

## THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SLOVENES, CROATS AND SERBS IN ZAGREB (1918 / 1919)

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On the basis of archival material and relevant scholarly and journalistic literature the author has reconstructed the emergence, activity and disappearance of the National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs (NV SHS) in Zagreb during the last months of the existence of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, the short-lived State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs and the first weeks of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (from March 1918 to January 1919). The basic characteristic of the National Council of SHS and its self-proclaimed state was its intentional temporariness. The aim of the National Council was not the destruction of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and the creation of an independent state outside of its borders, but the hasty unification of the State of SHS with the Kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro and the creation of a wider South Slavic state community in the southeast of Europe.

It is hardly necessary to mention that the last century of the past millennium was marked by two world wars and the destruction of four empires – the Ottoman, Russian, German and Austro-Hungarian – and the emergence of new or restored states on the ruins of those empires. 2008 marks nine decades from the end of the First World War, the disappearance of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy from the political map of central Europe and the creation of the short-lived State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs (SHS) and its hasty drowning in the Kingdom/State of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The main characteristic of the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs and its central political body, the National Council, was its temporariness – they emerged only to disappear.<sup>1</sup>

On the basis of existing scholarly and journalistic literature and accessible sources this work aims to show in general outlines the chronological sequence of the formation, activity and disappearance of the National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs and the short-lived state which it created in the last weeks of the First World War.

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<sup>1</sup> Ferdo Čulinović, *Državnopravni razvitak Jugoslavije* (Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu, 1963), p. 129.

## **The creation and activity of the National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs in Zagreb from the Zagreb resolution to the cessation of state-legal relations with the Austro-Hungarian monarchy (from 2/3 March to 29 October 1918)**

At the beginning of 1918, the situation on the battlefields of Europe looked very advantageous for the members of the Central Powers – Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire: on 9 February peace was concluded with the restored Ukrainian state; on 3 March a peace treaty was signed with Russia; on 7 May Romania capitulated. Some weeks before Romania's exit from the war, the German High Command, inspired by its military victories, began the spring offensive on the Western front (21 March 1918). Successes were not long in coming at the beginning. The British-French line of defence began to slacken. The German army came within 70 kilometres of Paris itself. The military-political leadership of Germany and Austria-Hungary hardly doubted any longer their final victory over the Allied states.<sup>2</sup> However, the successful counteroffensives of the Allied armies stopped the German advance, and the god of war changed sides once again.

After four years of warfare, the Allied states were not in agreement as to who was the main enemy. For Italy, the main enemy was the Austro-Hungarian Empire, while for the remaining Allied countries – France, Great Britain and the United States of America, it was Germany. Not one of the Allied states had as a war aim the complete destruction of the Austro-Hungarian Empire as a sovereign state. In other words, the leading political circles in the Allied states were very reserved toward possible plans of destroying the Empire and creating a Yugoslav state community from some of its parts.<sup>3</sup> The government of the Kingdom of Serbia, which was still situated in exile on the island of Corfu, had in preparation two solutions with regard to the future of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The first solution anticipated that, in accordance with the 'ethnographic principle', the regions in which dwelled the 'South Slavic nations' (Croats, Slovenes and Serbs) would be separated from Austria-Hungary and, after Serbia was restored as a sovereign state within its pre-war borders, be united with Serbia. The second solution was limited to the creation of a so-called Greater Serbia, i.e. a state that would include within its borders all those parts of the empire in which the Serbs supposedly had a 'marked' or 'predominant majority'.<sup>4</sup>

In spite of its relatively advantageous foreign political and military position, the Austro-Hungarian Empire was daily falling into greater internal crises,

<sup>2</sup> Bogdan Krizman, "Stvaranje jugoslavenske države". (Referat na Drugom kongresu historičara Jugoslavije), *Historijski pregled*, 4 (1958), no. 3-4: 167-168.

<sup>3</sup> B. Krizman, Austrougarska diplomacija u danima raspadanja Dvojne Monarhije 1918. god., *Istoriski pregled*, 8 (1962), no. 1, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> B. Krizman, "Stvaranje jugoslavenske države", p. 170.

primarily because of the dissatisfaction of its numerous Slavic nations (Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Slovenes, Croats and Serbs). The deepest crisis was felt in the south of the Empire. The justified dissatisfaction of Slovenian political elites with the position of their lands within the Austrian part of the Monarchy, the bitterness of Croatian politicians because of the dualist organization of the Empire, which led to the separation of the Ban's (or Civil) Croatia from Dalmatia and the unsolved state-legal status of Bosnia-Herzegovina altogether grew into an unsolvable problem, which will to a significant degree contribute to the final dissolution of the old state dynasty of Habsburg-Lothring. In such an atmosphere the demand for the unification of Croats, Slovenes and Serbs, the 'three tribes of a one nation' into one state, began to be more vocally emphasized, even if it was not clearly specified, of course, what was really understood by this demand. The action to link all political forces which accepted the program of 'national unification' unfolded under the slogan of 'national concentration'. At the instigation of the Yugoslav Club<sup>5</sup> in Zagreb, inter-party talks were held in Zagreb at the beginning of 1918 on the common action of all 'Yugoslav' parties in the Empire. At the head of this action to link parties, groups and individuals in Civil Croatia was Starčević's Party of Right (the so-called *Milinovci*), which represented the Yugoslav political program.<sup>6</sup> A meeting was held on the 2 and 3 March in Zagreb at which were present, representatives of the Party of Right (the *Milinovci*), the group around the Zagreb newspaper, *Glas Slovenaca, Hrvata i Srba* ('The Voice of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs'),<sup>7</sup> the group around the Zagreb Catholic daily, *Novine* ('The Newspaper'),<sup>8</sup> the Social-Democratic Party of Croatia and Slavonia, the Slovene People's Party, the Slovene National Progressive Party and party individuals from Bosnia, Herzegovina, Istria, Dalmatia and Međimurje. The invitation to attend the meeting did not draw a response from the ruling Croato-Serbian Coalition and the opposition Croatian People's Peasant Party. The meeting was chaired by the *milinovac* Ante Pavelić ('the dentist').<sup>9</sup> The second day of the meeting brought forward the resolution that stated, among other things, that the 'nation of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes

<sup>5</sup> The Yugoslav club was a parliamentary representation of Slovene, Croatian and Serbian national representatives from the Slovene lands, Istria and Dalmatia in the Viennese imperial parliament.

<sup>6</sup> For more on the national-political views of the *Milinovci*, see: Vaso Bogdanov, 'Starčevića stranka prava prema oslobođenju i ujedinjenju južnoslovenskih naroda u toku prvog svjetskog rata', *Jugoslavenski odbor u Londonu u povodu 50-godišnjice osnivanja* (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1966), pp. 27-163.

<sup>7</sup> This group consisted of dissidents from the Croato-Serbian Coalition. See: Srđan Budisavljević, *Stvaranje države Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca. Povodom četrdesetogodišnjice jugoslovenskog ujedinjenja* (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1958), pp. 73-74.

<sup>8</sup> For more on the Catholic daily *Novine* see: Jure Krišto, *Hrvatski katolički pokret (1903-1945)*, (Zagreb: Glas koncila – Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2004), pp. 103-105.

<sup>9</sup> Dragovan Šepić, 'Oktobarska revolucija i jugoslavensko pitanje u Austro-Ugarskoj 1917/1918', *Historijski zbornik*, 11-12 (1958-1959): 43-44. For more details on the Zagreb meeting see: Janko Pleterski, *Prvo opredeljenje Slovenaca za Jugoslaviju* (Beograd: Nolit, 1976), pp. 235-243.

are a united people, who seek 'independence, unification and freedom in their united national state'.<sup>10</sup> It is important to stress that the Zagreb resolution did not mention the Empire as the set framework for the creation of the state of the 'united people' of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, nor did it speak of the sceptre of the dynasty of Habsburg-Lorraine as the symbol of state sovereignty.

The participants of the Zagreb meeting charged an *ad hoc* committee to carry out all preparatory work necessary for the formation of the National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs. It was agreed that the following meeting would be held on the 21 and 22 April in Zagreb and that the National Council would be formed at these meetings. However, this meeting was not held in the end.<sup>11</sup>

The formation of a general organization which, linking the South Slavic lands of the Empire, regardless of whether these lands were located in the Cisleithanian or Transleithanian half of the Empire, would carry out the politics of 'national concentration', was preceded by the formation of the National Organization of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in Dalmatia in Split (2 June),<sup>12</sup> the National Organization of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs for the Croatian Littoral in Sušak (14 June)<sup>13</sup> and the National Council in Ljubljana (17 August).<sup>14</sup> Present at the inaugural meeting were delegates from Civil Croatia, Dalmatia and Istria: Gjuro Šurmin, Ivan Pošćić, Ivan Krstelj, Mate Drinković, Srđan Budisavljević, Ivo Grisogono, Duje Mikačić, Živko Petričić, Matko Laginja, Vjekoslav Spinčić, Janko Šimrak and Ivan Lorković.<sup>15</sup> In the report presented to the inaugural meeting it was expressly stated that the National Council in Ljubljana (*Narodni Svet*) was an integral part of the Yugoslav National Committee (National Council), which was to convene shortly in Zagreb.<sup>16</sup> Anton Korošec was elected as president of the National Council in Ljubljana.

<sup>10</sup> Ante Pavelić ('the dentist'), *Stvaranje Narodnog vijeća u Zagrebu. Na obljetnicu predaje adrese* 1. XII 1918 (Zagreb: 1935), p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> B. Krizman, *Raspad Austro-Ugarske i stvaranje jugoslavenske države* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1977), p. 21.

<sup>12</sup> Ferdo Šišić, *Dokumenti o postanku Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca 1914-1919* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1920), pp. 141-142.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*, p. 142.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*, pp. 156-160. For more details on the political relations in the Slovene lands which led to the formation of the National Council in Ljubljana see: Momčilo Zečević, *Slovenska ljudska stranka i jugoslovensko ujedinjenje 1917-1921. Od Majske deklaracije do Vidovdanskog ustava* (Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju – NIP Export-press, 1973), pp. 104-137; J. Pleterski, *Prvo opredeljenje Slovenaca*, pp. 331-342.

<sup>15</sup> Petar Pekić, *Propast Austro-ugarske monarhije i postanak nasljednih država* (Subotica: 1937), p. 204. Although Dalmatia was in the Austrian part of the Monarchy, together with Istria and the Slovene lands, it was not represented in the National Council in Ljubljana. Nevertheless, it was intended that Dalmatian representatives regularly attend the meetings of the Ljubljana council. See: B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu. Hrvatsko-srpski politički odnosi* (Zagreb: Globus, 1989), pp. 215, 238.

<sup>16</sup> J. Pleterski, *Prvo opredeljenje Slovenaca*, p. 340.

Although the Preparatory Committee<sup>17</sup> in Zagreb had already penned invitations for the constituent assembly of the National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs by the 22 July, the assembly's convening was delayed.<sup>18</sup>

At the meeting of the representatives of opposition parties<sup>19</sup> from Civil Croatia, held in Zagreb on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August, it was concluded that the proposal for the 'statute for the National Council for Slovenes, Croats and Serbs in Zagreb' had been unanimously accepted and that it had 'acceded to establish a common representative body of independent national elements in Croatia and Slavonia, which would as a whole send its delegates to the National Council'.<sup>20</sup>

For the leaders of the *Narodni Svet* the main question during those days was how to persuade political parties and groups in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina to cooperate in forming the National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs in Zagreb.<sup>21</sup> The main emphasis was placed on winning over the Croato-Serbian Coalition.<sup>22</sup> In spite of the pressures to which it was exposed, the leadership of the Coalition stubbornly resisted entering the 'national concentration' and consequently the National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs.<sup>23</sup>

Through the common action of the leadership of the *Narodni Svet* and Zagreb politicians, who argued for the implementation of 'national concentration', it was agreed that a meeting in the Croatian capital should be held for 24 September, at which the final decision for the formation of the NV SHS would be reached. This meeting resulted with a declaration against the peace note (14 September)<sup>24</sup> of the Austro-Hungarian minister of foreign affairs, Burian, which was addressed to 'all warring and neutral states', and presented viewpoints regarding the principles upon which peace should be concluded.<sup>25</sup> It was finally decided that the meeting to form the National Council would be convened for 5 October in Zagreb.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>17</sup> The members of the Committee were: S. Budisavljević, B. G. Angjelinović and J. Šimrak.

