

agricultural produce of the rich district Precomurge, practically all of which passes over the bridge across the Mura into the town. At present there is no other bridge for 50 or 60 kilometres and for technical reasons, it would be difficult to build one. The town itself is German but so seriously was its loss of trade felt, that many of the leading German citizens desire its union with Slovenia. At present Ratkersburg is in a serious condition and if not joined to the Precumurge, my informant considered that the town would soon practically cease to exist.

Count Begouen stated that he found the Precumurge well-governed by a Slovene formerly Governor of Maribor³⁴, who appeared to have studied the needs of the country and to be doing everything possible. The country had suffered severely from the vandalism of the Bolchevist Government which had created here a centre for spreading Bolchevism into Croatia and Slovenia.³⁵

I may add to what appears above as to the situation in Croatia and Slovenia, that it concurs with what I have heard from other well-informed persons and that I believe substantially accurate.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
 Your obedient Servant,
 H. Percival Dodge³⁶
 Special Agent and Charge d' Affaires

File No. 800, d.

(Two copies sent to the American Peace Commission enclosed in Despatch No. 135 of September 20, 1919, American Peace Commission Series.)

7. 1919., rujan 30., Izvješće američkoga vojnog atašea u Kraljevstvu SHS Francisa T. Colbyja ravnatelju Vojne obavještajne službe o stanju u Hrvatskoj u kojemu se iznosi mišljenje da „još uvijek nema opasnosti od većih prosvjeda i nemira u Hrvatskoj, iako je prisutno ‘anti-srpsko raspoloženje’, te da je za očekivati žestoki politički otpor srpskoj dominaciji“.

NARA, M 358, R 2, 860H.00/20

³⁴ Lajnšič, Srećko, načelnik Maribora. (Petar Ribnikar, ur., *Sejmi zapisniki Narodne vlade Slovencev, Hrvatov in Srbov v Ljubljani in deželnih vlad za Slovenijo 1918-1921*, 3. del, od 22. mar. 1920 do 9. jul 1921 (št. 134-204), 132).

³⁵ Mađarska Crvena armija okupirala je ovo područje 6. lipnja 1919. ugušivši tako „Prekmursku Republiku“ samoproglašenu tek nekoliko dana ranije, 29. svibnja 1919. Boljševička vojska Mađarske sovjetske republike ostala je na tome prostoru do kolovoza 1919. kada je na područje ušla vojska Kraljevine SHS.

³⁶ Vlastoručno.

DOKUMENTI

AMERICAN LEGATION.

Belgrade, October 3rd., 1919.

Despatch No. 382.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State
Washington.

Sir:

My Despatch No. 369 of September 20th. reported the substance of a conversation with a distinguished French journalist, who is also an acute observer and well-acquainted with the provinces in question, regarding his recent visit to Croatia and Slovenia. I am led to concur in his opinion by such corroborative evidence as he reached me. I now have the honor to enclose herewith a copy of a report on conditions in Croatia, made by Francis T. Colby, Military Attaché of this Legation, following a short visit there some two weeks ago. While in many points this reports confirms that of the French journalist, I incline to think that as regards the feelings of the Croats towards the Serbs, the violence of these is perhaps somewhat too strongly put. It should also be noted that the agrarian reform project stated to have been instituted by the Serbs, is on the contrary one owing its origin to the demands of the Yugoslav provinces since in them alone is there any need of agrarian reform. The agrarian reform bill expressly excepts Serbia from its operation since in Serbia there are no larger estates nor any oppressive or feudal land tenures. Nor can it be stated that the Serbian politicians alone devoted themselves to party politics with alight regard to the situation in Croatia. This is quite as true if the Croat politicians in Belgrade and their regard appears to be no slighter for Croatia than for any other portion of the Kingdom.

Regarding the small mutinies at Maribor and Varazdin³⁷, also mentioned in the report, these were reported at the time and I am happy to note that Major Colby's information entirely concords with that which I then reported: my telegram No. 152, Department No. 46, of July 26, 3 p.m. and Despatch No. 368 of September 14th., last.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your obedient Servant
H. Percival Dodge³⁸
American Minister

³⁷ Pobune boljševičkoga karaktera dogodile su se u dvjema vojnim postrojbama, u Mariboru 22. srpnja 1919. i Varaždinu 23. srpnja 1919. Vidi više: Stanislava Koprivica-Oštrić, „Vojnička pobuna u Varaždinu 23. srpnja 1919.“, *Povijesni prilozi* 2 (1983), br. 2: 65-94.

