

# LOUIS ADAMIC'S WORK FOR THE OFFICIAL RECOGNITION OF TITO AND THE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT OF YUGOSLAVIA BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT<sup>1</sup>

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At the time World War II began, Louis Adamic was an established American writer. His was a success story attained by very few immigrants, especially if they came from the South Slavic lands. He arrived at the United States when he was fourteen years old and by that time his education ended. Hence, he must be regarded as a self-made English language writer, which evinces that he was a very gifted man.

The writings of Adamic reveal his great concern for the working class as illustrated by his book *Dynamite*, and for the life of immigrants described in such works as the *Laughing in the Jungle*, *Cradle of Life*, *My America* and others.<sup>2</sup> With the latter group of books he became the initiator of a new field of studies, the ethnic studies, which became prominent in recent years.

The most important book of our study is *The Native's Return*, published in 1934.<sup>3</sup> The book discusses his visit to Slovenia and Yugoslavia in 1932–1933. What he had experienced in his native land had a great impact on his views and actions during World War II. In this regard, it is important to remember that in *The Native's Return* he condemned the dictatorship of King Alexander which he

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was presented at the *International Symposium on Yugoslav-American Relations 1903–1945* at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, October 6 to 9, 1983.

<sup>2</sup> *Dynamite: The Story of Class Violence in America*, New York: The Viking Press, 1931; *Laughing in the Jungle: The Autobiography of an Immigrant in America*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1932; *Cradle of Life: The Story of One Man's Beginnings*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1938.

<sup>3</sup> *The Native's Return: An American Immigrant Visits Yugoslavia and Discovers His Old Country*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1934.

described as a centralistic and unitaristic rule in favor of a Pan-Serbian ruling class. The dictatorship and the ruling class were sustained by Serbian nationalism and profited from the exploitation of Yugoslav natural resources in cooperation with the foreign capital. The main victims of this Pan-Serbian dictatorship, according to Adamic, were other national groups, especially the Croats, and the radical left-wing elements, specifically the communists. The story of the regime's persecution of communists Adamic received directly from Edvard Kardelj, who had been introduced to him by Boris Kidrič under an assumed name.<sup>4</sup> Only after World War II had Adamic learned who the man really was. Kardelj also wrote a report for Adamic about the persecution and the torture suffered by the communists in Glavnjača, the notorious prison in Belgrade. Adamic translated the report and published it as a pamphlet under the title *Struggle* the same year as *The Native's Return*.<sup>5</sup> Because of his deep mistrust for the Yugoslav government and its ruling class, Adamic also disliked the Yugoslav Embassy in Washington, which represented, according to him, the same ruling class, and was headed by the Yugoslav Ambassador Konstantin Fotić, a typical member of this class.

This negative disposition toward Yugoslav government was somewhat softened by the Serbo-Croat agreement – the *Sporazum* – which gave the Croats autonomy in the newly established *Banovina Hrvatska* in 1939. This new attitude was reinforced when Bogdan Radica, a Croat who had been appointed as the head of Press Services at the Yugoslav Embassy in Washington in the fall of 1940, came to see Adamic in New York, bringing him a message from Vladko Maček, the leader of Croatian Peasant Party and the Vice-Premier of the new Yugoslav government formed after the *Sporazum*.<sup>6</sup> In this message Maček was expressing his thanks to Adamic for Adamic's exposure of Serbian unitarism and centralism and for his defense of Croatian national rights in his *Native's Return*. And Radica, describing this event, stressed that Adamic »repeatedly asked me if my superiors [Fotić] had been informed [about Radica's visit to Adamic]. I insisted that they had. Aware of the previous political persecutions of leaders like Maček, he suddenly accepted the fact that conditions might have changed with

<sup>4</sup> Bratko Kreft, *Srečanje s komunisti: Spomin na Adamičev obisk v Ljubljani 1932*, *Delo* (Ljubljana), October 16 and 23, 1981.

<sup>5</sup> *The Struggle*, translated from the Yugoslav by Louis Adamic and with a Preface by the translator, Los Angeles, California: Arthur Whipple, 1934.

<sup>6</sup> Bogdan Radica, Louis Adamič: An Unmeltable American, *The South Slav Journal* (London), vol. 5, no. 4 (Winter 1982–83), pp. 15–16.

the presence of Dr. Maček in the government.<sup>7</sup> Adamic's feelings toward the Yugoslav government further improved with the coup d'état of March 27, 1941. He expressed his enthusiasm with a telegram sent to Radica the same evening with the short exclamation »Živela Jugoslavija« (Long live Yugoslavia).<sup>8</sup> Also his relationship with the Yugoslav Embassy in Washington improved but remained lukewarm. Fotić and his Serbian employees never forgot Adamic's condemnation of Pan-Serbian dictatorship (*The Native's Return* was prohibited reading in Yugoslavia) and Adamic himself never completely trusted Fotić.

