a single body*,” was deepening.³⁴ The report stated that the communists had a significant military presence in the region, capable of mobilizing about 6000 people, of whom about 4200 were in Gorizia and Trieste and about 1800 in Istria. The author’s assessment was that about a third of these forces were volunteers, while the communists forcibly mobilized about

32 In the aforementioned reports, the Julian March (Venezia Giulia) was understood as “*a territorial division of northern Italy, at the eastern head of the Adriatic Sea, consisting of the provinces of Gorizia, Trieste, and Pola, in the Istrian Peninsula, and the detached provinces of Fiume and Zara. Area: 3,360 square miles. In 1936 the population was about 980,000.*” (National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD (NACP), Confidential information received by the Holy See concerning communist activities in the Venetia Giulia, October 5, 1944, 800 Venetia Giulia, Entry 1068, Myron Taylor File, Records of the Personal Representative of the President to Pope Pius XII, Decimal File 711.6 to 800, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59).

33 NACP, Myron Taylor to the Secretary of State, Vatican City, March 2, 1945, 800 Venetia Giulia, Entry 1068, Myron Taylor File, Records of the Personal Representative of the President to Pope Pius XII, Decimal File 711.6 to 800, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59.

34 NACP, Confidential information received by the Holy See concerning communist activities in the Venetia Giulia, October 5, 1944, p. 2, 800 Venetia Giulia, Entry 1068, Myron Taylor File, Records of the Personal Representative of the President to Pope Pius XII, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59.

4000 with threats of severe penalties: “against all who fail to join up and have threatened to exterminate their families.”³⁵

The author of the report claimed that until then “the Communists have shot three Slovene priests, two in the provinces of Gorizia (Chaplains Don Ladislao Piscanec and Don Lodovico Sluga at Circhina), and another Chaplain from Istria (Don Placido at Dolina).”³⁶ A Partisan court sentenced 24 priests to death for anti-communist propaganda, but their executions, according to a secret circular from the Partisan command, were postponed for tactical reasons.³⁷

The author further stated that during the initial phase of the German establishment of authority after September 1943, certain concessions were made to the Slovenian population. The Germans, indeed, implemented a series of tactical measures in the fields of economy, culture, and propaganda, restoring certain rights to the Slovenians that had been abolished under fascism.³⁸ The author stated that in the first months of the German occupation, the authorities tried to win over the Slovenians by promising recognition of all national rights, including the opening of Slovenian schools throughout the entire area settled by Slovenians and the introduction of the Slovenian language in public administration and lower courts:

However, the Germans have not been so fortunate in the application of their political philosophy. [...] The Germans tried to find among the intellectual Slovenes persons who might be suited to take over the position of Vice-Prefects and special commissioners in the Prefectures of Trieste and Gorizia, but they were not able to find anyone who was prepared to undertake such collaboration tasks with Naziism [sic!]. Having seen that the Slovenes would not rise to this bait the Germans gave up their plan

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid. Historiographical research confirms these claims. Lado Piščanc was a chaplain in Cerklje, and the Partisans accused him of spying for the Germans during the attack on the communist (Party) school in Cerklje on January 27, 1944, in which 47 course participants were killed. Chaplain Piščanc was executed by the Partisans on February 3, 1944, along with fifteen other civilians. Chaplain Ludvik Sluga had served in the same parish from May 1942 and was executed with the same group. Placid Sancin was a parish priest in Dolina near Trieste. The Partisans accused him of treason and executed him in September or October 1943; Renato Podbersič, *Revolucionarno nasilje na Primorskem: Goriška in Vipavska 1941–1945* (Ljubljana: Študijski center za narodno spravo, 2012), 64–65.

