

**110.** 1928., kolovoz 23., Izvješće poslanika Johna Dyneleyja Princea State Departmentu o razgovoru s knezom Pavlom Karađorđevićem o stanju u Kraljevini SHS nakon atentata u kojem je iskazao mišljenje da „kralj ne razumije ekstremnu ozbiljnost trenutne situacije između Srba iz stare kraljevine i gotovo polovice Jugoslavije koja je (...) neizmjereno napeta“ izražavajući svoje „zaprepaštenje kukavičkim ubojstvom koje je 20. lipnja počinio srpsko-crnogorski zastupnik Račić“.

NARA, M 358, R 4, 860H.00/364

[...] <sup>582</sup>

LEGATION OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Belgrade, August 23, 1928.

Despatch No. 482.

CONFIDENTIAL.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report as follows regarding the Yugoslav political situation up to date.

On August 30, 1928, Prince Paul of Serbia, King Alexander's cousin, now residing at Bohinjko Jezero in Slovenia, informed me confidentially that in his opinion the King does not realize the extreme seriousness of the present situation between the Serbs of the old Kingdom and nearly half of Yugoslavia which, as the Department is aware, is extremely tense. Prince Paul mentioned with some feeling his horror at the dastardly murders committed by the Serbo-Montenegrin delegate Račić on June 20, 1928, on Paul Radić, Dr. Basariček and Stephan Radić. He said that he thinks the King has been blinded to the possible consequences which may arise, if the Belgrade Government under Korošec continues to maintain its present uncompromising attitude and refuses to yield an inch towards giving the Croats and Vojvodinans "free elections" to begin with. I was surprised at this attitude from one of the Royal Family here, but Prince Paul's subsequent remarks showed that he felt himself slighted by the powers that be, as he added that he had wished long ago to reside in Zagreb with his family as a constantly present representative of the Karageorgević House and thus keep constantly before Croatia the friendly

<sup>582</sup> Državni pečat.

spectacle of the Serb ruling family who are highly respected, but that he had been absolutely forbidden to do so by the King whose policy had been dictated in this direction by chauvinistic Serb generals such as Hadjić and Pero Živković.<sup>583</sup> The latter person is an infamous character and unfortunately has the ear of the King, possibly through fear, as General Živković was the young lieutenant who while on duty opened the gates of the palace at Belgrade to the murderers of King Alexander Obrenović in 1903.

Prince Paul, an Oxford man himself, went on to praise the culture of the Croats and spoke highly of their moderation during the present crisis when only one Serb editor – Ristović<sup>584</sup> – had been murdered by the Zagreb mob in revenge for Ristović's inflammatory articles in his (Belgrade) paper JEDINSTVO (Union), advocating the murder of the late Stephen Radić. No other effort was made to take a physical revenge on any Serb personage.

Before visiting Prince Paul, I had had an interview at Bled with Mr. Pribičević, the leader of the Independent Democratic Party, whose center is among the Serbs in Croatia and who is working hand in hand with S[t]ephan Radić's Croatian Peasant Party and the federalist adherents of Dr. Trumbić. Mr. Pribičević spoke very frankly when I asked him just what are the demands of the anti-Belgrade group whose representatives have formally withdrawn from the National Skupština since the date of the above mentioned murders. Mr. Pribičević replied that they all were firmly agreed that Yugoslavia as a whole must at once be granted "free elections"; that is, elections not influenced, as the last ones were in September, 1927, by the presence of Serbophile gendarmes who forcibly kept all persons away from the polls who were liable to vote against the interests of the Belgrade "Ring". Mr. Pribičević then said: "You may be sure and, if you care to do so, you may inform your government that neither party – the Croatian Serbs – nor any of the Croat parties will consent to send our representatives to the Skupština until pure and free elections shall have been had." I asked him whether he anticipated the usual dissensions which are liable to occur in Slavonic countries and he replied, smiling somewhat grimly, that the blow directed against the non – "srbijanski" parties (Serbian Serbs) had been too violent to permit the opponents of Belgrade to indulge in mutual local bickering. In Zagreb a day or two later, I tried to set Dr. Maček, the newly elected President of the Croatian Peasant Party and the duly recognized successor of the late Stephan Radić, but he was not in town. I was able, however, to satisfy myself from kindred sources that the Croats were ready to stand as one man together with the Croatian Serb Party of Mr. Pribičević against recognizing either the present Belgrade Government or, in fact, any act of the mutilated Skupština.