But *The Native's Return* has still another importance for our study. Adamic became regarded because of it, an expert for the Balkan affairs in the government circles of Washington and this in turn opened many official doors for him, including the State Department, the Office of War Information (OWI) and the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Both of the latter were the forerunners of today's CIA (Central Intelligence Agency).

Such were the emotional attitudes of Adamic, his frame of mind, his connections – or potential connections – with the governmental agencies when World War II extended to Yugoslavia in April 1941, and eight months later later, in December 1941 to the United States.

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The time from German-Italian attack on Yugoslavia in April 1941 and until September of 1942 can be characterized as the period during which Adamic was gathering all the available information about the situation in Slovenia and Yugoslavia. For this purpose he was eager to meet the few emigrés which succeeded to escape from Yugoslavia and began coming to the United States during the second part of 1941. Outstanding among them were Rev. Kazimir Zakrajšek, a Franciscan priest who left Slovenia as an American citizen after the foreign occupation, Franc Šnoj, minister in the Yugoslav government in exile, Dr. Boris Furlan, university professor in Ljubljana, and Ivan Marija Čok, publicist from the Slovenian Littoral – all of whom were Slovenes. But Adamic established contact also with Serbian and Croatian emigrés. Among them he cultivated specifically close ties with Minister Sava Kosanović, a Serb from Croatia (Prečanski Srb).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

The following letter of November 15, 1941, written by Adamic to Rev. Zakrajšek, very well illustrated the attitudes of Adamic for this period, during which he diligently collected all the available news but did not yet commit himself to a definite program. The letter is referring to the Zakrajšek's program of United Slovenia and reads in part:

*It was fine to see you the other day, and to listen to you. Now I must thank you too for sending me copies of your article. As I read them, I wished I could keep them for future reference. But since you request their return, I enclose them herewith – with the hope that you will let me have them again, either in script or type...*

*For the time being, I shall try to avoid involvement in the immediate polemic, lest I reduce the effectiveness of whatever I might write later. I proceed on the assumption that the current crisis will last at least another year, probably two and possibly longer; meantime many things will happen which now are not even imagined; and I shall try to time whatever I will do as well as I can. I shall be grateful for your advice from time to time. But please don't wait to give it to me 'till I asked for it; be so good as to write to me any time...'<sup>9</sup>*

Exactly when Adamic learned for the first time about the existence of the Partisans and the National Liberation Front is still not firmly established. The indirect evidence indicates that he must have heard about the Partisans at least by March but definitely before August, 1942. Two letters in Zakrajšek's archives support this assertion. On March 12, 1942, Zakrajšek's brother Leo wrote from New York city to Rev. Zakrajšek about the Slovenian Communists who had collaborated with the Germans until the latter attacked Soviet Russia. Thereafter, on the orders from Moscow, they have been attacking German and Italian forces. The consequence is that the Italians and Germans were burning down Slovenian villages and shooting hostages.<sup>10</sup> In another letter, this one of June 24, 1942, Rev. Zakrajšek wrote to a friend of his that he had received three letters from Ljubljana, Slovenia, dated May 23, 1942. All three letters were reporting that Communists

<sup>9</sup> Letter from Louis Adamic to Rev. Kazimir Zakrajšek, dated November 15, 1941, in Zakrajšek Archives.

<sup>10</sup> Letter from Leo Zakrajšek to Rev. Kazimir Zakrajšek, March 12, 1942, in Zakrajšek Archives.

were shooting to death their unarmed ideological opponents in the streets of Ljubljana.<sup>11</sup> In his book *My Native Land* Adamic himself mentioned such reports about the »criminal Slovenian Reds« as coming from a conservative source, but gives August 1942 for the time when he learned about it.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, knowing his excellent ability to obtain all kind of news, one can accept the conclusion that he knew something about a »communist underground« by the middle or by the end of March 1942. This assertion supports the fact that in March 1942 Adamic contributed to the travel expences of Stoyan Pribichevich – an American Serbian journalist – for his trip to London, where Pribichevich would try to find out something more about this mysterious second guerrilla force in Slovenia and Yugoslavia.<sup>13</sup>

Sometime after August 1942 Adamic received »copies of official documents issued by the Liberation Front in Slovenia«, which were signed by Boris Kidrič as secretary and Josip Vidmar as chairman.<sup>14</sup> These were the same people Adamic met in 1932, when he visited Slovenia. These communists and radical liberals were ideologically much closer to Adamic than the Catholic People's Party represented by Miha Krek and Snoj in the Yugoslav government or the Yugoslav government itself, which Adamic was once suspecting of the old, centralistic and Pan-Serbian tendencies. Hence, sometime since August 1942, Adamic began with his diverse activities in favor of the Partisan guerrillas and the National Liberation Movement.

Further research also needed to be conducted regarding the sources from which Adamic received his information about the Partisan movement. Without

<sup>11</sup> Letter in Zakrajšek Archives.