38 Podbersič, *Revolucionarno nasilje na Primorskem*, 44.

of conquering the Slav majority of this region and only permitted the opening of thirty elementary Slovene schools.³⁹

The author reported that Slovenian and Italian communists had constant contacts, the most significant of which was a meeting held in Trieste on August 25, 1943, where they signed an agreement on the creation “*of the autonomous Soviet Republic of Venezia Giulia*.” He stated that based on this agreement, the Communist Party of Italy “*is dragging after it [the secret Accord] the other parties of the National Committee of Liberation [NLC], forcing them to collaborate with the Slav partisans.*”⁴⁰ The author claimed that parallel to this NLC policy, other political movements existed among the Italian population:

Fascism is still relatively strong. This is due to the facts that the population of the towns of Istria being terrorized by the crimes committed by the partisans, is seeking protection of the Fascist troops, even though this population is profoundly opposed to Neo-Fascism and to the Germans. Furthermore, at Trieste there is a movement for the free city, for “*Dan-zica Adriatica*” which is finding sympathizers among merchants and the small people.⁴¹

The author’s conclusion was that the crucial question of the area was who would ultimately conquer this region: the Soviets with Tito or the Anglo-Americans:

Public life is entirely dominated by hope and fear: Who will win the race for Trieste, the Anglo-Americans or the Soviets with Tito? Who will occupy Venezia Giulia? The lives and liberty of tens of thousands of Italians and Slovene democrats rest on the answer to these questions. Having been freed from the Nazi yoke the people of Venezia Giulia do not wish to fall under a communist dictatorship. This is the supreme and vital problem of this region.⁴²

39 NACP, Confidential information received by the Holy See concerning communist activities in the Venetia Giulia, October 5, 1944, p. 2, 800 Venetia Giulia, Entry 1068, Myron Taylor File, Records of the Personal Representative of the President to Pope Pius XII, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59.

40 Ibid., 3.

41 Ibid., 3–4.

42 Ibid.

The report titled *Some notes on the situation of the Catholic Church in Yugoslav territory occupied by the Partisan troops and in Slovenia*, dated April 9, 1945, was forwarded by the Holy See to the American mission in the Vatican already on April 14. This indicates the conviction that it was very important for the Holy See to warn the American side about the “*plight*” of the Catholic Church in the areas of “*Yugoslavia and Slovenia*.” Although the author or authors of this document were also not named, Monsignor Tardini, who delivered the report to Taylor’s advisor Tittmann, stated that the Holy See had received it “*through secret channels and that it comes from reliable sources*.”⁴³ According to Taylor’s instructions, this report was also submitted to the American ambassador to Yugoslavia, Richard Patterson. The report detailed the state of Partisan repression against the Catholic Church in the cities of Split, Dubrovnik, Kotor, Zadar, and the Franciscan Province of the Most Holy Redeemer in Dalmatia. The murders of priests and monks and the Partisan tactic of obstructing the work and activities of the Catholic Church were described. The parts of the report concerning Croatian areas are characterized by detail and precision, giving the impression that it was compiled based on direct observations and testimonies.

The section of the report titled “*The situation in Slovenia*” differs from the rest of the document because it does not follow the established structure of describing individual murders with execution descriptions, including the place and circumstances of executions, and the Partisan authorities’ attitude toward seminaries and Catholic schools. The description of the situation in Slovenia remained focused on a presentation based on reports of the general aversion of the Slovenian population towards communism and a summary of the consequences of communist repression against the Catholic Church and the population. It was highlighted that:

More than 10,000 Slovene houses burnt and destroyed; more than 100 schools and as many cultural institutions destroyed; are a terrible indictment of a “Communist culture”. More than 70 churches profaned, of which 16 burnt, are evident demonstrations of atheist-communism. More than 15,000 tombs of the best men and women, young peoples,

43 NACP, Myron C. Taylor to the Secretary of State, Despatch No. 398, Vatican City, April 14, 1945, Vatican Matters Representation 1945, Entry 1073, Miscellaneous Subject File, R to W, Myron Taylor File, Records of the Personal Representative of the President to Pope Pius XII, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59.

girls and innocent children of every class and condition demand just punishment.⁴⁴

The report further emphasized the severe economic consequences for Slovenia involving “*several billions worth of Slovene property*.”⁴⁵ Furthermore, it was claimed that by May 1944, the number of murdered priests had risen to thirty-five, a figure that was greatly exceeded by the number of executed individuals associated with the Catholic Action and Catholic Associations.⁴⁶ The report also included warnings about the nature of the communist regime and the decisions of the Slovenian communist leadership, which, in case of victory, would carry out mass executions based on pre-established lists which included “*chiefly all the clergy and all the lay intellectuals*.”⁴⁷ The assumption in the report was that the previous crimes and executions were merely an introduction to such a future, according to the alleged communist order:

The first six hours after the end of the war will be decisive for the Communist Party. If at that time the Party wins, it will have power; if it loses it will fall forever. Every member of the “Liberation Front” and of the Communist Party must therefore, with lightning rapidity, put an end to all adversaries and to all those who in any way might be dangerous to Communism.⁴⁸

The description of the situation in Slovenia in this report was based on the Anti-communist declaration signed by leading Slovenian representatives of public, cultural, and economic life submitted to Leon Rupnik, the president of the Province of Ljubljana and general of the Slovenian Home Guard, around Christmas 1943 and published in the anti-communist Catholic weekly *Slovenski dom* (Slovenian Home).⁴⁹

44 NACP, Enclosure No. 1 to Despatch No. 398, dated April 14, 1945, from Vatican City to Department (Report “Some notes on the situation of the Catholic Church occupied by the Partisan troops...”), p. 10, Vatican Matters Representation 1945, Entry 1073, Miscellaneous Subject File, R to W, Myron Taylor File, Records of the Personal Representative of the President to Pope Pius XII, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59.

45 Ibid., 11.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 “Slovenski narod hoče živeti!” *Slovenski dom*, 13. 12. 1943, 1.

The second mentioned quote from the report about the situation in Slovenia, which speaks about the intentions of the communist leadership regarding the introduction of revolutionary violence after the victory, largely corresponds to what was published in the book *Črne bukve: O delu komunistične Osvobodilne fronte proti slovenskemu narodu* (The Black Book: On the Actions of the Communist Liberation Front Against the Slovenian Nation).⁵⁰ This book was of an anti-communist character, its main purpose being to summarize all the crimes committed by communist Partisans up to that point. It was edited by the chief editor of *Slovenski dom* and was a continuation and a summarized presentation of what this weekly advocated for.

About two weeks later, Monsignor Tardini, as a continuation of this report, delivered to Harold Tittmann additional information “*concerning alleged anti-Catholic activities in Yugoslavia*.”⁵¹ Although the author(s) of the report were again not disclosed to the American mission, Monsignor Tardini stated “*that this information was received by the Secretariat of State of His Holiness through secret channels from members of the Catholic Clergy in Yugoslavia whose judgment and discernment are favorably known to the Holy See*.”⁵²

The situation in Slovenia was described by summarizing communist repression with emphasis on the murder of Lambert Ehrlich, a priest, theologian, ethnologist, politician, and the ideological leader of the Straža (Sentinel) academic club with a strongly anti-communist orientation.⁵³ The report on the situation in Slovenia also included the description of the existence of “*the Registers of Death*,” which refers to pre-made

50 *Črne bukve: O delu komunistične Osvobodilne fronte proti slovenskemu narodu* (Ljubljana [i.e. Maribor]: Založba za alternativno teorijo, 1944 [i.e. 1990]), 75.

51 NACP, Harold H. Tittmann to [the Secretary of State], Despatch No. 405, Vatican City, May 1, 1945, Vatican Matters Representation 1945, Entry 1073, Miscellaneous Subject File, R to W, Myron Taylor File, Records of the Personal Representative of the President to Pope Pius XII, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59.

52 Ibid.

53 Damjan Hančič, *Revolucionarno nasilje v Ljubljani: 1941–1945* (Ljubljana: Študijski center za narodno spravo, 2015), 18, 138. For a perspective that views the activities of Lambert Ehrlich, the Slovenian clergy, and the Holy See as cooperation with Fascism and Nazism, see: Gregor Joseph Kranjc, *To Walk with the Devil: Slovene Collaboration and Axis Occupation, 1941–1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

communist lists for execution.⁵⁴ It can be claimed with high probability that this “*additional information*” originated from the report “Massacre of Catholic Clergy in Yugoslavia” by Slovenian politician Miha Krek, a former minister in the Yugoslav government-in-exile in London, who resided in Rome after refusing to recognize the Tito-Šubašić agreement.⁵⁵ There, he continued his work on an anti-communist platform, presenting himself as part of the Slovenian Democratic Union, which he presented as a political group that gathered all anti-communist forces in Slovenia and operated on the principles of the Western Allies.⁵⁶ His reports were based on a broad network of sources from Slovenia, including anti-communist publications, such as the weekly *Slovenski dom*.⁵⁷ He submitted his reports to British diplomats, and judging by the Vatican reports, they also reached the Holy See. Krek wrote his report “Massacre of Catholic Clergy in Yugoslavia” on January 15, 1945, while the Vatican report based on it was dated April 26, 1945.

