

42. 1923., travanj 19., Izvješće poslanika Henryja Percivala Dodgea State Departmentu o političkoj situaciji u Kraljevini SHS koje uključuje i izvješće konzula u Zagrebu Josepha F. McGurka o postizbornim koalicijama i stavu Stjepana Radića te pregovorima koji su prethodili „Markovom protokolu“ u kojemu se prenosi i razgovor američkoga poslanika s jugoslavenskim ministrom vanjskih poslova Momčilom Ninčićem koji mu je otkrio da je „Radić u nekoliko navrata nakon izbora poslao više ili manje tajne predstavnike na razgovore s njim (Ninčićem, op. H. Č.) i ostalim vođama radikala s namjerom postizanja nekakvog dogovora.“

NARA, M 358, R 3, 860H.00/171

[...]²²⁷

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Belgrade, April 19, 1923.

Despatch No. 1893

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

Referring to my Despatch No. 1872 (/170) of the 3rd instant, relative to the internal political situation following the recent parliamentary election, I have the honor to inform you that a few days after the date of my Despatch two deputies of the Raditch party arrived in Belgrade and had conferences with several prominent members of the Radical Party.²²⁸ Following these conferences they gave an interview to the local press which I enclose a translation. It will be seen that in it they give some idea of what they desire regarding the future situation of Croatia and state that they have observed much good will among the Radicals for coming to an agreement. Two days after the departure of the Raditch representatives, two prominent members of the Radical party went to Zagreb where they had conferences first with Mr. Raditch and members of his party and then with these again and also Dr. Korochetz and Dr. Spaho and member of their parties.

²²⁷ Državni pečat.

²²⁸ U Beograd su doputovali Vladko Maček i Juraj Krnjević. („Radićevci u Beogradu“, *Politika* (Beograd), 11. travnja 1923., br. 5374, 2).

Following these conferences in Zagreb with the so-called "Bloc", a communiqué was issued to the press by Mr. Raditch of which I also enclose a translation. It will be noted that this communiqué states that after their conference the Radical party as well as the Republican Croatian Peasants' party believed that the regulation and settlement by means of a mutual agreement of the question in dispute between the Serbs and Croats were necessary and possible and that at a subsequent conversation, at which delegates of the Slovene People's party and of the Yugoslav Mussulman Party were also present, several points were brought out which must be a preliminary condition to any agreement, these points relating to a modification of the Constitution and a liberalization of the present régime and administration in the sense of greater autonomy. The communiqué then states that an agreement was reached on these general principles, the attitude of the Bloc was decided as regards participation in Parliament and it was further decided to continue the conversations with a view to reaching a definitive agreement. Following this conference certain organs of the Belgrade press published the substance of what was stated to have been agreed between the Radical representatives and the representatives of the Bloc. A translation of this reported agreement is enclosed which will be observed to provide for a coalition between the Radicals and the Raditch, Korochetz and Spaho parties with a view to a revision of the Constitution as follows: "The new Constitution shall re-establish the office of Ban of Croatia which office shall be conferred upon a member of the Royal House. Croatia without Dalmatia and Bosnia shall be autonomous and will be governed by a substitute of the Ban with the aid of Councillors who will form a body similar to a Council of Ministers. The installment of the member of the Royal House as Ban shall take place at Zagreb."

According to the press report, it appears that Mr. Raditch considered that this agreement or some similar understanding had actually been agreed to by the radical representatives and he thereupon made enthusiastic statements to his friends, praising the Radicals and stating that the constitutional battle had been won. His enthusiasm however was short-lived for on the following day, the day in which he was to hold a great public meeting of his party, the news came to him from Belgrade that the Radical party considered that it had agreed to nothing. Mr. Raditch accordingly gave full vent to his disappointment by making a violent speech at his party meeting at which, according to various reports, from 10,000 to 25,000 persons were present. Mr. Raditch's own organ claims that 100,000 persons were present on this occasion. Interesting comments upon this meeting and Mr. Raditch's speech will be found in a report from the Consul at Zagreb of which a copy is enclosed. I also enclose a translation of the speech itself, the threatening and demagogic tone of which will be noted. Especially noteworthy are the statements that Croatia has two great friends, Germany and Russia, that the fate of the King will depend on Mr. Raditch's agreement with the Radicals and that Mr. Ljuba Jovanovitch, generally considered to be only second to Mr. Pashitch in the Radical party, is an ass in political matters. The immediate effect upon the Radicals of this utterance was the announcement that further negotiations with Mr. Raditch were impossible.