<sup>12</sup> *My Native Land*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1943, p. 132; see also *ibid.* pp. 63–65.

<sup>13</sup> Letter from Louis Adamic to Janko Rogelj, April 27, 1942. See also Slobodan Nešović, *Doprinos Luja Adamiča probijanju istine o oslobodilačkoj borbi Naroda Jugoslavije (1941–1945) sagledan na osnovu istraživanja štampe, periodike i arhivskih spisa u SAD (The Contribution of Louis Adamic for the Breakthrough of the Truth Regarding the Struggle for National Liberation of Yugoslav Nations (1941–1945) Based on Researches in American Press, Periodical Publications and Archival Material in the United States)*, *Louis Adamič: Simpozij – Symposium*, held in Ljubljana, September 16 to 18, 1981 (Ljubljana: Univerza Edvarda Kardelja, 1981), pp. 392–93. According to Nešović, Pribichevich stayed in London from April 4, 1942 until the end of May of the same year and again from September 1942 until May 1943. (*Ibidem.*)

<sup>14</sup> Adamič, *My Native Land*, p. 132.

doubts an important source for Adamic was Minister Snoj himself and his Yugoslav Information Center in New York, which was established in January 1942 and issued mimeographed reports twice or three times a week.<sup>15</sup> Bogdan Radica from the Yugoslav Embassy in Washington remained in close contact with Adamic.<sup>16</sup> Stoyan Pribichevich, who was sent in April 1942 to London, established valuable connections with the people employed by or at least close to the Yugoslav government in exile. Especially precious were the friendly relations he established with the left-wing Yugoslav journalists who later became supporters of the Partisan movement. One of them, the Slovene Slavo Klemenčič – a correspondent stationed in London before the war for the Slovenian daily *Jutro* (Ljubljana), was supplying Adamic with the news from London and Yugoslavia.<sup>17</sup> From the summer of 1942 on Adamic found many data on the Partisans in the American communist newspapers, mostly in the *Daily Worker* (New York), which were publishing Russian dispatches about Mihailović and the Partisans. The information was based on the broadcasts »Free Yugoslavia«, stationed in Tiflis, Soviet Union, and transmitted from the Soviet Union by the Inter Continental Press to the West.<sup>18</sup> Adamic had also many radical left-wing friends who became employed by the Office of War Information and the Office of Strategic Services. He himself was an adviser to both institutions and he had the possibility to gather the information either directly from both services or with the help of his friends employed there. One very important of them was Alan Cranston who was assistant to the director of OWI.<sup>19</sup> Adamic had also friends among journal-

<sup>15</sup> The Royal Yugoslav Government Information Center existed from January 1942 until September 30, 1943. About it see Letter from Leo Zakrajšek to Rev. Kazimir Zakrajšek, January 7, 1942; and Letter from Leo Zakrajšek to Rev. Kazimir Zakrajšek, October 2, 1943.

<sup>16</sup> Radica, *South Slav Journal*, vol. 5, no. 1 (Winter 1982–83), p. 20.

<sup>17</sup> Mih. S. Petrović, *Uspomene iz emigracije: Luj Adamič i narodnooslobodilačka borba, Politika* (Belgrade), January 19, 1994; *Jugoslovenske vlade u izbeglištvu: 1943–1945, Dokumenti*, edited by Branko Petranović, Zagreb: Arhiv Jugoslavije and Globus, 1961, p. 222; Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington, D.C., file no. 100–6367–, dated 4–2–44. Referred hereafter as FBI file.

<sup>18</sup> Zlatko Balokovic's Archives deposited at the Immigration History Research Center (IHRC), University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota, Box 2, Folder 26. Hereafter cited as Balokovic's Archives, IHRC. See also *My Native Land*, p. 63–65.

<sup>19</sup> Letter from Janko Rogelj to Louis Adamic, August 27, 1942, in Rogelj's Archives (Mss 3555, Folder 1: Correspondence 1937–44) deposited in the Library of the West-

ists assigned to the State Department.<sup>20</sup> By late spring or by early summer of 1944, Adamic very probably established direct contact with the National Liberation Movement and its leader Marshal Tito.

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The activities of Adamic from September of 1942 on can be divided in two periods. During the first one, lasting until the summer of 1943, he destroyed the myth of Draža Mihailović, worked for the recognition of Partisans by the United States and other allied nations and for a united struggle of both, the Chetniks and the Partisans against their common enemy, the German and the Italian occupiers and their collaborators. When the first goal was achieved – or at least partially achieved – by the recognition of the Partisans by the Allied Headquarters for Middle East in July 21, 1943, the second period began, during which Adamic propagated the recognition of the National Liberation Movement as the legal government of Yugoslavia. These manifold activities of Adamic terminated for a while at the end of March 1944, when he was totally exhausted and had to be hospitalized. But by that time, as he later said in his report to the United Committee on September 22, 1944, he had known that the major struggle had been over and the National Liberation Movement was winning.<sup>21</sup> And truly, two months later King Peter appointed under the British pressure Ivan Šubašić as the new Prime Minister who concluded an agreement with Marshal Tito on June 16, 1944.<sup>22</sup>

