

112. 1928., listopad 5., Izvješće konzula u Zagrebu Leslieja A. Davisa poslaniku Johnu Dyneleyju Princeu o hrvatskom pogledu na političku situaciju u Kraljevini SHS, padu vlade Velje Vukičevića nakon skupštinskoga atentata, ratifikaciji Nettunskih konvencija, utjecaju smrti Stjepana Radića, „amputaciji zapadnih dijelova Kraljevine“.

NARA, M 358, R 4, 860h.00/370

[...] ⁶⁰⁴

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Belgrade, October 11, 1928.

Despatch No. 507

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to transmit herewith a statement sent to me by Consul Leslie A. Davis, of Zagreb, covering certain aspects of the present Croatian-Slavonian schism from the Belgrade hegemony. This communication Mr. Davis submits in accordance with the desire expressed by the Department in its undated "Comments on Despatches, etc."

It will be observed that the material, cf. pp. 1-7 inclusive, of the accompanying treatise is much the same as that already known to the Department from this Legation's despatches up to date, but especial attention may be given to Mr. Davis's pp. 8-9 regarding "an important change taking place in the internal situation in favor of the (Peasant-Democratic) coalition."

Commenting on these paragraphs, I may remark that the movement to form a national center around Zagreb "County" appears to be not yet crystallized, although I believe that this method of procedure would seem to be the most farreaching from the Croatian point of view. The Belgrade authorities with whom I am in constant touch, aver that, thus far, the Croatians and their associates have been unable to formulate any concrete proposition or even to effect any real bond of union among themselves. At any rate there has occurred no change at all in the deadlock up to the present time.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
John Dyneley Prince ⁶⁰⁵
John Dyneley Prince

⁶⁰⁴ Državni pečat.

⁶⁰⁵ Vlastoručno.

DOKUMENTI

Enclosure:

1. Statement from Consul Leslie A. Davis dated October 5, 1928.

File No. 800-Quintuplicate.

Dodatak br. 1: Izvješće konzula u Zagrebu Leslieja A. Davisa poslaniku Johnu Dyneleyu Princeu.

ENCLOSURE NO. 1 WITH DESPATCH NO. D DATED OCTOBER 11, 1928.

AMERICAN CONSULATE

Zagreb, Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes,
October 5, 1928.

The Honorable

John Dyneley Prince,
American Minister,
Belgrade.

Sir:

I have the honor to submit to the Legation the following report of the political situation in this country, as seen from Zagreb, since the assassination in the Parliament on June 20, 1928, supplementing this Consulate's report of June 27, 1928:

The people of the western Yugoslavia, i. e., those parts which were formerly under the Austro-Hungarian rule, having preserved perfect order and discipline, with the exception of the demonstration in Zagreb during two days immediately after the bloodshed in the Parliament, have expected that the Government would meet the demands of the Peasant-Democratic Coalition, which were reduced to the minimum of satisfaction that the Government should resign and that a Government be elected composed of persons not members of any of the political parties. The Peasant-Democratic Coalition insisted on the elections as the murderer in the Parliament was a member of the Government party.

The Government of Mr. Vukičević did finally resign, but only a fortnight after the murder. It appeared then that the demands of the opposition would be met, in view of the fact that a neutral person, General Hadžić, Minister of War, was entrusted with the mandate to form a neutral non-party Government. For fully three weeks General Hadžić conferred with prominent non-partisan Croatians with a view to having them enter a

non-party Government. All these neutral persons who were consulted declared their readiness to join a neutral Government, but emphasized at the same time that they would not work with the present Parliament, and they considered the elections as the only reasonable solution of the crisis. It appeared for a time that the neutral Government would be formed on this basis, but suddenly General Hadžić returned the mandate to the Crown with the explanation that he could not form the Government because the non-partisan persons consulted demanded the immediate dissolution of the Parliament and immediate elections. These non-partisan persons, and especially Dr. Tartaglia⁶⁰⁶, the mayor of Split, replied to this explanation that they did not demand immediate elections but were prepared to work without the Parliament during the period allowed by the Constitution, i.e., until October 20, 1928, when the existing Parliament would be dissolved and the date of the new elections determined. The reasons, therefore, why General Hadžić returned the mandate do not appear to be quite clear, but it is reported that Dr. Marinković, the present Minister of Foreign Affairs, played an important part in undermining the formation of a neutral Government, as he insisted that the Conventions of Nettuno between Italy and Yugoslavia should be passed immediately. As the non-partisan persons consulted refused to work with the present Parliament it would not have been possible to bring these conventions before it until the new Parliament met some time next year.