The different date of the report and the comparison of Krek’s original text with the one submitted to the Americans reveal that Krek’s report went through processes of editing and revision.⁵⁸ Thus, the American mission in the Vatican was presented with a summary of Krek’s description of the situation in Slovenia, from which significant parts of Krek’s assessments and comments were omitted.

54 NACP, Enclosure no. 1 to despatch no. 405 from the office of the Honorable Myron C. Taylor, Vatican City, to the Department, dated May, 1, 1945 (file no. 800), Anti-catholic persecutions in Yugoslavia, April 26, 1945, pp. 2–3, Vatican Matters Representation 1945, Entry 1073, Miscellaneous Subject File, R to W, Myron Taylor File, Records of the Personal Representative of the President to Pope Pius XII, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59.

55 See: Tomislav Kardum, “Miha Krek’s Reports on the Communist Seizure of Power and Repression in Yugoslavia (1944–1945),” *Dileme: Review of Slovene Contemporary History* 9, no. 1 (2025): 41–64, DOI: 10.55692/D.18564.25.2.

56 *Ibid.*, 43.

57 *Ibid.*, 52.

58 I would like to thank Tomislav Kardum for providing the complete reports of Miha Krek from the personal archive of Stephen Clissold at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, UK.

Table 1: Comparison of texts from Miha Krek's report "Massacre of Catholic Clergy in Yugoslavia" dated January 15, 1945, and the memorandum "Anti-Catholic Persecutions in Yugoslavia" dated April 26, 1945, which Monsignor Tardini submitted to Harold Tittmann. (Bolded words from Miha Krek's report are not found in the Vatican report submitted to the American mission to the Holy See).

<i>Excerpts from the secret memorandum "Anti-Catholic Persecutions in Yugoslavia" of April 26, 1945 presented by the Holy See to the assistant of Myron C. Taylor</i>	<i>Excerpts from the Miha Krek's Report "Massacre of Catholic Clergy in Yugoslavia" of January 15, 1945</i>
To date some 50 priests, and still more laymen, have been assassinated in Slovenia by Communists.	There have been assassinated in Slovenia by Communists up to today some 50 priests and still more laymen.
Among the victims is University Professor Monsignor Lambert Ehrlich, an Oxford graduate, Slovenian expert for Carinthia at the Paris Peace Conference, in 1919, and the leader of the Slovenian Students' Federation. Most of the other priest victims were assassinated in the countryside. Many of them were previously tortured and had to dig their own graves or were simply thrown in caves.	Among the victims is Univ. Prof. Mgr. Lambert Ehrlich, a saintly priest, an internationally known ethnologist , an Oxford graduate, Slovenian expert for Carinthia at the Paris Peace Conference, in 191[9] Spiritual leader of the Slovenian Students' federation – member of the "Pax Romana", international association of Catholic intellectual youth. Another victim is Mr. Antony Tepež, the Vice-President of Pax Romana and President of its latest Congress held in Europe in 1938 in Ljubljana. Prof. Ehrlich was assassinated on May 26th, 1942, in face of the church when he was leaving it after his usual daily Mass. Mr. Tepež was assassinated at his home near Ljubljana. Most of other priests-victims - a Canon, parish priests and chaplains - were assassinated in country-side, many of them were previously tortured and had to make their own graves or were simply thrown in Carst-caves.
In January 1944 there was discovered in Ljubljana in the Secret Communist headquarters a "register of death" in which were written the names and other concerning about 20.000 Slovenian people to be killed in the town of Ljubljana alone in the first days after the presumed withdrawal of the occupying power. Among the people scheduled for death were the Bishop, almost all the priests, intellectuals, etc. The same „registers“ were compiled for other Slovenian places, Trst included.	In January 1944 there was discovered in Ljubljana in the secret Communist H.Q. a "register of death" in which were scheduled the names and other data of about 20.000 Slovenian people to be killed in the town of Ljubljana alone in the first days after the presumed withdrawal of the occupying power. Among the people scheduled for death were the Bishop Mgr. Rožman , almost all the priests, intellectuals, etc. The same registers were compiled for other Slovenian places, Trst included.
	If Tito's Balkan Communist bands will be given Slovenia too, there will most probably occur one of the greatest civil massacres in the present war - if those singled out fail to flee in time towards the Allied front in Northern Italy.