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ern Reserve Historical Society (WRHS) in Cleveland, Ohio. Hereafter cited as Rogelj's Archives, WRHS. Adamic returned the above letter to Rogelj with his remarks in handwriting. Note from Louis Adamic to Janko Rogelj, no date [written after August 26 but before September 18, 1942], *ibid.* Alan [also Allen] Cranston was accused of associating with Communists and fellow travelers; on this see typewritten Report on the Speech of Ray Brock at the Meeting of Serbian Defense League in Detroit, Michigan, on April 9, 1944, 4 pages, in Rogelj's Archives, WRHS. See also Hillard Edwards, American Support for Tito Linked to Reds in U.S. Army, *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, March 11, 1945.

<sup>20</sup> See for example Letter of Louis Adamic to Janko Rogelj, August 26, 1943, in Rogelj's Archives, WRHS.

<sup>21</sup> Letter from Louis Adamic to Mirko Kuhel, August 27, 1943, in Rogelj's Archives, WRHS; and Louis Adamic's Report at the Annual Meeting of the United Committee of South Slavic Americans in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, September 22, 1944, 2 pp., in *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Jugoslovenske vlade 1943–45*, pp. 349–50.

How did Adamic work to achieve his two goals? In the first place he tried to influence the American public opinion through the mass media of his time, the big press and the radio. Simultaneously, he contacted the American government, specifically the State Department, the OWI and the OSS where he was already known as the expert for the Balkans. After the first contacts, Adamic realized that he would need organizations which would support his lobbying at different levels of government. Such political organization can be established only by different South Slavic ethnic groups. Being by birth a Slovene he began with this group. He urged the Slovenian fraternal benefit and cultural organization to organize a big Slovene congress. They agreed and sent their delegates to the Slovenian American National Congress which took place in Cleveland, Ohio, on December 5 and 6, 1942. Over five hundred delegates gathered and elected their representative body, the Slovenian American National Council (SANC) with Louis Adamic as honorary chairman.<sup>23</sup> From then on he could speak in the name of American Slovenes. However, Adamic was looking forward to a wider organization representing all Southern Slavs. With the help of leaders of other Slavic ethnic groups, Adamic followed the pattern established by Slovenes. Accordingly on February 20 and 21, 1943, the Croatian American Congress was held in Chicago, which elected the National Council of Americans of Croatian Descent with the internationally known violinist Zlatko Balokovic as its president. Likewise, the Serbian Democratic Vidovdan Congress elected its representatives with Zarko Buncick as president. On June 19, 1943, the leaders of these three ethnic groups met in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and formed the United Committee of Croatian, Serbian and Slovenian Americans. The president of the new organization became Adamic, and he expressed, immediately after his election, his wish that the Bulgarians and the Macedonians also be included in this organization. Consequently, Bulgarians and Macedonians held their congress in Detroit, Michi-

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<sup>23</sup> Data are based on Bogdan C. Novak, *Adamic and Yugoslavia During World War II: The Slovene Catholic Response*, paper presented at the International Symposium on Louis Adamic sponsored by the Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota, May 30, 1981. See also Matjaž Klemenčič, *Louis Adamič in druga svetovna vojna (Louis Adamic and World War II)* in *Louis Adamič: Simpozij*, pp. 369–83. The same paper was presented in English also at the International Symposium on Adamic on May 30, 1981, in St. Paul, Minnesota. Documents related to the Slovenian American National Congress and SANC are in Zakrajšek's Archives, in the folder marked SANS.



gan on July 17 and 18, 1943 and agreed to join the United Committee which thereafter changed its name to the United Committee of South Slavic Americans, or referred to shortly as the United Committee. Adamic as its president could hereafter speak and lobby in the name of American Southern-Slavs. On August 7, 1943, the first meeting of the newly reorganized committee was held, and exactly a month later – on September 7 – the United Committee began publishing its *Bulletin* with Adamic as its editor.<sup>24</sup> The strongest support for the United Committee came from Slovenian group or precisely from the Slovenian American National Council (SANC) which financed the expenses for Adamic's lobbying, as well as for the publication of the *Bulletin*.<sup>25</sup> In addition, the United Committee published numerous pamphlets in support of the Partisans and the National Liberation Movement and also pamphlets supporting the Yugoslav territorial claims against Italy and Austria.<sup>26</sup>

Of course, not all the South-Slavic Americans agreed with Adamic and the work of his United Committee. The strongest and the best organized opposition came from the Serbian group organized in the Serbian National Defence – publishing the pro-great Serbian *Srbobran* – and the Serbian National Federation. Both organizations were in favor of King Peter and Mihailović, and strongly supported the activities of Yugoslav Ambassador Fotić.<sup>27</sup> While these Serbian organizations never participated in the United Committee, descent began to spread also among the organizations represented in the Committee. The strongest opposition against the support to Partisans came from the Slovenian Catholic group which left first the United Committee and later also the SANC.<sup>28</sup> In addition to the Serbs there were also Croatian groups which never participated in the United

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<sup>24</sup> For a short description of how the United Committee has been organized see *The Bulletin of the United Committee of South-Slavic Americans* (New York), vol. 1, no. 1 (September 7, 1943), pp. 1–3, 6. Hereafter cited as *Bulletin of the United Committee*.

