

DOKUMENTI

73. 1925., kolovoz 6., Dodatak Izvješću br. 2783 privremenoga otpravnika poslova Gordona S. Paddocka: Izvješće konzula u Zagrebu Leslieja A. Davisa privremenom otpravniku poslova poslanstva u Beogradu Gordonu S. Paddocku o političkoj situaciji u Zagrebu, mišljenju javnosti o sporazumu HSS-a i NRS-a, te predviđanjima o budućnosti ove koalicije.

NARA, M 358, R 3, 860h.00/258

DUPLICATE

AMERICAN CONSULATE

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

Gordon Paddock, Require,
Chargé d'Affairs ad interim,
American Legation,
Belgrade.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Legation's Instruction of July 24, 1925, and to enclose herewith a brief resumé of the manner in which the recent Radical-Croatian-Agrarian accord is accepted by the various political parties as well as the public in this district, as far as I have been able to obtain information on this subject through interviews with local politicians and other persons here, newspapers comment, etc.:

The New Political Situation as Seen in Zagreb.

As regards the new political situation there are there main points of view in political circles here:

1. Members of the Independent Democratic Party (SDS), which until recently was allied with the Radical Party, believe that the new coalition between the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS) and the National Radical Party (NRS) will not last a long time. The reason for this opinion of the Independent Democrats appears to lie in their belief that the interests of the two parties are too diverse for the coalition to endure. They think that the Radical desire to have the whole power centered in their own hands and that they will probably take advantage of the first good opportunity to break up this alliance in order to bid for an absolute majority at the next elections. On the other hand, the Croatian Peasant Party is "developing a tendency of expansion in Serbia proper which, of course, will lead them to a conflict with the Radicals.

2. The Croatian Union (HZ), which represents the Croatian Intelligentsia in Zagreb, believes that the new Coalition Government is likely to last but with the certain consequence that the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS) will be considerably weakened among its electors. The Croatian people, according to the trend of thought of the members of the Croatian Union (HZ), will not approve of the new coalition, as they are essentially federalists. The members of the Croatian Union (HZ) hope therefore that at the next elections they will be able to increase their numbers to such an extent as to be able to revive again the question of the revision of the constitution in the sense of a Serbo-Croato-Slovene Federation, i. e., there would be there federated small states having in coming an army and certain departments of the Government, such as those for foreign affairs, which by their nature must be centralized. A similar point of view is held by the Slovene Clericals who believe that the Croatian Clericals will be strengthened at the expense of the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS).
3. The members of the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS) and of the National Radical Party (NRS), on the other hand, believe that the new Coalition Government will last as having resulted from the natural course of events. The members of these two parties point out the similarity of ideals in their programs and in their origin, both of them being essentially peasant parties and their immediate and ultimate (...) ⁴²⁷ being the same, viz., the organization and strengthening of the peasant population and of its main fields of activity – the autonomy of communes and a foreign policy which looks forward to a union with Bulgaria, as in this way the Southern Slav peasant race resting on three seas, i. e., the Adriatic, Aegean and Black Seas, would become absolute masters of the Balkans.
Other parties like the Davidovic Democratic Party, the Yugoslav Moslem Party and the small Serbian Agricultural Party are apparently, taking an attitude of observation and expectancy.

Importance of the Coalition and Reasons Therefor.

The general opinion prevailing appears to be that the Coalition Government from all points of view is a very important event in the history of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, it being considered in some quarters to be practically as important as the separation of the Croats and Slovenes from the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The reasons why such importance is being attributed to this event appear to be the following:

1. The Skupstina for the first time has a strong working majority capable of passing necessary laws. Many feel that the Skupstina heretofore has not worked seriously at all.

⁴²⁷ Nečitko.