Clearly, it was important for the Holy See to present the data without displaying it in a manner that might reveal its biased or impassioned stance. Thus, unlike Krek's report, the Vatican editor omitted that Lambert Ehrlich was "*a saintly priest, an internationally known ethnologist*" and that he was the "*spiritual*" leader of the Slovenian Students' Federation.⁵⁹ It was also omitted that this society was part of the international association of Catholic intellectual youth, "*Pax Romana*."⁶⁰ Since they did not want to present data about the "*Pax Romana*" society, information about the murder of Anton Tepež, the vice-president of this association, was also omitted. The highly significant omission of parts of Krek's text describing Tito's Partisans, as well as his call for the Allied occupation of Slovenia, suggests that the Vatican intended to present a general and more neutral depiction of the repressive characteristics of communist regimes and point out the humanitarian consequences of not restraining communism.

According to the available documents in the fonds of the personal representative of the US president to Pope Pius XII, it is evident that the Americans reacted only to one Vatican report, the one concerning the conditions of the deported population in Yugoslav camps after the area of Julian March was conquered by the Yugoslav Army. An excerpt from the report of July 29, 1945, which the Holy See also claimed to have received from a credible source, described in detail the situation in the Yugoslav area under the emerging communist rule:

A problem which concerns both Trieste and Istria (and naturally also Gorizia and Fiume) is that of the internees. During the time that the Yugoslavs dominated Trieste and Gorizia (the same domination naturally continues in Istria and at Fiume, although in a diminished form) there were imprisoned thousands of people without any discrimination. Among these were anti-Fascist, persons who have never had anything to do with politics, etc. These persons were placed in concentration camps in Slovenia and Croatia. Many were ruthlessly killed; a certain number was thrown into caves; many died of hunger and hardship. The survivors are in concentration camps where the treatment has been described as horrible by thousands of persons who have experienced it, including ex-prisoners of war from Germany who had been in those camps and were

59 Bodleian Libraries, Oxford (BLO), Archive of Stephen Clissold (ASC), MS. Eng. c. 2684, fol. 89, Miha Krek, "Massacre of Catholic Clergy in Yugoslavia," January 15, 1945, 2–3.

60 Ibid., 3.

later liberated. It is almost a repetition of the Nazi camps. All protests, appeals and petitions have been of no avail. [...] The intervention of the International Red Cross was requested and promised, but nothing has come of this. [...] It will be a highly meritorious task if one can demand a prompt execution of the Belgrade convention and the consequent immediate restitution and repatriation of those thousands of people (if this is not done promptly, it will be useless).⁶¹

The Holy See sent this excerpt to the American mission in the Vatican as a *note verbale* and apparently at the same time submitted a request for sending a relief mission to the camps under Yugoslav control. The intention of the Holy See was to encourage a reaction from the Western Allies regarding the situation of political persecution and repression in the Yugoslav area. The Holy See received the report on the state of political deportations in the areas of the Julian March under Yugoslav control on July 29, 1945, and sent the verbal note to the Americans on August 6, 1945. Harold Tittmann forwarded this note to the State Department on August 8 and to Captain W. B. Neuburg at the Allied Commission Headquarters in Rome as early as August 9, 1945. Washington responded to this verbal note concerning the Holy See through Harold Tittmann on September 25, 1945:

[...] welfare of refugees in Venezia Giulia has been a matter of constant concern to this Government, which has endeavored to assist in all specific instances of hardship which have been brought to its attention. In addition, the Department has recently indicated to Allied Force Headquarters and to the Yugoslav Government its approval of the Vatican proposal to send a relief mission to visit concentration camps in the area of Venezia Giulia under Yugoslav administration, and it is hoped that this mission will be enabled to carry out its program of assistance to refugees in that territory.⁶²

61 NACP, Harold H. Tittmann to the Secretary of State, Enclosure no. 1 to Despatch no. 436, Vatican City, August 8, 1945, 800 Venetia Giulia, Entry 1068, Myron Taylor File, Records of the Personal Representative of the President to Pope Pius XII, Decimal File 711.6 to 800, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59.

