

DOKUMENTI

The representatives of high finance and industry were not present, owing, it is said, to fear of possible vengeance from the present Government.

The meeting was optimistic and the voters were asked to come in full numbers to the polls on February 8th, in spite of the rumors that the Government intends to withhold the ballot boxes of the HRSS, which would indicate that the leaders of the Croat politics who are still at liberty have decided against the policy of "abstinence" (not voting) in case of these boxes not being issued. Followers of the HRSS in the districts of Novi Sad and Subotica have already been instructed to vote for Davidovic, as the courts have not accepted the HRSS candidates in these districts, basing their decision on the "Obznana", where the HRSS was declared an illegal party.

A copy of the Zagreb "Hrvat" (organ of the Croatian Union), of January 26, 1925, containing the speech of Dr. Trumbic in full and a detailed report of the meeting is enclosed herewith as of possible interest to the Legation. Additional copies will be sent if desired.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
Leslie A. Davis³⁷⁷
Leslie A. Davis
American Consul

Enclosure:

Copy of "Hrvat" of January 26, 1925³⁷⁸

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LAD/rs

65. 1925., veljača 6., Izvješće konzula u Zagrebu Leslieja A. Davisa Henryju Percivalu Dodgeu o posjetu Ljubomira Davidovića Zagrebu.

NARA, M 358, R 3, 860H.00/232

COPY FOR THE DEPARTMENT
AMERICAN CONSULATE

Zagreb, Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes,
February 6, 1925.

³⁷⁷ Vlastoručno.

³⁷⁸ Prilog nije snimljen na mikrofilm.

The Honorable

H. Percival Dodge,
American Minister,
Belgrade.

Sir:

I have the honor to report to the Legation concerning the meeting which was to have been held in Zagreb last Sunday (February 1st) by the Democratic party, at which Mr. Ljuba Davidovic was to speak:

Arrival of Mr. Davidovic at Zagreb.

Mr. Davidovic arrived in Zagreb on Saturday, January 31st, at 5 p.m. according to program. A committee and members of the Democratic Party in Zagreb awaited him on the platform, and many Zagreb citizens stood in front of the station. There were also on the platform a few adherents of Mr. Pribicevic and a large number of policeman and detectives. The organization received its leader with enthusiastic ovations, whilst the Pribicevic adherents attempted some demonstrations against him and a few eggs were thrown. Members of the Democratic Party assert that this was done under the protection of the police, the eggs having come from the aid where the police stood. They say further that it was an open secret in Zagreb that the adherents of Minister Pribicevic had come not only to demonstrate against Mr. Davidovic but and also planned an attack on him. This report was verified by a member of the staff of this consulate, who was told at the headquarters on the Democratic Party in Zagreb that Dr. Ante Pavelic, President of the Organization and former President of the National Council of the SHS after the breakdown of Austria, and in a special letter notified the Prefect of the Zagreb Department, Dr. (...) ³⁷⁹, that the adherents of Mr. Pribicevic had received to carry out such an attack. In this connection it may be said that according to rumors and newspapers reports the excitement among the citizens and in the country has increased to a great extent because of many acts of violence which are said to have taken place recently and in which the police anticipates. The "Slobodna Tribuna" of February 3rd, for instance, reports a case which happened on January 30th in Donji Mosti, Belovar, where a gendarme drew his gun to shoot the Priest Benkovic at the moment when he came to intervene with the gendarme and to pacify the people who were greatly excited because the gendarmes were driving them to the "kuluk" (forced labor) which is prohibited during elections. The priest, being in mortal danger, drew his revolver and killed the gendarme on the spot.

Such were the reports and the feeling of the people when Mr. Davidovic came to Zagreb. He could not hold the public meeting, as the police had forbidden it on the grounds that it would endanger public order and peace, owing to the publication and

³⁷⁹ Nečitko.

posting of a poster "Death to Corruption", and that in case of demonstrations the police could not guarantee order at the meeting itself. A copy of this poster, which was intended to show that corruption should die on February 8th, is enclosed herewith. The poster was confiscated by the police, but the Court of First Instance has disapproved this confiscation and the poster has been released. The Attorney General has appealed from this decision to the Court of Higher Instances.