<sup>25</sup> Letter from James Debevec to Rev. Bernard Ambrožič, August 21, 1943, and Letter from Leo Zakrajšek to Rev. Kazimir Zakrajšek, December 24, 1943, both in Zakrajšek's Archives. See also *Bulletin of the United Committee*, vol. 1, no. 1 (September 7, 1943), pp. 2–3.

<sup>26</sup> Some of the pamphlets published by the United Committee are in the Balokovic's Archives, IHRC, Box 2, Folder 26.

<sup>27</sup> Report on the Speech of Ray Brock, April 9, 1944, in Rogelj's Archives, WRHS. See also FBI files on March 6, 1944, April 5, 1944, May 28, 1944.

<sup>28</sup> Zakrajšek's Archives, folder marked SANS.

Committee and this for different reasons: some of them secretly sympathized with the Independent Croatian State of Ante Pavelić, others just didn't like the re-establishing of the Yugoslav state. Yet any opposition, especially the one inside the United Committee and the SANC came too late to have any impact on Adamic's work. At that time (early 1944) he and his United Committee had already achieved their main aims.

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Next, let us observe a few selected cases to find out what were Adamic's ideas and how he worked to realize them.

By the end of September 1942, Adamic gathered enough material on Mihailović and the Partisans, mainly from the *Daily Worker*, that he came to the conclusion there were two guerrilla forces in Yugoslavia, one representing the old socio-political order, the other fighting for a new communist one. He elaborated his ideas and explained why the United States should help the Partisans in his article in *The Saturday Evening Post* on December 19, 1942, and in his six page memorandum submitted to Sumner Welles, the Undersecretary of State on December 30, 1942.<sup>29</sup>

The following views of Adamic are taken from the above two documents:

It was Mihailović, who began the struggle against the Germans in Serbia. Later when he was appointed the Minister of War he became prisoner of the inner circle of the Yugoslav government in London formed by Slobodan Jovanović, Momčilo Ninčić, Milan Gavrilović, and Miloš Trifunović, which represented Serbian nationalism with their aim of Greater Serbia and the old social order. This pushed Mihailović more and more toward narrow-minded chauvinism and brought him closer and closer to the Serbian Quisling general Milan Nedić who favored the same plans. In addition the inner circle of the Yugoslav government was closely tied up with the British imperialistic forces which pursued their own

<sup>29</sup> Louis Adamic, Mikhailovitch: Balkan Mystery Man, *The Saturday Evening Post* (Philadelphia), December 19, 1942, pp. 20–21, 84, 86; »Is the Yugoslavian leader our friend or foe?« appears as subtitle only in the table of content. The »Memorandum« has the following heading: Louis Adamic to the Hon. Sumner Welles, December 30, 1942. Hereafter referred to as Memorandum, Dec. 30, 1942. The six page Memorandum is in Rogelj's Archives, WRHS.

post-war aims of economic exploitation of Yugoslavia. This was the main reason why the British continued with the support of Mihailović and prevented any broadcasts in favor of the Partisans. Instead the Partisan military successes were credited to Mihailović. On the other hand, the Partisans were struggling for a new and better social order. While the partisan leaders were communists, many of them seasoned revolutionaries of Spanish civil war, the majority of the rank and file were not. The Partisans were supported by the healthiest element at home and by the democratic members of the Yugoslav government such as Sava Kosanović, Milan Grol, Srdjan Budisavljević, Ivan Šubašić, and others.

Regarding the re-establishing of the Yugoslav state – according to Adamic – Mihailović was coming closer to the concepts of Nedić, favoring a greater Serbia, which in part was a reaction to the establishment of the Croatian Independent State headed by the Croatian Quisling Ante Pavelić and to his massacre and persecution of Serbs. In opposition to this narrow-minded nationalistic concept the Partisans stood for the re-establishment of Yugoslavia, but for a new, federalistic and democratic one.

Still according to Adamic, the position of great powers in the late 1942 was such that Great Britain was supporting Mihailović, Soviet Union the Partisans, while the United States was waiting, letting things slide, favoring legitimacy. The Soviet Union in addition was turning against the inner circle of the Yugoslav government in London.

