

## ON THE CONCEALMENT OF ANTE PAVELIĆ IN AUSTRIA IN 1945-1946

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Based on available American and British documents and thus-far unconsulted papers left behind by Ante Pavelić, the leader of the Independent State of Croatia, the author analyzes Pavelić's concealment in Austria and the role of Western agencies therein. Some of the relevant literature indicates that the Catholic Church and Western agencies took part in Pavelić's concealment. The author concludes that all such conjecture lacks any foundation in the available sources.

**Key words:** Ante Pavelić, Western allies, extradition, Yugoslavia

Historiography is generally familiar with the fate of the army of the Independent State of Croatia and the civilian population which, at the end of the war in early May 1945, withdrew toward Austria in fear of advancing communist forces, with the aim of surrendering to the Allies. These people were extradited to the Yugoslav army with the explanation that they would be treated in compliance with the international laws of war. As it transpired, this "treatment" was one of the most tragic episodes in the history of the Croatian nation, known under the terms Bleiburg and the Way of the Cross.<sup>1</sup> A portion of these refugees who managed to elude this fate ended up in Allied refugee camps, mostly in Italy, Austria and Germany.<sup>2</sup> However, even in these camps, besides

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Martina GRAHEK RAVANČIĆ, *Bleiburg i Križni put u historiografiji, publicistici i memoarskoj literaturi*, Master's thesis, Department of History, University of Zagreb, 2006, pp. 3-9 and the sources and literature cited therein.

<sup>2</sup> For more, see Berislav JANDRIĆ, "Saveznički izbjeglički logori. Počeci otpora hrvatske političke emigracije komunističkom režimu u domovini (logor Fermo)", 1945. - *Razdjelnica hrvatske povijesti, Zbornik radova sa znanstvenog skupa održanog u Hrvatskom institutu za povijest u Zagrebu 5. i 6. svibnja 2005.*, Zagreb 2006, 305-322. and *Ibid.*, "Prijeponi saveznika oko zahtjeva Jugoslavije za izručenjem osumnjičenih za ratne zločine iz savezničkih izbjegličkih logora u Italiji 1945. - 1947.", *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 38/2, Zagreb 2006, 457-498.

all of the other troubles, it was necessary to evade Yugoslavia's manhunts to ensure the extradition of "war criminals";<sup>3</sup> and the most fortunate made their way to transoceanic countries or remained in Western Europe.

However, with reference to the movements and concealment of Ante Pavelić, the former leader (*poglavnik*) of the Independent State of Croatia (hereinafter referred to by its better-known Croatian acronym NDH), from his flight from Croatia until his arrival in Argentina, the relevant historiography still contains many lacunae. The question of the role played by Western intelligence agencies in Pavelić's concealment after he fled Croatia has also become topical.<sup>4</sup> Often such assertions are even politically motivated, e.g. in order to compromise the Catholic Church. Naturally, all of this must be placed within the context of deteriorating post-war relations between Yugoslavia and the West.<sup>5</sup>

The intention of this text is to contribute to the illumination of certain controversies surrounding the concealment of Ante Pavelić in Austria, based on available American and British documents and the papers of Ante Pavelić himself held by his daughter Višnja in Madrid which have thus far not undergone scholarly scrutiny. By analyzing these sources, I shall endeavour to reconstruct Pavelić's movements and sojourn in Austria, and the relevance of the information on Pavelić's movements which the West had at its disposal.

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According to historian Jere Jareb, "Dr. Ante Pavelić left Zagreb on Sunday afternoon, 6 May 1945 and then spent the night of 6-7 May at the Novi Dvori estate".<sup>6</sup> His immediate entourage included his son, Lt. Velimir Pavelić, Ivan

<sup>3</sup> Already at the Moscow Conference, Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin concluded that in case all of those who "join the ranks of the guilty (...) the Allied powers will pursue them to the uttermost ends of the earth and will deliver them to their accusers in order that justice may be done." ("Ratni zločinci u službi imperijalista", *Trideset dana*, Zagreb, January 1948, 67). The same conclusions were reiterated at Yalta and Potsdam.

<sup>4</sup> "It can be stated with certainty that the Americans attempted to exploit the Ustasha emigrants to obtain useful military data, while the Ustasha leadership attempted to exploit common anti-communism and fear of the expansion of the USSR's zone of influence to renew the NDH and destroy Yugoslavia" (Zdenko RADELIĆ, *Križari-gerila u Hrvatskoj 1945.-1950.*, Zagreb: Dom i svijet, 2002, 51).

<sup>5</sup> Despite a series of incidents (knocking down two American aircraft and sinking a British destroyer in 1946, the Trieste crisis, etc.), British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin believed that relations with Yugoslavia had to be set on "firm foundations". When speaking of Yugoslav war crimes, both sides had sound reasons for their actions: "All involved parties nurtured misunderstandings and all were responsible for the failure to administer justice". (LANE J. Ann, "Putting Britain Right with Tito: The Displaced Persons Question in Anglo-Yugoslav Relations 1946-7", *European History Quarterly*, vol. 22., London, Newbury Park and New Delhi 1992. 219-220, and more in Katarina SPEHNJAK, *Britanski pogled na Hrvatsku 1945.-1948.*, Zagreb, 2006, 146-152).

<sup>6</sup> Jere JAREB, "Sudbina posljednje hrvatske državne vlade i hrvatskih ministara iz Drugog svjetskog rata (Prilog za studiju o hrvatskoj državnoj vladi)", *Hrvatska revija*, Munich-Barcelona, June 1978, year XXVIII, vol. 2 (110), p. 222. Vice Admiral Nikola Steinfel, who retreated

Ico Kirin, the commander of the Security Service of the *Poglavnik's* Bodyguard Corps (Croatian acronym: PTS) and Erih Lisak, the former director general of the General Directorate of Public Safety and Order. Together with the newly-arrived high-ranking officers, the members of the 'Supreme Command', and a PTS unit, Pavelić left Novi Dvori on Monday evening, 7 May, and set off for Austria. By nightfall he was in Rogaška Slatina, in Slovenia, whence he arrived at 9 p.m. On the next day, "the final meeting of the *Poglavnik's* Supreme Command was held in Rogaška Slatina".<sup>7</sup>

According to Lisak's statement made during a post-war investigation, the session was "held in light of news from a German general that the German armed forces, against all expectations, would capitulate on the Eastern front as well, i.e., to the Russians, and for us this meant that the German forces still in Slovenia would surrender to the Partisans with their arms. Since our forces withdrawing into Slovenia were counting on the German army and its arms, our units were put in a very difficult position (...) The *poglavnik* was visibly concerned – Lisak stated – over the fate of the people, both soldiers and civilians, who had voluntarily departed from the country with the army. He emphasized this at several points."<sup>8</sup>

In a post-war investigation, the Third Reich's Ambassador Siegfried Kasche testified that General Juppe established contact with General Löhr, commander of the South-east and German army Group E withdrawing from the Balkans, in Rogaška Slatina on 8 May,<sup>9</sup> and learned of the German capitulation. When asked about the fate of the NDH armed forces under Löhr's command, Pavelić told Kasche "that he had no contact with his units, but that he agreed that his units surrender like the Germans, while he would decide on his own fate for himself".<sup>10</sup> The meeting in Rogaška Slatina was "cut short by dramatic outbursts by certain Croatian officers", and it was decided that the NDH would unconditionally surrender to the Allies, while its armed forces "were supposed to withdraw to the north-west toward Ljubljana, in order to avoid being cap-

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with the 'Supreme Command', later testified in an investigation: "It was assumed that Germany would continue to hold out and that it intended to mount resistance in an eastward direction, while letting events in the west develop on their own. There was the conviction that with the help of the Anglo-American Western Allies some sort of agreement would be reached with the Soviet Union in the sense of resolving foreign policy issues. This view was generally upheld by the Germans. It was believed that there would be a conflict among the Allies, and the entire plan was based on this" (B. KRIZMAN, *Pavelić u bjekstvu*, Zagreb: Globus, 1986, 133-134).

