

## Allied Conferences at the End of World War II in the NDH Press: Ustasha Propaganda on Political Relations and Military Cooperation of the USA, the United Kingdom and the USSR

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### 1. Introduction

Late 1944 and early 1945 will be remembered by the Allied conferences held in Dumbarton Oaks, Yalta and San Francisco. The three conferences were of high significance for the Ustasha propaganda since, as the war drew to its end, the controversies grew within the Allied camp between the Soviets and their Western Allies. The Ustasha propaganda considered it politically opportune to repeatedly convince the Croatian public of the clash between the two. This would raise the Ustasha-German strife against the NOP (Peoples' Liberation Movement), as well as the German one against the Soviets in Europe, to the level of the global Anti-Bolshevik movement. At a time when German defeat was imminent, which would consequently lead to the downfall of the Ustasha regime as well, it may be interpreted as the attempt to narrow the gap between the NDH (Independent State of Croatia) and the Western Allies. The Allied disputes, however, would have no significant effect on the outcome of the war, since the German capitulation was their irrevocable joint cause. Nevertheless, the influence of such disputes would prove to be important in the post-war circumstances. On an occasion in January 1945, Stalin said,

*The Soviets have joined the democratic party of the capitalists in joined strife against the fascist party, for Hitler has been a greater threat, but in the future the Soviets will turn against their former allies.* (Reynolds 2007, p 108) In March 1945, just after the Yalta meeting, Roosevelt told a newspaper editor that, although he had honestly believed that Stalin could be reasoned with, which he had mentioned in the Congress after the Yalta meeting, it was no longer the case for, *either Stalin is no longer a man of words, or he has no longer any control over the Soviet government* (Reynolds 2007, p 139)

### 2. Dumbarton Oaks – A New International Insecurity Organization

The Dumbarton Oaks conference was announced by *Hrvatski narod* on 23 August 1944 in these words,

*World Security Conference: Moscow, London and Washington seek ways to secure global power and lay foundations for imperialism. The freedom and the right of the people to self-determination, which were put down in the Atlantic Charter, have been all but forgotten.* This was an attempt by the Ustasha propaganda apparatus to convince the public that the Washington conference was a meeting of victors who were dividing the post-war world in advance. Using the "great and small" phrase, in the meaning of the ruling and the supporting states, *Hrvatski narod* scornfully informs the readers about the setup of an international organization which should guarantee peace to the post-war world. (23 August 1944) *Hrvatski narod* (HN) No. 1116, p 6.

On 29 October 1944, in its regular column *Dokumenti*, the weekly *Spremnost* familiarized its readership with the official text on the formation of the new international organization. The text, which was not commented upon, published the Dumbarton Oaks conclusions, or the principles of the future League of Nations. In this way, the basic tenets of the United Nations appeared on the pages of an Ustasha papers. The goal of the new international organization, *Spremnost* said, was to ensure international peace and security; it was based on the premise of the ruling equality of all peace-loving nations; and its principal organs were to be the General Assembly, the Security Council, the International Court of Justice and the Secretariat. All member states would participate on equal basis in the work of the Assembly with the aim of maintaining international peace and security. (29 October 1944) *Zaključci u Dumbarton Oaksu*, *Spremnost* No. 141, p 5.

The Anti-Bolshevik stance and the preservation of Croatian sovereignty would be a permanent motif in all Ustasha newspapers, but only *Spremnost* was given the task to lead a different campaign in regard to the Western Allies. There was an obvious benevolence in the stance towards the Western Allies and their values, as shown by the articles *U Dumbarton Oaksu* (27 August 1944), *Spremnost* No. 132, p 5; *Pismo iz Švicarske – Big Three Staljin-Roosevelt-Churchill* (6 February 1945), *Spremnost* No. 153, p 3; *Smrtno zvono nad Jaltom* (22nd April 1945), *Spremnost* No. 166, p 4; and *Poslije Krime* (4 March 1945), *Spremnost* No. 159, p 1. These articles, often in the form of an essay, positively discussed

democracy, the rights of small nations, the Atlantic Charter, and the laudable attempts by Churchill and Roosevelt to give life to the principle of national self-determination. They also revealed the non-random regularity in the style of Ustasha newspapers, and an invariable fact – that *Spremnost* was different from other papers.