Why should then the United States become involved in the Yugoslav mess? Because the civil war between Mihailović and the Partisans, according to Adamic, hampered the common war efforts. The civil war itself began and continued because there was no agreement among the great powers regarding their post-war plans, aims and goals. Adamic viewed the entire struggle of World War II as involving three different ways of life: the democracy, Fascism or Nazism, and the revolutionary communism. While the Allies were in agreement to destroy Fascism and Nazism nothing was agreed about the other two, democracy and communism.<sup>30</sup> Adamic was hoping that a compromise could be achieved between American democracy and Russian communism by taking the best of each system and applying it to Yugoslavia which would become an »ideological bridge between the U.S.S.R. and the West«. <sup>31</sup> And this is what America should do to become a leader in Yugoslav reforms: Mihailović should be dismissed as

<sup>30</sup> *Saturday Evening Post*, Dec. 19, 1942, p. 86.

<sup>31</sup> Memorandum, Dec. 30, 1942, p. 2.

Minister of War; the Yugoslav government in exile should be reorganized; and a commission composed of American, British and Russian officers should be sent to Yugoslavia to take over the command of all the guerrilla forces there.

Evidently this plan of Adamic's would bring the recognition to the Partisans and put them on the equal footing with Mihailović.

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Next, the activities of Adamic will be described, which cover the period from the late September until the end of December of 1942, this is the time when he was working for the propagation and acceptance of the above program.

From the later part of September on he discussed his new program with officials in the OWI and the OSS and on September 28 he presented his view to Adolf Berle, the Assistant Secretary of State.<sup>32</sup> From Adamic's correspondence with Janko Rogelj – one of his close co-workers – we learn that in the first part of October 1942, Adamic was preparing his article on Mihailović which will explode like a bombshell »through some important American magazines.«<sup>33</sup> For Rogelj, he was including a rough draft but will send him a carbon copy later of the final draft, which would be translated into the Slovenian language and released on some date in November which he will decide. »I am so insistant on this because I don't want the bombshell to fizzle out by partial publication.«<sup>34</sup> In the same letter, Adamic asked Rogelj for criticism of the enclosed article and continued:

*You must remember though, that I am writing for an American public, which knows nothing, to which Mihailovich is a hero. This creates a problem for me, which I solve by telling everything good about him then destroying him.*<sup>35</sup>

However, the article was not published in November, as planned, except for the version in the Slovenian language. The wartime censorship did not allow his article to be published in its original form.<sup>36</sup> He had to rewrite and

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 1–2.

<sup>33</sup> Letter from Louis Adamic to Janko Rogelj, October 14, 1942, Rogelj's Archives, WRHS.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Letter from Louis Adamic to Janko Rogelj, October 19, 1942, Rogelj's Archives, WRHS.

shorten it and as such it appeared in *The Saturday Evening Post* on December 19, 1942. In December he also published a short pamphlet entitled *Inside Yugoslavia*, dealing with the same topic.<sup>37</sup> He sent both, the magazine article and the pamphlet to the Undersecretary of State Sumner Wells as well as to all the officials in the OWI and OSS who were dealing with Yugoslav affairs.<sup>38</sup> On December 18 he invited twenty of the leading commentators, columnists and correspondents for a lunch in a private room at the Willard Hotel in Washington, D.C., where »we batted out the Mihailovitch mess and I think there will be a lot of intelligent publicity about it in the press.«<sup>39</sup> Finally at his meeting with the Undersecretary of State, Sumner Wells, on December 30, 1942, Adamic pleaded at the highest level for the recognition of the Partisans along the line as described in his *Memorandum*.<sup>40</sup>

A few other highlights of Adamic's work for the recognition of Partisan movement can only be sketched. In his press release on the eve of the first meeting of the United Committee in Cleveland on August 7, 1943, Adamic asked for an »immediate recognition by the United States, Britain, Russia and the other United Nations of the Liberation Front National Council [sic] in Yugoslavia as the country's legal government.«<sup>41</sup> Though later at the meeting this statement was watered down by saying that the great powers should only »establish contact with the National Anti-Fascist Liberation Council of Yugoslavia,« it does mark the next step of Adamic's efforts for the recognition of the Liberation Movement as the legal government.<sup>42</sup>

A great support for Partisans and the Liberation Movement was the publishing of his book *My Native Land* in the latter part of October 1943.<sup>43</sup> With it he abandoned his detached journalistic style, so characteristic for his previous works and became totally committed to the Partisan cause. *My Native Land* was con-

<sup>37</sup> An article on Partisans and Mihailović was published in *Cankarjev glasnik* (Cleveland), vol. 4, no. 4 (November 1942), pp. 95–106. See also Post card from Louis Adamic to Janko Rogelj, October 23, 1942, Rogelj's Archives, WRHS.

<sup>38</sup> Letter from Louis Adamic to Janko Rogelj, no date [after December 19 and before December 30, 1942], Rogelj's Archives, WRHS.