<sup>583</sup> Živković, Petar (1879. – 1947.) general, političar. Sudjelovao je u prevratu protiv dinastije Obrenović 1903. Osnovao organizaciju „Bijela ruka“. Za vrijeme kraljeve diktature bio je predsjednikom vlade i ministar unutarnjih poslova (1929. – 1932.), vojske i mornarice (1932. – 1933.), osnivač i predsjednik (1936.) režimske stranke Jugoslavenske nacionalne stranke. Emigrirao s vladom u London u travnju 1941. Umro u Parizu. (*Hrvatska enciklopedija*, sv. 11 Tr-Ž, 840).

<sup>584</sup> Ristović, Vladimir. Ubijen je u atentatu 5. kolovoza 1928. u Zagrebu.

The new American Vice Consul at Zagreb, Mr. Walter Lowrie, who, in the absence of Consul Leslie A. Davis, had witnessed the funeral of Stephan Radić, told me that it was difficult to realise the solemnity and earnestness of the vast concourse which followed their idolised leader to the grave. Over 100,000 people arrayed in the costumes of Croatia, Dalmatia, Bosnia, Montenegro and the Vojvodina – in fact, of all Yugoslavia save Slovenia and Serbia proper, made up a vast parade in which were also representatives of two American-Croatian Sokols (Associations) carrying American flags – the only foreign flags seen that day. No Belgrade representatives were permitted to attend except the King's adjutant. In absolute silence this vast throng marched behind the bier of their murdered chief. Mr. Lowrie said that not even a whisper was heard as they filed by his place – only the clattering of innumerable feet and occasional sobs from the many companies of peasant women who walked with bowed heads in black kerchiefs and green trimmed costumes. By agreement, all the consulates in Zagreb hung out the customary south-European black funeral flags, instead of the national banners at half mast as would usually be done on such an occasion. This was to avoid offending Belgrade.

Shortly after my departure from Zagreb, the Croatian Peasant Party chief, Dr. Maček sent a telegram to the International Parliamentary Convention at Berlin protesting against the action of Belgrade and asserting the nationalism of Croatia – not as a separate state – but as entitled to equal rights in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. This message was followed by two representatives, Mr. Pernar, who had been one of those wounded by the attack of Račić on June 20th in the Belgrade Skupština and Dr. Krnjević.<sup>585</sup> These delegates were not received by the Berlin Convention, nor was any official attention paid to the message. This action which was of course technically correct was anticipated by the Croats, who desired merely to make a public gesture. Mr. Svetoslav Popović<sup>586</sup>, a prominent member of the Pribičević party then at Belgrade, protested against the action of the Croats in sending such a message without first consulting with their real brother Serbs, in Croatia, a fact which was made much, of by the Belgrade Press which insisted that the first great dissension had begun in the enemies' ranks. Almost immediately, however, Mr. Pribičević explained that, while he believed the sending of such a message to Berlin was premature, as it was done before the party of his own group had had time to meet at Ljubljana, he was ready to approve of the Croatian move, as he realized that Dr. Maček thought it would be too late to make his gesture if he awaited the

<sup>585</sup> Krnjević, Juraj (1895. – 1988.), političar. Bio član H(P)SS-a od 1919., glavni tajnik HSS-a (1928.), biran za zastupnika u Ustavotvornoj (1920.) i Narodnoj skupštini (1923., 1925., 1927.), ministar socijalne politike (1925. – 1927.). Nakon uvođenja kraljeve diktature 1929. emigrirao i vratio se nakon uspostave Banovine Hrvatske (1939.). Emigrirao s vladom Kraljevine Jugoslavije u London u travnju 1941. Nakon Drugoga svjetskog rata surađuje s Vladkom Mačekom u organizaciji HSS-a. Nakon Mačekove smrti 1964. bio doživotni predsjednik HSS-a. Napustio jugoslavensku političku orijentaciju i zalagao se za hrvatsku samostalnost. (*HBL*, 8 Kr – Li, 212-212.).

<sup>586</sup> Popović, Svetislav (1882.-?), odvjetnik, političar. Član SDS-a, kasnije Seljačko-demokratske koalicije, zastupnik u Narodnoj skupštini, bio ministar prometa (1924.), šuma i rudnika (1934. – 1935.). (*Ko je ko u Jugoslaviji*, 121).

session at Ljubljana. Both Pribičević and Maček have since made announcements in the Press that there is no quarrel nor factionalism among their respective followers. From personal inquiries, I believe that this is true up to now, although it is, of course impossible to predict that any Slavs will long remain unanimous on any subject.