Unlike *Spremnost*, in early October *Hrvatski narod* bitterly attacked the political decisions of the Allies, which were the basis for the post-war world. The anonymous editor pounced on the Allies, who were passing decisions regarding peace, which had not been achieved, for, in his words, “Germany has not had its final say yet.” The author derisively commented on the relations between the Allies and the unnatural connection of the communists and the plutocrats, whose war-time cooperation was already sowing the seeds of World War III. He concluded that the conference had served to set international regulations, which would secure peace primarily between the Allies. World security, it was said in *Hrvatski narod*, would mean insecurity for all the smaller nations and enemies of the three great forces, i.e. it was a pact between the victors on the division of the spheres of influence. However, the article concluded, the discord between the Soviets and the Western Allies within the Allied camp had grown so strong that they had not managed to reach a satisfactory agreement in Dumbarton Oaks. Firstly, there was no clear agreement regarding the activation of military forces regulated by the Security Council, which consisted of six member states, because the Soviet interference hindered the clear formulation of the aggressor. It was further said that, in this way, Stalin ensured he would have a clear path for unhindered military and political actions in East and Central Europe. (12 October 1944) *Hrvatski narod* No. 1159, p 1. The article from *Hrvatski narod* closely resembles the selection of articles from the neutral press, which was prepared by the Investigative Bureau of the Foreign Affairs Ministry (MVP) in its Overview from October 1944. As mentioned in a summary of the Swedish news, Dumbarton Oaks laid the foundation for a new international organization which was supposed to secure world peace and security. Clearly, an important element of the decision was the formation of international military forces and the Security Council, or the body which would be able to quickly and effectively control them. Nonetheless, the Swedish source said, there remained the question of predominance in the new international association, and whether the five great forces could outvote the “smaller” member states. *Novi savez naroda*, (Swedish press overview) HDA (Croatian State Archives), MVP – Investigative Bureau Box 26, No. 559.

According to *Novine*, a Zagreb weekly, a part of the representatives from the House of Commons in the British Parliament joined the severe criticisms of conclusions from Dumbarton Oaks. They considered that their implementation would call into question the principles of the Atlantic Charter. (16 October 1944) *Novine* No. 156, p 4.

Contrary to what *Hrvatski narod* and *Novine* wrote in the NDH, the UN organization was actually the second stage in the implementation of the principles from the Atlantic Charter. It proved the continuing cooperation between the Allies at the end of World War II. The agreement between Roosevelt and Churchill from August 1941 – on the rights of every nation to self-determination, free world trade and economic cooperation, abandonment of the use of force and the formation of a global security system – needed to be put into practice. The new international organization was supposed to act as the means for the implementation of political principles from the Atlantic Charter. In the Dumbarton Oaks conversations, held between 12th August and 7 October 1944, the representatives of the USA, the United Kingdom, the USSR and China agreed on the formation of an international organization for world peace and security, the United Nations. It was where the foundations were laid for the future operation and organization of the UN, the powers of the UN General Assembly, the Security Council, the International Court of Justice and the Secretariat. (7 October 1944) *Dumbarton Oaks, Washington Conversations on International Peace Security Organization* (Reynolds, p 114)

The Dumbarton Oaks conference was interpreted by *Hrvatski narod* and *Novine* on the unfounded premise of discord within the Allied camp. The UN organization was set as an example of the inconsistencies of the Western Allies and proclaimed a departure from the principles of the Atlantic Charter, as if the Ustasha Croatia was founded on the value system of the Western Allies. The UN was immediately given the attributes of an organization in which the great outvoted the small, or where the great decided on all the important world issues. It was specifically stressed that the Western Allies strive to implement the democratic standards in the world, whereas the Bolshevik foster the most severe form of state totalitarianism in their country, which should have proven that the new international organization would be inefficient. For Ustasha propaganda, the UN was actually an example of the future lack of cooperation between the Allies and of world insecurity.

### 3. Yalta – Announcing A New World War

An important propaganda task for the NDH newspapers in late 1944 and during 1945 was to convince the public of the unnatural alliance between the Soviets and the Western Allies. The aggravating circumstance for Ustasha propaganda was the high plausibility of the USA, the USSR and the United Kingdom winning the war, as the result of their common military and political strategy. Although without much success, until the end of the war, the NDH press would continue to

discuss the disputes between the Allies in the case of Poland, Greece and Yugoslavia, in an attempt to convince the public of the validity of the Ustasha *nation-building* policies. (Sinovčić, 1998, pp 21-25) This argument grew in significance just prior to and after the Yalta conference.

In early 1945, the Yalta conference was the central foreign affairs topic in the NDH press. Of all the dailies in the NDH, *Hrvatski narod* dedicated the greatest number of articles to the announcement of the conference between the "Big Three" and the commentaries on the decisions from Yalta – as many as 19 articles in 37 issues (1241 to 1278), printed from 23 January to 7 March 1945. The announcement of the conference was positioned either on page 6 or on the back cover (page 8, 10 or 12), while the analyses of the Yalta negotiations were published on the front page.

Sarajevo's *Novi list* published the first announcement of the possible conference in Yalta as early as 8 January, in issue No. 1120, on page 2, under the title *Trojni sastanak radi rješenja pitanja, koja se ne mogu riješiti*. However, by 24 February – when Yalta was mentioned for the last time – eleven articles were published, usually on page 2 or 3.

