

DOKUMENTI

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Copy to E. I. C., Paris.

96. 1927., srpanj 13., Izvješće poslanika Johna Dyneleyja Princea State Departmentu o njegovu razgovoru sa Stjepanom Radićem na Bledu o izborima, kampanji i djelovanju HSS-a u Bosni, Makedoniji gdje „oružništvo provodi vladavinu terora protiv svih neradikalskih glasača“, očekivanjima na budućim izborima, odnosu s Italijom.

NARA, M 358, R 4, 860H.00/321

[...] ⁵²⁸

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Belgrade, July 16, 1927.

Despatch No. 259

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that on July 13th, I had two interviews with Mr. Stefan Radić, the President of the Croatian Peasant Party and the most cogent force of the Opposition to the present Coalition Government of a branch of the Radical Party with the Democrats.

Mr. Radić, who is looked upon by all conservative elements in Yugoslavia as the chief danger to the future integrity of the state, has been comparatively quiet during the past six months, as he has been engaged in marshalling his cohorts preparatory to the coming elections in September. He informs that he has succeeded in obtaining “complete

⁵²⁷ Potpis nečitak, strojopis.

⁵²⁸ Državni pečat.

control of the agrarian Moslem vote in Bosnia” which, he states, is in accord with the principles of his populist theories. He also told me that he is conducting a similar violent anti-Serb campaign in south Serbia Macedonia, stressing especially the “corruptionist politics of Belgrade” and asking the “Macedonian” elements to stand for a local autonomy, which however he did not define. One of his lieutenants, Baron Švegel, who is a resident of Bled in Slovenia, at whose house in Bled I have had the opportunity of meeting Mr. Radić, is endeavoring to be elected to the Skupština from a “Macedonian” district near Skoplje and while he was down there campaigning two weeks ago, he was “mistreated by the Serb gendarmerie who are conducting a veritable reign of terror against all non-Radical voters”. Švegel said he had been stoned by the local mob and was in danger of his life, but that the Serb gendarme “forced” him into a train and sent him back to Belgrade, thus depriving him of the privilege of being a “Second Saint Stephen”. I mentioned this event to Foreign minister Marinković just before I went to Bled, (Legation despatch No. 252, July 5th), and he told me that the gendarmerie had saved Švegel’s life against an enraged populace, as Švegel had been preaching Macedonian separatism which is palatable only to the Komitadji sympathisers of Southern Serbia.

Mr. Radić, in discussing the coming election, said that Premier Vukičević⁵²⁹ was counting upon a continuance of the present coalition reckoning without the Croats who, even if they were to get a majority would not be able, according to the opinion of the Radicals, to form a government. Radić said that the results of the elections would show that the Radicals would lose so many votes in the Chamber that the strength of the present Coalition would, after the election, be no greater than the present strength of the entire Radical Party in the House without their Democratic Allies, so that this Government must necessarily fall. Radić did not however, say whether he would be at the head of the new Government himself, although it was plain to me that he thinks so, as he seems full of confidence.

I am unable to come to any conclusion as to whether the alleged Italian machinations now said to be going forward in Macedonia have any connection with the activities of the Radić Party in that region. On the surface at least, this would appear not to be the case, as Radić himself spoke very bitterly against Mussolini and his fascistic policies and said that, in the event of a war between Italy and Yugoslavia, the Italians would “get the biggest beating they had ever had in their entire history”.

Mr. Radić also excoriated the Foreign Minister here, Mr. Marinković, expressing his opinion that Marinković had sadly bungled the recent Albanian difficulty (See Legation despatches Nos. 241, 243 and 248 (768H.75/83/88 768H.65/89)).⁵³⁰

I was especially glad to get this opportunity to meet and talk with Radić at some length, as I found that to seek him out for myself would have been a bad policy, but on

⁵²⁹ Vukičević, Velimir (1871.-?) političar. Bio je član NRS-a, zastupnik u Narodnoj skupštini, ministar unutarnjih poslova (1927. – 1928.), graditeljstva (1921. – 1922.), pošte i telegrafa (1922. – 1925.), prosvjete (1925. – 1927.), predsjednik vlade (1927. – 1928.).

⁵³⁰ Dopisano rukopisom.

this occasion, I was able to meet him both at lunch and at dinner on the same day in the house of an acquaintance (Švegel). I find that Radić has a certain amount of personal magnetism, as he speaks with great force and fixes his hearers with an earnest eye. He grinds his teeth while talking in a manner very similar to the style of the late President Roosevelt. Radić's ideas, on the other hand, are far more like those of Mr. William J. Bryan⁵³¹, as a professed worldwide pacifism and a belief in the brotherhood of all races are his central themes.