The formation of the working Government was then entrusted again to the quadruple Coalition (Serbian Radicals, Serbian Democrats, Slovene Clericals and Bosnian Mussulmans), which raised a storm of indignation in the ranks of the Peasant-Democratic Coalition, especially in view of the fact that this was, with only a change of names and portfolios, to all intents and purposes the same Government as that of Mr. Vukičević under which the murder in the Parliament took place. The fact that the Premiership of the new Government was entrusted to Dr. Korošec, a Catholic priest and leader of the Slovenian Clerical Party, has only tended to increase the existing indignation, as Dr. Korošec has already for two years been a close associate of Mr. Vukičević on the basis of the Bled agreement, as he was the Minister of the Interior in the Government of Mr. Vukičević, as it was with his permission and authority that the police both in Belgrade and Zagreb used firearms against student's demonstrations against the Conventions of Nettuno, and as it was also under his ministry that the murder in the Parliament took place.

The new Government of Dr. Korošec convoked the Parliament for the 1st of August. The Peasant-Democratic Coalition replied to this by withdrawing both from the Belgrade Parliament and from Belgrade and summoned its members to a meeting on the 1st of August, the same day when the Parliament met in Belgrade, in the building where the Croatian provincial Parliament formerly met in the time of Austria-Hungary. At this meeting the Peasant-Democratic Coalition passed a resolution stating that they did not

⁶⁰⁶ Tartaglia, Ivo (1880. – 1949.), političar, publicist. Gradonačelnik Splita (1918. – 1929.), ban Primorske banovine (1929. – 1932.), blizak Vladku Mačeku i politici HSS-u krajem 1930-ih godina. Nakon Drugoga svjetskog rata komunističke vlasti su ga uhitile pod optužbom za podršku diktature kralja Aleksandra, umro u zatvoru. (*Hrvatska enciklopedija*, sv. 10, 644).

recognize the Parliament in Belgrade as being legally constituted, and that they would not recognize as valid any of the laws or amendments that that Parliament might pass, and that they would relentlessly continue the struggle against the hegemony of Belgrade and for equal rights and duties of all part of the country within the historical boundaries. The Peasant-Democratic Coalition especially emphasized that they would not recognize any financial obligations or loans that the Government in Belgrade might assume.

On the same day the two deputies of the Croatian Peasant Federalistic Party (Dr. Trumbić and Dr. Pavelić) joined the club of the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS) and through it became members of the Peasant-Democratic Coalition. Thus, all the Croatian Parties, most of the Serbs from the former Austro-Hungarian provinces, and all the liberally minded Slovenes are now united in the Peasant-Democratic Coalition.

The Conventions of Nettuno, which especially concern Croats, were in the meanwhile brought before the Parliament by the Belgrade Government and passed by the Parliament without consulting the Peasant-Democratic Coalition and against its repeated protests.

While the political situation was developing in the direction stated, the President of the Croatian Peasant Party and the leader of the Croatian people, Mr. Stjepan Radić, was on his deathbed as a consequence of the injuries received in the Parliament in Belgrade, and died on August 8th.

The death of Mr. Radić made a tremendous impression, especially in Croatia, as the people here were conscious of the loss they would have through the death of their great tribune and leader. His funeral was extraordinarily impressive. It is estimated that over 300,000 people participated either directly in the procession or as onlookers, while peasants flocked from all parts of the country, many of them having made on foot over 100 kilometers to reach Zagreb and accompany the dead leader to his last resting place. It is remarkable that in spite of this large number of people perfect order and discipline were maintained and that there were no demonstration or incidents of any kind.

The Government expect and is still expecting disruption of the Peasant-Democratic Coalition after the death of Radić, while the leaders of this Coalition are constantly emphasizing their unanimity.

An incident which was at first interpreted as a sign of discord in the ranks of the Coalition was that the Croatian Peasant Party by itself sent a protest to the meetings of the Interparliamentary Union in Berlin against the delegates of the Parliament in Belgrade being allowed to appear as representatives of the whole country, and especially as representatives of the Croats after the murder on the 20th of June. Dr. Krnjević, secretary of the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS) went personally to Berlin to support the protest of his party. However, when the Peasant-Democratic Coalition met in Ljubljana on the 23rd of August, it approved the protest of the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS), which was sent to save time and before the Coalition had met. The Peasant-Democratic Coalition sent also an identical protest from its plenary meeting, proving thus its full approval of the steps taken earlier by the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS).