Of all the weeklies, *Spremnost* dedicated the largest amount of space to analyzing the conclusions from Yalta and their repercussions on the NDH. This is confirmed by six articles, mostly taken from the neutral press, which were published in the column *Odjeci iz svijeta*, from No. 156 of 11 February to No. 165 of 15 April; and editorials by Milivoj Magdić entitled *Nakon Krima* (4 March 1945), *Spremnost* No. 159, p 1, and *Vjera u Hrvatsku* (15 April 1945), *Spremnost* No. 165, p 1.

The Investigative Bureau of the NDH's Ministry of Foreign Affairs dictated the contents of the NDH press. In the weekly overviews from European press (mostly neutral and German) by the Investigative Bureau, materials were prepared for print, which reported on Stalin's wise policies, his postponing of the conference until the opportune moment struck on the East Front, and the increasingly favorable situation for the Soviets in the negotiations with the Polish government in exile. They stressed the negotiations focused on the location and the date of the second conference of the *Big Three*, which were, it was interpreted, dominated by the Soviets. This was the setting in which the NDH press was given the task to comment on the preparations for the conference of the Big Three in Crimea. (15 January 1945), Swiss press overview, HDA, the MVP Fonds – Investigative Bureau, Box 28, No. 823.

Following the guidelines of the MVP, *Hrvatski list* and Sarajevo's *Novi list* revealed why the Soviet offensive had begun simultaneously with heavy combat in the West, which had obviously weakened American and British forces. It had primarily been motivated, they explained, by Stalin's desire for the Soviets to be the sole victors in the war on European ground, thus enabling them to uncompromisingly impose the conditions of peace. This was the reason for Stalin to purposefully postpone the meeting with Churchill and Roosevelt, biding his time in order to gain on the battle field a better negotiating position, concluded *Sarajevski novi list* and *Hrvatski list*. (8 January 1945) *Trojni sastanak, Sarajevski novi list* (SNL) No. 1120, p 2. (9 January 1945) SNL No. 1121, p 2. (27 January 1945) *Hrvatski list* (HL) No. 22, p 2.

It is a fact that Stalin had no need of a political meeting in regard to Eastern Europe, since he was already in the process of accomplishing his goals on the battlefield. A stronger interest for the meeting was shown both by Roosevelt and Churchill. The former expected the Soviets to engage in warfare in the Pacific. (Although he had been informed in August 1944 of the construction of powerful nuclear weapons, and knew they might be ready for use by August 1945, it was uncertain whether this could result in the collapse of Japan.) The latter felt there was a danger in Bolshevism spreading across greater part of Europe, and insisted Germany was divided and France included as a major continental gate. (Reynolds, 2007, pp 100, 103, 110, 114, 115, 122 and 148. Murray-Millett, 2001, p 477. Rothberg, 1966, p 121.)

Articles similar to these appeared in the NDH press without an answer as to what consequences the NDH might suffer if such scenarios were realized. The NDH press covered the Soviet military success and the glum future of Europe as if it did not include the end of Ustasha regime and the NDH. The shift in register would not occur before the very end of the war, in the final days of May 1945. In lieu with the Ustasha government *Memorandum*, the Zagreb newspapers, which were the only ones still in print in the NDH, openly advocated the values of Western democracies and sought the help of the USA and Britain against the JA.

The first news covering the negotiations of Allies on the Black Sea already appeared in early February in *Sarajevski novi list* (SNL): *The lengthy Black Sea conference – Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin hide their grand designs for the sack of Europe*. Special attention was given to news from Stockholm, which alleged that Roosevelt revealed the plan to sack Germany and its industries, and take charge of their air force. (10 February 1945) SNL No. 1149, p 8. To gain plausibility, such news was generally taken from the neutral Swedish and Swiss press by the Investigative Bureau of the MVP. For example, in the weekly overview of the foreign press from early February, it was reported that the Allies would insist on the alteration of German borders, in order to defray the Soviets in the East and accomplish the desired Curzon Line. The compensation was to take place in the West, while Germany would waive East Prussia. (8 February 1945) *Granice buduće Njemačke*, Swiss press overview, HDA, the MVP Fonds – Investigative Bureau. Box 28, No. 844. For further details, see Rothberg, 1966, pp 86-97.