<sup>39</sup> Letter from Louis Adamic to Janko Rogelj, [December 19, 1942; date added probably in Rogelj's handwriting], Rogelj's Archives, WRHS.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Press Release for August 4 or about that date of 1943, in Rogelj's Archives, WRHS.

<sup>42</sup> *Bulletin of the United Committee*, vol. 1, no. 1 (September 7, 1943), p. 2.

<sup>43</sup> For publishing data see note no. 11.

demned as a onesided piece of propaganda, full of half-truths, distortions and, in some cases, outright lies.<sup>44</sup> Since then Adamic remained completely devoted to the Partisan cause and began to see and present everything in a white-black picture. This did help to diffuse the Partisan movement among the American public but on the other hand it made Adamic less successful with the official circles, which is confirmed by an increased surveillance over him by the FBI.<sup>45</sup>

Though he stepped down for a while in April 1944, because of his health, he continued to help the Partisan cause, and went on warning them against the dangers of British imperialism for Tito's movement. He was convinced, for example, that British agents with the knowledge of Randolph Churchill, were involved in the German assault at Drvar to capture Tito.<sup>46</sup> Also, after the Tito-Šubašić agreement in June 1944, he continued to suspect the fair play of the British and worried if something similar would happen in Yugoslavia as it did in Greece where the British had turned against the communist controlled guerrillas, and instead supported the Greek »collaborationists«.<sup>47</sup>

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In conclusion one must acknowledge Adamic played a major role in propagandizing Tito and his Partisan movement among the American public, among the South-Slavic Americans, and among the officials of the United States

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<sup>44</sup> See for example Letter from William Philip Simms to Louis Adamic, August 29, 1944, in Rogelj's Archives, WRHS, in which he said: »...I felt obliged to disagree with you when I read your disappointing 'My Native Land'. It was unworthy of you.« Simms was the foreign editor for Scripps-Howard newspapers. For a Slovenian American response see: *Shall Slovenia be Sovietized: A Rebuttal to Louis Adamic*, Gathered and translated from the pages of the Slovenian daily »Ameriška domovina«, and published by the Union of Slovenian Parishes of America (Cleveland, Ohio, n.d. [about January 1944]).

<sup>45</sup> See FBI files, Reports were sent to Harry Hopkins for President Roosevelt, to Colonel L.R. Forney for G-2 in War Department, to the Office of Naval Intelligence in Navy Department, to Adolf Berle for the State Department and others; February 22 and 23, 1944 and continue since then.

<sup>46</sup> Letter from Louis Adamic, October 16, 1944, in Rogelj's Archives, WRHS. It may be just a one page note as it is not addressed to anyone.

<sup>47</sup> Letter from Louis Adamic to Zlatko Balokovic, [October 31, 1944], in Balokovic Archives, IHRC, Box 2, Folder 3. The date is written in hand.

government. But he was not the decisive force for the legal recognition of Tito and his movement. The recognition of Tito by Western Allies was a much more complicated historical process. It was initiated by Winston Churchill and Great Britain and only later accepted also by the United States. And here lies the important contribution of Adamič. He prepared the United States government and its agencies as well as the American public opinion to accept Tito and his Liberation Movement as the legal Yugoslav government without much resistance when this solution had been proposed by Churchill.

POVZETEK

**PRIZADEVANJA LOUISA ADAMIČA, DA BI  
ZDRUŽENE DRŽAVE AMERIKE URADNO  
PRIZNALE TITA IN JUGOSLOVANSKO  
NARODNOOSVOBODILNO GIBANJE**

*Bogdan C. Novak*

*Preden se je začela druga svetovna vojna, se je Louis Adamič že uveljavil kot pisatelj in položil temelj za pozneje tako popularna etnična raziskovanja. Leta 1934 je objavil knjigo *The Native's Return* (Vrnitev v rodni kraj), s katero se je uveljavil kot strokovnjak za Balkan. Med drugo svetovno vojno mu je to delo odprlo vrata do uradnikov, ki so se ukvarjali z Jugoslavijo v State Departmentu in v obveščevalnih službah, posebno v Office of War Information (OWI) in v Office of Strategic Services (OSS). V teh uradih je imel posebno dobre stike z levo usmerjenimi uradniki. Od njih je izvedel, kaj je novega, sam pa jim je prav tako poročal o novicah iz Jugoslavije.*

*Do avgusta 1942 je Adamič zbiral podatke o položaju v Jugoslaviji, avgusta pa je vzpostavil prve stike s slovenskim osvobodilnim gibanjem, ki mu je bilo kot levičarju mnogo bliže kot Draža Mihailović in njegovi četniki. V razdobju od septembra 1942 do poletja 1943 si je Adamič prizadeval, da Združene države in drugi zavezniki priznajo poleg četnikov tudi partizane. S pomočjo zaveznikov*

naj bi nato dosegli složno sodelovanje med četniki in partizani proti skupnemu sovražniku. Za doseg tega cilja je moral Adamič uničiti »mit« o Mihailoviću in si pridobiti pomoč širših krogov. Tako se je od 5.–6. decembra 1942 v Clevelandu sestal Slovensko ameriški narodni kongres, ki je izvolil Slovensko ameriški narodni svet (SANS). Nato so Hrvati, Srbi, Makedonci in Bolgari izvolili podobne svete, ki so se združili v United Committee of South Slavic Americans (Združeni odbor južnoslovanskih Američanov) ali na kratko United Committee, in Adamič je postal njegov predsednik.