<sup>18</sup> B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, p. 214.

<sup>19</sup> Present at the meeting were members of Starčević's Party of Right (Ž. Petričić, C. Akačić, I. Peršić, K. Šegvić and B. G. Angjelinović), S. Budisavljević, a dissident from the Croato-Serbian Coalition and representative of *Glas S.H.S.*, I. Lorković and Gj. Šurmin, dissidents from the Croatian Independent Party gathered around *Malih novina* and J. Šimrak, representative of *Novine*.

<sup>20</sup> Hrvatski državni arhiv, Zagreb, 124-1 NV SHS, Pripremni radovi oko stvaranja NVN SHS.

<sup>21</sup> B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, pp. 216-217.

<sup>22</sup> B. Krizman – Dragoslav Janković, *Građa o stvaranju jugoslovenske države* (1. I – 20. XII 1918), 2 vols. (Beograd: Institut društvenih nauka – Odeljenje za istorijske nauke, 1964), 1: 305.

<sup>23</sup> B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, p. 218.

<sup>24</sup> V. P. Potemkin, ed., *Historija diplomacije*, 3 vols. (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1951), 2: 325.

<sup>25</sup> F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, pp. 165-167.

<sup>26</sup> S. Budisavljević, *Stvaranje države Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*, pp. 121-122.

The delegates earmarked for the inaugural meeting were already gathered on 4 October in Zagreb. Visibly alarmed by the development of events, S. Pribičević, the undisputed leader of the Croat-Serbian Coalition, invited S. Budisavljević on the same day for urgent talks in the parliament building. Responding to the invitation, Budisavljević met with Pribičević and Dušan Popović in the building of the Croatian parliament *Sabor*. Although he at first attacked Budisavljević, arguing that the activity around the formation of the NV SHS was actually directed against the Coalition, after calming down Pribičević requested information as to what was intended by the action. Budisavljević informed the two leaders of the Coalition that the principal decision concerning the formation of the NV SHS and how it was to be organized would be taken at the next meeting. At the end of his discussion, Budisavljević added that the organizers expected that the Croato-Serbian Coalition would enter the NV SHS and that it was intended to secure the Coalition a determinate number of places in the NV SHS. Having learnt the decision of the organizers of the meeting, Pribičević declared that the decision to form the NV SHS should nevertheless be postponed until the Coalition had decided whether it was going to enter the ranks of the NV SHS. Responding that this was no longer possible, Budisavljević promised that he would arrange for Drinković to visit Pribičević and for Korošec to visit Popović the following day (5 October). In that way, according to his opinion, it would be possible to examine in direct conversation all questions tied to the Coalition's relationship to the NV SHS. During the fixed meetings it was agreed that at the assembly of delegates gathered to form the NV SHS, the proposal be put forward that before the bringing of resolutions about its formation, the Croato-Serbian coalition be called to enter the NV SHS.<sup>27</sup>

On the eve of the constituted assembly of the NV SHS, statements of the representation of the Serbian National Radical Party, the Croatian People's Peasant Party and the group around *Malih novina* were placed in the hands of the convenors, declaring that they were entering the NV SHS. A statement of the main committee of the Social-Democratic Party of Croatia and Slavonia declared that Vitomir Korać would attend the constituent assembly of the NV SHS, but only for informational purposes. As to the question of entering the NV SHS, the final decision had to be taken at the conference of Yugoslav Social-Democratic parties.<sup>28</sup> The Social-Democratic conference, held in Zagreb on 6 October, took the decision, opposed by delegates from Bosnia,<sup>29</sup> to join the NV SHS.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 122.

<sup>28</sup> B. Krizman, "Zapisnici središnjeg odbora 'Narodnog vijeća Slovenaca, Hrvata i Srba' u Zagrebu", *Starine*, 48 (1958), pp. 332-333.

<sup>29</sup> Vlado Strugar, *Jugoslavenske socijaldemokratske stranke 1914-1918* (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1963), pp. 165-171.

<sup>30</sup> F. Šišić, Dokumenti, pp. 169-170; Vitomir Korać, *Povijest radničkog pokreta u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji*, 3 vols (Zagreb: Radnička komora za Hrvatsku i Slavoniju, 1929), 1, p. 252.

On 5 October, A. Pavelić opened the constituent assembly of the NV SHS. Pavelić was elected as president, as proposed by A. Korošec, while S. Budisavljević, Albert Kramer and Živko Petričić were elected as notaries.<sup>31</sup> In his welcome address, Pavelić stressed that the constituent assembly of the NV SHS was a continuation of the Zagreb conferences from 2 and 3 March (and its resolution).<sup>32</sup> The next speaker Budisavljević presented the work done concerning the formation of the NV SHS; after Budisavljević's speech, I. Lorković gave an account of the 'tasks and aims' of the NV SHS.<sup>33</sup> At the late afternoon continuation of the assembly, a discussion was undertaken with regard to Lorković's report and ended with Drinković proposing the following decisions: '1) Here gathered to found the 'National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs', we are unanimous in thoughts and deeds for the realization of a completely independent, sovereign and free state for our nation of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs on the whole continuous ethnic territory of that people. For that purpose we pledge that, neither as individuals, nor as individual parties, nor as individual regions, nor as individual parliamentary corporations, will we enter into any obligatory talks with any factors outside of our people, rather, we declare that we will, once the 'National Council' is constituted, work collectively according to the instructions and decisions of the National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs and the delegated authorities of the National Council; 2) a committee will be selected from 7 individuals, who will immediately today or, at the latest, tomorrow, enter into negotiations with the Croato-Serbian Coalition with the purpose that it also join the National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs under the above conditions.'<sup>34</sup>

After Drinković's proposal was unanimously adopted, the Committee of seven was elected: Matko Laginja, A. Korošec, Jozo Sunarić, Ž. Petričić, M. Drinković, S. Budisavljević and V. Korać.<sup>35</sup> All the members of the Committee of Seven departed for the parliament building that evening where they were met by the representatives of the coalition: S. Pribičević, Guido Hreljanović and Većeslav Wilder. Korošec informed the Coalition representatives of the decisions of the first day of the constituent assembly of the NV SHS. It was particularly stressed that the participants of the assembly wished for the Croato-Serbian Coalition to join the NV SHS.<sup>36</sup> After an exchange of ideas, the members present resolved, among other things, that the NV SHS would not be constituted until the Coalition had given its positive or negative answer in regard to joining the ranks of the National Council. Although a negative answer from the Coalition was not expected, Korošec nevertheless added that in such a case, it would be desirable that their mutual relations remain friendly.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>31</sup> S. Budisavljević, *Stvaranje države Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*, p. 22.

<sup>32</sup> B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici središnjeg odbora', p. 332.

<sup>33</sup> B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, pp. 221-222.

<sup>34</sup> B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici središnjeg odbora', 333.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid*, 334.

<sup>36</sup> S. Budisavljević, *Stvaranje države Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*, p. 123.

<sup>37</sup> B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici središnjeg odbora', 334.

On the second day of the constituent assembly of the NV SHS, Drinković informed those present about the talks which the Committee of Seven had held with the representatives of the Croato-Serbian Coalition. His report, after some elucidation, was unanimously accepted without debate.<sup>38</sup> Continuing the meeting's proceedings, Budislav Grga Angjelinović read the proposal for the statutes of the NV SHS. After a longer debate, and the introduction of specific modifications, the Statutes were unanimously accepted.<sup>39</sup> On the basis of Pavelić's proposal and on the basis of the adopted statutes, there began the election of members of the NV SHS in Zagreb for the Slovene lands (Carniola, Styria, Carinthia, Gorizia and Trieste), Istria, Dalmatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slavonia with Rijeka and Međimurje.<sup>40</sup> With that, it was decided that Bačka, Banat, Baranja and the remaining south western parts of Hungary would elect their representatives later. It was also anticipated that one would be able to later elect members for the NV SHS in Zagreb from the ranks of national representatives of the Croatian and Bosnian parliaments and the Yugoslav club in the Viennese parliament. Although a partial election for the members of the central committee was held, this body was not constituted for the National Council was still waiting for the Coalition's answer. So that the NV SHS could function normally, a Working committee was constituted. This Committee was to undertake the work of the Presidency until the Central committee was constituted. Into the working committee were elected: A. Pavelić, S. Budisavljević, I. Lorković, S. Radić, V. Korać, J. Šimrak, M. Drinković and Ž. Petričić. There was unanimous approval of Pavelić's proposal, according to which the working committee could declare the composition of the Presidency of the NV and Central committee in case the Coalition remained outside of the NV SHS. With that aim in mind, a list of candidates was drawn up.<sup>41</sup>

The continuation of talks with the Croato-Serbian Coalition was entrusted to the committee of seven with the same composition as the day before.<sup>42</sup> At their meetings on 8 and 9 October, the Croato-Serbian Coalition's parliamentary club decided that the Coalition should enter the NV SHS and, as a result, a committee of five members was constituted: Edo Lukinić, D. Popović, S. Pribičević, Ivan Ribar and V. Wilder. At a meeting held on 10 October, the committee of seven and the Coalition's committee of five<sup>43</sup> discussed all questions tied to the entry of the Croato-Serbian Coalition into the NV SHS. After the negotiators reached a complete agreement regarding fundamental questions, an agreement was also reached concerning the number of representatives in the NV SHS consisting of individual parties and groups from Civil Croatia.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 335.

<sup>39</sup> F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, pp. 174-176.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, pp. 171-174.

<sup>41</sup> B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, p. 225.

<sup>42</sup> B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici središnjeg odbora', 338.

<sup>43</sup> Both committees held talks with a smaller composition. (ibid, 338, 9 & 10fn).

According to this division, the Coalition received 12 mandates, while the Party of Right (*Milinovci*) received 6. All the remaining parties and groups received 1 to 2 mandates. The Coalition received 5 mandates in the Central committee, the Party of Right 2 and the remaining parties 1 seat each. As regards to the Presidency, both negotiating sides agreed that the Central committee be convened as soon as possible in order to elect members for the Presidency. So that this could be undertaken, it was proposed to the Working committee that a meeting of the Central committee be convened for 17 October with the following agenda of items: 1) the election of the Presidency NV SHS and 2) a discussion concerning the action to be taken in the following days. The working committee (widened to include two or three members of the Coalition) was to conduct all business within the proposed time limit.<sup>44</sup>

At a second meeting of the two committees, held on 12 October, Pribičević declared that the Coalition's plenum had accepted the report on talks from a 'political perspective', but that it had certain criticisms concerning their technical side, i.e. the allegedly large number of *Milinovci* in the NV SHS. The resulting discussions, which were not without heightened tones, did not bring any concrete conclusions.<sup>45</sup>

At two meetings of the Working committee that were held on 15 and 16 October, which were attended by members of the Croato-Serbian Coalition, discussions were held about the constitution of the Central Committee and its tasks. Finally, the members of the Working Committee decided to propose to the Central committee, which was to meet on 17 October, that it issue a 'declaration to the people', in which the 'principles of national politics' would be 'defined', or, in other words, it would be emphasized that 'national unity of our entire people and the solutions of their problems could not be solved partially but only in their entirety'. One had to especially emphasize the 'sovereignty of the Yugoslav state, founded on national self-determination'.<sup>46</sup> Finally, the Central committee had to decide as to whether the Croatian Sabor 'should be convened' and 'what position it would take in today's time'.<sup>47</sup>

Assembling for the set date, one day after the announcement of the Manifesto to Emperor and King Charles I (IV.), which dealt with the federalization of the Austrian half of the Monarchy,<sup>48</sup> the members of the Central committee<sup>49</sup> conducted a thorough discussion which lasted three days (until 19 October). The session of the Central committee resulted in the selection of the

<sup>44</sup> B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, pp. 225-226.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p. 226.