<sup>7</sup> Jere JAREB, "Sudbina posljednje hrvatske državne vlade...", 222.

<sup>8</sup> B. KRIZMAN, *Pavelić u bjekstvu*, 13.

<sup>9</sup> In the thus-far unpublished fourth volume of his memoirs (*Doživljaji*), written after the war, Pavelić wrote of Löhr: "However, this general, instead of a friend, proved to be our enemy, particularly an enemy of the regime and the Ustasha movement" (Pavelić papers (hereinafter: OP), Madrid, "Doživljaji IV", chapter "Urota proti NDH-Sastanak s Hitlerom-Put na istočno bojište", manuscript, 2.)

<sup>10</sup> B. KRIZMAN, *Ustaše i Treći Reich*, vol. 2, Zagreb: Globus, 1983, 338.

tured by Russian or Tito's forces, and they were supposed to surrender to British or American troops".<sup>11</sup> After General Löhr transferred command of the NDH armed forces to Pavelić, on the next day he appointed General Vjekoslav Luburić the commander of withdrawing Croatian forces.<sup>12</sup>

During the investigation, Perčević stated that after Löhr announced the capitulation, Pavelić was "enraged, and wanted to speak to Löhr personally and ask him about something that had been arranged with the Germans, that together with the Croatian army they defend the Samobor-Ludbreg line while the Anglo-Americans come in from the rear, and then they could surrender together. Later I learned from another officer that Löhr had refused to speak to the *Poglavnik* personally and sent him a message to have Croatian units withdraw to the northern bank of the Drava River, in Austrian territory, if he does not wish to surrender to the People's Liberation Army".<sup>13</sup>

After the conclusion of the meeting in Rogaška Slatina, on "8 May the *Poglavnik's* procession set off through Maribor, with the objective of reaching Wolfsberg and Klagenfurt in Carinthia".<sup>14</sup> With occasion brief exchanges of gunfire with the Partisans, they continued toward the Austrian border. After crossing into Austria, Pavelić changed into civilian attire and then entered another automobile and separated from the remainder of his accompaniment.<sup>15</sup> Lisak testified that Pavelić's group moved onward toward Judenburg, although "when we arrived there, we heard that there was no longer an Anglo-American commission there, and that it had moved to Salzburg".<sup>16</sup> On the way to Salzburg, in front of Trieben, they learned that there were Soviet units there, and that the latter were also moving in from the direction of Judenburg.<sup>17</sup> They abandoned their automobiles, split into two groups, donned rucksacks and

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 340.

<sup>12</sup> J. JAREB, *Pola stoljeća hrvatske politike*, reprint, Zagreb: Institut za suvremenu povijest, 1995, 116, note 156.

<sup>13</sup> B. KRIZMAN, *Pavelić u bjekstvu*, 32. Pavelić's son Velimir wrote that his father "in Rogaška Slatina after the meeting of the main staff (...) literally said: 'Just imagine what Löhr told me: I'm surrendering to the Partisans, and you do what you want'". (OP, file-folder containing notes written by Velimir Pavelić).

<sup>14</sup> Jere JAREB, "Sudbina posljednje hrvatske državne vlade...", 222.

<sup>15</sup> According to Lisak, this occurred in Spielfeld, while according to Kren it was in Leibnitz (B. KRIZMAN, *Pavelić u bjekstvu*, 13-14). These differing versions were probably due to the fact that these two towns are only roughly 10 km from each other.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>17</sup> In an entry dated 10 May, Bracanović wrote: "We arrived in Judenburg at 5 a.m. and here we intend to turn ourselves over to the Americans. An urgent order to move came: the Americans are withdrawing from Judenburg, and the Russians are entering. We hurry toward Trieben. (...) The Russians are in Trieben. We are trapped! On both sides, from Judenburg and Trieben, the Russians are headed toward us. (...) The *Poglavnik* proposes the forest." Bracanović dated to crossing of the Tauern Alps on 12 May (Dolores BRACANOVIĆ, "S Poglavnikom na povlačenju", *Hrvatska – Memorial Edition in Honour of the Unforgettable Poglavnik*, year XIII, no. 4-7 (291-294), Buenos Aires 10 April 1960, 18).

entered a nearby forest. Lisak, Kirin, Pavelić's son Velimir, Viktor Rebernišak and Dolores Bracanović remained with Pavelić at the time.<sup>18</sup>

Lisak claimed that a military map Velimir Pavelić had with him helped them determine the way to Salzburg. (Does this mean that they set off without a map?) They moved "mainly through the forest, avoiding larger settlements, for we did not know if there were already Russian contingents in these places. We spent nights in lonely rural cottages, mostly in haylofts, pretending as though we were accustomed to such travel, to avoid any suspicion of our identities. We ate by exchanging food for cigarettes, which the peasants were glad to take".<sup>19</sup> From passers-by, they learned "about the zones that had been established between the Anglo-Americans and Russians. That's how we learned that the closest access to the Anglo-American zone led across the Enns River at Untergrinning, where we practically – after about 6 days of moving in the Russian zone,<sup>20</sup> passed into the Anglo-American zone. (...) Finally in Anglo-American territory, we moved onward along the main road. In case we were stopped by the Anglo-Americans, we each had personal identity documents indicating civilian occupations. This sufficed for the moment, because the security organs were generally concerned with military personnel, mainly seeking and hunting former members of SS units. The roads were thus once more full of various civilians, who were workers returning from Germany and Austria, so that we were also able to move in the same way without attracting any particular attention".<sup>21</sup>

After the crossing of the Alps, the American sentries, as Kirin stated, "checked their papers and let them through".<sup>22</sup> This should not be surprising,

<sup>18</sup> "Thus, it was agreed that this larger group should split up, with civilians on one side and military persons on the other. (...) We were still convinced that our withdrawal was only temporary" (Interview with Dolores Bracanović conducted by Tomislav Jonjić, published in *Politički zatvorenik*, May 1997, no. 62, 11). Kirin testified that when crossing the Alps they came across "a small group of refugees accompanied by the engineer Klaudio Fiedler, an official in the main county prefecture. He was retained by the *poglavnik*, to travel with us, since he was wearing hunting attire, and besides this he spoke German in the local dialect, so that he could help us secure food, seek nightly accommodations and otherwise find our way about. So our group grew to seven..." (B. KRIZMAN, *Pavelić u bjekstvu*, 20.)

<sup>19</sup> B. KRIZMAN, *Pavelić u bjekstvu*, 20.

<sup>20</sup> The Soviet presence in this territory was temporary, for the division of Austria in Allied zones was carried out in early July 1945, and the Soviet zone covered the north-east section of the country.

<sup>21</sup> B. KRIZMAN, *Pavelić u bjekstvu*, 20-21.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 20. Bracanović also noted different experiences when passing through American checkpoints. "13 May – (...) We finally see a bridge, and the Americans approaching the Russians. We exploited that moment to cross the bridge". For 16 May 1945, she stated: "God helped us again. The guard left his post for a moment and entered the hut there, and we passed by quickly". On "17 May – Once more we passed by an American sentry, who checked everyone's papers, except for the *Poglavnik* and myself, for we were the last in the group" (Dolores BRACANOVIĆ, "S

since the American sentries very likely did not know who Ante Pavelić was, to say nothing of his appearance. Having arrived in the U.S. zone, they found the rest of Pavelić's family, who had been staying in Leingreith, on the road to Radstadt.<sup>23</sup>

Namely, according to Višnja Pavelić, she, her mother and sister left Zagreb on 12 December 1944 and travelled to Semmering, near Vienna.<sup>24</sup> The arrangement of accommodations was "handled by the Germans, officials of the Reich's Foreign Ministry, for all persons transferred from Croatia and other countries. There were various nationalities, Bulgarians, Romanians, Macedonian Bulgarians, Hungarians, etc. So as the Bolshevik army approached German territory, they moved us farther into Austria". As to how Pavelić managed to find his family, Višnja Pavelić testified that they succeeded "at the last moment, just before the capitulation of the German Reich, to send a message to Zagreb with the last courier, that we were accommodated near Salzburg called by the generally name Langreith-Hintersee". Together with the Pavelić family in the house in Leingreith "there were the persons who came with us to Austria: Mrs. Balen, the wife of Minister Josip Balen, Mrs. Dora Werner, the daughter of Zagreb Mayor Ivan Werner, Merica Pavelić, the daughter of the engineer Ante Pavelić, two housemaids who had been with us since 1931, when we were émigrés in Italy, the head driver Štef Babić from the Prefecture, honorary battleship Captain Crisomali and Dr. Vladimir Vranjković". Immediately upon arriving, "we all reported to the designated authorities by name. The first visit of the American military CIC (Counterintelligence Corps) to Langreith was conducted by an American captain, named Messing. He held a very long conversation with us".<sup>25</sup>

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Poglavnikom na povlačenju", 18).