I have had conversations regarding these negotiations with several of the political leaders here and especially with Dr. Nintchitch²²⁹, the Foreign Minister, who has given me confidentially the following information: Mr. Raditch on several occasions since the elections had sent more or less secretly representatives to talk with him and other Radical leaders with a view to reaching some agreement. The two Raditch representatives who had recently come here openly had been received by several Radical leaders who had endeavored to ascertain from them just what Mr. Raditch proposed as bases for an agreement. The representatives replied however that they had no authority to state these bases but that Mr. Raditch was prepared to state them if Radical representatives should come to Zagreb. Thereupon Mr. Djurichitch²³⁰ and Dr. Yanitch²³¹, were sent as such representatives and had two long conferences with Mr. Raditch, Dr. Korochetz, Dr. Spaho and members of their parties. These conferences had taken place at a local restaurant and during them Mr. Raditch drank and talked continuously, ranting in his customary way and frequently contradicting himself. The Radical representatives made frequent efforts to induce him to state clearly the terms of the agreement he desired but failed entirely. Dr. Ninchitch stated that following the conferences, a protocol of them had been drafted and that the Radical representatives had signed this protocol contrary to their instructions. He could give me no details as to this protocol which however he stated amounted to nothing as no definite desiderata appeared in it and no agreement was mentioned. The Radical representatives had then returned to Belgrade and their report was being considered with a view possibly to further conferences when Mr. Raditch made the speech mentioned above by which he had deeply offended the Serbian people and rendered further conferences impossible. Dr. Ninchitch then informed me, strictly confidentially, that the Radical representatives to Zagreb, previous to their departure from Belgrade, had been authorized with the consent of the King to make what Dr. Ninchitch described as very extensive concessions to Mr. Raditch in case he proposed some possible bases for discussion. These concessions, he stated, were extremely confidential and only known to three or four members of the Radical party. He might however say that they included a grant of autonomy to Croatia and Slovenia and were practically identical to what Mr. Raditch's former secret emissaries had stated that he desired. Dr. Nintchitch stated that the Radical party, notwithstanding their previous deceptions with Mr. Raditch, had made this further honest effort to meet his wishes and had hoped to be successful as they were prepared to make such great concessions. They now had definite proof that he was politically impossible and in reality did not desire to come to any agreement or was incapable of doing so. Dr. Ninchitch then blamed the previous Yugoslav Cabinet, for having given

²²⁹ Ninčić, Momčilo (1876. – 1949.), političar. Obnašao više ministarskih dužnosti u Kraljevini Srbiji i Kraljevini SHS. Najduže bio je ministar vanjskih poslova (1921. – 1926.).

²³⁰ Đuričić, Marko, političar. Bio je član NRS-a, u ime vodstva stranke vodio pregovore i potpisao sporazum (Markov protokol) sa Stjepanom Radićem 13. travnja 1923.

²³¹ Janić, Vojislav, političar. Bio je član NRS-a, u ime vodstva stranke s Markom Đuričićem vodio pregovore sa Stjepanom Radićem 1923. godine.

Mr. Raditch such wide tolerance and expressed the belief that this tolerance had been the chief reason for the growth of his influence. He believed that the new Cabinet would modify this policy and apply the laws in Croatia as they were applied in Serbia and other parts of the Kingdom. Mr. Raditch in his last speech had been guilty of punishable affronts to the King and to the safety of the State. While he might not be called to account for these, he believed that he would be for any future such declarations. Dr. Ninchitch declared emphatically that the reported agreement mentioned above between the Radical representatives and the Raditch Bloc was entirely unfounded. Mr. Raditch's statement in his speech that Dr. Spaho was a Republican was also wholly untrue.

