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Security Intelligence Liaison Office

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S. I. L. O.

Consolidated Interrogation Report on Dr. Bunoslav Stepano DRAGOVIC

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY SOURCES METHODS EXEMPTION 3B2B NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT DATE 2001 2008

SYNOPSIS:

Subject is a Roman Catholic priest, who is far from uninterested in politics, a Devotional Croat Nationalist, and an intellectual, if in any way somewhat immature. The following represents the outcome of five interviews with him. His hobbies appear to be collecting stamps and "evidence" against the Serbs.

1. PERSONAL HISTORY:

Petar

Born 1903 at TRKOVO. His father, ~~Trko~~, now dead, was professor of natural science at TRAVNIK. One brother, Zvonimir, is a bank clerk at ZAGREB, and another, Krosimir, is a clerk in private firm. A sister, Dunja, is a school mistress at SARAJEVO.

Education: TRAVNIK, SARAJEVO, Gymnasium, Polytechnic, VIENNA 1922-5, SARAJEVO Theological Seminary 1925-30, Instituto Orientale Pontificio at ROME 1932-5.

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| <u>Occupation:</u> | 1930-2 | Priest at SARAJEVO |
| | 1932-5 | At ROME (see above) |
| | 1935-40 | Catechist to the school, Secretary to the Archbishop, and, as he described them, similar "odd jobs" in SARAJEVO. |
| | 1941 Feb. | Appointed teacher in Ecclesiastical History at TRAVNIK University, by competition. This post he still holds. |
| | 1941 Jan.-Jul. | Spent 50 days in BELGRADE on refugee relief work, to help his friend the Bishop of SKOPJE, Dr. CIGMIL. He was based on SKOPJE but travelled widely in YUGOSLAVIA. |
| | 1941 Autumn | Became President of a Great-Slovene Committee for the relief of Slovene refugees in ZAGREB. This Committee was set up by his own initiative. He is still nominally President. (See above). |
| | 1943 Aug. | Came to Italy to represent the Great-Slovene. His sponsor was the Archbishop of ZAGREB, and his mission to secure the release or otherwise help Yugoslav internees. He returned to ZAGREB at the end of the year and returned to ROME in Jan. 1944. |

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2. COMMISSION:

NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT

Subject stated voluntarily that he knew that three charges were being leveled against him:-

- (1) That he was a collaborator with the Germans. He stated that his work for the Red Cross in TRAVNIK in 1941 and in Italy in 1943-4, made it necessary for him to approach the Germans with a view to securing release of people interned. Apart from that he had no contact with the Germans, except that he was taken to a German Oberleutnant who was billeted in his home.

EXEMPTIONS Section 3 (b) (2)(A) Privacy (2)(B) Methods/Sources (2)(G) Foreign Relations

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- (ii) That he was a Military Chaplain to the DOMOVINA or USTASHI. This he categorically denies.
- (iii) That he acted as guide to Col. PRAPCETIC's (the notorious Ustasi) Regiment. He categorically denies that he ever held this post or ever acted as guide to any troops.

He admits that he supported the Ustasi movement at first, because it brought about the creation of the Independent State of CROATIA. But he never considered a member, and he states that his support for it died after a few months. Now he still supports the Independent State of CROATIA, but not the Ustasi regime.

(NOTE :- The actual charges levelled against subject, which have been brought to notice are :-

- (i) That he is still an ardent Ustasi.
- (ii) That whilst acting as Red Cross Delegate in ITALY he worked to the advantage of the Ustasi, ignoring all non-Croat Yugoslav internees that he found, and sent the Croat internees whose release he secured back to CROATIA, where they were worked at TRISTE by the Germans and carried off to forced labour.

- + (iii) That whilst President of the Slovene-Croat Refugee Relief Committee at LONDON he was supported by PAVICIC and in 1945 by AVSENIK, the prominent Slovene Clerical and collaborationist.

No concrete evidence has yet been obtained to support any of those charges, except that he was undoubtedly working with AVSENIK. (They have been so widely levelled against him, however, that it is difficult to believe they have no foundation.)

10. ETHICAL OUTLOOK

He is a political subject to fanatically anti-Serb and pro-Croat. He is also fanatically anti-Partisan because the Partisans are Communists and therefore in league with the Germans. He is alleged to have expressed enthusiastically his views about the future independence of CROATIA, but under investigation no evidence of this emerged although no evidence emerged to the contrary.

He justified his anti-Serb outlook by declaring that the Serbs have always oppressed and terrorised the Croats, and that the Cetniks who have existed for 70 years, have been an instrument of this oppression. The Declaration of INDEPENDENCE was the culmination of their process of liberation, and the following year he visited the home country to ensure Serb domination over the government of Yugoslavia. It was in answer to this oppression that in 1929 PAVICIC started the Ustasi movement as a Croat answer to the Cetniks. PAVICIC was then expelled for making an inflammatory speech about YUGOSLAVIA in CROATIA, and he now became something of a Croat hero as the Croats argued that when Cetniks were killed their political and law were not infringed in the only manner. PAVICIC then went to ITALY and made an agreement with the Germans. He is alleged to have been a spy because the Italians were bound to understand that the Croat movement of Yugoslavia, and in fact did so. It is alleged that the Partisans had the usual aim of becoming a terrorist movement. That it is a terrorist movement is not in doubt. Such an aim is a crime, and it is a crime when they set in motion the hands of the Serbs are to be marked by.