<sup>46</sup> B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici središnjeg odbora', 340.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 340-341.

<sup>48</sup> See: F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, pp. 176-177.

<sup>49</sup> For the list of the members of the Central committee: B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, p. 241, 53fn.

Presidency: the president, A. Korošec,<sup>50</sup> the vice-presidents, S. Budisavljević, M. Drinković and I. Lorković, and secretaries.<sup>51</sup> Further proposals were accepted: 1) work in the parliaments (in Zagreb and Sarajevo), 2) the procurement of passports for members of the Central committee who were to travel to Switzerland and 3) the proclamation of work of the Central committee as permanent.<sup>52</sup>

This session produced the *Declaration* of the Central committee of the NV SHS, which, among other things, rejected the government's *Manifesto* and openly sought 'the unification of the entire nation of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs on the whole of its ethnographic territory into one united and completely sovereign state, regardless of the regional or state borders within which they live today'.<sup>53</sup> At about the same time as the three day session of the Central committee of the NV SHS was held in Zagreb, the Main committee of the NV SHS was founded for Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>54</sup>

On 21 October, i.e. at the same time as Woodrow Wilson's negative response to Austria-Hungary's peace note of October 4<sup>55</sup> was printed in the Zagreb morning newspapers, the Central committee held a meeting at which individual sections were formed along with the election of their heads. M. Drinković was chosen to head the section for national defence, S. Radić became the head of agriculture, and I. Lorković head of the financial-political sector. S. Budisavljević took over the section for finances of the NV SHS, while B. Angjelinović stood at the head of the section for agitation and organization. The section for transport was entrusted to V. Wilder. The section for provisions had two chiefs: Cezar Akačić and Svetozar Delić. The section for social policy was taken by Vilim Bukšeg. The administrative section came under the authority of the Presidency. Preparatory work in sections for peace talks was headed by Fran Barac. The decision as to who should head the sections was not taken because of disagreements among the members of the Central commit-

<sup>50</sup> Korošec was not unanimously elected to the post of president of the NV SHS. See: Mate Drinković, *Hrvatska i državna politika* (Zagreb: vlastita naklada, 1928), p. 10.

<sup>51</sup> F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, p. 181.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 180. For more on the importance of the Declaration in the process of forming the state of SHS see: Ljubo Boban, 'Kada je i kako nastala Država Slovenaca, Hrvata i Srba', *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 24 (1992), no. 3: 45-60. Also see: Hodimir Sirotković, 'O nastanku, organizaciji, državnopravnim pitanjima i sukcesiji Države SHS nastale u jesen 1918.' *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 24 (1992), no. 3: 61-74 and Stanislav Koprivica-Oštrić, 'Konstituiranje Države Slovenaca, Hrvata i Srba 29. listopada 1918.' *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 25 (1993), no. 1: 45-71.

<sup>54</sup> Nusret Šehić, 'Narodno vijeće SHS za Bosnu i Hercegovinu i njegova djelatnost nakon sloma Austro-Ugarske (novembar-decembar)', *Prilozi*, 18 (1982), no. 19: 166.

<sup>55</sup> B. Krizman – D. Janković, Građa, 1: 367-368. For the declaration of the NV SHS concerning Wilson's response to the Austro-Hungarian ministry of foreign affairs see: F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, pp. 181-182.

tee. At the head of the 'Bureau of the Presidium' (The Office of the Presidency) was the secretary of the Presidency.<sup>56</sup>

Inspired by Wislon's response, on the following day, 22 October, large rallies in support of the NV SHS were held in front of the Croatian National Theatre and parliament building in Zagreb.<sup>57</sup> The most prominent members of the NV SHS spoke to the crowds of citizens in Zagreb, including, A. Pavelić, S. Radić, B. G. Angjelinović, S. Pribičević, M. Drinković, V. Bukšeg and others.<sup>58</sup>

It is very probable that on the same day A. Pavelić and S. Pribičević met Ban Mihalovich in order to find out what he, as the head of executive authority in Civil Croatia, would do if the members of the NV SHS, who were also national representatives, 'presented a common proposal in the Sabor regarding the breaking of all state-legal ties with Hungary'.<sup>59</sup> After leaving the Ban's residence, the two vice-presidents of the NV SHS had the impression that the Ban would not oppose their intentions. The two vice-presidents informed the members of the Central committee of their conversation with Mihalovich.<sup>60</sup>

Ban Mihalovich readily responded to an invitation to attend a meeting of the Central committee, held on 23 October. The Ban warned the Committee members present that a way had to be found for the NV SHS to come into contact with the state government, because 'two governments cannot exist', i.e. the government of the NV SHS and the lawful government of Civil Croatia.<sup>61</sup> The meeting sent a call to supporters of the NV SHS to begin forming 'Committees of the National Council' in all locations (towns and villages).<sup>62</sup> Discussions were held on convening the Croatian Sabor and the contents of its decisions at a meeting of the Central committee on 25 October. During the debate, S. Radić provoked an incident because he appeared to represent some 'radical solutions'. At the same meeting, J. Šimrak was elected as secretary of the NV SHS.<sup>63</sup>

The Central committee held a meeting the following day, 26 October, at which, among other things, it was decided to announce that the 'Yugoslav Committee'<sup>64</sup> has the right to speak in the name of our people in connection with the National Council, and at which discussions about the possible entry

<sup>56</sup> B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, p. 228.

<sup>57</sup> The proclamation of Ban Mihalovich on the occasion of the Zagreb demonstrations can be found in: F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, p. 182.

<sup>58</sup> S. Budisavljević, *Stvaranje države Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*, p. 132.

<sup>59</sup> B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, p. 230.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 232.

<sup>62</sup> F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, p. 183.

<sup>63</sup> B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, p. 233.

<sup>64</sup> See: Milada Paulová, *Jugoslavenski odbor. (Povijest jugoslavenske emigracije za svjetskog rata od 1914.-1918.)* (Zagreb: Prosvjetna nakladna zadruga, 1925).

of the Party of Right (Frankists) into the NV SHS also took place.<sup>65</sup> The meeting also sent a call for a 'volunteer national tax' on behalf of the NV SHS.<sup>66</sup>

On the same day, the Presidency of the NV SHS inquired the commanding Austro-Hungarian generals in Zagreb, Luka Šnjarić and Mihovil Mihaljević, as to what they intended to undertake in the case of the breaking of state-legal ties with the Monarchy. Before they placed themselves at the disposal of the NV SHS, both generals asked the Emperor to unbind them from their oaths, which the Emperor did immediately.<sup>67</sup> After he had certain political talks in Vienna with the premier Lammasch regarding the future of the Monarchy, Korošec travelled, with the approval of the Austrian authorities, to Switzerland together with Gregor Žerjav,<sup>68</sup> where they were joined by Melko Čingrija.<sup>69</sup>

The work of the Central committee continued on 27 October. At that meeting there was repeated discussion on the entry of the Frankist Party of Right into the NV SHS, but the final decision was left for a meeting for the following day. After a discussion concerning the pressing question of the army, Angjelinović's proposals were accepted: '1) that arms be supplied to the National council from military storerooms; 2) that the academic guard for preserving peace and order be armed for Tuesday during the assembly of the Croatian Sabor;<sup>70</sup> 3) that the Croatian and Serbian Falcons (*Sokoli*) be organized and armed for the same purpose.'<sup>71</sup> The last Austro-Hungarian minister for foreign affairs, Gyula Andrássy, sent a peace note, with the consent of Emperor Charles, on 28 October to Washington in which it was stated that the Monarchy was prepared to begin talks and sign an armistice on all battlefields as soon as possible.<sup>72</sup> This was the last sign that Zagreb was awaiting from Vienna.

On the same day, Ban Mihalovich had an audience with Emperor Charles. After he had listened to the Ban's report on the conditions in Croatia, the Emperor dismissed the Ban with the following words: 'Do as you wish.'<sup>73</sup> Of vital importance for the further development of events in that moment, was the decision of the Common ministry of war in Vienna, which was alarmed by the altogether more serious unrest in the state, to enter into contact, if necessary,

<sup>65</sup> B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici središnjeg odbora', 342.

<sup>66</sup> F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, pp. 184-185.

<sup>67</sup> B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, p. 299.

<sup>68</sup> Žerjav was the secretary of the Yugoslav club in Vienna.

<sup>69</sup> B. Krizman, 'Predavanje Antona Korošca o postanku Jugoslavije', *Historijski pregled*, 5 (1959), no. 1: 70-71; B. Krizman, *Raspad Austro-Ugarske*, p. 163; J. Pleterški, *Prvo opredeljenje Slovenaca*, p. 355.

<sup>70</sup> This refers to the meeting of the Croatian Sabor on 29 October.

<sup>71</sup> B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici središnjeg odbora', 343.

<sup>72</sup> B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, p. 237. See: F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, pp. 188-189.

<sup>73</sup> B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, p. 299.

with the representatives of national councils on their territories so that peace and order could be preserved in the disappearing Empire.<sup>74</sup>

At a meeting of the Central committee, held on 28 October, Pavelić, in the capacity of Chairman, opened debate regarding the preparation of the decisions that had to be taken at the meeting of the Croatian Sabor the following day. Two viewpoints were presented: '1.) the National council has to take dictatorial authority into its own hands; 2.) that slowly, without disturbing the rights of the crown, wide conditions for the work of the National council are created.'<sup>75</sup> S. Radić was very active during the meeting, and already at the beginning of it put forward his ideas on what the 'first act' of the Croatian Sabor should be.<sup>76</sup> He also presented for the forthcoming Sabor assembly the pressing proposal concerning military deserters.<sup>77</sup> According to a decision brought earlier the meeting also discussed the question of the entry of the Frankist Party of Right in the NV SHS and it was decided that its entry was not welcome.<sup>78</sup> After the arrival of the generals Šnjarić and Mihaljević, the meeting of the Central committee was temporarily interrupted, while the Presidency and the two generals moved to a new room for talks, which were ended with the declaration of the generals that they would 'unconditionally submit' to the government of the NV SHS.<sup>79</sup> After their departure from the parliament building, debate commenced on the pressing proposals that were intended to be presented at the meeting of the Croatian Sabor the next day. The first pressing proposal, from S. Pribičević and his comrades, ran as follows: '1.) It is proposed to the High Sabor to conclude the following: The Croatian State Sabor, on the basis of the complete right of national self-determination, which is today already recognized by all warring governments, makes the following resolution: all past state-legal relations and ties between the Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia and Dalmatia on the one side, and the Kingdom of Hungary and the Austrian Empire from the other, are dissolved. The Croato-Hungarian compromise (legal article 1. 1868) is therefore annulled and declared null and void, and at the same time, also annulled and declared null and void are all later supplements or revisions to it, so that from today Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia has actually neither legal nor common state functions with the Kingdom of Hungary. II. Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia with Rijeka is proclaimed as a completely independent state

<sup>74</sup> Hamdija Kapidžić, 'Veze austrougarske Vrhovne komande i narodnih vijeća u vrijeme raspada Habsburške monarhije', *Godišnjak Društva istoričara Bosne i Hercegovine*, 17 (1966-1967): 9-21.

