

FROM THE BRITISH POLITICS TOWARDS THE
CROATIAN PEASANT PARTY AT THE END OF 1943
AND THE BEGINNING OF 1944

Summary

The author describes the three missions sent abroad by the Croatian Peasant Party leaders at the end of 1943 and the beginning of 1944 in order to establish the contacts with the representatives of that party in London as well as with the Western allies mostly British. Those were the missions led by dr Tomo Jančiković, Zenon Adamič and colonel Ivan Babić. In historiography these missions have been only generally described so far. On the ground of relatively extensive and available material in Yugoslavia and abroad (Public Record Office in London) Boban made a detailed analysis of the genesis and results of those missions. To understand the background and purpose of the missions the author discussed essential characteristics of the British politics towards Yugoslavia after 1941 as well as those of the Croatian Peasant Party leadership, especially those regarding the aims and policy towards foreign countries. It is the author's opinion that in the British politics towards Yugoslavia in the course of the Second World War two main periods should be distinguished, the first from April 1941 until the spring of 1943 and the second from the spring 1943 until the end of the war. In the first period the British politics was directed mostly towards Serbia and Draža Mihajlović's Chetniks. In this period the British politicians were less interested in Croatia and the Croatian Peasant Party. In the second period when the allies after defeating German and Italian troupes in North Africa were planning their further aims the British interest for the West Balkans and thus for Croatia and the Croatian Peasant Party was increased.

Discussing the basic characteristics of the Croatian Peasant Party politics the author comes to a conclusion that in the spring of 1943 there occurred intensive disturbances in this party, wider internal differences and more and more followers of the party turned their sympathy to the People's Liberation Movement. At the same time there were repeated attempts of the Ustashi regime to achieve a compromise with the Croatian Peasant Party.

After a comprehensive description of T. Jančiković's activities on the area of Crikvenica and Dubrovnik the author speaks about going abroad, to Bari, where he came under the control of the British who did not give him a permission to meet the Croatian Peasant Party representatives in London. He was allowed to go there only after I. Šubašić's request when he became President of Yugoslav Refugee Government.

Zenon Adamić, a Yugoslav Navy officer, came to Carigrad in December 1943 introducing himself to the Americans and the British as a delegate of the Croatian Peasant Party and the Slovenian Labour and Peasant Party for Croatia. He claimed to have a message of the Croatian Peasant Party leaders from the country for Šubašić, and that he wants to examine the plans and intentions of the allies towards Yugoslavia so that the Croatian Peasant Party leaders could decide on their policy. Showing no trust in Adamić's mission and respecting the People's Liberation Movement attitudes the British authorities did not allow Adamić to come in contact with the Croatian Peasant Party representatives abroad, while Šubašić did not show any interest to meet him.

Domobran colonel Ivan Babić, before leaving for Bari where he flew by plane, had been collaborating with the Croatian Peasant Party leaders in the country on whose behalf he had talks with the People's Liberation Movement representatives. In Bari he introduced himself as a delegate of Domobran officers group and the Croatian Peasant Party leadership. British authorities distrusted him while Šubašić asked them to meet Babić. Their meeting took place immediately after Šubašić's return from Vis in June 1944. Šubašić informed the British that Babić could be used only if Marshal Tito agreed.

After giving the account of the three emissaries activities and of the British attitude towards them, the author writes about the fundamental characteristics of the British politics towards Yugoslavia after the Teheran Conference when the British became even more orientated towards the People's Liberation Movement keeping their distance from Draža Mihailović more openly and trying to secure the monarchy position in Yugoslavia by the policy of compromise. According to the author's opinion the Croatian Peasant Movement leadership faced with the British policy of compromise towards the People's Liberation Movement asked in this politics a possibility to realize the post-war aims of the party, which was also the main purpose of Jančiković's Adamić's and Babić's mission. But the British did not show a deeper interest in those missions since the position of the Croatian Peasant Party leaders was of no greater use in their military efforts, and their supporting the politics of that party would make their understanding and arrangements with the People's Liberation Movement more difficult.