Dr. Ninchitch then informed me that negotiations were pending between the Radical group and the Democratic group for the formation of a coalition Cabinet. He thought it practically certain that these negotiations would be successful in a few days and that in this case the new Cabinet would be able to count upon 180 deputies in Parliament, which would be a majority off about twenty-five. This majority in addition to the Radicals and Democrats would include the Djemietz²³² or Turkish party of Macedonia, the German party and a few dissident deputies.

In connection with Dr. Nintchitch's statements regarding the Royalist sympathies of the Spaho party, I enclose a translation of an interview with a member of that party, which appeared in the Belgrade "Pravda" of the 17th instant, in which the member in question states emphatically that his party is Royalist and is bound to Mr. Raditch only on the basis of parliamentary opposition. His expressions regarding the Raditch party are not very friendly while they are distinctly so toward Dr. Korochetz' party, which he states has a definite programme of autonomy, the nearest to that of the Spaho party.

Regarding Dr. Nintchitch's statement that Mr. Raditch had now been proved to be politically impossible, I enclose a translation of an extract from an article signed Mr. Stojan Protitch which appeared in his organ, the "Radical", of the 7th instant and in which he states practically the same opinion. Mr. Protitch's testimony is valuable in this connection for it will be remembered that he separated from the Radical party because it than refused to treat with Raditch while he believed that an understanding with him was possible. After fruitless efforts and after being called an imbecile by Mr. Raditch, he has now ceased his endeavors. Another and seemingly impartial witness to the same effect is Mr. Seton-Watson²³³, the well-known English publicist and advocate of long-standing of the Yugoslav. Mr. Seton-Watson has recently arrived here after talking with Mr. Raditch both before and after his last speech and states also his opinion that he is politically impossible. Previously Mr. Seton-Watson had entertained great hopes of some agreement between Mr. Raditch and the Serbs but he states he now has none. It seems true, as stated by Dr. Ninchitch, that the chief reason for the coalition of a negative order into which

²³² Džemijet.

²³³ Seton-Watson, Robert William (1879. – 1951.), britanski povjesničar i publicist. Profesor Istočno-europske povijesti na Sveučilištu u Londonu (1922. – 1945.). Podržavao je politiku Jugoslavenskoga odbora i osnivanje Jugoslavije. (*Hrvatska enciklopedija*, sv. 9 Pri-Sk, 706).

Dr. Spaho and Dr. Korochetz have entered with Mr. Raditch, is dictated more to preserve their parties from Raditch encroachments than by any common policies.

Immediately following the rupture of their negotiations with the Raditch party, the Cabinet resigned. On the 16th instant the new Parliament met, all the deputies except those of the Raditch party being present, and elected as Provisional President a Radical, Mr. Peleche²³⁴, by 128 votes. The Radicals believe that they can count on this number of deputies which appears to include, in addition to the 108 Radical deputies, the thirteen Djemietis and eight Germans. Mr. Pashitch as President of the Ministry then handed a letter to the Provisional President announcing the resignation of the Cabinet. Protests were heard from the opposition benches when the announcement was read and, when immediately afterwards the Provisional President adjourned Parliament pending the formation of a new Cabinet, there was much lively discussion among Deputies.

The King is now, according to the provisions of the Constitution, consulting with the leaders of all the political groups to gain advice as to whom to entrust with the formation of a new Cabinet. According to the best information, he will probably again entrust Mr. Pashitch with this task with a mandate to form a coalition Cabinet with the Democrats with a view especially to secure the passage by Parliament as soon as possible of the urgent legislation pending at the time of the dissolution of the last Parliament, namely the Budget Bill, the Invalids Pensions Bill and the Public Employees' Bill. It appears that the King has from the beginning of the present crisis been in favor of this solution, although authorizing substantial concessions in order to bring about an understanding with the Raditch party.