<sup>75</sup> B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici središnjeg odbora', 344.

<sup>76</sup> According to Radić's opinion, the first decision of the Croatian Sabor should have been the proclamation of Civil Croatia as a 'sovereign state and component part of the state of SHS' and the implementation of the 'total liquidation of ties with the monarchy and dynasty'. *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 346-348.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 348.

in relation to Hungary and Austria, and according to the modern principle of nationality, and on the basis of the national unity of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, enters into the common national sovereign state of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs on the whole of the ethnographic area of that nation regardless of the territorial and state borders within which the nation of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs presently live. The general national constituent assembly of the whole united nation of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs will decide with a beforehand determined qualified majority, which completely guards against every outvoting, the final form of government and the internal state organization of our state founded on the complete equality of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs.<sup>80</sup> After that was read, the urgent proposal of A. Pavelić and his comrades was presented: 'It is proposed to the High Sabor that it conclude the following: The Sabor, as the representative of the Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia, regards the proclamation of the National council from the 19<sup>th</sup> of this month as binding for itself and declares that it recognizes the supreme authority of the National council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs.'<sup>81</sup> At the same meeting it was decided that the NV SHS 'proclaim the Presidency of the National council as the supreme authority in all Yugoslav lands, which is represented in the National council'; the Presidency consists of: A. Korošec, the president, A. Pavelić and S. Pribičević, as vice-presidents and S. Budisavljević, I. Lorković and M. Drinković as secretaries.<sup>82</sup> It was also unanimously accepted that until 'the final composition of the government, the Presidency of the National council will act as the government.'<sup>83</sup> The assembly was concluded by the dawn of 29 October.

On the morning of 29 October, Bogdan Medaković, the president of the Croatian Sabor, opened the assembly at which were present, apart from the national representatives, Ban Mihalovich and three department heads: Aleksandar Badaj, Milan Rojc and Aurel Rauer. Marko Novosel, the Sabor's notary, read the pressing proposal of S. Pribičević and his comrades, which was adopted hours before at the meeting of the Central committee of the NV SHS. Taking the chair from the President of the Sabor, Pribičević explained the urgency of the proposal by declaring that 'one has to clearly emphasize to the outside and to the inside' that concerning the read proposal 'our independent and completely sovereign state stretches over the whole of our national territory from the Soča to Salonica.'<sup>84</sup> The national representatives present welcomed this proposal with a 'stormy round of applause' and shouts of 'long live'. After the pressing proposal of Pavelić and his associates was read and had already been accepted by the Central committee of the NV SHS, Pavelić explained the

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 350.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, p. 212.

<sup>83</sup> B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici središnjeg odbora', 349.

<sup>84</sup> *Stenografski zapisnici sabora kralj. Hrvatske, Slavonije i Dalmacije. Petogodišta 1913-1918*, 6 vols. (Zagreb, 1918), 6: 1468-1470.

details of his proposal.<sup>85</sup> After the speech of the vice-president of the NV SHS, Ban Mihalovich took the chair and declared: 'it is my honour, in the name of the government, to declare that I completely adopt the point of view of the Croatian Sabor with regard to the first and second proposals, and so I place the whole executive at the disposal of the National council.'<sup>86</sup> The president of the Sabor then gave the chair to Vladimir Prebeg, the head of the parliamentary club of the Frankist Party of Right,<sup>87</sup> then to Josip Šilović<sup>88</sup> and D. Popović. After all the registered speakers had finished, Medaković put Pavelić's pressing proposal to the vote, which was then unanimously accepted.<sup>89</sup>

After the bringing of these two fatal decisions, the national representatives left the parliamentary building so that they could attend a mass of thanksgiving in the parish church of St. Mark. The Sabor assembly continued under the chairmanship of Pero Magdić, during which the representatives accepted the pressing proposal of S. Radić and his associates, which sought that the Ban ban the export of provisions to Hungary and Austria.<sup>90</sup> After the minutes of the held meeting were unanimously adopted, the chairman concluded the work of the Sabor with the acclamation: 'Long live the National council! Long live the free and sovereign state of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs!'<sup>91</sup>

That was, for a very long period, the last assembly of the Croatian Sabor, which renewed its work only after the Second World War.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 6: 1472-1470.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 6: 1474.

<sup>87</sup> Prebeg declared that the 'Party of Right accepts the proposal, put forward by sir national representative dr. Pavelić and comrades, the proposal, namely, that all state authority is transferred to the National council and that we will vote for that proposal'. Continuing his speech, Prebeg claimed that the 'program of the Party of Right is fulfilled in those points in which the discontinuance of the compromise and the rupture with Hungary and the unification of all Croatian lands into a free and independent state are demanded. The Party of Right's parliamentary club will 'propose to its party council, which will be convened in the shortest time, that the Party of Right dissolve itself'. (ibid, 6: 1474).

<sup>88</sup> In the name of the club of Unionists (the Magyarones) outside of their party, Šilović declared that their club was 'breaking up'. (ibid., 6: 1475).

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 6: 1476.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 6: 1479.

<sup>92</sup> The last manifestation of the Croatian Sabor was a deputation on 24 June on the occasion of the visit of the regent Aleksandar to Zagreb. By a decree of the regent, on 30 November 1920, all earlier state parliaments and regional parliaments on the territory of the Kingdom of SHS were dissolved. See Neda Engelsfeld, *Prvi parlament Kraljevstva Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca – Privremeno narodno predstavništvo* (Zagreb: Globus, 1989), p. 50.

## **The activity of the NV SHS in Zagreb from the construction of the central government of the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs to the formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (29 October – 1 December 1918)**

Immediately after the end of the work of the Sabor, the Central committee held a meeting at which M. Drinković opened the question of the Austro-Hungarian navy stationed in ports along the Adriatic. After discussions, the decision was taken to send a delegation of the NV SHS, including Ante Tresić-Pavičić, Ivan Marija Čok and V. Bukšeg to Pula.<sup>93</sup> The meeting continued with S. Pribičević informing the members present that the Presidency of the NV SHS agreed to the new government being entrusted to Ban Mihalovich, that the department heads for justice (Badaj) and education (Rojc) further remain in the government and that commissioners be named in the 'shortest time' possible for the remaining portfolios.<sup>94</sup> At around the same time (from 29 to 31 October) Albert Kramer was elected as secretary of the NV SHS for Slavonia, Matko Laginja was elected as commissioner for Istria, while Rikard Lenac<sup>95</sup> was elected as the district prefect for the city of Rijeka and its surroundings.<sup>96</sup>

On 29 October, the Presidency of the NV SHS sent a proclamation to former Austro-Hungarian soldiers, calling on the soldiers to unconditional discipline, guaranteeing amnesty concerning their earlier arbitrary desertion of military units, but also threatening them with court-martial if they were to participate in revolt against the new government.<sup>97</sup> At a meeting of the Central committee held the following day, 30 October, it was decided that the *Narodni svet* in Ljubljana<sup>98</sup> and the National council for Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo<sup>99</sup> propose to the Presidency of the NV SHS in Zagreb their candi-

<sup>93</sup> B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici središnjeg odbora', 351.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 352. Named as the heads of the remaining departments were the following: S. Budisavljević for interior affairs, Ž. Petričić for national economy, F. Braum for finances, E. Marković for food provisioning, C. Akačić for post, telegraph and telephone, V. Bukšeg for social welfare, V. Wilder for railways, Gj. Šurmin for trade and industry, M. Drinković for national defence. V. Havliček was installed as secretary. Ž. Petričić was elected commissioner thanks to his family ties to A. Pavelić. See: F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, p. 212; B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici sjednica povjerenika hrvatsko-slavonsko-dalmatinske zemaljske vlade u Zagrebu (1918)', *Zbornik Historijskog instituta Slavonije*, 2 (1964), 244; Ivan Peršić, *Kroničarski spisi* (Zagreb: Državni arhiv u Zagrebu – Dom i svijet – Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2002), p. 226.

<sup>95</sup> See: Petar Trajković, 'Rijeka u beleškama Egana Lajoša', *Dometi*, 21 (1988), no. 9: 471-481; Mira Kolar, 'Dokumenti o vlasti Narodnog vijeća Države SHS nad Rijekom – listopad/studen 1918. godine', *Vjesnik Državnog arhiva u Rijeci*, 41-42 (1999-2000): 3-38.

<sup>96</sup> F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, p. 213.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, pp. 211-212.

<sup>98</sup> The government for Slovenia was formed on 31 October (ibid, pp. 217-218).

<sup>99</sup> The government for Bosnia and Herzegovina was composed on 1 November (ibid, pp. 218-219).

dates for regional governments, to be confirmed by the Presidency.<sup>100</sup> In that manner, the autonomy of regional national councils was preserved, while the authority of the central NV SHS in Zagreb was violated. In contrast to the Slovenian and Bosnian governments, the Dalmatian government continued as a result of a completed act on 2 November. Namely, the Presidency of the NV SHS named I. Krstitelj as commissioner for Dalmatia on 3 November, i.e. after the Dalmatian government had been composed without consulting Zagreb.<sup>101</sup>

The process of the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian armed forces continued with unstoppable speed. On 30 October, Charles I (IV.) issued a 'supreme order' that the 'navy, naval institutions and other naval property will be successively surrendered to the Yugoslav National council in Zagreb.'<sup>102</sup> A possible reason for the Emperor's surrender of his navy to the NV SHS can be found in his hope that, after the end of the war and the conclusion of peace agreements, the Empire would be preserved in some form ('a new Austria') and that representatives of states emerging from its territory would enter the new government. In that way, the navy handed over to the NV SHS would once again come under Charles' command.<sup>103</sup>

The Presidency of the NV SHS made its first diplomatic move on 31 October when it sent a note to the American, British, French, Italian and Serbian governments: 'The State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, which was constituted on the territory of the South Slavs, which hitherto formed part of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, and which is ready to enter into a common state with Serbia and Montenegro, declares formally that it is not in a state of war with the Allied states.'<sup>104</sup> At the same time the Central committee informed the Yugoslav committee about the note sent to allied governments and added that the National council 'authorizes the Yugoslav committee in London to represent the interests of the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs toward other states.'<sup>105</sup>

The delegation of the NV SHS led by A. Tresić-Pavičić arrived in Pula on 31 October and boarded the flagship *Viribus Unitis*, upon which they were awaited by Admiral Miklós Horthy. The transfer of the navy was carried out in conformity with the Emperor's order and without incident.<sup>106</sup> Indeed, there

<sup>100</sup> B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici središnjeg odbora', 353.

<sup>101</sup> B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici središnjeg odbora', 355; B. Krizman, *Raspad Austro-Ugarske*, p. 99; *Zapisci Dra Josipa Smodlake* (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1972), p. 57. For more on the composition of the Dalmatian government see: S. Budisavljević, *Stvaranje države Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*, p. 142.

<sup>102</sup> B. Krizman, *Raspad Austro-Ugarske*, p. 105.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>104</sup> B. Krizman – D. Janković, *Grada*, 1: 430.

<sup>105</sup> F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, p. 218. This authorization was confirmed on 8 November (*ibid.*, p. 230-231).