<sup>23</sup> "Crossing the River Enns, we were in the American zone and we thus moved more securely toward Radstadt (...) At that moment two women appeared, and the *poglavnik* rose, approached them and they discussed something. When he returned, he told us that he asked them if they were any Croatian refugees nearby, and that he had learned that approximately 2 km back from where we were, there was a hunting lodge in which a somewhat well-to-do Croatian family was living. At this, the *poglavnik* sent his son and Lisak to see who lived in this hunting lodge. After a short time, Lisak returned with the news that the *poglavnik's* family was there, i.e., his wife and their daughters (Višnja and Mirjana) as well as the wife of Minister Balen with their young nephew" (B. KRIZMAN, *Pavelić u bjekstvu*, 20).

<sup>24</sup> At the end of 1944, Foreign Minister Mehmed Alajbegović sent a telegram to the NDH delegation in Berlin: "The government's wish is that first distinguished national activists, youths, the wounded and women and children be sent to the Reich, while the government with their staffs and high state officials will go last" (B. KRIZMAN, *Ustaše i Treći Reich*, 200).

<sup>25</sup> "As the first we were accommodated behind Semmering, Altausee-Badausee-Salzkammergut, and then in the vicinity of Salzburg, on a side road leading to Salzburg, in the Langreith-Hintersee section in a lonely hunting lodge in the forest, where Austrian refugee families who fled before the Allied bombing of Salzburg were accommodated. (...) We later learned that the owner of the hunting lodge in the forest, where the refugee families from Salzburg and our entire group had been accommodated, was Count Nostiz, a Czech..." (OP, text by Višnja Pavelić entitled "Austrija I.", 1-3).

Bracanović set 18 May as the date of arrival of Pavelić's group in Leingreith. She stated that on 20 May, General Moškov and Major Šarić came "on orders", and that Pavelić "sent a message to Dr. Maček via Moškov, that he work for Croatia's interests". On 1 June Pavelić "reported to the American authorities".<sup>26</sup> In a post-war inquest, Slavko Kvaternik stated that Crisomali told him that "he had reported everyone in the house, including Dr. Pavelić, in writing with all names to the American authorities".<sup>27</sup> Thus, Pavelić was reported under his real name the first time, although this only lasted for a few days.

After they heard the news of extradition of a part of the NDH government "over the radio" on 6 June,<sup>28</sup> "we had no other option than to begin thinking about how and where to remove the *Poglavnik* and find him another residence. Fortunately, a friend of the local Austrians, Springet, (...) understood the matter and offered to find another residence for the *Poglavnik* in the surrounding hills".<sup>29</sup> Historian Bogdan Krizman also confirmed that after "the English had extradited a part of the NDH government to the Yugoslav authorities", Pavelić "disappeared from Leingreith in mid-June 1945. With an active sense of conspiracy, all trace of Pavelić was lost".<sup>30</sup>

Pavelić went to his other hiding place by automobile "with an Austrian friend<sup>31</sup> and our faithful Angelina" (the housemaid with them since the 'first' exile in Italy). On the way they were stopped by "an American MP [military

<sup>26</sup> D. BRACANOVIĆ, "S Poglavnikom na povlačenju", p. 19. "While the *Poglavnik* was still in Langreith in the beginning, Moškov came through an established contact from the English zone with his 'trusted' man, an officer, Šarić. This meeting near the Hintersee near Langreith, was also attended only by our sister". Višnja Pavelić dated the report of all of the new arrivals "to the American military authorities" to "the second day of their arrival". Assuming that this is correct, then according to the date of the group's arrival cited by Bracanović, this would have been 19 May (OP, text by Višnja Pavelić entitled "Austrija I.").

<sup>27</sup> B. KRIZMAN, *Pavelić u bjekstvu*, 125.

<sup>28</sup> Pavelić did not withdraw together with the NDH government, which had retreated through Krapina, Rogaska Slatina, Maribor and Klagenfurt and then to Turracher Höhe, where, based on an agreement with the Germans, accommodations had been arranged in three hotels for Prime Minister Nikola Mandić, the members of the government with "their families, senior clerks and auxiliary staff". On 14 May, the members of the government who were at Turracher Höhe reported to the command of the British army, which arrested them and turned them over the Yugoslav Partisans several days later. Most were condemned to death in early June (For more: B. KRIZMAN, *Pavelić u bjekstvu*, 23-26, note 22-23 and J. JAREB, *Zlato i novac NDH*, 249-250, note 1).

<sup>29</sup> OP, text by Višnja Pavelić entitled "Austrija I.", p. 3. According to Bracanović, Pavelić "early in the morning on 7 June left" Langreith (D. BRACANOVIĆ, "S Poglavnikom na povlačenju", 19).

<sup>30</sup> Krizman wrote about Pavelić's flight from Langreith, mentioning Pavelić's ties "with several priests and monks", his concealment "in individual Austrian monasteries", and additionally, Pavelić "also, as needed, wore clerical robes to appear convincing as a 'pious monk'". Krizman did not cite any source for this assertion (B. KRIZMAN, *Pavelić u bjekstvu*, 146).

<sup>31</sup> Pavelić's younger daughter Mirjana stated: "We came upon an Austrian who saved papa. For money" ("Ante Pavelić potpuno je uspio!", *Globus*, 22 May 1992, no. 76, 32).

police] patrol” and then taken in for questioning. After examining their documents, which were forged,<sup>32</sup> they seized their vehicle and let them go. The three continued their journey through a forest to Tiefbrunnau “to the house of a farmer where father was accommodated”. During their stay in Austria, both Pavelić and his wife were dressed as typical Austrians. The family regularly maintained contacts with Pavelić in his new residence; Višnja and her sister walked “over the surrounding hills 6-7 hours there and back”. Pavelić remained in Tiefbrunnau “until the month of September”, and “only his family and the late Prof. Dolores Bracanović knew” about his stay.<sup>33</sup>

Several days after Pavelić left Langreith, “a military delegation came from Salzburg, among them a Serb wearing an American military uniform, and they interrogated the families and others present in order to strong-arm us into revealing the *Poglavnik*’s whereabouts.”<sup>34</sup>

Given that the owner of the house in which Pavelić’s family had been staying up to that point returned and demanded that all refugees vacate it, Captain Messing arranged to accommodate the family “in the village of St. Gilgen<sup>35</sup> on the Wolfgangsee, and in boarding-house named the Vila Helene<sup>36</sup> – owned by a Mrs. Ellmauer, which was two houses down from the headquarters of the American military police, the CIC, obviously in order to keep better tabs on us”. After accommodation in St. Gilgen, the family also “received” a new CIC captain – Johnson.<sup>37</sup> In their first interview, “he asked if we had a photograph

<sup>32</sup> “The township of St. Gilgen received the lorry of our embassy from Vienna and the consulate in Graz, and they had everything necessary to make documents, which we also used, made out to various names, while in exile” (OP, text by Višnja Pavelić entitled “Austrija I.”, p. 8). There could not have been an “embassy” in Vienna, for embassies could only be located where a head of state or a national government had its seat. Extraordinary circumstances (such as the spring of 1945 in Berlin) could have led to a de facto transfer, but formally the Croatian embassy to the Third Reich was and remained in Berlin.