62 NACP, William L. Clayton (For the Acting Secretary of State) to Harold H. Tittmann, no. 47, September 24, 1945, 800 Venetia Giulia, Entry 1068, Myron Taylor File, Records of the Personal Representative of the President to Pope Pius XII, Decimal File 711.6 to 800, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59.

As in the case of warnings about the goals of communist regimes, the Americans, independently of the Vatican reports, also had information about the deportation of the population, political arrests, confiscation, or the existence of camps in Yugoslav territory. For example, as early as May 23, 1945, it was stated in the office of the Supreme Allied Command (SAC) “that we should insist that Tito be asked to return all non-Yugo residents in area who have been arrested or deported by Partisans and that restitution of all removed or confiscated property should be made.”⁶³ The American Political Advisor at the same command, Alexander C. Kirk, also questioned the commander of the Allied forces in the Mediterranean at the end of August about the Basovizza pit, wondering whether the Allies were firm enough with the Yugoslavs:

We said we felt the situation was not satisfactory and we wondered whether Allied authorities on the spot were being sufficiently firm with Yugoslavs and whether we were not inviting trouble for ourselves later on by not insisting that Yugoslavs carry out their part of Belgrade and Morgan-Jovanovic agreements in letter and spirit. We pointed out to Alexander inspection of Bassovizza [sic!] pit has not been completed and deported Italians not returned to our zone in Venezia Giulia.⁶⁴

Alexander C. Kirk’s comment on General Alexander’s inspection referred to the investigation by the SAC Investigation Commission conducted between August 15 and September 20, 1945, concerning “*arrests, deportations and executions carried out by the Yugoslavs in Venezia Giulia*” between May 2 and June 12, 1945. A total of two investigations were conducted based on witness statements, and thousands of cases of arrests and executions were established, as well as the existence of camps for the deported population. The central camp was at Borovnica, and conditions were extremely difficult for the detainees in all camps.⁶⁵ The Western Allies, especially the Ameri-

63 *FRUS: Diplomatic Papers, 1945, Europe, Vol. IV*, eds. William Slany, John G. Reid, N. O. Sappington and Douglas W. Houston (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1968), Document 1094, accessed October 2, 2025, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v04/d1094>.

64 *FRUS: Diplomatic Papers, 1945, Europe, Vol. IV*, eds. William Slany, John G. Reid, N. O. Sappington and Douglas W. Houston (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1968), Document 1113, accessed October 3, 2025, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v04/d1113>.

65 Urška Lampe, *Deportacije iz Julijske krajine v Jugoslavijo, 1945–1954: Diplomatski in socialni vidiki* (Koper: Založba Annales, 2023), 53–80.

cans, and the Holy See tried to secure a visit from humanitarian missions to these camps, but the Yugoslav side always rejected these requests because, according to them, “*there were no deportees in Yugoslavia, and therefore no mission was needed.*”⁶⁶

The Holy See’s concerns about the situation in Yugoslavia were most directly expressed in the audience of Richard Patterson, the ambassador in Belgrade, with Pope Pius XII on September 29, 1945. According to the memorandum of this thirty-minute conversation, the pope expressed great concern regarding the emerging communist rule in the Yugoslav area, specifically in the area of Croatia, Slovenia, and the Julian March.⁶⁷ The pope, who assessed the situation in Yugoslavia as terrible, was concerned about systematic restrictions on religious freedom, physical persecution of priests, confiscation of church property, and the suppression of Catholic institutions and educational activities. In this conversation, it was emphasized that the information reaching the Holy See regarding the position of the Catholic Church was limited, which was symptomatic for all areas under “*Russian influence*,” but also that the available reports (often transmitted orally) clearly indicated that there had been no improvement in the situation.⁶⁸

The main source of concern was the direct threat to the physical security and religious freedom of the clergy and the believers. The Holy See constantly received reports of the murders and arrests of priests. For the area of Slovenia, it was highlighted that in Ljubljana, in August 1945 alone, fifty-six priests were arrested for opposing communist doctrine. The authorities openly obstructed and prevented priestly work, priesthood and Christian education. Catholic religious education was declared an optional subject and could only be conducted after school hours. Particularly concerning were the actions of the “*Tribunals of the People, whose sentences, given by incompetent and passionate judges, are directed against priests and active members of Catholic Action as also against non-communist intellectuals and industrialists.*”⁶⁹ In the conversation, the pope asserted that:

66 Ibid., 34, 204.

67 NACP, Richard C. Patterson to Harlod Tittmann, Belgrade, October 12, 1945, Vatican Matters Representation 1945, Entry 1073, Miscellaneous Subject File, R to W, Myron Taylor File, Records of the Personal Representative of the President to Pope Pius XII, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59.