<sup>106</sup> The Monarchy surrendered in total 300 ships to the State of SHS. (See: P. Pekić, *Propast Austro-ugarske monarhije*, p. 274).

were certain chivalrous gestures in connection with the lowering of the Austro-Hungarian flag and the raising of the Croatian flag on the mast of the *Viribus Unitis*, on the occasion of Admiral Horthy's departure from the ship.<sup>107</sup> On the same day, Drinković and Krstelj took possession of the Austro-Hungarian ships in Šibenik. Another transfer took place in Boka Kotorska, in agreement with the Dalmatian regional representative, Ante Franić.<sup>108</sup> Having received into their hands the naval fleet of the vanished Monarchy, the Central committee named, at a meeting held on 31 October, Rear Admiral Dragutin Prica as commissioner for the navy, while the battleship Captain Janko Vuković Podkapelski was named commander of the fleet.<sup>109</sup>

The Italian naval command soon discovered what had happened in Pula and decided to carry out an urgent action with the aim of sinking the flagship anchored in the port. The action of two Italian saboteurs (Paolucci and Rosseti) was quick and frighteningly efficacious – the flagship *Viribus Unitis* was sunk together with its commander Vuković Podkapelski who was joined in a watery grave by two hundred and fifty sailors.<sup>110</sup> The sinking of *Viribus Unitis* marked the beginning of the end of the navy of the State of SHS.<sup>111</sup>

Realizing that the State of SHS could not survive without its own armed forces, M. Drinković issued a call to mobilization in the name of the NV SHS: 'It is the duty of every son of our homeland to defend his loved state, which is being born in pain, from collapse.'<sup>112</sup> Yet almost no-one answered his call. The NV SHS had at its disposal a minimal number of armed forces: the 25<sup>th</sup> and 53<sup>rd</sup> Home Guard regiments in Zagreb (poorly manned), some Croatian and Serbian members of Falcon organizations, armed youth and students, a unit of sailors from Pula, the National Guard, and some volunteer groups and units of Serbian POWs.<sup>113</sup> Drinković was, in the fullest sense of the word, a general without an army.

The armistice between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, which to a certain extent still existed only formally, and the countries of the Entente was

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<sup>107</sup> Ferdo Čulinović, *1918 na Jadranu* (Zagreb: Glas rada, 1951), pp. 217-220; M. Balota (Mijo Mirković), *Puna je Pula* (Zagreb: Izdavački zavod Jugoslavenske akademije, 1960), p. 305.

<sup>108</sup> B. Krizman, *Raspad Austro-Ugarske*, p. 110.

<sup>109</sup> F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, p. 220.

<sup>110</sup> F. Čulinović, *1918 na Jadranu*, p. 220. Also see: M. Grakalić, 'Nepoznati zapis Frana Barbalića o uzrocima potonuća admiralskog broda 'VIRIBUS UNITIS'', *Istarski mozaik*, (1967), no. 1-2: 88-90.

<sup>111</sup> See: B. Krizman, 'Nešto o sudbini austro-ugarske ratne mornarice 1918. godine', *Riječka revija*, 3 (1954), no. 3-4: 99-105; B. Krizman, 'Razdioba austrougarskog ratnog brodovlja poslije prvoga svjetskog rata', *Anali Jadranskog instituta*, 4 (1968): 205-291.

<sup>112</sup> F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, p. 219.

<sup>113</sup> For more, see: Tomislav Zorko, 'Sigurnosne prilike i stvaranje vojno-političkih snaga Države SHS na prostoru Banske Hrvatske' (Zagreb: Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 2006).

signed on 3 November in Padua, and came into effect the following day.<sup>114</sup> The Italian side, not recognizing the reality of the disappearance of the Monarchy and the proclamation of the State of SHS, skilfully exploited the conditions of the armistice to take possession of those territories on the eastern Adriatic coast that were promised to the Italians by the secret Treaty of London from 1915, and even more than those territories (i.e. Rijeka).<sup>115</sup>

At a meeting of the Central committee held on 3 November, a new note was sent to governments in Washington, London, Paris, Rome and Skopje, i.e. to the Serbian government, and to the Yugoslav committee in which everything, along with certain explanations, that was already said in the note from 31 October was repeated, while it was added that the NV SHS 'appeals to the governments of the Entente' to recognize 'the right of our national self-determination in its entirety', and that, with the Italian 'occupation of one part of our national territory, prejudice is not created against our complete national and state unification'.<sup>116</sup>

At the same meeting, the members of the Central committee accepted the three proposals of Tugomir Alaupović and Vladimir Ćorović: 1) that the Presidency of the NV SHS sends president Wilson, 'the liberator of small and oppressed peoples and the defender of the principle of national self-determination', a greeting of gratitude and request that he 'take the state of SHS into his moral protection',<sup>117</sup> 2) that, on the occasion of the liberation of Belgrade, it send a greeting to the 'brother Serbian government' with which the State of SHS 'will together soon share a serene and brighter future' and 3) that on all occasions, 'wherever the state of SHS is represented, let the common flags of the SHS be raised as a symbol of our unity'.<sup>118</sup>

Soon after his arrival in Geneva on 3 November, Korošec communicated to the governments of France, Great Britain, Italy, the United States of America and Serbia that the NV SHS was the 'supreme government of the Yugoslav lands, which it already administers', and requests that they 'please recognize the National council in Zagreb as the regular government'. The President of the NV SHS further declared that the 'government in Zagreb considers as its

<sup>114</sup> F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, pp. 221-224.

<sup>115</sup> Milan Marjanović, *Londonski ugovor iz godine 1915. prilog povijesti borbe za Jadran 1914-1917.*, (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1960); F. Čulinović, *Riječka država. Od Londonskog pakta i Danuncijade do Rapalla i aneksije Italiji* (Zagreb: Povijesno društvo NR Hrvatske, 1953), pp. 42-65. On the attitude of the Serbian president Milenko Vesnić at the conference in Padua, see: Ante Smith Pavelić, Dr. Ante Trumbić. *Problemi o hrvatsko-srpskih odnosa* (München: Knjižnica Hrvatske revije, 1959), pp. 157-159.

<sup>116</sup> B. Krizman, 'Narodno vijeće Slovenaca, Hrvata i Srba' u Zagrebu i talijanska okupacija na Jadranu 1918. godine. Građa o vanjskoj politici Predsjedništva Narodnog vijeća SHS od 29. X do 1. XII. 1918', *Anali Jadranskog instituta*, 1 (1956): 88-89.

<sup>117</sup> F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, p. 227.

<sup>118</sup> B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici središnjeg odbora', 355.

task the liberation of the Austro-Hungarian Yugoslavs from all foreign rule and their unification with their brothers from Serbia and Montenegro into an independent state, on the basis of the principle of nationality and the right of national self-determination' and finally communicated that A. Trumbić had received the mandate to represent the NV SHS in relations 'with the Allied governments and government of the United States (of America)'.<sup>119</sup> Pašić answered Korošec's request for the recognition of the NV SHS on 8 November.<sup>120</sup>

From 6 to 9 November, the representatives of the NV SHS (A. Trumbić, M. Čingrija and G. Žerjav), the Yugoslav committee (A. Trumbić, Gustav Gregorin, Nikola Stojanović, Jovan Banjanin and Dušan Vasiljević), the president of the Serbian government (Nikola Pašić) and the representatives in the Serbian National Assembly (Marko Trifković, Milorad Drašković and Vojislav Marinković) held a conference in Geneva.<sup>121</sup> In a declaration on 9 November, 'solemnly and before the whole world', the participants of the conference unanimously stated the unification of the State of SHS and the Kingdom of Serbia into 'the state of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes', and was also expecting with open arms and 'a brotherly hug', the people of Montenegro.<sup>122</sup> On the basis of the achieved agreement it was decided to form a 'common ministry for the Kingdom of Serbia and the area of the National council in Zagreb, the task of which is to organize the common state of SHS, the Constituent Assembly of which will produce a constitution'. The formation of the 'common ministry', i.e. a government composed of 12 ministries, did not disturb the 'existing administrative system' in the Kingdom of Serbia and the State of SHS, i.e. the royal government and the government of the NV SHS remained further in place, but with a reduction of their scope of work. It was agreed that the ministers who would be chosen for the 'Common ministry' by the Kingdom of Serbia, would also swear an oath, according to the decrees of the constitution, to their sovereign (King Petar Karađorđević I), while the ministers named by the NV

<sup>119</sup> F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, pp. 225-226.

<sup>120</sup> 'In the name of the royal Serbian government it is my honour to inform you that it recognizes the National council in Zagreb as the lawful government of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, which lives on the territory of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and that i have sent today a note to the governments of France, England, Italy and the United States of America, requesting that they also recognize the National council in Zagreb, as the lawful government of the Yugoslav lands of the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and that they recognize the volunteer troops of these lands as a warring party...At the same time the royal government acknowledges that the National council has entrusted mister Trumbić with the mandate to represent it to the Allies...With particular satisfaction, the Serbian royal government acknowledges the declaration of the National council in Zagreb, according to which it considers as its' aims the liberation of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy from every foreign domination and their unification with their brothers from the Kingdom of Serbia and the Kingdom of Montenegro into one united and independent state'. (F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, p. 233).

<sup>121</sup> *Ženevska konferencija o jugoslavenskom ujedinjenju. Događaji, dokumenta i komentari* (Zagreb: Braća Kralj 1919), p. 38.

<sup>122</sup> F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, p. 236.

SHS would swear their oath to their president (A. Korošec).<sup>123</sup> Yet, the Geneva agreement was not fated to last too long. Due to resistance in the government itself (from Stojan Protić and others), Pašić was forced to inform Korošec, Trumbić and Čingrija on 14 November that their agreement had not found approval from the decisive Serbian political factors and that he was withdrawing from the Geneva agreement.<sup>124</sup>

At a meeting of the Central committee on 4 November, V. Korać proposed that the Presidency of the NV SHS call for the assistance of the Entente's units which should defend 'our territory from the army of the former Austro-Hungary, which in the utmost disorganization is returning from the battlefield'.<sup>125</sup> Yet, on 3 November, after hearing that German units had left Belgrade two days earlier, a special delegation (Laza Popović, Valerijan Pribičević<sup>126</sup> and Dragutin Perko) was constituted in Zagreb with the task of establishing ties between the NV SHS and the Serbian government and army 'somewhere on the Balkan battlefield'. According to written instructions, they were to request from the 'brother' Serbian government that it 'help protect the land and population of Srijem and eastern Slavonia' from the army of the former Monarchy, which, because of the shortage of food could be transformed into an 'unordered horde, which would ravage and pillage'. The units of the Serbian army were supposed to place themselves at the disposal of the NV SHS 'roughly' to the Osijek-Šamac railroad.<sup>127</sup> In the period from 5 to 11 November, the delegation successfully completed its military-diplomatic mission in Serbia. Indeed, Popović even exceeded the authority he had, calling the Serbian army into the interior of the State of SHS (Bačka, Banat, Baranja, Rijeka, Međimurje).<sup>128</sup> While Popović and Perko returned on 12 November to Zagreb, V. Pribičević remained in Belgrade as a 'consular agent' of the NV SHS.<sup>129</sup> Apart from Serbia, the NV SHS turned to the supreme commander of Allied armies, Marshal Foch, for help on 4 November.<sup>130</sup>

<sup>123</sup> Ibid, pp. 239-240.

<sup>124</sup> For more on the Geneva conference, see, M. Paulová, *Jugoslavenski odbor*, pp. 550-574; B. Krizman, 'Ženevska konferencija o ujedinjenju 1918 godine', *Istoriski glasnik* (1958): no. 1-2: 3-32; D. Janković, 'Ženevska konferencija o stvaranju jugoslovenske zajednice 1918 godine', *Istorija XX veka* (Beograd: Institut društvenih nauka – Odjeljenje za istorijske nauke, 1963), pp. 225-262.