In the memorandum “Ustasha Activity in Land Salzburg”, which was compiled in early October 1945 by U.S. counterintelligence operatives, it is noted that the Croatian Red Cross was issuing forged documents and travel passes (National Archives and Records Administration (Records of the Army Staff (Records Group 319), Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) Collection, Records of the Investigative Records Repository (IRR), IRR Case Files: Impersonal Files 1940-1976, Box 62, File ZF015107, Ustasha Project, 2 Folders, 1945-1949 (hereinafter: NARA, RG 319, Box 62, Ustasha Project).

<sup>33</sup> OP, text by Višnja Pavelić entitled “Nekoliko podataka iz ‘45.”, 1. and *Razgovor sa Dolores Bracanović*, 13.

<sup>34</sup> OP, text by Višnja Pavelić entitled “Austrija I.”, 6. and BRACANOVIĆ, “S Poglavnikom na povlačenju”, 19.

<sup>35</sup> Slavko Kvaternik had heard that the Pavelić family was accommodated in “a hotel on the lake at the village of St. Gilgen and that they were interned there by the American authorities, but they could move about freely”. (B. KRIZMAN, *Pavelić u bjekstvu*, 126).

<sup>36</sup> “Mrs. Turina was placed in a ground-floor room with her daughter, while Minister Turina was lying ill in the hospital” (OP, text by Višnja Pavelić entitled “Austrija I.”, 7).

<sup>37</sup> A certain officer named Johnson is also mentioned in the literature, but as a colonel (Guy

of father”, and after “he inspected it carefully, he said: ‘Well, I could recognize that man quickly and very easily!’”<sup>38</sup> However, Pavelić would, according to his own account, pass right next to the CIC building when changing hideouts, and obviously went unrecognized and unnoticed.

For some time now, the relevant literature, both Croatian and foreign, has featured theories on Pavelić’s deals and arrangements with both British and U.S. intelligence agencies.<sup>39</sup> However, evidence more substantial than statements by individuals<sup>40</sup> and intelligence documents of questionable veracity have thus far not been found.<sup>41</sup> According to the Pavelić family, the CIC officer, Captain Messing, was “well-mannered, as opposed to the savage behaviour of the army, which looted wherever it could”.<sup>42</sup> However, “the Americans knew where Pavelić’s daughter was staying, for she claimed that she and her family had to report in regularly. If the Americans had wanted to locate Pavelić’s hideout, they could have simply followed his daughter on the numerous occasions when she visited him in the forests next to Saint Gilgen”. According to this same author, “this suggests that they probably already knew his location and they left him alone”.<sup>43</sup>

The Yugoslav side did not have accurate data “on Pavelić and his movements in Austria”, except to the extent “that was necessary for the restitution

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WALTERS, *Lov na zločince*, Zagreb: Naklada Ljevak, 2009, 118). I could not establish as to whether this was the same person, and whether Višnja Pavelić incorrectly cited his rank.

<sup>38</sup> OP, text by Višnja Pavelić entitled “Austrija I”, 7.

<sup>39</sup> The best known are two popular history books: Mark AARONS, John LOFTUS, *Unholy Trinity. The Vatican, the Nazis, and the Swiss Banks*, New York, 1998; Uki GONI, *The Real Odessa. How Peron Brought the Nazi War Criminals to Argentina*, London and New York, 2002.

<sup>40</sup> Moškov had heard “that Pavelić had contacts with the Americans and that an American major visited him constantly”. When he asked Pavelić about this, the latter “laughed and said that just a little earlier he – meaning the American – had just left” (B. KRIZMAN, *Pavelić u bjekstvu*, 120). Slavko Kvaternik had also heard “that at the time prior to Pavelić’s disappearance, no uniformed Americans came to the manor, rather only a single civilian whom he did not know and who only spoke English, and it was striking that this civilian visited Pavelić a day before his disappearance” (Ibid., 125).

<sup>41</sup> “Pavelić’s relations with the British have been the subject of many conspiracy theories, of which some may indeed contain a grain of truth. Certainly, the Russians, Yugoslavs and Americans believed that Pavelić had concluded some kind of agreement with the British, who gave him some freedom or held him secretly as a captive” (Guy WALTERS, *Lov na zločince*, 116-117).

<sup>42</sup> “Thus in St. Gilgen they came to Mrs. Košak who, as their commander told me, directed them to us, saying, ‘Go to Pavelić family, and you’ll find more than we have!’ Truly about two dozen American wild men came with their commander and ransacked the garage of the hunting lodge, where all the residents – refugees – had their suitcases or other things, and began to take whatever they found. (...) They took a car, *pour souvenir* – as a memento, as they put it, but mostly they were interested in cameras, radio sets, hunting rifles and certain other items that were the property of the house’s owner. They also took two radio sets and my Leica camera” (OP, text by Višnja Pavelić entitled “Austrija I”, 6).

<sup>43</sup> Guy WALTERS, *Lov na zločince*, 119.

delegation to more easily locate the hidden property (treasures) which Pavelić took with him in his flight across the border to Austria". They learned "that Pavelić and his entourage were lingering in the American zone, near a salt mine".<sup>44</sup> According to one account, in mid-May "a sudden change transpired in the bearing of the British command staffs. Obviously the orders from their superiors were such. Not only did not want to extradite Quislings to us, they also began to exert pressure on us in every way and call on us to depart from Carinthia".<sup>45</sup> The conclusion that "the majority of the Ustasha and Ustasha leadership together with Pavelić at their head had withdrawn to the British occupation zone in May 1945" also indicates that the Yugoslav side did not have accurate data on Pavelić's hideaway, for only several days after arriving in Austria, he had crossed into the American zone.<sup>46</sup>

During this time, the Yugoslav government pressured London and Washington to secure Pavelić's extradition. The British ambassador to Belgrade, Ralph Skrine Stevenson, in a cable to the Foreign Office dated 20 June 1945, proposed "that all Yugoslavs now in Allied hands" for whom there is irrefutable evidence of guilt, should be handed over as soon as possible. He noted that Pavelić was among those for whom there was irrefutable evidence. The ambassador stated: "We surely have already sufficient evidence ourselves against such people both to make supply of further evidence by Yugoslav Government unnecessary and to satisfy ourselves that their request is genuine. Delay on our part would arouse deepest suspicion of our motives. The positive advantage of handing them over now as opposed to later on". The ambassador stressed that "such a step would be well received in Yugoslavia" and would "divert public attention at least temporarily from Mihailovic and Macek".<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Krizman cited the testimony of Ivan Kreft, who was the chief of "our restitution delegation attached to the Mission, later the Representative Office", and alleged: "Somewhat later, after Pavelić had fled from Austria to Italy, the Americans (Major Weber) called Kreft and asked him to ascertain together with them whether the property was stored in twenty large travel cases of Yugoslav origin. These cases were hidden in one of the trenches of an abandoned salt mine near Salzburg. The Americans were well aware that this was a part of Pavelić's luggage, but they reported it only several months after Pavelić had left Austria and took up residence in Italy, and this was – Kreft alleged – to mislead our investigators. However, our Commission led by Col. Kovačević knew well that Pavelić was no longer in Austria since October 1946" (B. KRIZMAN, *Pavelić u bjekstvu*, 146-147).

<sup>45</sup> "This was the end of cooperation. Every day the pressure became greater and we were in a difficult position. The British began to behave aggressively and callously" (*Ibid.*, 148).

<sup>46</sup> "Nonetheless, it was not difficult to conclude that the British intelligence service was apprised, that it had its interests in the matter, and probably some arrangements with individuals. (...) The interests of the allies in the anti-Hitler coalition came into conflict in Austrian territory. Austria, and Vienna in particular, were the hubs at which their intelligence agencies, and others, were intensively active. Incursions and counter-incursions, double agents, provocations, kidnappings, murders and similar 'receptions' blossomed like nowhere before at that time" (*Ibid.*, 148).