His anti-Serb outlook is justified by the fact that Communists are by definition anti-Serb, and by the fact that the Serbs are a race.

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4. THE USTASHI PARTY.

Subject's account of this is that after the collapse of NEKRIVAVIA in 1941 practically all Croats welcomed the Ustashi regime because it brought with it the creation of the Independent State of CROATIA and freedom from Serb domination, and few distinguished between this and the regime. After a few months the Ustashi lost this support because of their terrorism but people still wished to retain the Independent State of CROATIA.

He states further that the Allies should take note that the existence of the Independent State of CROATIA will be defended by every Croat to the end. They distrust the idea of a Yugoslav Federation as proposed by the D.D.C., because past experience has shown this leads to Serb domination. If the Allies wish to gain the support and not the opposition of the Croats, they must respect this.

He states that through the British Minister to the VATICAN he submitted in January 44 a memorandum to the British Foreign Office, expressing his views. These are, broadly, the formation of a WARRING Federation consisting of AUSTRIA, SLOVENIA, CROATIA, CZECHOSLOVAKIA and parts of HUNGARY.

He does not attempt to defend Ustashi terrorism, though he states that terrorism was in fact started by the Serbs, and that the most terrible of the Ustashi have by now all been killed in the mutual recriminations which have been going on. He thinks the Ustashi regime would have been good if the Italians and Germans had not corrupted it.

There is, he states, within the Ustashi Party itself, a large body of opposition to its policy of terrorism. This body believes that it only serves the ends of the Germans, as carrier of the Italian. It includes among its members Dr. BRICIC, Dr. CRACIC, Dr. COLO, RAMBAC, Dr. FRANCO (former Minister of Hygiene), and many others. BRACEROVIC associated himself with them. They will work for LIBERTY or anyone else who will give them an Independent State of CROATIA without the Italian.

5. THE CROAT-SLOVENE REFUGEE RELIEF COMMITTEE.

BRACEROVIC states that he formed this on his own initiative at LAGER in the autumn of 1941, to help Slovenes who had fled from NOVIGRA after the German and Italian occupation. The members of the Committee were:-

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|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Dr. <u>BRACEROVIC</u> | President |
| Director <u>BUCEVIN</u> | Vice-President |
| Prof. <u>ROSENER</u> | Secretary (Slovene) |
| Dr. <u>CRACIC</u> | Treasurer " |

This Committee had contact with Dr. AVSTERY, who brought them money from LIBERATION. He is a Slovene Clerical (now in ROME) and made contact with the Committee through the Bishop of LIBERATION. He was in fact present at the first meeting of the Committee. Because of the German laws connected with it was, of course, very secret, as he was infringing currency regulations every time he brought it money.

The Committee had no connection with the Red Cross, he states, such as its funds came from LIBERATION, through Dr. AVSTERY, (all told several million Kupan). The money also came from subscriptions in LAGER, collected from well-to-do Slovenes. The Germans suspected that they were passing money illegally and raided their premises. They found nothing, but put ROSENER in prison for two months on suspicion.

The Committee ran kitchens and an orphanage, and BRACEROVIC had many administrative duties.

CGRISER has now left the Committee, because his political views were objectionable to some of the Slovenes. He was replaced by SRECA, a Slovene and a Liberal.

Another Refugee Relief Committee was run in ZAGREB by Pavle HORVAT, President of the Slovene Peasant and Workers Party. He carried on his political activities parallel to his relief activities and, therefore, had little contact with DRAGANOVIC's Committee. His administrative expenses were high and his funds low, so he achieved little and eventually closed down.

6. THE GREAT RED CROSS IN ITALY.

In Aug. 45 DRAGANOVIC was sent to ITALY by the Archbishop of ZAGREB, to work for this. He also had a wish to work in the VATICAN Archives to complete a book on the Early History of the Church in the Balkans.

The head of the Great Red Cross is Dr. HEN, an eye specialist at ZAGREB University. The Archbishop of ZAGREB sponsored the work in ITALY because the Italians claimed that all Yugoslavs imprisoned there were political internees and did not come within the sphere of the Red Cross. The Archbishop was able to bring VATICAN pressure to bear, and altogether DRAGANOVIC claims to have secured the release of 10,000 people.

The Germans insisted that all people returned should be repatriated. D. states that he was obliged to pay an outrageous show of attention to this ruling, but usually secured people a week's grace between release and repatriation during which they could "disappear". Most of them in fact allowed themselves to be repatriated for fear of the consequences to their family if they were not.