<sup>125</sup> B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici središnjeg odbora', 359.

<sup>126</sup> As a member of the delegation, V. Pribičević replaced B. Medaković. See, B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, p. 322.

<sup>127</sup> B. Krizman – D. Janković, *Građa*, 2:475.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid, 2: 561-562. The Serbian army crossed the borders of the State of SHS on 4 October at Višegrad, and two days later entered Sarajevo. See: B. Krizman, *Raspad Austro-Ugarske*, p. 130.

<sup>129</sup> B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, p. 332.

<sup>130</sup> F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, p. 229.

At the moment when the Italian army began to urgently carry out the military occupation of the eastern Adriatic coast,<sup>131</sup> and while Korošec was still in Geneva, the delegation of the NV SHS – Tresić-Pavičić, Čok and Bukšeg – were on Corfu where they held talks with the French Vice-admiral Gauchet and the representatives of the Serbian government-in-exile. After these talks, Tresić-Pavičić sent a telegram to Zagreb on 7 November full of completely unjustified optimism concerning the impending development of events on the Adriatic.<sup>132</sup>

In its attempt to stop the further advance of the Italian army on the eastern Adriatic coast, the Presidency of the NV SHS protested to the American president Wilson: 'Since Italy has with its units begun to occupy our pure national territory and enter our ports with their warships, the National council, interpreting the feeling and wishes of the whole of our people, implores the President of the great American republic to help us with his powerful protection, so that the state of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs together and in concordance with Serbia and Montenegro carry out without hindrance the state unification of our whole nation.'<sup>133</sup>

Apart from the call for help sent to foreign countries, on 5 November, the Presidency of the NV SHS proclaimed the foundation of a court-martial, which had to punish those who were responsible for revolt, murder, robbery, arson, public violence and 'violent resistance to military force'.<sup>134</sup> On 6 November, the NV SHS received an unexpected telegraph of support from the French general Franchet d'Espèrey: 'The Allied armies in the East greet with enthusiasm the Yugoslav National council in Zagreb and in Ljubljana, as well as the new Yugoslav army on land and sea, which marches under the flag of the Allies for the victory of freedom and justice. The Allies expect that the Yugoslav units in Zagreb and Ljubljana will immediately enter into a close connection with the Allied command in Belgrade. That connection will be a symbol of the unification of blood against the common enemy of all Slavs, liberated from the Habsburg yoke.'<sup>135</sup>

The same day, president Wilson appealed to the nations of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire to 'do all that is possible in order [to ensure] that the

<sup>131</sup> D. Šepić, *Italija, Saveznici i jugoslavensko pitanje 1914-1918* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1970), pp. 379-387.

<sup>132</sup> B. Krizman, 'Talijanska okupacija na Jadranu i misija A. Tresića-Pavičića 1918 god.', *Pomorski zbornik*, 5 (1967): 662. On the activity of the delegation on Corfu see his report to the NV SHS in B. Krizman – D. Janković. *Grada*, 2: 626-628, 3fn.

<sup>133</sup> F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, p. 227.

<sup>134</sup> B. Krizman, *Raspad Austro-Ugarske*, p. 140.

<sup>135</sup> F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, p. 230. The Presidency of the NV SHS thanked the French general for his telegram of support and informed him, among things, it had already sent its delegation – L. Popović, V. Pribičević and D. Perko – to Serbia with the aim of entering into closer relations with the Serbian government and army. (ibid, pp. 234-235).

critical changes, which need to be carried out, are performed orderly, moderately and mildly as well as decisively, so that all violence and every cruelty are removed and hindered.<sup>136</sup>

After the first days of the Sabor's decision on the breaking of all state-legal ties with Austria and Hungary, the Presidency of the NV SHS found itself completely isolated. It had not received information as to whether their notes and telegrams had even reached the right addresses. As a result, on 8 November, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Serbia was contacted with the following request: 'during the last days, the National council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs has sent dispatches by telegraph, copies of which are here attached. As the National council is not certain that these dispatches have been sent and received by the addressees, it has the honour of attaching its text and instructions to the fraternal royal ministry of foreign affairs and to ask that it take note of the contents of the dispatch and undertake what is necessary so that the remaining dispatches are immediately forwarded by telegraph to where they are earmarked for'.<sup>137</sup>

The Presidency of the NV SHS maintained certain diplomatic ties with the newly founded states on the territory of the former Empire. Thus, a Hungarian military delegation, headed by Alladár Balla, arrived in Zagreb on 10 November. Although the Hungarian delegates were received ceremoniously, they returned home without having completed their work, because their hosts actually refused to talk with them at all.<sup>138</sup> The Presidency of the NV SHS did not limit itself only to the hosting of foreign delegations in Zagreb, but also had, apart from V. Pribičević in Belgrade, diplomatic representatives ('consular agents') in Budapest (Marko Petrović), Vienna (Petar Defranceschi)<sup>139</sup> and Prague (Roko Bradanović).<sup>140</sup> In return, the Czechoslovak government named Emil Šimek as its authorized delegate in Zagreb.<sup>141</sup>

A meeting of the Central committee on 8 November accepted D. Popović's proposal that the 'Presidency of the NV SHS enter, as best it can and when

<sup>136</sup> B. Krizman – D. Janković, *Grada*, 2: 488-489.

<sup>137</sup> F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, p. 231.

<sup>138</sup> B. Krizman, 'Poslanik grofa M. Karolyi-a u Zagrebu godine 1918' and 'Što je Balla zapravo tražio u Zagrebu?' *Narodni list*, 14 May 1954, p. 2 and 18 May 1954, p. 3. Also see the report on the arrival of the Hungarian delegation to Zagreb: F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, pp. 243-245. For more on the proclamation of Hungarian state independence see: Péter Hanák, ed. *Povijest Mađarske* (Zagreb: Barbat, 1995), pp. 210-212.

<sup>139</sup> The former Austro-Hungarian consul in the United States, Ivan Schwegel, operated in Vienna as the diplomatic representative of the Slovenian government. For more on his appointment and the confusion that emerged in connection with this, see: Andrej Rahten, *Pozabljeni slovenski premier. Politička biografija dr. Janka Brejca (1869-1934)* (Celovac: Mohorjeva založba, 2002), pp. 198-199, 60fn.

<sup>140</sup> For more see: B. Krizman, 'Predstavnici Predsjedništva 'Narodnog vijeća SHS' u Budimpešti, Beču i Pragu 1918', *Historijski zbornik* 10 (1957), no. 1-4: 23-43.

<sup>141</sup> B. Krizman, *Raspad Austro-Ugarske*, p. 141.

most convenient, into diplomatic contact with the Entente.<sup>142</sup> On the same day the Presidency sent a note of protest to the Italian government because of its occupation policy along the Adriatic.<sup>143</sup> N. Pašić was informed about the actions of the Italians: 'The state of SHS has declared from the first beginnings of its existence that it wishes to enter into one united state with the Kingdom of Serbia and Montenegro. The areas and ports, which Italian units now occupy, enter the composition of that state and Italian encroachments are directed precisely against our interests, as well as the interests of the Kingdom of Serbia. For that reason the National council of the NV SHS turns with brotherly trust to the Serbian government, ardently pleading that, from its side, it decisively support our demand and undertake as soon as possible all necessary steps so that the Italians should refrain from the occupation of our regions.'<sup>144</sup>

The following day, 9 November, the Presidency of the NV SHS made a protest to the Italian government because of the demand of the 'supreme command of the Italian' fleet that 'warships have to fly the Austro-Hungarian flag on the stern' since 'the Yugoslav flag is not recognized by the Allies.'<sup>145</sup> The Serbian government was informed about the problem of the former Austro-Hungarian fleet on 10 November along with the appeal that a Serbian delegate be sent to Zagreb for the purpose of an agreement 'so that we can save with our common efforts the fleet for our future common concern.'<sup>146</sup> Drinković was not only troubled by the problems in connection with the navy, which was daily slipping out of the hands of the NV SHS, but also by the impossibility of organizing military forces on the territory of the state of SHS in the way desired for by Zagreb. Namely, the Bosnian government, 'with particular gratitude and recognition' took note of the news that Drinković was sending Vice-Marshal Teodor Bekić and General-Major Adam Durman to Sarajevo and Mostar. However, this did not mean that it wanted to receive them. The government of the National council for Bosnia and Herzegovina felt that it was best to let the Serbian army take matters into their hands in order to maintain order and peace. Drinković and his military staff were perfectly unnecessary in Bosnia.<sup>147</sup>

At a meeting of the Central committee on 11 November, debate was held about the 'republican and monarchical form of the state of SHS'. Unable to bring any concrete decision, the members of the Central committee accepted Pavelić's proposal that the debate continue at the following meeting scheduled

<sup>142</sup> B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici središnjeg odbora', 359.

<sup>143</sup> F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, pp. 231-232.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 235-236. A week later, the Presidency of the NV SHS protested, through the intercession of the Serbian government, the Italian occupation of Rijeka (*ibid.*, pp. 251-252).

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 237-238.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 245-246.

<sup>147</sup> B. Krizman, *Raspad Austro-Ugarske*, pp. 146-148.

for 14 November.<sup>148</sup> Burdened by numerous internal and external problems, the members of the NV SHS probably did not notice, if indeed it interested them at all, that the Austrian Emperor and Croato-Hungarian King Charles I (IV) abdicated the throne in Vienna on 11 November.<sup>149</sup>

On the same day, 13 November, when the armistice was signed in Belgrade between the defeated Hungary and the Allied states,<sup>150</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel Dušan T. Simović reached Zagreb as a delegate of the Supreme command of the Serbian army to the NV SHS. Before his departure to his new post, Simović was received by the regent Aleksandar, who named him as delegate, and commanded him to convey his greetings, and the greetings of the Serbian government to the NV SHS, as well as to express their readiness to meet all the wishes of the NV SHS regarding the maintenance of internal peace and the protection of national borders.<sup>151</sup> *Vojvoda* Živojin Mišić gave Simović his credentials in which it was stated that he would maintain ties between the NV SHS and the Supreme command of the Serbian army 'in all questions, which will appear in our present mutual relations.'<sup>152</sup>

Simović was welcomed at Zagreb's railway station by V. Wilder who accompanied him to meet Drinković, who in turn took Simović to the parliament building, where the headquarters of the Presidency of the NV SHS was located. There Simović was greeted by: S. Pribičević, A. Pavelić, A. Kramer, I. Lorković, and others. Handing over his diplomatic mandate, Simović conveyed to those present the viewpoints of the regent and *Vojvoda* Mišić and informed them that one battalion of the 5<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment of the Serbian army had started to make its way toward Rijeka from Ruma via Zagreb with the task of protecting Rijeka from Italian occupation. In response to Simović, I. Lorković spoke of the creation of the state of SHS with its borders on the Drina, Sava and Danube rivers and of its independence from the Kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro and its 'recognition' from the Serbian government.<sup>153</sup>

<sup>148</sup> B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici središnjeg odbora', 361. At the same meeting, it was decided that a decree be added to the statutes of the Central committee, on the basis of which only the following individuals could participate in its work: '1. the commissioners of all national governments of the state of SHS; 2. the national representatives of parties which entered the National council. This is valid for all assemblies along with the permission of the Central committee. The right to participate at meetings is also shared by the deputy members of the Central committee without the right to vote'. (ibid, 362).

<sup>149</sup> F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, p. 246. On 12 November, the German-Austrian National council in Vienna proclaimed a republic. See: Ernst Joseph Görlich, *Grundzüge der Geschichte der Habsburgermonarchie und Österreichs* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1980), p. 275.

<sup>150</sup> B. Krizman, 'Beogradsko primirje' od 13. novembra 1918', *Zbornik za društvene nauke*, 47 (1967): 111-134.