2. The Government which is being supported by this majority has the necessary moral force to put the house in order, whereas the Government thus far had this moral and material backing, having been invariably weak in the Skupstina and frequently forced to resign. This had a demoralizing influence, both on the employees of the Government and on the population. This weakness of the previous Governments is also said to be the reason why racial and social jealousies and rivalries prospered, but it is thought that under the new Government they will die a natural death.
3. The new Coalition Government, representing the largest Serbian and the largest Croatian party, has thus shelved or at least allayed the bitterness of the Serbo-Croatian quarrel, which through the whole six years has paralyzed and weakened all endeavors to improve the Government and to develop the economic life in the country.
4. The new Coalition Government by the very fact of its being formed has put an end to the heretofore prevalent feeling among the Croats that they were second class citizens, the largest Croatian party not being represented in the Government.
5. The question of monarchy, which has been a very great obstacle to the spiritual union of the Serbs and Croats, has been definitely solved as there are no longer republican parties in the Skupstina. A step towards the complete amalgamation of the Serb and Croat peasants, whose interests are identical and who represent over 80 per cent of the population, has now been definitely made.

From the point of view of the consolidation of the State, the new situation is judged as very important. Its importance, it is said, is manifest from the very fact that all other parties appear to have lost the principal object of their aims as already having been accomplished and some of them appear to have lost the very reason for their existence. Thus, for instance, the Davidovic Democratic Party which in the course of the last few years has had a hard fight in favor of an understanding between the Serbs and the Croats has been deprived of its essential task and is already announcing a revision of its program. In the same way, the Independent Democrats (led by Pribicevic), who have spent their time and energy in trying to persuade the people that there can be no understanding between the Serbs and Croats, that is to say, between the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS) and the Radicals (NRS), appear to have lost the reason for their existence. The Yugoslav Moslem Party has lost the principal object of its aims and the Slovene Clericals are trying to find new slogans in the face of danger to Catholicism arising from the understanding between the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS) and the National Radical Party (NRS) and from the fact that the Croatian Peasant Party is trying to find means to liberate the Croats from the influence of Rome and to draw them nearer to their orthodox brethren.

As to the stability of the new Government, it is believed that, although the feelings of the Croatian Peasant Party and of the National Radical Party in this respect are perhaps too optimistic, this Government is certain to last much longer than any of the previous Governments – probably for the whole of the remaining legislative period, or something over three years. It is further believed that the new Government is likely to

survive the new elections, the more so as there appears to be already a (...) ⁴²⁸ tendency and a canceled desire for amalgamation of the Croatian Peasant Party (SHS) and the National Radical Party (NRS) in a Serbo-Croat Peasant Party.

Predictions Concerning the Future of Other Parties

As regards the future of other parties in Yugoslavia, there are various prophesies, but the following appear to be dominating:

1. The Independent Democratic Party (SDS) in its present form and numbers will not be able to last a long time. This party has apparently depended on the permanency of the Serbo-Croatian dispute and therefore it is bound to dissolve and to merge in other parties. The question of dissolution of this party appears to have been already raised, although the leaders are trying to prevent it.
2. The Davidovic Democratic Party, it is thought, will have to be entirely reorganized. There is some talk of its approaching amalgamation with the Yugoslav Moslem Party and the Serbian Agricultural Party. Other reports have it that this party will also dissolve and that the majority of its members will join the Coalition Government.
3. The Croatian Union (HZ) in spite of its activity would appear to be doomed to failure. It said that the Croatian people, have no feelings nor understanding for federalistic theories. It is possible that the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS) will lose 10 to 15 per cent of its followers, but these are mostly ex-communists who joined the Croatian Peasant Party while it represented the wildest opposition, or the Croats with extreme anti-Serbian feelings. The Communists will now join again own Labor Party and the extreme Croats, who are very few in numbers, will join other Croatian organizations which are more radical than the Croatian Union. On the other hand, the Croatian Peasant Party with its present policy will win new followers at the expense of the Independent Democratic Party and the Davidovic Democratic Party. In this way it does not appear probable that the Croatian Peasant Party will lose in numbers at all, except perhaps in Zagreb and in one or two larger Croatian towns.
4. The Clerical Party will probably remain limited mainly in Slovenia. It is very improbable that it will gain anything in Croatia at the expense of the Croatian Peasant Party.

If no new parties are formed it is said that the present opposition parties represent no real menace to the new Coalition Government.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,
Leslie A. Davis
American Consul

⁴²⁸ Nečitko.