Speech of Mr. Davidovic.

Mr. Davidovic therefore held a closed session at the headquarters of the Democratic Club. A copy of the "Slobodna Tribuna" of February 3, 1925, containing Mr. Davidovic's speech in full is enclosed herewith. In his speech Mr. Davidovic pointed out that these elections have two outstanding tasks, viz., the task of creating and preserving a legal State, and that of raising the dignity of the people here to that of people in other civilized States. He condemns sharply the violence committed against Vasilj Grdjic, Uros Stajic, and Dr. Kraft, comparing all this with the Matteotti case in Italy, and emphasizing how civilized Europe unanimously condemned that case and even in a discreet manner boycotted Mussolini himself. He emphasizes further how the present Belgrade Government is not taking into account all these movements and feelings in the cultural world, and says that consequently this violence leaves the indifferent and insensible.

Mr. Davidovic is opposed to the "Obznana" which places an entire nation in an exceptional status, depriving the people of their principal rights as citizens, the holding of meetings, the use of the press, etc. He calls the "Obznana" illegal, unconstitutional, antinational and anti-State, and he denies its legality. He stigmatizes especially the treatment of the HRSS by the Government. He designates the "Obznana" as a mere election trick, pointing out how the present Government, which was in power in May and June and July, did not prosecute the HRSS, which on May 1st entered the Peasants' Internationale in Moscow. He points out that after the fall of his Government and during a conference between the leaders of the Oppositional Block and those of the Radical Party the proposal was made that in case of a possible concentration of the Government two cabinet seats were to remain empty for the representatives of the HRSS, and that this took place at the end of last October. He opposes the arrest of Dr. Macek, the first Vice President of the Parliament and member of the State Committee, declaring that it was a great violation of his right of immunity, and that he, as the substitute for Mr. Ljuba Jovanovic, President of the Parliament, enjoys unquestionable immunity.

Mentioning the document against Radic, he states that they have two errors – in the first place, they are not originals and, secondly, they are not signed by the accused parties, while, furthermore, the Court is only competent to apply the law and to declare their guilt, and he protests against this abuse of the law, especially of the "Law for the Protection of the State (Obznana), as this undermines the confidence in justice.

He opposes the wrongful acts of Dr. Lukinic, Minister of Justice, and his attempts to influence the Courts, especially after the declaration of one active Minister,

who openly and publicly declared, as published in many papers, that if the independence of the Courts would interfere with the intentions of the Government, the Government would find ways and means to abolish this interference. He considers this attack against the independence of the Courts not only as a great sin but also as a very dangerous fact for the development of conditions in the country. Characterizing the actions and character of Mr. Svetozar Pribicevic, he says that Mr. Pribicevic took over the portfolio of Minister of Education six years ago and that during almost all this time he has been uninterruptedly in power, but that in spite of the fact that he had received from his predecessor all the plans for laws for the establishment of schools and middle schools and for new University regulations, he could not in all this time succeed in passing these bills through the Parliament, but that he immediately succeeded as the Minister of the Interior, short though the time was, in completing the regulations for the gendarmerie. He calls the Ministry for Education the Ministry for Police, saying that the real Ministry of Police is only its branch, especially after the recent events at the Universities in Zagreb and Belgrade and after the persecution of the youth because of their demonstrations against him on the occasions against him on the occasion of the Sv. Sava celebration in Belgrade; also after his persecution of the prominent scholar, Dr. Polić³⁸⁰, rector of the Zagreb University, who was an honor not only to Yugoslav science but also to the science of the world – and all this from a man who does not even have any academical qualifications, who transfers and pensions off professors and teachers en masse without a Government decree and dismisses the teachers in Croatia from service.