<sup>47</sup> The National Archive: Public Record Office (hereinafter: TNA: PRO), London, Foreign Office: Political Departments: General Correspondence from 1906-1966 (hereinafter: FO 371) 48890, R 10676, 1.

In early July 1945, the Yugoslav ambassador in London, Ljubo Leontić, informed the Foreign Office that Pavelić “has been made prisoner by the troops of Field Marshal Alexander, and that he is now in the part of Austria under the control of the British Army”. The Yugoslav ambassador “begs the Foreign Office to take the necessary steps in order that the Military Authorities in Austria may hand Dr. Pavelic over to the Yugoslav Authorities as soon as possible”.<sup>48</sup> On this line, on 12 July the Foreign Office sent a query to its political representative in Caserta, Philip Broad, whether Pavelić “should properly be considered as having been captured and/or as being detained by Allied (British-American) forces or by purely British force”.<sup>49</sup> Ambassador Leontić received a response on 9 October: “Every effort is being made to discover the present whereabouts of Dr. Pavelic”.<sup>50</sup> U.S. agencies were also seeking “any information” on Pavelić’s whereabouts in early July.<sup>51</sup>

The U.S. State Department also gave its opinion on these demands. On 16 July 1945, the British ambassador in Washington, D.C., Edward Frederick Lindley Wood, informed the Foreign Office as follows: “State Department says that up to the present they have received no (repeat no) information from Caserta to indicate that the Allies are holding any of the persons named in Yugoslav Government’s note”.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, the State Department issued instructions to its representatives in Caserta “that if any of these persons fall into Allied hands they should not (repeat not) at present, be turned over to Yugoslav Government although State Department think they will eventually have to be handed over. Before they would agree to this, State Department would wish (a) to know the charges upon which the Yugoslav Government’s claim is based and (b) to be satisfied that the accused would receive a reasonably

<sup>48</sup> TNA: PRO, FO 371/48890, R 11462. On 7 July Ambassador Stevenson announced that “in today’s press” the demand of the State Commission on Investigation into the Crimes of the Occupiers and their Accessories was published, in which they first and foremost sought Pavelić’s extradition, and claimed “that Pavelic is in the hands of the Allies” (TNA: PRO, FO 371/48890, R 11586). On 2 July, Stevenson also informed London of 46 death sentences in Zagreb, of which 33 persons were members of the Ustasha movement, 7 were Catholic priests, and 6 priests of the Croatian Orthodox Church (TNA: PRO, FO 371/48890, R 11688).

<sup>49</sup> “We are of course in any case consulting the United States Government about the action which we propos(e) to take; but we also wish to know whether the eventual repl(y) to the Yugoslav Government should be made by ourselves alon(e) or jointly by ourselves and the Americans” (TNA: PRO, FO 371/48890).

<sup>50</sup> TNA: PRO, FO 371/48892, R 16234., 157.

<sup>51</sup> NARA, RG 319, Entry 134 B, box 173, Apprehension of Croat Quislings, 5 July 1945. (I owe a debt of gratitude to Jure Krišto, Ph.D., for making these documents available.) A former U.S. intelligence operative stated that: “The American intelligence agencies in Austria were not in the business of catching Yugoslav war criminals. Their job was gathering current intelligence on the Soviet armies, not exacting retribution for past crimes” (James V. MILANO – Patrick BROGAN, *Soldiers, Spies and the Rat Line. America’s Undeclared War Against the Soviets*, Washington-London, 1995, 53).

<sup>52</sup> TNA: PRO, FO 371/ 48891, R 12114.

fair trial. State Department would like to have a further exchange of views with you on this subject if and when any of the persons named in Yugoslav Government's note fall into Allied hands".<sup>53</sup> The Foreign Office responded on 22 July 1945 that it has no news on Pavelić, but that it agrees with the Yugoslav government's demand that in the case of Pavelić and Nedić there was a "prima facie case of guilt" [underlined in original] for their extradition. It stressed that they "were overt collaborators with the enemy and their case is therefore of a different nature from that of Mihailović".<sup>54</sup> However, the British were aware of the type of trial those extradited would receive in Yugoslavia, so they adopted a pragmatic stance. They responded to the State Department: "It is in fact unlikely that any Yugoslav trial would be considered satisfactory by British or American standards, and even if verbal assurances are given in general terms they are not likely to be worth much. Any attempt to put forth detailed requirements on our part as regards trial will be much resented and it seems to us probably wiser not to attempt anything of this kind".<sup>55</sup>

According to a report submitted by Marion H. Scott, the Deputy Regional Public Safety Officer with the Allied Military Government, on 29 July, Ante Pavelić's whereabouts were known, however a precise location was not specified.<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, in a reported dated 5 November 1945, he stated: "Subject is believed to be in custody in the United States Zone, but his exact location is unknown".<sup>57</sup> In his second report of 26 July, Scott proposed that he or some other Allied officer should cooperate with Tito's representative to locate the fugitives, especially Pavelić. He saw this as all the more important because Tito thought "that the 'Western Allies' have no interest whatever in his enemies". He and agent Heda Stern dedicated special effort to investigating the Salzburg zone because there were leads which interested them with regard to their investigation.<sup>58</sup>

A senior agent from the Allied Command for the Rome region, Gono Morena, sent a query to the Counterintelligence Corps on 8 August 1945 to ascertain whether Pavelić was in Rome and possibly in the Institute of St. Jerome.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> TNA: PRO, FO 371/ 48891, R 1214., 2.

<sup>55</sup> "There is in our opinion no doubt that all three puppet Yugoslav administrations – the Serbian Government, the Croatian Government and the Provincial Administration of Ljubljana – were active accessories in the enemy's war effort over a long period; and we consider that any Minister or leading personality of those administrations is rightly regarded by the Yugoslav Government as a traitor to the Yugoslav State. We should therefore consider evidence of an individual in our custody having participated in any of those three administrations as constituting a satisfactory prima facie case" (*Ibid.*, 2).

<sup>56</sup> NARA, RG 319, Box 62, Ustasha Project, Marion H. Scott AFHQ, 26 July 1945.

<sup>57</sup> NARA, RG 319, Entry 134B, box 173.

<sup>58</sup> NARA, RG 319, Box 62, Ustasha Project, 1946. Recently this intelligence duo's intriguing post-war search for Pavelić received some scholarly attention (Jure KRIŠTO, "Zagrebačka Židovka Heda Stern u lovu na Pavelića", *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 42/1, 2010, 55-72).

If Pavelić were indeed in Rome, he ordered his arrest.<sup>59</sup> The CIC responded on 25 August 1945, and sent him a newspaper article which claimed that Pavelić had been arrested a day earlier in Austria, and awaiting extradition to Yugoslavia. In this regard, he was advised that the Pavelić case was deemed closed.<sup>60</sup>

Unverified information and other rumours continued to serve as the sole leads.<sup>61</sup> Thus, on 27 August 1945, Ambassador Stevenson asked the Foreign Office the basis for the BBC's report "that the Allied High Command in Austria has decided to hand over Pavelic to the Yugoslav authorities". He also asked: "Did Pavelic fall into Soviet hands?"<sup>62</sup> The response from London on 31 August was that the "report was broadcast by the Russian-controlled Berlin radio on August 22<sup>nd</sup> and quoted by the B.B.C. on August 23<sup>rd</sup>". In case "Pavelic has not yet been found in the territory of Allied Force Headquarters, I suggest that His Majesty's Ambassador in Moscow should enquire whether he is in Soviet custody".<sup>63</sup> Clark Kerr, the ambassador in Moscow, responded negatively to this query on 14 December.<sup>64</sup> The Yugoslav ambassador repeated the demand for Pavelić's extradition on 30 August, claiming that the British were holding him in captivity in Klagenfurt.<sup>65</sup> Even the investigation conducted by the Allied command in Caserta did not succeed. So on 9 September 1945 it notified the Foreign Office that "there is no trace of Pavelic in this theatre as yet".<sup>66</sup> The response from London on 12 September advised them to verify the latest rumours: "There is a story current among the Yugoslav Royalist officers interned in Germany that Pavelic is disguised as a monk in a monastery at Klagenfurt. This might conceivably be worth investigating".<sup>67</sup>

<sup>59</sup> NARA, RG 319, Entry 134 B, box 173.