Zanimivo je, da Adamič ni hotel postati predsednik SANS-a, temveč je sprejel samo naslov častnega predsednika. Slovenci so mu bili preneznatni, čeprav je SANS kril večino Adamičevih stroškov za njegovo delo v Washingtonu in izdajanje biltena odbora. Seveda niso vsi Hrvatje in Srbi podprli Adamičevega dela, ravno tako ne vsi Slovenci. Katoliški Slovenci, ki se niso strinjali z Adamičevim delom za partizane, so izstopili iz Združenega odbora in pozneje tudi iz SANS-a, vendar je bilo takrat že pozno. Prvi Adamičev cilj je bil dosežen julija 1943, ko je zavezniško poveljstvo za srednji vzhod priznalo partizane kot gverilo.

Od julija 1943 do konca marca 1944 si je Adamič prizadeval, da se jugoslovanski Antifašistični narodnoosvobodilni odbor prizna kot legalna jugoslovanska vlada. Po Adamičevem mnenju je v Jugoslaviji divjala civilna vojna zato, ker med velesilami ni bilo nobenega dogovora glede ureditve po koncu vojne. Adamič je menil, da bijejo boj za tri različne sisteme: za naci-fašizem, demokracijo in revolucionarni komunizem. Naci-fašizem bo premagan in Adamič je upal, da bo prišlo do kompromisa med ameriško demokracijo in ruskim komunizmom. Če povzamejo po vsakem sistemu, kar je najboljšega, in to uvedejo v Jugoslaviji, bo ta postala nekakšen ideološki most med Rusijo in Zahodom. Zato je pomembno, da bi ameriška vlada prevzela pobudo in poskrbela, da se ta načrt uresniči. Konec oktobra je objavil knjigo *My Native Land* (Moja rojstna dežela). Nekateri levo usmerjeni ameriški književniki so mu očitali, da se je s to knjigo odrekel svojemu objektivnemu slogu in postal partizanski propagandist. Konec marca 1944 je imel Adamič živčni zlom in je moral v bolnišnico. Vendar je bil takrat že prepričan, da njegova ideja zmaguje. 16. junija 1944 je bil res sklenjen sporazum med Šubašičem, predstavnikom londonske begunske vlade, in Titom, ki je privedel do Titove zmage.

Pri vsem svojem delu in propagandi za Tita pa Adamič ni bil odločilnega pomena za Titovo zmago. Ta vloga pripada Winstonu Churchill in Veliki Britaniji,



*saj so se Združene države pridružile angleškemu priznanju Tita šele pozneje. Adamičeva zasluga pa je, da je s svojo propagando pripravil ameriško vlado in njene agencije, kakor tudi ameriško javnost, da so brez večjega odpora sprejele priznanje Tita in njegovega osvobodilnega odbora za legalno jugoslovansko vlado.*

### Janez Potočnik

At the beginning of his literary career Louis Adamic translated a number of his own literary texts into English. In the first place there was Ivan Cankar with his important story *Priglasenje* (invitation) presented as poem published as a tiny book besides his other short stories and vignettes which appeared in various papers and magazines.<sup>1</sup> Henry A. Christian assesses Adamic's literary beginnings as follows:

Adamic produced original material in Slovenian & Magister's thesis in 1924 and in the early, but for the first few years in San Pedro he kept his military day to day and evening diary (night journals) in the evening, and much of his work consisted of translations of these journals. When in 1924 he became a clerk in the municipal government office, however, he had a job which allowed him more time to write. He became a regular contributor to the several publications, *Jedini*, *Publikacija* and continued to refine his translations in *The World*, *The Young Day*, the *Chicago Slavonian* and *Pedagog*, and other similar periodicals. One Slovenian author whom he often translated was Ivan Cankar.<sup>2</sup>

The 1920s were indeed the time of Adamic's apprenticeship both in terms of English, the full value of which Adamic had yet to learn as well as his literary career. Adamic was persistent and obviously set himself a clear goal to become an American writer right early. Nevertheless, he was aware of his own limitations and indirectly admitted that the whole assimilation period was far from

<sup>1</sup> *Unpublished*, 1924.

<sup>2</sup> See J. Farrell, *Slovene Literary Tradition* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1941), pp. 14-16; Henry A. Christian, *Louis Adamic* (1897-1952), The Kent State University Press, 1971, p. XXII.