Characterizing the financial policy of the present Government he calls it a “spendthrift” policy. He regrets that he left in Belgrade the documents from which one could see that the whole budget of the State for the year 1924-25 is now used up. He says that during these last few days five hundred million dinars more have been spent than are provided in the whole budget, that no receipts are being taken and no accounts kept, but that they just say to give to this man two million and to that man two million, etc. He mentions that on one occasion the Minister for Foreign Affairs in one communication demanded an increase of sixteen million dinars, and in another of ten million dinars, that is, in all, twenty-six million dinars, and he suspects that all these enormous sums have been used for electioneering purposes.

He states that even in Serbia itself during the most difficult times no elections were held under “exceptional” conditions and martial law (“Obznana”), whereas to-day the elections are being held in this exceptional status. In spite of this he calls every citizen to active participations in the elections and he pleads for a policy of national agreement between Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, for the liberty of the citizens, for justice and for equality.

³⁸⁰ Polić, Ladislav (1874. – 1927.), pravnik, profesor. Bio je rektor Sveučilišta u Zagrebu 1919. – 1920. i 1924.

Agreement of the Oppositional Block.

At a recent meeting held by the leaders of the Oppositional Block in Zagreb, a complete agreement in all matters of their future policy was reached.

Translation of Telegram Published in the "Hrvat".

Below is a translation made in this office of a telegram published in the "Hrvat" of February 3, 1925, anowing the alleged feeling among the Yugoslavia in the United States towards the present Government in this country:

"Pittsburgh, February 1, 1925"

"The Yugoslav of Pittsburgh and surroundings held to-day a great meeting at the Masonic Hall to protest against the present despotic regime in Yugoslavia. The meeting was wellled under the auspices of the cultural committee of all Croatian societies. Several thousand Yugoslavs were present at the meeting. Many persons were unable to participate on account of lack of room in the hall. Right speakers, representing various Croatian, Servian and Slovenian organizations and societies, have sharply condemned the present regime in Yugoslavia, the crimes and the acts of violence of the Government committed against the Yugoslav population and especially against its representatives during the last three months of the election campaign. At the close of the meeting a resolution was unanimously adopted in which the representatives of all American Yugoslavs are sharply protesting against the illegality of the Pasic-Pribicevic regime. The resolution concludes with the following words:

'The assembled American Yugoslavs most energetically condemn the present illegality which was committed by the usurpation of the Government by the P.P. against the will of the whole nation in the Kingdom of the SHS, and consider them responsible for all crimes and acts of violence committed against the population in the State; further we protest most energetically against the terror introduced in the election campaign for the new Parliament on the part of the present fascistical Government in the Kingdom of SHS, for the purpose of trampling under foot the nation's will and depriving the people of the free expression of the right to vote.'

'We demand that all political prisoners be set free at once.'

'We demand that the notorious "Obznana" be immediately abolished, which was proclaimed under the pretext of the protection of the State, but which, in fact, aims at establishing an unspeakable system of terror against the inhabitants and the whole country.'

"Similar protest meetings are being held to-day in all parts of the United States where Yugoslavs live and where they have their organizations.

"The resolution has already been approved by the Supreme Councils of all Croatian National Societies."

A copy of "Hrvat" of February 3, 1925, is enclosed herewith.

DOKUMENTI

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
Leslie A. Davis
American Consul

Enclosures:

1. Poster, "Death of corruption."³⁸¹
2. Copy of "Slobodna Tribuna" of February 3, 1925.³⁸²
3. " " "Hrvat" " " 1, 1925.³⁸³

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LAD/rs

66. 1925., veljača 14., Izvješće poslanika Henryja Percivala Dodgea State Departmentu o pojačanoj represiji pred održavanje parlamentarnih izbora na cijelom području Kraljevine SHS predvođene radikalima u kojemu se donosi i da su „nekoliko dana prije izbora u Hrvatsku prebačene tri vojne pukovnije iz Srbije da bi pojačale ionako veliki broj postrojbi smještenih u Hrvatskoj.“

NARA, M 358, R 3, 860h.00/233

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LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Belgrade, February 14, 1926.

Despatch No. 2581.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,
Washington.

³⁸¹ Vidi sliku 6.

³⁸² Prilog nije snimljen na mikrofilmu.

³⁸³ Prilog nije snimljen na mikrofilmu.

³⁸⁴ Državni pečat.