68 Ibid., 1.

69 Ibid., 2.

The terror engendered in the Slovene population by the system of government now in operation, is shown by the flight, not yet terminated, of thousands of Slovenes who are abandoning their fatherland. Their number approximates, according to statistics not yet complete, about 18,000.⁷⁰

Within parts of the same memorandum discussing the Julian March during September 1945, sophisticated methods of communist repression and surveillance were emphasized, which were used to prevent any form of organized Catholic life, even if freedom of worship was seemingly maintained. Although, therefore, freedom of worship was “*apparently allowed*” in the observed area, reports confirmed that every organized Catholic activity became impossible.⁷¹ The clergy was subjected to strict state surveillance. Priests were spied upon, especially during sermons. Those who tried to contact priests were also “*spied upon and threatened*.”⁷² Catholic personnel in the Julian March faced severe legal obstacles. There was no possibility of appeal “*against the arbitrary decisions of the communal authorities who decide as to the permanency or no-permanency of the catholic priest in their parishes, because in the judicial field anarchy and incompetence prevail*.”⁷³ Although the Yugoslav authorities did not fully succeed in abolishing religious education in schools, they actively attempted to restrict the freedom of Catholic schools.⁷⁴ It was emphasized that the civil administration was generally hostile towards priests in rural municipalities. Furthermore, state practice suppressed the sacramental role of the Church because marriages were recorded exclusively in civil registers.⁷⁵ Reports stated that any reaction from the population was “*almost impossible, since they find themselves under the incumbus of the secret police, whose severity demonstrated by so many examples, they fear*.”⁷⁶ Finally, the Holy See was of the impression “*that in Yugoslavia and in the territories occupied by the Yugoslav Army liberty of conscience does not exist*.”⁷⁷

All the mentioned information, however, was not unknown to Ambassador Patterson, who also held anti-communist views, nor to the American

70 Ibid., 3.

71 Ibid.

72 Ibid.

73 Ibid.

74 Ibid.

75 Ibid.

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid.

administration in Washington. However, the Americans had absolutely no intention of interfering in Balkan political conflicts or directly confronting the Yugoslav Army.⁷⁸ They only concluded that “*the Yugoslav government understands only the logic of force.*”⁷⁹ What Patterson and his colleagues reported from Belgrade to Washington clearly spoke about the nature of the new Yugoslav regime. Reports from American diplomats during this period depicted a picture of the Yugoslav government (still composed according to the Tito-Šubašić agreement) that was increasingly dominated by communists and employed repressive tactics, neglecting democratic principles of governance. American diplomatic reports from Belgrade consistently highlighted that “*a relatively small group of Communists, inspired and directed by Moscow, has succeeded in foisting a ruthless totalitarian police regime on the Yugoslavs.*”⁸⁰ American Ambassador Patterson described that the “*present ruling clique under Communist control maintains itself by force and secret police as satellite of USSR.*”⁸¹

Conclusion

Available documents from the archival fonds of the personal representative of the US president to Pope Pius XII reveal the intense diplomatic activity of the Holy See in 1945. This activity focused on the fate of Slovenian lands and territories coming under Yugoslav communist control. The Vatican's core motivation was to protect the clergy and citizenry and preserve the religious and human rights of the Slovenian people during complex upheavals and the threat of communist totalitarianism.

Throughout 1945, the Holy See consistently communicated its concerns to the American mission. It sought to highlight the ruthless, repressive character of the communist forces in Yugoslavia. These reports described

78 Војислав Г Павловић, *Од монархије до републике: САД и Југославија (1941–1945)* (Београд: Клио; Бања Лука: Глас српски, 1998), 448–49.

79 Ibid., 475.

80 *FRUS, Diplomatic Papers, Europe, Vol. V*, eds. Rogers P. Churchill, William Slany, John G. Reid, N. O. Sappington, and Douglas W. Houston (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1969), Document 1012, accessed May 4, 2025, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v05/d1012>.