<sup>60</sup> NARA, RG 319, Entry 134 B, box 173, 26 August 1945 and the memorandum "Pavelić, Ante" of 25 August 1945.

<sup>61</sup> "The CIC's agents themselves could be very unprofessional in their intelligence gathering. Richard West, a member of a British intelligence unit in Trieste in 1949, recalled that he had met a CIC agent who had been dismissed because his superiors found out how he performed his duties. 'He got hold of some Albanian newspapers', West said, 'and gave them to some Albanian who translated some utter foolishness. He would submit the translation as being from 'his' man in Tirana. That was when I understood how silly most intelligence agencies were' (Guy WALTERS, *Lov na zločince*, 118) "...and today we know that the Allied agencies did not have much better evidence on their hideouts, so they fell prey to various rumours and unverified information" (J. KRIŠTO, "Zagrebačka Židovka Heda Stern u lovu na Pavelića", 60).

<sup>62</sup> TNA: PRO, FO 371/ 48892, R 14477.

<sup>63</sup> "We have a right to ask since Yugoslav Government believe he is in our custody and have requested his surrender" (TNA: PRO, FO 371/ 48892, R 14477). The Foreign Office assessed that the BBC's report "is incorrect", stating "We are still waiting for the State Dept. to make up their minds on Pavelic" (TNA: PRO, FO 371/ 48868, R 14297, 26. VIII. 1945. Handwritten note on the file's folder).

<sup>64</sup> TNA: PRO, FO 371/ 48894, R 21039.

<sup>65</sup> TNA: PRO, FO 371/48892, R 14839.

<sup>66</sup> TNA: PRO, FO 371/ 48892, R 14477.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

Ambassador Halifax announced on 22 September: “The United States Government considers that the Yugoslav Government have made out a prima facie [underlined in original] case against Pavelic”. Additionally, the “Anglo-American authorities are continuing their efforts to ascertain the present whereabouts of Pavelic”.<sup>68</sup> The command in Caserta responded to another Foreign Office query on Croatian quislings on 1 October 1945 that Allied forces “have not yet succeeded in tracing these men”.<sup>69</sup> It should be borne in mind that according to the intelligence data of the time, from August 1945 to January 1946, thus at the time when Pavelić was hiding in Austria, the number of displaced persons (DPs) in Austria ranged from 400,000 to slightly above 300,000.<sup>70</sup>

A year later, Pavelić himself described his stay in Austria, in Tiefbrunnau. American units in Salzburg and its environs “passed through daily in their jeeps”, although “they were not overly concerned with identifying the refugees who were in the villages in a rather high number. These were mostly Volksdeutscher who had fled from Romania. Only once did they ask at the neighbouring house whether there were any Croatian refugees, to which the Volksdeutscher responded negatively, not knowing about me, because I was considered Austrian”. Not long afterward, “when the Austrian local authorities were once more allowed to organize their own gendarmerie, Austrian gendarmes came to the village very often”. Thus, on one occasion, a “gendarme sergeant from Faistenau” questioned Pavelić’s “peasant who owned the house, about who I was and where I was from?” After this Pavelić changed his residence.<sup>71</sup> According to his own account, he travelled along the railway tracks “from Bad Ischl to Salzburg, even passing the house in which the local American secret military police, the CIC, was accommodated, and arrived at AICH, where a

<sup>68</sup> TNA: PRO, FO 371/48892, R 16234, 1 and 2.

<sup>69</sup> TNA: PRO, FO 371/ 48891, R 12813.

<sup>70</sup> “The displaced person problem in Austria is more complex. Over four-fifths of the displaced persons in Austria are in the American zone, and the majority represent German minorities from south-eastern Europe” (*Intelligence review*, no.1, 14 February 1946. Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, D.C., p. 53 and tables on p. 54).

<sup>71</sup> “One day a gendarme sergeant from Faistenau came and asked the house owner farmer who I was and where I was from. He told him I was an Austrian from Linz. The gendarme sergeant was not satisfied with this response, and he wished to speak with me personally. I was outside the house at the time, strolling along a small stream ... (...) I approached the house (...) but waited, looking in from close by, to see how long the gendarme was willing to wait – and meet me. When an hour passed, the gendarme said he had waited for nothing. I finally decided to approach and then enter the house. There I learned from the owner/farmer, that the gendarme wanted to know who I was and what I was doing in the village, but since he could no longer wait, I left a message for me to come to Faistenau in the afternoon – a place only a few kilometres away, where the gendarme barracks were. I had no intention of going there, rather I gathered a few of my things, put them in a rucksack and told the peasant I was going to Faistenau. However, instead of Faistenau (...) I went through a forest (...) to St. Gilgen on the St. Wolfgang Lake” (OP, “Austrija – svibanj 1945-srpanj 1946.”, 1).

well-known Macedonian family named Zilev was staying”.<sup>72</sup> Commenting on his flight from Tiefbrunnau, Pavelić said that he thought that “in the time it takes Austrian gendarmes to ascertain whether I’m an Austrian or a Croat while already in custody, I’d have been identified ten times by Yugoslav communist spies, who were spread throughout Austrian territory, and then seized and taken to Tito’s paradise, all under the noses of the Austrian gendarmes and American military police. Honouring that old Latin saying, *periculum in mora, salvus in fuga*, I left before that Austrian gendarme could return...” He stayed with the Zilev family “for several weeks, while an Austrian friend obtained a new identity card under a different name, making it possible to stay at another place. This other place was called Obertrum, a small, pleasant village near the shores of the lake Mattsee, in the same province, about 20 kilometres from the city of Salzburg. The village had about thirty houses, all five hundred to a thousand meters from each other, all farming estates”. Here as well, he was accommodated “in a farmer’s house, about a kilometre from the village, where I was able to stay in peace until the month of April in the next year (1946). I helped the farmer do his work, especially in his workshop, in which he had an electric circular saw all carpentry tools, as well as a smithy, which all Austrian farmers had to fix their farm machinery. With time I became acquainted with all of the peasants whom I met on their fields, and especially every Sunday in the parish church. I had a reputation as a specialized worker, who spent a great deal of time in Trieste, but then returned to Austria – as a result of the new situation that ensued after the war”.<sup>73</sup>

By all indications, Pavelić considered his departure from Croatia temporary.<sup>74</sup> His closest friends, Lisak and Kirin, left Leingreith before Pavelić, thus prior to 7 June, with the intent of returning to Croatia. According to statements made during an investigation, Lisak spoke of this in advance with Pavelić, who “responded that we had to be patient and wait for a time, to see how circumstances would unfold”.<sup>75</sup> Kirin struck the same tone in the investigation, stating that he believed “that if Lisak had in fact met with the *Poglavnik*, he certainly

<sup>72</sup> “Zilev, a Bulgarian-Macedonian politician, a member of IMRO, an older associate on the émigré scene. We were all accommodated in the Austrian section near Wolfgangsee and we had joint contacts. Zilev had died during the withdrawal from Macedonia” (*Ibid.*, 2, note by Višnja Pavelić).

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>74</sup> Moškov testified that Pavelić told him in Austria “that Yugoslavia as it had been certainly will certainly never be established again. (...) Our last exile lasted 12 years, if this one lasts 12 months it will be long. (...) We also spoke about how they (the Supreme Command) had left without any reason whatsoever. He told there was no longer any point in waiting due to the approach of the Russians” (B. KRIZMAN, *Pavelić u bjekstvu*, 120).