The Radical deputies from Bosnia and the Voivodina are stated to be against a coalition with the Democrats and the leading Democratic organ itself has lately declared that "instead of sharing the shame of the Radicals, we should second those who consider that the suppression of the Radical régime, saturated with corruption, and the realization of a broad policy of social reforms, are the first objects to be accomplished." in any case the Democrats appear to be prepared to sell their support to the Radicals at the highest possible figure, their terms being the following, according to the Belgrade "Politika": (1) the same portfolios and other rights to be accorded to the Democratic party as in the former Cabinet; (2) all the Democratic office-holders (claimed to be about 3000) displaced by the Radicals to be reinstated previous to the formation of the new Cabinet; (3) application to the Raditch party of the same laws as are applicable to the other subjects of the State; and (4) continuation of legislative activity from where it was left off upon the dissolution of the late coalition, that is the immediate passage of the Invalids, Public Employees and Land Tenure Bills.

²³⁴ Peleš, Dušan (1867.-?), odvjetnik, političar. Bio zastupnik u Hrvatskom saboru i zajedničkom hrvatsko-ugarskom saboru (1906. – 1918.), član Narodnoga vijeća SHS-a u Zagrebu (1918.) i član delegacije u Beogradu za predaju Adrese 1. prosinca 1918. Bio ministar pravosuđa (1920.), socijalne politike (1923. – 1924.), privremeni predsjednik Narodne skupštine. (*Ko je ko u Jugoslaviji*, 112).

DOKUMENTI

Notwithstanding Mr. Raditch's threats, it is generally not anticipated here that he will venture upon any subversive movement. It may be noted however that a small incident has occurred at Dogna Stubitsa²³⁵, a village near Zagreb, where the villagers who were of Raditch's party resisted the arrest by the gendarmes of some deserters from the army, resulting in the killing of three villagers and the wounding of a number of others, including three gendarmes.

Finally I enclose a summary of a further article of the Belgrade "Vreme" continuing its campaign in favor of "amputation" and a translation of another from the Belgrade "Pravda" containing official figures showing the votes cast at the recent elections divided according to the different parties.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
H. Percival Dodge²³⁶
H. Percival Dodge,
American Minister.

Enclosures:

- 1.- translation of article from the Belgrade "Pravda" of April 11th 1923 entitled "The representatives of Raditch at Belgrade";
- 2.- Same from the Belgrade "Politika" of April 14th 1923; entitled "Communiqué of the Bloc";
- 3.- Same from the same of April 17th 1923, entitled "Reported agreement between Raditch and the Radicals";
- 4.- Copy of report from the Consul at Zagreb, dated April 16th 1923, entitled "Local political comment"; only three copies available;
- 5.- Translation of article from the Belgrade "Vreme" of April 16th 1923 entitled "The assembly of the Republican Croatian Peasants' Party";
- 6.- Same from the Belgrade "Pravda" of April 17th 1923, entitled "Raditch and the Muslim group";
- 7.- Same from the Belgrade "Radical" of April 7th 1923, entitled "Mr. Protitch and Mr. Raditch";
- 8.- Same from the Belgrade "Vreme" of April 4th 1923, entitled "Croatia and Slovenia";
- 9.- Same from the Belgrade "Pravda" of April 11th 1923 entitled "Electoral statistics".

File No. 800-D

Copies to Bucharest, Prague and Sofia.

²³⁵ Donja Stubica.

²³⁶ Vlastoručno.

DOKUMENTI

Dodatak br. 4: Izvješće konzula u Zagrebu Josepha F. McGurka poslaniku Henryju Percivalu Dodgeu.

Enclosure no.4

CONFIDENTIAL

LOCAL POLITICAL COMMENT

From J. F. McGurk, American Consul, Zagreb, April 16th, 1923.

The much advertised congress of the Radic party was held in the outskirts of Zagreb Sunday the 15th instant, for the purpose of discussing the policy of the party in connection with the situation arising out of the recent elections. Despite the inclement weather it is estimated that fully ten thousand people attended the meeting, many of them being delegates from distant parts of the Kingdom, and representing, it is claimed, more than four hundred thousand voters. The meeting opened at noon and continued for several hours.

The main event during the course of the meeting was the speech of Mr. Radic, and although it was expected that he would outline a policy to be carried out by his party after their recent victory in the national elections, he failed to do so. Nor did he clearly reveal the results of the recent conference between the delegates of his party and the delegates of the Radical party, which was also expected of him.