<sup>151</sup> B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, p.335.

<sup>152</sup> B. Krizman, 'Izvjestaj D. T. Simovića, delegata srpske Vrhovne komande kod vlade Narodnog vijeća SHS g. 1918', *Historijski zbornik*, 8 (1955), no. 1-4: 123.

<sup>153</sup> B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, p. 336.

Having listened to Lorković, Simović, refusing to give any political declarations, said the following: 'Serbia, which in this war gave one and a half million victims for the liberation and unification of our one-blooded brothers across the Danube, Sava and Drina, can in no case allow the formation on its borders of some new state, which would take into its composition all of her compatriots and – after four years of pain and the complete defeat of its enemies – remain in the background and surrender all fruits of victory to another, who participated in the war on the enemy side. To Serbia belongs, by right of its arms and on the basis of the agreement with Hungary the following territories: Banat to the Oršava-Karansebeš (river) line, Maroš-Arad below Segedin; Bačka to the Horgoš-Subotica-Baja line; Baranja to the Batasek-Pečuj-Barč line and further along the river Drava toward Osijek; Srijem and Slavonia to the railway line of Osijek-Đakovo-Šamac; the whole of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Dalmatia to the cape of Planka. Outside of that territory, once can take sides as one wishes; to go with Serbia or to form your own separate state'.<sup>154</sup>

After a short silence, A. Pavelić stated that the NV SHS was not thinking of forming an independent ('Yugoslav') state but rather wished for 'unification with Serbia.' However, according to his opinion, two questions still needed to be addressed: 1) the shape of the common state, i.e. a federal arrangement in which there would exist separate administrative units, consisting of: Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Vojvodina, Croatia, Dalmatia and Slovenia; and 2) 'the demarcation' of boundaries between the Croatian and Serbian populations, which would, due to the mixture of the two populations, have to be carried out through the resettlement and exchange of the Serbian population in Croatia and western Bosnia and the Croatian population in Herzegovina.<sup>155</sup> Pavelić also told Simović, among other things, the following: 'the decision on the question of the future state arrangement is a sovereign right of the nation and it is the one to decide through the freely elected Constituent Assembly. Neither the Serbian government nor you are authorized to solve that question without the nation and not having asked the nation. I therefore think that one need not now debate the question of the future state arrangement'.<sup>156</sup> Pavelić was left with no other option than to retreat and argue that he 'largely' agreed with what Simović had told him and that the main question now was the formation of the common state.<sup>157</sup>

<sup>154</sup> Ibid, pp. 336-337. Simović's statement made 'the deepest impression' on all present. Simović was told this by S. Pribičević the following day. (ibid, p. 337).

<sup>155</sup> Ibid, p. 337.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid. In response to Pavelić's argument that Macedonia should be a separate federal unit in the new state, Simović declared that 'it would not be right or fair that for you, for whose freedom Serbia fought and who will receive you with open arms in a fraternal community, to separate Macedonia from Serbia.' See ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

During his stay in Zagreb, Simović informed his Supreme command several times concerning the military-political situation in the state of SHS.<sup>158</sup> At a meeting of the Central committee on 14 November, it was concluded that the 'Presidency of the government of the National council of SHS in Zagreb has to enter into contact with the Serbian government in Belgrade as soon as possible concerning the formation of a common government for the whole sovereign state of SHS'.<sup>159</sup> The following areas would be included in the government's common affairs: railways, army, finances and foreign affairs. Before the government could be constructed, information from the Yugoslav committee regarding foreign-political relations had to be received.<sup>160</sup> Two days later, on 16 November, Simović informed the Presidency of the NV SHS about the Geneva conference and its resolutions, although they no longer had any obligatory power.<sup>161</sup>

On the same day, the Serbian minister Momčilo Ninčić also informed S. Pribičević, using Simović as a go-between, about the resolutions of the Geneva conference. According to his argument, Serbian politicians had the increasing impression that 'certain Croatian circles had a plan to separate Serbia and Montenegro from our remaining areas' so that 'instead of a united state in which they are frightened that Serbs would have the leading word, a purely Austrian combination is created', i.e. the creation of dualistic state-legal relations such as those which existed previously between Austria and Hungary.<sup>162</sup> For Ninčić there was no doubt that the 'majority of Croats in Croatia will accept the idea of an inseparable and indivisible state of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes under the dynasty of Karađorđević only when they are given tangible evidence that all Serbs will, in the case that this idea is not quickly and honestly accepted, without hesitation go over to Serbia', as was soon shown by the case of Vojvodina,<sup>163</sup> which in any case was not strongly tied with the NV SHS in Zagreb,<sup>164</sup> but also by the attempt in Banja Luka to bring about independent unification with Serbia.<sup>165</sup> So that the relations between the Serbian government and Yugoslav committee (which, with the participation of the president

<sup>158</sup> B. Krizman, 'Izvyještaj D. T. Simović', 123-132.

<sup>159</sup> B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici središnjeg odbora', 363.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, p. 341.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid. Also see: Kosta Milutinović, 'Vojvodina i stvaranje Jugoslavije', *Historijski pregled*, 7 (1961), no. 3-4: 207; F. Čulinović, *Jugoslavija između dva rata*, 2 vols (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1961), 1: 119-126.

<sup>164</sup> Ante Bešlić represented the 'Yugoslavs from Hungary'. See B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici središnjeg odbora', 362.

<sup>165</sup> H. Kapidžić, 'Pokušaj ujedinjenja Bosne i Hercegovine sa Srbijom u novembru 1918. godine', *Bosna i Hercegovina pod austrougarskom upravom (Članci i rasprave)*, (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1968), pp. 262-282.

of the NV SHS, brought about the Geneva agreement) could be brought to a conclusion, direct talks between Zagreb and Belgrade concerning the creation of a common state had to be established.<sup>166</sup> Ninčić's point of view regarding the Geneva declaration fell on fertile ground with S. Pribičević.<sup>167</sup>

At a meeting of the Central committee on 20 November, S. Pribičević asserted that the 'weakness of the entire situation' in the State of SHS lay in the fact that 'until now, we have not placed ourselves into closer contact with the Kingdom of Serbia and the Kingdom of Montenegro', because 'our delegates do not have the right to independently conclude obligatory agreements with the governments of the Entente in the name of the National council of SHS in Zagreb'.<sup>168</sup> This was more than a clear condemnation of the signing of the Geneva declaration. At the same meeting, a 'compromise proposal' arrived from the regional government of Dalmatia, dated 16 November in Split, regarding the 'temporary unified arrangement of the State of SHS'.<sup>169</sup> The debate on the Dalmatian proposal regarding state unification with Serbia was postponed for the next meeting of the Central committee.<sup>170</sup>

As a prelude for the forthcoming meeting, on the night of 22/23 November, Pribičević and his circle of sympathizers arrested General Anton Lipošćak on charges of conspiring against the NV SHS.<sup>171</sup> The invention of a conspiracy and its quick discovery, thanks to the 'vigilance' of V. Korać,<sup>172</sup> was intended to intimidate and psychologically 'deal' with eventual vacillators in regard to the bringing of decisions on the immediate unification of the State of SHS with Serbia.<sup>173</sup>

On 23<sup>174</sup> and 24 November, a meeting of the Central committee was held, chaired by S. Pribičević. According to his introductory remarks, the State of SHS was in a 'critical situation' and one had to act quickly, i.e. create a common state with Serbia, so that the country would not fall into chaos.<sup>175</sup> The meeting's items of agenda did not only include the proposal of the Dalmatian govern-

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<sup>166</sup> B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, pp. 341-342.

<sup>167</sup> On Pribičević's part in discrediting the Geneva agreement see: Hrvoje Matković, *Svetozar Pribičević i Samostalna demokratska stranka do šestojanuarske diktature* (Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu – Institut za hrvatsku povijest, 1972), pp. 24-25.

<sup>168</sup> B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici središnjeg odbora', 365-366.

<sup>169</sup> For the text of the proposal, see: F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, pp. 268-269.

<sup>170</sup> B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici središnjeg odbora', 365, 369.

<sup>171</sup> See: T. Zorko, 'Afera Lipošćak', *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 35 (2003), no. 3: 887-902.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 896.

<sup>173</sup> B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, p. 344.

<sup>174</sup> On that day, the Presidency of the NV SHS lodged a protest to the Allied governments because of the Italian occupation of Istria, parts of the Slovene lands, the Croatian littoral and some strategic points in Dalmatia. See: B. Krizman – D. Janković, *Grada*, 2: 638-639.

<sup>175</sup> F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, p. 268.

ment, which was signed by I. Krstelj and Josip Smodlaka, but also included their threat and ultimatum that Dalmatia would proclaim unification with Serbia on its own if the Central committee did not bring a decision in regard to the creation of a common state within a time-limit of five days.<sup>176</sup> In two days there were more speakers who presented explanations of various proposals on unification with Serbia.<sup>177</sup> Josip Smodlaka's talk was 'improvised' and presented with 'great affect'.<sup>178</sup> At the end, a committee of seven members,<sup>179</sup> who had to produce a 'common proposal' on the implementation of unification, was elected.<sup>180</sup> A meeting was then held in the late afternoon on the second day of the assembly of the Central committee. Following debate, there was acceptance, with one vote (Radić)<sup>181</sup> against, of the proposal of the Committee of seven that a delegation of 28 members<sup>182</sup> be elected to travel to Belgrade in order to implement, in agreement with the Serbian government and the representatives of all parties in Serbia and Montenegro,<sup>183</sup> the urgent organization of a united state.<sup>184</sup> The Committee of seven proposed their *Naputke* ('Instructions'), in accordance with which the members of the delegation had to proceed in Be-

<sup>176</sup> *Zapisci Dra Josipa Smodlake*, p. 75; B. Krizman, *Raspad Austro-Ugarske*, p. 206.

<sup>177</sup> F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, pp. 270-274; B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici središnjeg odbora', 371-374.

<sup>178</sup> *Zapisci Dra Josipa Smodlake*, p. 75.

<sup>179</sup> The following were elected to the committee: A. Pavelić, S. Pribičević, I. Cankar, J. Smodlaka, V. Bukšeg, H. Svrzo and M. Drinković. See: B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici središnjeg odbora', 374.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 373; Smodlaka argued later that the members of the Central committee accepted, 'with a huge majority of votes', everything that he stated regarding the immediate unification with Serbia. Indeed, the Committee of seven had to discuss his (and Krstelj's) 'plan for the temporary arrangement' of the common state with Serbia and on the basis of that plan to bring to the members of the Central committee the following day (24 November) the approval of conditions for the implementation of state unification'. See, *Zapisci Dra Josipa Smodlake*, pp. 75-76.

<sup>181</sup> For Radić's famous speech on the evening meeting of the Central committee, see: Stjepan Radić, *Politički spisi, govori i dokumenti/izbor* (Zagreb: Dom i svijet, 1995), pp. 79-86. Already on the following day, 25 November, in Zagreb at the general assembly of his party, Radić sharply attacked the decision of the Central committee on the unification with Serbia. The peasant delegates present decided that Radić should not travel to Belgrade. See: Ivan Mužić, *Stjepan Radić u Kraljevini Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca* (Zagreb: Hrvatsko književno društvo sv. Ćirila i Metoda, 1987), pp. 32-33. Dissatisfied with Smodlaka's arguments in favour of unification with Serbia, Dr. Hrvoj sent A. Pavelić a letter in which he stated: 'I beg and implore you to hinder in whatever manner you know [the possibility] that tonight the fatal decision to create a united government with the Kingdom of Serbia with the regent Aleksandar at its head, is not taken'. See: A. Smith Pavelić, *Dr. Ante Trumbić*, p. 207.