<sup>75</sup> “I did not speak of this again with the *poglavnik*, but I decided to take the first opportunity to go to the homeland at my own risk to operate in line with Ustasha principles” (B. KRIZMAN, *Pavelić u bjekstvu*, 21). On the activities of so-called ‘Crusader’ groups, of which the best known was Kavran’s, see: Z. RADELIĆ, *Križari...*, 115-239.

could not have received any task, because in that general lack of information even the *Poglavnik* could not have been apprised of the situation, neither abroad nor especially at home, so I believe that as a result not even Lisak could have been given any special mission”.<sup>76</sup> Pavelić and Moškov met in Austria several times. During one of these meetings, Pavelić – according to Moškov – said “he was even prepared to return to Croatia (...) but that everything had to have ‘a head and a tail’”.<sup>77</sup> Otherwise, the two of them parted ways, for after a time Moškov refused to comply with Pavelić on the matter of use of the gold that had been taken from Croatia in May 1945.<sup>78</sup>

The manhunt for Pavelić by Western agencies and the Yugoslav demands continued. A U.S. report dated 2 October 1945 contained the claim that “a substantial group of Ustasha are still at large in the St. Gilgen area and are currently being investigated”. It is assumed that they had contacts with Ustasha in

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<sup>76</sup> B. KRIZMAN, *Pavelić u bjekstvu*, 125.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 123. Namely, according to Moškov, among the refugees in Austria, “news was spreading that the entire territory was in battle against the Partisans” (*Ibid.*, 126-127). With reference to the extradition of Croatian soldiers and civilians by the British, Pavelić told him “that he had already been informed of this, but that this certainly had to have been done by some English commander at his own discretion. (...) He once more stressed that any possibility that they were handed over by the English” (*Ibid.*, 120). “I remember well, Katja and I waited for Kavran in Linz on Easter itself. He learned of my whereabouts from the *Poglavnik*’s family, and he came to the *Poglavnik* in order to obtain permission to conduct a campaign of sending volunteers to the Homeland. Božo told me that the *Poglavnik* expressly opposed such actions. As a seasoned illegal operative and revolutionary, he warned Kavran that circumstances in both the Homeland and in the world were not such as to offer any kind of prospects for success, and even though Božo was troubled by the *Poglavnik*’s stance, he could not be dissuaded” (*Razgovor sa Dolores Bracanović*, 13).

<sup>78</sup> In this exhaustive study, Jere Jareb ascertained that on 7 May 1945, approximately 290 kg of gold, a large sum of foreign currency, the large stamp collection of the Postal Directorate and a small quantity of jewels were removed from the Croatian State Bank in two lorries and the automobile of Minister Mirko Puk. The fate of the lorry carrying the stamp collection in 18 boxes after stopping along a road in Austria remains unknown. Puk’s automobile carrying 2 cases of gold and a high quantity of foreign currency, was attacked by the Partisans, who probably seized these valuables. However, the other lorry contained 12 cases of gold, foreign currency and a small quantity of jewels. The Ustasha distributed the contents of one case of gold among themselves, while the remainder was stored in a Franciscan monastery in Wolfsberg. Thereafter, the priest Krunoslav Draganović took a smaller quantity of gold with him to Rome, while the remainder was buried near Radstadt. Božidar Kavran and Lovro Sušić were aware of this, while the gold was under the care of Frane Šarić who, together with Moškov and Major Marko Čavić, was hiding at another location near Radstadt, and they refused to turn the gold over to Pavelić. It is known that Moškov gave Kavran 1,037 gold coins at Pavelić’s behest; however, the fate of the remaining gold remains unknown to this day (J. JAREB, *Zlato i novac NDH ...*, 348-356). In Carinthia, Draganović learned “that 400 kg of gold from the Croatian State Bank and a rucksack full of foreign paper currency and other valuables are hidden in Wolfsberg”. He took 40 kg with the permission of Sušić and Milas (For more see Miroslav AKMADŽA, *Krunoslav Draganović – Iskazi komunističkim istražiteljima*, Zagreb, 2010, 109-113).

the British zone in Spital, Klagenfurt and Villach.<sup>79</sup> At the end of October, an agreement was confirmed between the State Department and Foreign Office that Pavelić “should be turned over to the Yugoslavs”.<sup>80</sup> On 10 December 1945, Ambassador Leontić wrote to British Foreign Secretary Ernest Blevin about the erroneous interpretation of the procedures surrounding the extradition of war criminals,<sup>81</sup> to which he received a response on 19 December that they had “sent further instructions to His Majesty’s Representatives in Italy and in the British zones in Germany and Austria, to ensure that all possible steps are taken to discover the whereabouts of those traitors”. Ultimately, the ambassador’s attention was turned “to a leading article published in *Borba* on 14<sup>th</sup> December, alleging that the Allied Governments had failed to hand over Nedic and Pavelic to the Yugoslav authorities in spite of the fact that the Yugoslav authorities had given precise information about the town and street in which these men are living”. Leontić was told that “every allegation which has been made concerning the whereabouts of these two men has been carefully investigated” but that all had proven “to be entirely without foundation”. The British government “will be glad to follow up any new clues which may in fact lead to the arrest”.<sup>82</sup> On 17 December, in response to all information received from the Yugoslav side, the Foreign Office asserted: “Pavelic is not (1) Disguised as a monk in a monastery near Klagenfurt. (2) Living in a villa at Klagenfurt. (3) In Soviet hands. We have told the Yugoslavs that we are most willing to hand him over to them when we find him, and the military authorities in Austria will have to continue their search. (...) There is now a letter from Vienna saying that he cannot be found”<sup>83</sup>

Just how zealous and persistent the Yugoslav Embassy was in sending queries about Pavelić is reflected in a comment made by John Colville from the Foreign Office’s Southern Department, recorded on 22 December: “As the Yugoslav Embassy bombard us with notes about Pavelic etc. I suggest a little counter-battery work”.<sup>84</sup> At the end of December 1945, they noted: “We have repeatedly told the Yugoslavs that we have not got Nedic or Pavelic, but they cannot get out of their heads the idea that we are harbouring these men for some hidden reactionary purpose of our own”.<sup>85</sup> After everything, probably due

<sup>79</sup> NARA, RG319, Box 62, Ustasha Project, 2.

<sup>80</sup> TNA: PRO, WO 204/2194, 31 and 41A.

<sup>81</sup> TNA: PRO, FO 371/ 48894, R 20950.

<sup>82</sup> TNA: PRO, FO 371/ 48894, R 20967. These same allegations from the daily newspaper *Politika* were cited in the article “Belgrade seeks puppets”, *The New York Times*, 16 December 1945, 2.

<sup>83</sup> TNA: PRO, FO 371/ 48894, R 21039. Hand-written note on the file’s jacket. Stevenson reported that Belgrade daily *Borba* of 15 December reported “in a forceful article demanding the return of war criminals”, while the “plea that British authorities could not determine the whereabouts of Nedic and Pavelic despite exact information”, was assessed as “thoroughly unconvincing” (TNA: PRO, FO 371/ 48894, R 21281).

<sup>84</sup> TNA: PRO, FO 371/ 48894, R 21193. Hand-written note on the file’s jacket.

<sup>85</sup> On 20 December 1945, the Foreign Office, after being visited by the Yugoslav ambassador

to the fact that they were unable to convince Belgrade that they had nothing to do with Pavelić's concealment,<sup>86</sup> the Foreign Office asserted on 24 December that Pavelić and Nedić were "probably hiding in the French or American zones in Austria."<sup>87</sup> With reference to the knowledge of Allied officials in the field, the following is interesting: "The Political Director in Carinthia, who was asked whether Pavlevitch was in Klagenfurt, did not know who Pavlevitch was!"<sup>88</sup>

According to the testimony of Dinko Šakić, he and Jakov Džal prepared the next hideaways for Pavelić. These were Wolfnitz and Pustriz in Carinthia (British occupation zone). They rented a room in the village of Pustriz, and presented Pavelić as a father-in-law in Vienna.<sup>89</sup> After Pavelić's arrival, in March 1946, Šakić moved to Pustriz, while Džal and Pavelić resided in Wolfnitz.<sup>90</sup> As a reserve residence for Pavelić, Šakić arranged a room in the municipality of Granitztal with the Baumgartner family, and registered under the name Petar Andoš. Pavelić used this room when anyone visited him and if his first residence became threatened.<sup>91</sup> According to the same source, Pavelić stayed in Wolfnitz for six months.<sup>92</sup> After intensification of the "combing" of Steiermark and then Carinthia by Yugoslav agents "with an English blessing and accompanied by Austrian local bureaucrats", preparations for Pavelić's transfer to Italy began.<sup>93</sup>

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who primarily mentioned the case of extradition of Pavelić and Nedić, among other things, responded that "at some time the policy of reconciliation must prevail" in Yugoslavia (TNA: PRO, FO 371/ 48894, R 21443., 139).