There was at VENICE a Red Cross Commission consisting of Professor LEMTIC, ZUPANCIC, ZEPIDANIC and Dr. PETRIC (former Ustasi Minister of Hygiene). D. states that this commission never directed people to forced labour in GERMANY, and in fact protested against it.

(NOTE:- Dr. LUCAN, another Red Cross Delegate states he knew well that this Commission did direct people to GERMANY, and that Prof. LEMTIC is undoubtedly an Ustasi. If he know, it is difficult to see how D. did not.)

7. MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION.

A. THE FASCIST DELEGATION TO ZAGREB.

D. can remember only two names. MALESTRA DI MOTOLE and General Eugenio COSELISCHI. The latter in 1941 was haranguing the Croats not to tolerate any longer Cetnik atrocities, at the same time as at CISTAJE the Italians were launching against the Croats a band of Cetniks armed by them.

The Delegation requisitioned Palazzo and Military Colleges in large numbers. The selection of Military Colleges was deliberate: the Italians insisted that all Croat officers should go to MODENA to be trained. In fact the BOKORJAN did manage to train some of its own officers.

To D. this is all part of the brazenness of the Italians towards the Croats, and a proof of the subversive effect they had on the Ustasi regime.

B. PERSONALITIES.

"Vojvoda" is a title not a name, it is best translated as "marshal"

JEVDEVIC D. Vojv.

Used to go round Italian camps looking for likely recruits. These were then released and sent to his camp at ABRUZZI where they disappeared into the ranks of the Cetniks. He came to ROME at the end of 43, D. thinks with the idea of recommencing this process.

PAVELIC Anto.

Not in himself a bad man but has become one through German and Italian pressure. He is a typical Wallach, by race, and capable of violence if driven to it. His wife is half-Jewish.

BULJAK Miro.

A really great warrior. Pavelic's adjutant also a Wallach by nature, but D. thinks, is in fact an Avaro by race, (i.e. Hun). A completely inept politician.

KVATERNIK (Senior).

Italian by origin. Has admitted this in a speech at ROME. Suffered much at Serb hands. Has a very high opinion of himself and extravagant ideas of his own importance. Incompetent because old, and so removed at German intervention.

KVATERNIK (Junior)

His mother is a Jewess, the daughter of FRANK, the forerunner of PAVELIC. He has himself shown extraordinary cruelty in his treatment of Jews. Removed soon after his father with whom he was on bad terms and always decuded. Played a large part in the MILSEKILLER murder in 1934 and is said to have organized the actual crime. Held in high esteem by PAVELIC.

(NOTE :- D. is at pains to point out that the leading USTASI are not true Croats).

C. CETNIKS.

i) They started killing Croats before the Ustasi started massacring them.

ii) They had pamphlets printed by the Italians and dropped from aeroplanes. The gist of these was that they would kill "innocent for innocent, and guilty for guilty".

iii) D. has a photograph of a document issued by MILILOVIC "abolishing" the Mohammedan religion in the SANJAK area. There were at the time 140,000 Moslems there.

iv) Col. FRANCETIC, the famous Ustasi, alleged that in Feb. 42 at MOST NA LON he and some Ustasi under him came upon an Italian guarding a bridge with two Cetniks. The Italian promptly shot the two Cetniks, when he saw FRANCETIC, to conceal the fact that Cetniks and Italians were collaborating.

v) In March 44 D. was introduced at MACERATA to Capt. Ferruccio ZIGLIOTTI, nephew of the Mayor of TERA and of a family well known there. In his cups he admitted that he had frequently been an emissary to the Cetniks and Partisans, and claimed to have visited MINALOVIC's H.Q. He further admitted that the Italians had started all the trouble in JUGOSLAVIA.

(NOTE:- D. also produced a sheaf of typewritten copies of documents purposing to give details of Cetnik atrocities against the Croats. These were typical "atrocity" literature and except as expressing his attitude have little or no value).

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9. CONCLUSION.

D. is at least probably an honest man, even if distinctly misguided in his political views. They appear somewhat academic, and are probably derived mainly from reading combined with a fierce Croat Nationalism.

That he is an ardent Croat Nationalist there can be no doubt. He has also betrayed a certain sympathy for the Ustasi regime beyond that to which he will admit, e.g. when he associated himself with the dissident movement within the Ustasi Party.

His account of his activities has at all times been straightforward, though some reticence was shown about his Croat-Slovene Relief Committee at ZAGREB and its connexion with AVSENIK.

It should be noted that in calling himself a Croat citizen he is representing himself to belong to a state not recognized by the Allied Powers, and factually at war with them.

He has been at pains to express his political outlook and beliefs, and possibly his intention in remaining in ROME is to attempt a political re-insurance of the Ustasi Party. It is to be noted that his former colleague AVSENIK is propounding an almost precisely parallel argument for the Slovene Clericals, and that they may still be linked together.

19 July 1944.

(Sgd.) (G. H. C. Davis)
Capt.

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