³⁸ Vlastoručno.

DOKUMENTI

Enclosure:

1. Report of September 30, 1919, of the Military Attaché at Belgrade to the Director of Military Intelligence.

File No. 800, d.

(Two copies sent to American Peace Commission enclosed in Despatch No. 140 of October 3, 1919, American Peace Commission Series.)

COPY SECRET CONFIDENTIAL

Despatch #308

September 30th, 1919

From: Military Atache, Belgrade

To: Director, Military Intelligence

Subject: Conditions in Croatia

1. A visit was made to Zagreb (Agram) and Lubiana³⁹ (Laibach) and the surrounding country, from the 23rd to the 27th of August.
2. The antiSerb feeling among the Croats has greatly increased since my last visit in June. For the first time, the condition appears to be really serious. At the same time, no revolt or uprising is to be anticipated. A vigorous political resistance to Serbian domination is, however, to be expected. A large part of the Croats appears to desire a Jugo-Slav union, based on rather loosed federation, leaving complete local autonomy. The party desiring an integral union under the crown of Serbia is negligible. The party desiring complete separation from Jugo-Slavia is small, but increasing. This party should not be taken too seriously, however, because it is clear that Croatia cannot exist alone, and Croatia shows no desire to unite with any of her other neighbors. The Italian menace is particularly directed against Croatia, and prohibits a serious separatist movement.
3. As stated in my last dispatch, the reports of riots, uprisings, mutinies, etc., in Croatia have been enormously exaggerated and fabricated by Italian propaganda. There has been practically nothing of this kind except a mutiny with Slovene troops, treated below. Croatia may be said to be politically restive, but physically at rest. Violence does not form party of the present opposition to the Serb regime. Violence would in any case be impracticable, because the country is under the complete control of the Serbian troops.
4. The mutiny referred to above, took place on the 22nd of July, in the reinforcement camps of the 47th Maryburg Regiment in the Sava Cavalry Regiment. Certain other units further west were affected. I am informed that the

³⁹ Ljubljana, Slovenija.

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mutiny was put down by other Slovene troops without the use of Serb troops. Both the extent and violence of this mutiny appear to have been exaggerated. The causes of this mutiny appear to have been military rather than political. The most important causes were bad rations, bad equipment and low pay. The Slovene troops felt that they were discriminated against, not receiving as good treatment as the Serbs in these matters. The officers, for example, receive the old Austrian pay, which is less than the Serb pay. Certain of the ex-Austrian officers have not had their commission ratified in the Jugo-Slav Army and remain on half pay.

5. An important cause of this mutiny came from outside Croatia, through an active propaganda organisation of Austrians and Italians, having its base of operations at Gras. I am informed that Italian money not found on the mutineers.
6. It may be accepted as a fact, however, that a deep seated dissatisfaction exists throughout the Croat forces.
7. The church has always been a strong separatist weapon in the hands of Austrians. For example, the sister of a man whom I knew was engaged to a Serb. The Roman Catholic priest visited her mother each day in order to prevent the sin of a union with a member of the orthodox faith, and succeeded. The church is now modifying its action but the inheritance of past feeling remains.
8. The Croat and Slovene is unmilitary at heart, is more refined and more educated than the Serb, and still regards the Serb as a Prussian. They dislike his manners, consider him a brute, but at present need his military power.
9. To add to this causes of dislike, a very large portion of the Croats were content under the Austrians, and only discovered their desire for Jugo-Slav union in order to escape the results of defeat.
10. The agrarian reforms instituted by the Serbs with the idea of dividing the land among the peasants, do not appear popular. Some peasants are reported to be selling the land so received to the Jews. It may also be added that all of the abnormal conditions resulting from the war appear to be charged against the Serbs.
11. In brief, Croatia is discontented, Croatia dislikes the Serb, but fears that without him, she will be devoured by the Italians. There is no present danger of a serious uprising because the Serbian forces are, in any case, sufficient to prevent it, and because the fear and hatred of Italy outweigh all other considerations.
12. It is entirely possible, that if properly handled, Croatia would become a contented element in the Jugo-Slav state. In the meantime, the Serbian politicians devote themselves to party politics with slight regard to the situation in Croatia.

FRANCIS T. COLBY
Major U.S. Army
MILITARY ATTACHE