<sup>86</sup> Stalin himself accused Churchill, after the latter's "Iron Curtain" speech, of intending to return Pavelić and Mihailović to authority in Yugoslavia: "Churchill wants to assure us that these gentlemen who came from the Fascist circles will establish and guarantee complete democracy. Such is the democracy of Churchill" ("Stalin Brands Churchill 'Warmonger and Liar'", *Los Angeles Times*, 14 March 1946, 1).

<sup>87</sup> TNA: PRO, FO 371/ 48894, R 21409.

<sup>88</sup> TNA: PRO, FO 371/55252, Confidential – Report of the Labour members of the parliamentary delegation to Austria, January 8<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> 1946, 7.

<sup>89</sup> Dinko ŠAKIĆ, *S poglavnikom u Alpama*, Split 2001, 80-81.

<sup>90</sup> According to Višnja Pavelić, this was "a peasant house owned by a certain Kanika (not in any house of Šakić, as he boasted and wrote among his lies), in which Minister Lovro Sušić resided before my father" ("Put mog otca Ante Pavelića od Austrije i Italije do Argentine i Španjolske", *Hrvatski list*, 25 December 2008, 27-28). Radelić stated that Pavelić "in March 1946, judging by the UDBa's claims, transferred to the English zone with the help of American intelligence operatives. He stayed with Col. Jakov Džal..." (Z. RADELIĆ, *Križari...*, 48). During his stay in Wolfnitz in July 1946, Pavelić himself compiled the leaflet on "The NDH in the forests on 10 April 1946". It was compiled so as to create the impression that it was published by the 'Crusaders' in Croatia. The most important thing was to convince émigrés that there was a Crusader movement". (Z. RADELIĆ, *Križari...*, 65).

<sup>91</sup> For more, D. ŠAKIĆ, *S poglavnikom u Alpama*, 78-105.

<sup>92</sup> This information was also confirmed by Višnja Pavelić: "For fifteen (15) months, my father stayed in Austria..." ("Put mog otca Ante Pavelića od Austrije i Italije do Argentine i Španjolske", 27).

<sup>93</sup> D. ŠAKIĆ, *S poglavnikom u Alpama*, 95.

France Hočevār<sup>94</sup> described the operations of the Military Mission of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, in which he was "charged with political coordination of all Yugoslav missions operating at that time in Austria". Despite obstructions by "the American military police", which "violated the diplomatic immunity of our delegation and blockaded the premises of the military mission", they secured "a rather good overview of the situation and the activities of emigrants".<sup>95</sup> As to the search for Pavelić, Hočevār stated: "In the late spring of 1946 these comrades obtained sound insight into Ustasha courier ties, particularly those who maintained contacts between the Ustasha in the British and American occupation zones. (...) We ascertained that Pavelić was hiding in monasteries and parish rectories and often changing his hideouts. He had no immediate accompaniment, and he kept in touch with his associates by means of couriers. His family lived separately from him, at that time also in the American zone. (...) Finally we managed to determine Pavelić's current hiding place. The final preparations had been made, and even a day for his arrest had been set. But after this we learned that at the last moment Pavelić eluded arrest, changed his hideout and then quickly left Austria".<sup>96</sup> For Yugoslavia had a delegation in the British occupation zone, but only under the condition that it investigate non-Yugoslavs.<sup>97</sup> However, it would be naïve to believe that the Yugoslav side fully adhered to this agreement. In mid-May 1946, the Americans announced that they had no objections to the Yugoslav side conducting a search for Pavelić in the American occupation zone in Austria.<sup>98</sup> However, at that time Pavelić was no longer in the American zone, but rather in the British zone.

On 21 May 1946, the U.S. Counterintelligence Corps received information from a confidential informant, who heard that Pavelić was "in good health" in a hotel in St. Gilgen, and that his "wife and daughter are also living in St. Gilgen".<sup>99</sup> On the other hand, also in May 1946, rumours were spreading that

<sup>94</sup> "Our Military Mission was active in Austria seated in Vienna during the initial phase of the Allied occupation, headed by Col. Vladimir Vodopivec, having Dr. France Hočevār as his political advisor..." (B. KRIZMAN, *Pavelić u bjekstvu*, 146).

<sup>95</sup> "This excess by the American military police, which arose because we allegedly impinged upon the interests of the American secret police among the Ustasha, only proved to us that there were certain underground ties which meant that we had to be more alert, and more penetrating" (*Ibid.*, 148-149).

<sup>96</sup> "This was done in such a rush that he left his family where they were until then, and he did not even manage to take his bags. I later gave these to the Americans. (...) I cannot ascertain with any certainty the reasons why the operation to arrest Pavelić did not succeed. The manner of his sudden flight from his hideout and his departure from Austria nonetheless indicate that he had to have been warned that we were closing in on him and that Austria was no longer safe for him" (*Ibid.*, 149).

<sup>97</sup> TNA: PRO, FO 945/342.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> NARA, RG319, Box 62, Ustasha Project, Ustasha activities in St. Gilgen, Vienna City, 21 May 1946.

Pavelić was in Rome under the protection of the Vatican and that he “*frequenti segreti rapporti con Monsignor Montini*”.<sup>100</sup>

## Conclusion

The hundreds of thousands of Croats who attempted to find refuge from advancing communist forces with the Western Allies included the former leader of the Independent State of Croatia, Ante Pavelić. His concealment after his flight from Croatia and his later departure to Argentina have been the subject of many memoirs, popular histories and historiographic texts. Many of them suggest that the Catholic Church or Western intelligence agencies played a crucial role in rescuing Pavelić. This author has concluded that most of these texts are politically motivated, while the original sources indicate that not one of these theories can be proven. Moreover, it would appear that the most likely hypothesis is that Pavelić, with his wealth of conspiratorial experience gained during his first interwar exile in Italy, adroitly exploited the existing chaos after the close of the war and managed to hide in Austria without any significant assistance from either the Catholic Church or Western intelligence agencies.

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<sup>100</sup> NARA, RG 319, Entry 134 B, box 173, Pro-memoria, 10 May 1946. Giovanni Battista Montini was at the time a cardinal and high official of the Secretariat of State, and he later became Pope Paul VI.

## Über Verstecken von Ante Pavelić in Österreich 1945-1946

### Zusammenfassung

In diesem Artikel analysiert der Autor auf Grund von zugänglichen amerikanischen und britischen Dokumenten sowie dem bis jetzt nicht genutzten Nachlass des Führers des Unabhängigen Staates Kroatien (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska, NDH) Ante Pavelić sein Verstecken in Österreich, beziehungsweise eventuelle Rolle der westlichen Geheimdienste dabei. Sein Verstecken nach der Flucht aus Kroatien und seine spätere Abreise nach Argentinien wurden in mehreren Memoiren, populär-geschichtlichen und historiographischen Texten thematisiert. In vielen von ihnen wird behauptet, dass die Katholische Kirche und die westlichen Geheimdienste entscheidende Rolle beim Verstecken von Pavelić spielten. Der Verfasser stellte fest, dass diese Texte politisch motiviert sind und dass originelle Quellen diese Behauptung nicht bestätigen. Vielmehr wäre, nach Meinung des Autors, die wahrscheinlichste Hypothese, dass Pavelić seine reiche konspirative Erfahrung aus dem Exil in Italien in der Zwischenkriegszeit im Chaos nach dem Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges ausnützte und es ihm gelang, sich ohne irgendwelche bedeutende Hilfe von der Katholischen Kirche und von westlichen Geheimdiensten in Österreich zu verstecken.