On August 23, 1928, in the absence of Foreign Minister Marinković, I had an interview with his representative, Mr. Šumenković<sup>587</sup> who is a Serb from the south and violently opposed to the whole northern and western movement, in this respect following the example of the Foreign Minister who, according to the statement to me of Mr. Pribičević, is the greatest protagonist of the old Serb dominion in Belgrade. Mr. Šumenković informed me that the Croat and new Serb coalition was already breaking up and that Pribičević would soon be separated from his present Croatian allies and therefore that the Belgrade government could not yield an inch to the "rebels" who desire a revision of the constitution. Taking down a copy of that document, Mr. Šumenković showed me with a grin that, if it were to be amended by legal methods there must be a majority of two thirds for such amendment. He added with relish that the Croats and their company could not possibly muster a two thirds majority, which is entirely under Serb control and that, therefore, such an effort must be futile. If, however, the Croats and Vojvodina people wished to revise the constitution by illegal methods (scil. by force), the Serbs were "in a strong position."

This brings me to the statement that not long ago a rumor was brought in Zagreb to the office of the Serb Governor, that many Croatian peasants possessed hidden arms in their homes. The Serb authorities at once sent a detachment of three hundred southern gendarmes to Croatia, who very violently made a thorough search of a number of peasant farms destroying considerable private property during their operations. Nothing was found but a few old fashioned muskets and pistols which had been for years in the families and which were triumphantly confiscated. The proposal was actually made in Belgrade to prohibit Croatian peasants from entering Zagreb but this measure was fortunately not adopted.

Mr. Šumenković then begged as net to draw a parallel between the present withdrawal of the Croatian and Croat-Serb representative from the Skupština and the similar resignation of the representative of the Confederate States from the Congress at Washington, which took place just before the American Civil War, because Radić had withdrawn his deputies from the Belgrade Skupština several times before and without result. Šumenković assured me that the present situation would right itself in due time without any concessions being made by the Serbs. I did not remind him that many Belgrade Serbs – among them Mr. Davidović, the rival Democratic leader to Marinković – were

<sup>587</sup> Šumenković, Ilija (1884.-?), pravnik, političar. Bio član SDS-a, zastupnik u Narodnoj skupštini, ministar trgovine i industrije (1924., 1932. – 1934., ), građevina (1927. – 1928.), bez resora (1928. – 1929.), pravde (1932.), prosvjete (1934.). (*Ko je ko u Jugoslaviji*, 149).

beginning to waver about giving in and that more than Radić deputies had withdrawn from the Parliament on this occasion.

Mr. Dard<sup>588</sup>, the French Minister, told me to-day with considerable emphasis that he believes it will be impossible for the Serbs to maintain their stiff attitude without a serious clash, but that he fears that "free elections" would not be feasible in the Balkans as the Serbs must retain their hegemony. This appears to be the French policy if one is to judge by Mr. Dard's reference to the Croats and their allies as "nos ennemis". While Mr. Kennard<sup>589</sup>, the British Minister, is personally intensely serbophile, he is not as violent in his support of Belgrade's present attitude as his French colleague.

The new Italian Minister, Mr. Galli<sup>590</sup>, is openly anti-Serb, of course, and went so far as to inform me the other day that his predecessor, General Bodrero, was little better than a traitor to Italy as he (Bodrero) had "sacrificed his country's interests to his own popularity among the Serb military". I said nothing, but I will add here that many of the Serb military men – especially General Hadjić, the Minister of War – had several times confided to me that they detested Bodrero who was "a snake with a genial manner." No one can say that Mr. Galli has a genial manner, as he has a remarkable resemblance to the great Napoleon and is well aware of the fact. He informed me that he was saying nothing at present as the Belgrade government was doing everything which Italy asked – giving them the Nettuno Conventions, most features of which, Galli stated, Italy had already "wrested from the Serbs", and punishing the rioters who had insulted the Italian Consul at Split, etc.

The Hungarian Minister, Baron Forster<sup>591</sup>, has told me that he has warned his government not to rely too much on the present dissensions between Serbs and Croats as, if Italy raises a finger, they will "come together like a fist". He said he had asked Budapest to warn Rome not to interfere in any way, but to let events take their own course in Yugoslavia.

As to my own opinion of the situation, I am torn two ways. I recognize fully the sufferings of the Croats and Vojvodina people, all of whom possess as much more culture than the Serbian Serbs, as a Massachusetts man is above a Navaho Indian. I purposely choose the Navahos as a rather cultural tribe. Since the Kingdom was formed, Serbia proper has dominated with an iron hand over the fiery Croats and Vojvodina Serbs and over the bovine Slovenes. These non-Serb people, instead of being equals in a great Slav state with their Serb cousins-german, as was the undoubted intention of the original plan for Yugoslavia, have been roughly subordinated to Belgrade rule where everything has been clumsily centralized. The Serbs have made and imposed the taxes, refusing aid for

<sup>588</sup> Dard, Émile (1871. – 1947.), diplomat. Poslanik Francuske u Kraljevini SHS/Jugoslaviji od 1927. do 1932. (Stanislav Sretenović, *Francuska i Kraljevina Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca 1918-1929* (Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2008), 323).