<sup>182</sup> The following were elected as delegates: F. Barac, I. Cankar, L. Čabrajić, M. Drinković, Š. Grdić, H. Hrasnica, V. Korać, A. Korošec, A. Kramer, A. Kristan, M. Laginja, I. Lorković, E. Lukinić, S. Ljubibratić, I. Paleček, A. Pavelić, Ž. Petričić, D. Popović, S. Pribičević, S. Radić, J. Smodlaka, V. Stajić, J. Sunarić, H. Svrzo, J. Šimrak, V. Šola, A. Tresić-Pavičić, A. Trumbić. See: F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, p. 256.

<sup>183</sup> For more on the unification of the Kingdom of Montenegro with Serbia, see: Dimitrije Dimo Vujović, *Podgorička skupština 1918*. (Zagreb: Školska knjiga – Stvarnost, 1989).

<sup>184</sup> F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, pp. 255-256.

grade.<sup>185</sup> At a meeting of the Central committee, on 25 November, discussions were mainly held on finances and the agrarian question.<sup>186</sup>

The following day, 26 November, a meeting of the Central committee discussed the pressing departure for Belgrade. After a longer debate, the majority of the present departed for their homes in the conviction that the delegation would not travel to Belgrade the following day, 27 November. S. Pribičević and his supporters remained at the meeting after the others had left and decided nevertheless to depart for Belgrade the following day. The leadership of the NV SHS was temporarily left to Ban Mihalovich, S. Budisavljević and V. Bukšeg. It is interesting that at the same meeting Radić, but not his party, was expelled from the Central committee.<sup>187</sup>

In the morning, on 27 November, the members of the delegation<sup>188</sup> departed for Belgrade from Zagreb's main railway station. The delegates were accompanied by financial experts, the Serbian Lieutenant-Colonel Milan Pribičević and Rudolf Giunio, who arrived that morning from Paris to inform, in Trumbić's name, the members of the NV SHS about the most important foreign events.<sup>189</sup>

The delegation arrived in Belgrade on 28 November. After a ceremonial welcome, the regent Aleksandar began to receive individual audiences. The representatives of the Serbian government (S. Protić, Lj. Jovanović and M. Ninčić) soon began to talk with the representatives of the delegation of the NV SHS about the manner and form of proclaiming state unification. It was decided to elect a committee of six members in which each side would ordain its three representatives. The Serbian representatives were S. Protić, Lj. Jovanović and M. Ninčić, while the representatives of the NV SHS were S. Pribičević,<sup>190</sup> A. Pavelić and J. Smodlaka. Since both sides did not wish to delay the proclamation of unification, it was agreed that the delegation of the NV SHS would deliver an address to regent Aleksandar in which it would inform him of the decisions of the Central committee from 24 November, while the Regent would, in his response, proclaim the unification of the Kingdom of Serbia with the State of SHS. S. Pribičević, A. Pavelić and J. Smodlaka informed the delegation of the NV SHS of this agreement, after which the delegation elected a

<sup>185</sup> Ibid, pp. 275-276.

<sup>186</sup> B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici središnjeg odbora', 376-382.

<sup>187</sup> F. Šišić, Dokumenti, p. 279. For the attempt to reconstruct the deficient report of the meeting see: Zvonimir Kulundžić, *Atentat na Stjepana Radića* (Zagreb: Stvarnost, 1967), pp. 94-100.

<sup>188</sup> A. Trumbić, S. Radić, I. Lorković and A. Korošec (who was replaced by J. Brejč) were not among the delegates. The Slovenian delegates, who were further added to by Josip Puntar, joined the remaining delegates a little later. See: B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, p. 353; M. Zečević, *Slovenska ljudska stranka*, p. 207.

<sup>189</sup> B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, p. 353.

<sup>190</sup> S. Pribičević was received in audience before regent Aleksandar on 29 November. See, *ibid*, p. 356.

committee of five members to whom was entrusted the task of composing the address.<sup>191</sup> During the talks, the members of the delegation never consulted the *Naputke* ('Instructions'), which was for the whole time comfortably located in the pocket of J. Šimrak.<sup>192</sup>

While the talks were still in progress, on 30 November a telegram from Split arrived in Belgrade from the Dalmatian government, which 'implored, in the name of the entire population of Dalmatia, all competent factors to implement, without further hesitation and without regard to minor questions, the formal unification of all Slovenes, Croats and Serbs from the Adriatic to the Vardar into a united state and that they immediately create a unified representation and leadership'.<sup>193</sup> On 1 December, at a common meeting of the delegation of NV SHS and Serbian representatives, the text of the address and response of regent Aleksandar was read and finally edited. At the same time, it was agreed that the actual act of unification would take place the same day, in the evening hours, in the Regent's temporary residence in the Terazija district (in the house of Krsmanović).

Reading the address in the name of the NV SHS, A. Pavelić exclaimed: 'Long live the free and united Yugoslavia!'<sup>194</sup> In his response,<sup>195</sup> 'in the name of his Majesty, King Peter I', regent Aleksandar proclaimed the 'unification of Serbia with the lands of the independent state of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs to the united Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes'.<sup>196</sup> Already on the following day, 2 December, Drinković sent a telegram to Trumbić: 'here everything is arranged as best it could be'.<sup>197</sup> Drinković was finally relieved of heavy burden of organizing and leading the army of the State of SHS.

## Epilogue

Two days after the proclamation of the Kingdom of SHS on 3 December, the president of the NV SHS, Anton Korošec, under whose chairmanship a meeting of the Central committee was held, arrived in Zagreb. He informed the present about his activities in foreign countries.<sup>198</sup> After the meeting, S.

<sup>191</sup> Some years later, S. Pribičević and A. Pavelić debated the authorship of the address. See: H. Matković, *Svetozar Pribičević i Samostalna demokratska stranka*, p. 28.

<sup>192</sup> Josip Horvat, 'Zapisci iz nepovrata. (Kronika okradene mladosti – 1900-1919)', *Rad* (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1983), no. 400: 144.

<sup>193</sup> B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, p. 357.

<sup>194</sup> For the text of the address, see: F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, pp. 280-281.

<sup>195</sup> For the regent's response see, *ibid.*, pp. 282-283.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 282.

<sup>197</sup> B. Krizman, 'Korespondencija A. Trumbić – M. Drinković – J. Gazzari (1918-1919)', *Istoriski pregled*, 9 (1963), no. 1: 57.

<sup>198</sup> B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici središnjeg odbora', 383.

Budisavljević informed, via Simović, S. Pribičević about Korošec's report and his consent to the manner in which unification was carried out.<sup>199</sup> Korošec departed Zagreb for Belgrade where a career as a royal minister awaited him.

At their meeting in Belgrade on 3 December, the delegation of the NV SHS published an announcement in which, among other things, it was stated that with the creation of the Kingdom of SHS, 'the function of the National council as the supreme sovereign government of the State of SHS on the territory of the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy had ceased. With the constitution of ministries its administrative functions will also cease, and until then these functions will be carried out by the presidency of the National council in agreement with the Serbian government.'<sup>200</sup> On 6 December, the delegates of the NV SHS elected a narrower committee of twelve members,<sup>201</sup> to whom was entrusted the task to remain further in Belgrade on account of the composition of lists of ministers in the first common government.<sup>202</sup> The remaining members of the delegation returned to their homes. After the meeting of the delegates of the NV SHS in Belgrade, two more meetings of the Central committee were held in Zagreb on 5 and 12 December.<sup>203</sup> By the decision of the Presidency of the NV SHS, all local organs of the council were dissolved on 28 December: 'Today all local committees of the National council in the provinces, as well as all national guards, are dissolved.'<sup>204</sup> The government of the NV SHS resigned on the same day.<sup>205</sup>

The last important task that the NV SHS had to accomplish before its final expiry was the election of delegates for the Temporary National representation in Belgrade. During the first days of 1919, the Central committee brought the principal decision according to which all members of the plenary of the NV

<sup>199</sup> B. Krizman, *Raspad Austro-Ugarske*, p. 241.

<sup>200</sup> B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici središnjeg odbora', 383.

<sup>201</sup> The following were elected to the narrower committee: A. Korošec, S. Pribičević, A. Pavelić, M. Drinković, V. Korać, Š. Grdić, H. Svrzo, J. Smolaka, E. Lukinić, F. Barac, A. Kramer and J. Šimrak. See: B. Krizman, *Raspad Austro-Ugarske*, p. 251.

<sup>202</sup> S. Protić formed the first government (20 December 1918 to 16 August 1919), in which the members of the NV SHS were supposed to be represented, after N. Pašić was unable to do so due to the Regent's opposition. Of the former members of the NV SHS from Zagreb, Ljubljana and Sarajevo who received ministerial portfolios were the following: A. Korošec (vice-president of the government), S. Pribičević (minister of internal affairs), E. Lukinić (minister for postal and telegraph services), Živko Petričić (minister of agriculture), Tugomir Alaupović (minister of religion), Mehmed Spaho (minister for forestry and mining), Albert Kramer (minister for the preparation of the Constituent assembly and equalization of laws), Vitomir Korać (minister for social policy), Uroš Krulj (minister for national health) and Franjo Poljak (minister without portfolio). See: B. Krizman, *Raspad Austro-Ugarske*, p. 257; F. Čulinović, *Jugoslavija između dva rata*, 2: 287-288.

<sup>203</sup> B. Krizman, 'Zapisnici središnjeg odbora', 385-386.

<sup>204</sup> F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, p. 292.

<sup>205</sup> N. Engelsfeld, *Prvi parlament*, p. 48.

SHS had to enter the composition of the Temporary national representation, while it was also determined as to what the relationship between the individual political parties would be before the election of the remaining representatives. The NV SHS did not take for itself the task of selecting individual representatives.<sup>206</sup> Before long, after the organizing of the state institutions of the Kingdom of SHS, all organs of the NV SHS had lost their *raison d'être*.

For the South Slavic politicians from the south of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy gathered in the NV SHS, the short-lived State of SHS served as a bridge for the secure departure from the Central European civilizational realm and the quick entry into the Balkan geopolitical space with all its traps.

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<sup>206</sup> Branislav Gligorijević, *Parlament i političke stranke u Jugoslaviji (1919-1929)* (Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju – Narodna knjiga, 1979), p. 27.

## **Der Volksrat der Slowenen, Kroaten und Serben in Zagreb (1918-1919)**

### **Zusammenfassung**

Aufgrund Archivakte, zeitgemäßer Presse und relevanter Literatur rekonstruierte der Autor die Entstehung und Tätigkeit sowie das Verschwinden des Volksrates der Slowenen, Kroaten und Serben (Narodno vijeće Slovenaca, Hrvata i Srba, NV SHS) in den letzten Monaten der Existenz der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie, während des kurz dauernden Staates der Slowenen, Kroaten und Serben (Država Slovenaca Hrvata i Srba, Država SHS) sowie während der ersten Wochen der Existenz des Königreichs der Serben, Kroaten und Slowenen, also in der Periode von März 1918 bis Januar 1919. Die Hauptcharakteristik des Volksrates der Slowenen, Kroaten und Serben und des von ihm proklamierten Staates war ihre vorausbestimmte Zeitweiligkeit. Das Ziel des Volksrates der Slowenen, Kroaten und Serben war nicht die Zerstörung Österreich-Ungarns und die Gründung eines unabhängigen Staates innerhalb der Grenzen der Monarchie, sondern beschleunigte Einigung des Staates der Slowenen, Kroaten und Serben mit Königreich Serbien und Königreich Montenegro sowie Bildung einer breiteren südslawischen Staatsgemeinschaft im Südosten Europas.