81 *FRUS, Diplomatic Papers, Europe, Vol. V*, eds. Rogers P. Churchill, William Slany, John G. Reid, N. O. Sappington, and Douglas W. Houston (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1969), Document 1045, accessed May 4, 2025, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v05/d1045>.

executions of clergy and intellectuals, mass arrests, property confiscation, and the use of sophisticated political police methods (OZNA). These details were based on various sources within the Catholic clergy and laymen aligned with the Vatican's anti-communist stance.

The US diplomatic relationship with the Holy See, facilitated by Myron C. Taylor, served as a vital channel for the Holy See to influence Western Allies. While both the Vatican and the US shared a negative view of communism, their strategic interests had diverged during the war, with the USA prioritizing the defeat of Nazism over containing the Soviet ally. Despite increasing American concern over the establishment of a "*ruthless totalitarian police regime*" in Yugoslavia, the US maintained a policy of non-intervention in Yugoslav politics.

The analyzed reports demonstrate the limits of the Holy See's ability to obtain precise, updated, and detailed reports on the conditions in Yugoslavia, although its core observations were correct. Also, they show the limits of the Holy See's ability to alter the postwar geopolitical reality, where US policy, constrained by previous wartime strategic decisions and a reluctance to employ military force in the region, largely allowed the communist regime to solidify its control without effective Western intervention.

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*Slovensko ozemlje v dokumentih
osebnega predstavnika predsednika ZDA
pri papežu Piju XII., 1944–1945*

Povzetek

Položaj osebnega predstavnika predsednika ZDA pri papežu je prvi vzpostavil Franklin D. Roosevelt leta 1939, pri čemer so ga delno vodile domače ameriške politične potrebe. Na mednarodni ravni, v predvojnem svetovnem okolju, so si ZDA prizadevale za neposredne odnose, ker so domnevale, da ima Vatikan dobre obveščevalne vire in stike z drugimi državami. Predstavniki, Myron C. Taylor, je služil kot zastopnik ameriških interesov, pogosto pa je tudi posredoval skrbi Svetega sedeža.

Analiza dokumentov osebnega predstavnika predsednika ZDA pri papežu Piju XII. orisuje intenzivno diplomatsko dejavnost Svetega sedeža v zvezi z usodo slovenskega ozemlja, ki je leta 1945 prehajalo pod nadzor jugoslovanskih komunistov. Do tistega leta sta glavna skrb Svetega sedeža glede slovenskega ozemlja postala nevarnost in značaj komunističnega totalitarizma, ki je ogrožal državljanske in verske pravice v samem temelju. Papež Pij XII. je izrazil globoko zaskrbljenost v zvezi s sistematičnim omejevanjem verske svobode, fizičnim preganjanjem duhovnikov in deportacijami ljudi iz Julijske krajine.

Sveti sedež si je precej prizadeval, da bi ameriške oblasti prepričal o inherentni nevarnosti komunističnih sil pod sovjetskim vplivom. Čeprav je bilo v ameriški administraciji vse več zaskrbljenosti glede vzpostavitve »neusmiljenega totalitarnega policijskega režima« v Jugoslaviji, so ZDA v skladu s prejšnjimi medvojnimi strateškimi odločitvami ohranjale politiko nevmešavanja v regijo. V članku je prikazano, da je edino dokumentirano ameriško ukrepanje, na katero so neposredno vplivali vatikanski pozivi, zadevalo posamezna humanitarna vprašanja, kot je odobritev morebitne misije pomoči deportiranim prebivalcem Julijske krajine, zaprtim v jugoslovanskih taboriščih. Analizirana poročila kažejo na omejitve pri zmožnosti Svetega sedeža, da bi dobil natančna, aktualna in podrobna poročila o razmerah v Jugoslaviji, čeprav so bila njegova glavna opažanja pravilna. Kažejo

tudi na omejeno zmožnost Svetega sedeža, da bi oblikoval povojno geopolitično realnost, v kateri je politika ZDA, omejena s prejšnjimi medvojnimi strateškimi odločitvami in nepripravljenostjo za uporabo vojaške sile v regiji, komunističnemu režimu v glavnem dopustila, da je utrdil nadzor brez dejanskega poseganja Zahoda.