Mr. Radic's speech, – in its details, – has been a source of considerable surprise to many of his sympathizers in Zagreb on account of his personal attacks, especially on Ljuba Jovanovic²³⁷, the delegate of the Radical party from Belgrade with whom he had been conferring during the last few days, and on account of his friendly utterances towards the German people.

The general impression appears to be that over night (Saturday to Sunday, April 14th-15th) Mr. Radic had obtained information from Belgrade that Mr. Pasic does not intend or wish to hold to the agreement said to have been made last Friday in Zagreb between the delegates of the Radic party and the delegates of the Pasic party, but merely wishes to have the Radic party commit itself to concrete terms with which Mr. Pasic may demonstrate that an agreement with the Radic party is an impossibility, and thus enable Mr. Pasic to justify his program and at the same time show that he has endeavored to

²³⁷ Jovanović, Ljubomir (1865. – 1929.), srpski političar i povjesničar. Bio je zastupnikom NRS-a od 1905., predsjednik Narodne skupštine Kraljevine Srbije (1906. – 1909.). Bio je ministar u dva navrata u vladama Kraljevine Srbije, zatim i ministar vjera (1922. – 1924.), te predsjednik Narodne skupštine Kraljevine SHS-a (1923. – 1924.). Zbog sukoba s predsjednikom Nikolom Pašićem isključen je iz NRS-a 1926. godine. (*Hrvatska enciklopedija*, sv. 5 Hu-Km, 2003, 382).

come to an agreement with the Radic party. It is asserted that Mr. Pasic has concealed the agreement made in Zagreb between delegates of both parties last Friday (the 13th inst.) and has been made known the terms of the agreement to only two or three of his close adherents. It is generally believed that the Radicals do not intend to continue negotiations with the Radic party, and Mr. Radic accordingly refrained from expressing an opinion concerning such intentions on the part of the Radic party, or his own intentions concerning further negotiations, for to do so would probably waken his position among the masses, and having in view future possibilities and new elections he endeavored to exercise his influence upon his hearers with a purely demagogic attitude.

The reason advanced for Mr. Radic's complimentary remarks to the German people during the course of his speech and which occasioned considerable surprise, is that there were present at the meeting delegates from the German residents of Sylvania and Voivodina, on whose support he is counting at future elections.

There is apparently considerable surprise in Zagreb that Belgrade opponents of any agreement (with Croatia) have exploited Mr. Radic's attitude and are threatening force and a dictatorship. These threats seem to be considered here as being connected with an attempt to persuade Mr. Davidovic and his group to form a coalition with Mr. Pribicevic and his party together with the Radicals, thereby obtaining a sufficient majority to support the pre-election regime. It is asserted that (should) Mr. Davidovic commit himself to such a plan he would lose all confidence of the Radic party and all those hopeful of an agreement on the basis of union. It seems to be the opinion here that Mr. Pasic is desirous of forming such a coalition, thereby taking up Mr. Davidovic and his party and making impossible the creation of a coalition between the Radic party and Davidovic party, whose main platform would be, in all probability, a revision of the Constitution.

According to the opinion of several local politicians the greater part of the intellectual classes in Zagreb and in their cities in Croatia regret that Mr. Davidovic has not taken a more energetic attitude and entirely broken all connection with the Pribicevic wing, thus enabling all other elements inclined to Yugoslav union and revision of the constitution to unite with the Democratic left wing and create a strong united political party to further their aims.

So far as can be learned no one will venture an opinion as to what Mr. Radic intends to do and to what extent he has outlined a program of action, but it can be safely said that he is a strong advocate of peace. It is now reasonably certain that he will not lead his delegates to Belgrade in the near future, and will continue passive resistance, and rumor has it that his passive resistance will be extended to advising his following to refuse to pay taxes and to refuse to perform the required military service; but this is purely rumor.

Aside from this incident there was no disorder and the two policemen mentioned above were the only representatives of the authorities present. The Committee in charge of the meeting appointed civilian members of the Radic party to police the crowd and apparently they were able to maintain perfect order.