The Government threatened to take legal steps both against the Coalition as such on Account of this protest to an international body, but after many discussions it refrained from taking such steps.

In spite of the fact that there has been no demonstrations or conflicts with the authorities, the situation remains as tense as ever. The Peasant-Democratic Coalition has proclaimed social, financial and national boycott of all those who are supporting the present régime. This boycott is now being organized in the provinces, although it is doubtful whether under the modern complex social and economic conditions the boycott can be successfully carried out.

In the series of polemics in the press between the opposing sides, the papers of the Peasant-Democratic Coalition have reported, and the President of the Coalition, Mr. Pribičević, has later confirmed the fact, that the representatives of present Government parties proposed at a conference held at the Court on the eve of the departure of the wounded Mr. Radić from Belgrade, the so-called "amputation", that is, that the army should be withdrawn from the Croatian territory, viz., from Croatia proper without Slavonia and Dalmatia, and that in this way the western parts of the Kingdom should be left undefended to their fate. This proposal is said to have been energetically rejected by Mr. Pribičević, who in his audience with the King spoke in his own name, in the name of Mr. Radić and in the name of the Peasant-Democratic Coalition, and emphasized the fact that the Peasant-Democratic Coalition insists absolutely on the integrity of the national territory, and demands only a complete reorganization both of the administration and of the Government.

Mr. Davidović, the leader of the Government Democrats, has confirmed the fact that the leaders of the Government parties discuss that night the question of the amputation, but only with a view to finding out what Mr. Radić was really aiming at. This declaration of Mr. Davidović is interpreted here as a confirmation of the fact that the Government really did consider the plan of amputation of the western provinces, the more so, as it is said that some correspondents have recently discovered in the Government room in the Parliament a map with the line of amputation already drawn.

A change in the situation was expected from the general meeting of the delegates of the Radical Party from the whole country, who assembled in Belgrade, as there was among these delegates a strong tendency not to favor the Government of Dr. Korošec and against Mr. Vukičević, former Radical President of the Government and the promoter of the coalition with Dr. Korošec. The leaders of the Peasant-Democratic Coalition had at that time assumed an attitude of reserve, but when the Congress of the Radical ended with a compromise between the various radical factions, bringing no change in the coalition, the leaders of the Peasant-Democratic Coalition announced the prolongation of the bitter struggle against the present system of Government.

While the Peasant-Democratic Coalition has thus far achieved no results in its struggle with the Government, an important change is taking place in the internal situation in favor of the Coalition. The County of Zagreb has assumed the leadership in this struggle, and as the Constitution foresees that several counties can associate for definite purposes, the counties outside Serbia proper are looking to Zagreb for leadership and

initiative. Thus, for instance, at the end of September an economic conference of all Croatian, Dalmatian and Bosnia-Herzegovinian counties took place in Zagreb, and the delegates of the various counties agreed on a closest possible economic cooperation with the County of Zagreb. Under the Constitution, the counties can build autonomously roads, railways, ports, etc., etc., and can associate for these purposes. The delegates of the various counties have pointed out that they intend to associate with Zagreb for this purpose and that foreign capital is already showing an interest in their plans. If this materialize it will mean that the counties outside Serbia proper will be able to build their own communications independently of the Belgrade Government.

It is generally considered both by the public and in the circles of the Peasant-Democratic Coalition that direct discussions between the Peasant-Democratic Coalition and the Government parties are impossible, and that the situation will remain as tense as it now is as long as the King does not use his initiative which is granted to him under the Constitution, as an authority outside party politics and quarrels, and that nothing will satisfy the Peasant-Democratic Coalition except a thorough revision of the Constitution on the basis of federation or the largest autonomies, which will only tend to strengthen the State, as it will mean a satisfaction to all those opposed to the present administration and Government, or, as the opposition names it, the misadministration and misgovernment from Belgrade.

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

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113. 1928., listopad 18., Izvješće poslanika Johna Dyneleyja Princea State Departmentu o razgovoru s kraljem Aleksandrom Karađorđevićem o stanju u Kraljevini SHS o kojem je rekao da ga ono „previše ne brine (...) jer je hrvatski karakter vrlo sličan Rusima i Poljacima. To će reći, Hrvati su vrlo promjenjivi i svadljivi između sebe, te zbog toga vjerujem da neće biti sposobni postići dogovor oko bilo kakve jedinstvene politike“.

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LEGATION OF THE
 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Belgrade, October 12, 1928.

⁶⁰⁷ Državni pečat.