<sup>589</sup> Kennard, Sir Howard William, diplomat. Poslanik Velike Britanije u Kraljevini SHS od 1925. do 1928. (Živko Avramovski, knj. 1, 13).

<sup>590</sup> Galli, Carlo, diplomat. Poslanik Kraljevine Italije u Kraljevini SHS/Jugoslaviji od 1928. do 1935.

<sup>591</sup> Forster, Pál.

the excellent roads left by the Hungarians and Austrians in Croatia and Slovenia. The Serbs have talked of the state as Greater Serbia. The Serbs have forced Catholic populations to learn the awkward and hated Cyrillic alphabet in the schools in Croatia, the Vojvodina and Slovenia. The Serbs have placarded the west country with Cyrillic signs in their own ekavski dialect. How the Serbs have treated the unfortunate minorities of much higher civilization than themselves, the Department has already been informed through my despatches on this subject according to the plan laid down in the Legation's despatch No. 8 of May 20, 1926. (860h.00/284)<sup>592</sup>.

On the other hand, the Serbs, owing to their rough century-long Turkish training, have actually been able to do all these things. The natural inference is, therefore, that they are more capable administrators than all the others whose resistance has hitherto been futile and who have been forced to submit to a far worse condition than they were in before the War. At that time, for example, Croatia had her own local legislature – Sabor – at Zagreb, where she could fulminate against Budapest to her hearts' content – a most excellent safety valve. But the Serb is a MAN – an orientalized man if one will, but a very real and rough person. One like myself who has had an early training among Turks, cannot but rather like him. It is very disarming, for example, to see Minister of War Hadjić get up and dance a pas-seul in his full uniform with creaking boots and jingling spurs to my accompaniment on the piano of a wild cadance. I introduce this touch to show why I cannot “hate” the Serb. I fear, however, that the time may be nearer than seems likely just now, when the Serb pitcher will go once too often to the western well for water to supply parched Belgrade – water which these westerners are becoming each year more and more loath to give.

A single instance of Serb lack of delicacy will illustrate why Belgrade and Zagreb can scarcely be expected ever to harmonize. At a cinema in Belgrade the Radić funeral procession was very well screened, but directly after this impressive pageant had been shown, without the slightest pause, a Harold Lloyd comic film was presented which was received with shouts of laughter; a lack of taste which reminds one of a military band returning from a funeral playing a lively air.

Of course it is evident that the present government with a Slovenian Catholic Priest at its head can be only a makeshift. It will not last long, nor does Belgrade intend it to last long. What will follow who can tell? It is proper to mention here that during my brief sojourn in Slovenia this year, I became sure that the opposition to the local clerical party headed by Korošec, the present Premier, is becoming very strong in the villages. As one peasant remarked to me in his queer mushy dialect: “I am a good Catholic; I love my church and my priest, but I do not like to see my priest at the head of secular affairs where he can be accused of blood guiltiness.” This was à propos of the scurrilous cartoon of Korošec which I forwarded to the Department with Despatch No. 462 of July 13, 1928. (860h.00/359)<sup>593</sup>.

<sup>592</sup> Dopisano rukom.

<sup>593</sup> Dopisano rukopisom.

DOKUMENTI

The situation is very bad just now in this Kingdom. But I will not prophesy, as I am always reminded of the fate of my former Copenhagen colleague, Lord Granville, when he was British Minister at Athens. Just before the great Constantine-Venizelos election, thinking to please Downing Street, he confidently fortold the triumph of Venizelos and (...) <sup>594</sup> it was Tino who came out of the bag the very next morning.

I have the honor to be, Sir,  
Your obedient servant,  
John Dyneley Prince <sup>595</sup>  
John Dyneley Prince.

File No. 800-Quintuplicate.

Copies to American Legations at Budapest and Sofia.

**111.** 1928., kolovoz 23., Izvješće poslanika Johna Dyneleyja Princea State Departmentu od 23. kolovoza 1928. o smrti Stjepana Radića u kojemu se donosi njegova biografija, analiza karaktera, širina utjecaja, kao i ocjena političkoga djelovanja i nasljeđa.

NARA, M 358, R 4, 860h.00/365

[...] <sup>596</sup>

LEGATION OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Belgrade, August 23, 1928.

Despatch No. 483.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to record with regret the fact already unofficially known to the Department, that the Croatian leader Stephan Radić who was wounded on June 20, 1928, by the Serb Montenegrin murderer Račić on the floor of the Skupština at Belgrade at the same time when his two compatriots, his nephew Pavle Radić and Dr. Basariček were instantly killed, finally succumbed to his wounds and died at Zagreb on August 8th.

<sup>594</sup> Nečitko.

<sup>595</sup> Vlastoručno.

<sup>596</sup> Državni pečat.