Radić is clearly a poseur of the first rank. It is difficult to realise whether he is actually sincere in his utterances, especially when he is extolling the farmer as the sole kernel of the state. Possibly he persuades himself that he really means what he says. At any rate, his history shows that one may rely on literally nothing which he says or promises. He was especially glad to see me, as the conversation could be carried on in Croatian in which he is a natural orator. He has, however, the great defect of leading up to his chief theme and then emphasizing the most important phrases by allowing his voice to sink almost to a whisper for the sake of emphasis! This peculiarity caused me to make him repeat quite often and I finally had to tell him a white lie: viz., that I was slightly deaf! He then spoke with great distinctness. The man has a remarkable fund of information especially about the United States, most of which is very accurate. In this respect he resembles President Roosevelt. Radić told me that he is particularly friendly to the Americans whom together with the French, he regards as the emancipators of the Southern Slav. By the term "Slav" he means "Croatian" as he stigmatized the Serbs as a non-Slavonic people of mixed Turkish and Illyrian origin. Radić's whole being seems wrapped up in, only one thing: Croatia, whose autonomy he openly desires, at present under the existing state and undoubtedly in the future as a separate governmental entity. He spoke very highly of King Alexander who, he says, is the best statesman in the Kingdom. This is significant, as the King has always tried to include Radić in every government, evidently not because the King admires Radić's ideas, but because he is too good a politician not to see that Serbian chauvinists must not be allowed for ever to ignore the claims of Croatia which, as has been pointed out in previous despatches, is the constant tendency of Belgrade.

Radić told me that he is trying to split the Slovenes in two by getting as many delegates from Slovenia as possible, in order in the end, to break up the power of the clericals under the leadership of Dr. Korošec who at present has the vast majority of the Slovans in the Skupština. I asked Radić whether this was not a hopeless task at present and he replied "by no means", as the Radić Party in Slovenia is progressing slowly but surely. He expects to get a few more delegates from the clericals at this election. His hatred of the Vatican is very great and he says that the Roman clericals have always been

⁵³¹ Bryan, William Jennings (1860. – 1925.), odvjetnik, političar. Bio je član američke Demokratske stranke. Tri puta neuspješno se natjecao za američkoga predsjednika. Bio je američki državni tajnik (1912. – 1915.), smatran za uspješnoga govornika i pacifista, podupirao interese zemljoradnika. (*The Cambridge Biographical Encyclopedia*, 151).

against Croatia as they opposed Croatian national tendencies of the great Slavophile Bishop Strossmayer⁵³² whose successor Radić believes himself to be.

As we were speaking, the chime of the neighboring Roman Catholic Church began to ring and Radić's small dog simultaneously started to howl.⁵³³ Turning to me with an ironical smile, he said: "You see, even my dog is anti-clerical".

He is really a phenomenon, as he is practically blind and yet will not admit it. When I started to lead him to his place at table, he said; "I can see better than most people, for all my blindness". My host, Švegel, told me that at times Radić seems to see "with a second sight", although both his ocular lenses are degenerated, and he can do little more than distinguish the largest print held close under his eyes.

On the morning of July 14th, all the leaders of the Radić Party met at the house of Dr. Švegel at Bled and, during the conference, the King sent for Radić to come to the summer Palace.

It will be interesting to see how far the prophecies of this erratic and talented leader will be justified by the result of the September elections.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
 Your obedient servant,
 John Dyneley Prince⁵³⁴
 John Dyneley Prince
 American Minister.

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⁵³² Strossmayer, Josip Juraj (1815. – 1905.), đakovački biskup, političar. Zalagao se za ujedinjenje Južnih Slavena u saveznu državu kao protutežu Nijemcima, Talijanima i Mađarima. Nakon Berlinskoga kongresa 1878., nakon što se Srbija našla pod patronatom Austro-Ugarske, a Srbi u Hrvatskoj ostvarili suradnju s Mađarima, zalagao se za federativnu ili trijalistički uređenu Austro-Ugarsku Monarhiju. (*Hrvatska enciklopedija*, sv. 10, 297-298).

⁵³³ Ovo može potvrditi pretpostavku da se ovaj susret održao u Schwegelovom dvorcu Wilsonija (Grimšće) u čijoj se blizini nalazi crkva sv. Andrije.

⁵³⁴ Vlastoručno.