Soon thereafter, all newspapers in the NDH would cover the decisions of the Allies detrimental to Germany, as well as the trade with European territories, despite the fact that the Western Allies advocated the principles from the Atlantic Charter and the right of nations to self-determination, it was explained. The NDH press presented it as proof that Britain and the USA were abandoning the implementation of principles from the Atlantic Charter on the dictates of Stalin. *Hrvatski narod*, the leading political daily in the NDH, presented Croatian readership with attitudes from the German newspapers – *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Völkischer Beobachter* and *Zwölf Uhr Blatt* – on the possible conclusions of the meetings. The dejected tone of German articles testified to a difficult military and political situation, and implied the imminent end of war. German victory was never mentioned, but speculations abounded on war damages, waiving parts of East Germany to the Lublin Committee, and the Allied protectorate over Germany. The meeting in Yalta was presented as a high-scale fraud, and the Allied principles were likened to Wilson's Points, which had doomed the Weimar Republic. (4 February 1945) HN No. 1252, p 12.

Commenting on the significance of the tripartite conference in Yalta, on 17 February 1944 Sarajevo's *Novi list* printed a propagandist message from Germany: *The tripartite conference is disappointing. The end of war is nowhere in sight. Germans will continue to fight for their lives and existence.* (17 February 1944) SNL No. 1155, p 3. More specific news on the Yalta negotiations appeared in *Novi list* in late February, which published parts of Churchill's report to the House of Commons. After the collapse of Germany, *Novi list* cited, his report had announced the Allied occupation of German national territories and the foundation of an institution which would succeed the League of Nation, and whose constituent assembly was to take place at a new conference in San Francisco. (28 February 1945) SNL No. 1164, p 1.

In mid-February, in order to prove the great danger posed by the Soviets, not only for Eastern and Southeastern but Central Europe as well, HDU (Croatian News Office) *Croatia* included in their Working materials for the production of articles a German report which would serve as a model interpretation of the Soviet imperial politics in the NDH press. The Soviets had, the report said, put their dominant military and political position to excellent use in realizing their imperial plans. The Soviet Union, it was said, was the leading world force, which was confirmed both by the place of the Allied conference, and by the complete autocracy with which the Soviets promoted their political and territorial advances. By the wise use of politics, it was concluded, Stalin had completed all the preliminaries to form an all-Slavic union under the Russian flag, which had already been joined by Bulgaria, Macedonia, Albania and Yugoslavia. Pending was the finalization of a pro-Soviet Central-European union which was supposed to include Hungary, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland. (*Tri velika saveza država pod sovjetskom zaštitom*. Working materials for the production of articles, HDA, Fonds of HDU *Croatia*, Box No. 94) This was another piece of evidence aimed at convincing the NDH public that Croatian people were threatened by a recently forming association under the wing of the USSR. On the Pan-Slavic Committee and Soviet influence on Slavic nations in Europe see Đilas, 1990, p 376.

More detailed information on the results of the Allied negotiation in Crimea was presented to the readership by the publication of Roosevelt's report to the Senate and the Congress in Sarajevo's *Novi list* on 3 March 1945. The conference had had, it was mentioned therein, two purposes; namely, to ensure the political and strategic prerequisites for the present collapse of Germany, with the least losses incurred, and to secure lasting peace through international contracts. Accordingly, the decisions at the conference were as follows: unconditional surrender of Germany, without the purpose of annihilating the German people; temporary post-war supervision of Germany by Britain, the Soviet Union, France and the USA; and German obligation of war reparations. (3 March 1945) SNL No. 45, p 1. The statement of the Big Three further envisioned, as reported by *Hrvatski narod*, the annihilation of all German weaponry, the prohibition of nationalist parties, the supervision of German industry and the persecution and conviction of war criminals. It was also announced that post-war Poland would be organized and the Yugoslav state formed. (13 February 1945) HN No. 1259, p 1.

It was telling that Sarajevo's *Novi list* and *Hrvatski narod* published the conclusions from Yalta without a tinge of propaganda. One of the reasons was that the decisions of Allies pertaining to Germany were partially applicable to the NDH as well. This aimed at producing fear in the Croatian public and painting the picture of what the vanquished may expect at the end of the war. It almost seemed like an attempt to mobilize the citizens in the defense of a lost cause, a state with no future once the war ended. The attitude of the Ustasha upper echelons towards the Yalta decisions was brought to Croatian citizens by Ivo Bogdan in his editorial of 14 February 1945 in *Hrvatski narod*. It was a harsh criticism of the allegedly perfidious Allied policy of trading with the territories of European nations – Poles, Germans and Croats – in order to meet the interests of victors. The decision to fuse the government-in-exile of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia with Tito's communist government received some of the worst negativity. Bogdan wondered about the missing principles of the Atlantic Charter and the right of nations to self-determination, as well as the aid given to the small nations by the Allies, alluding at the dubious survival of the Croatian state after the war.

*The entire report reeks with the truth of Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill not being able to give any promises to the*

*nations of Europe. They are satisfied with threatening Germany and announcing the conference of the united nations in San Francisco... In the meantime, they reiterate the maxims of the Atlantic Charter on the necessity of inner peace and giving aid to the freed countries. Unfortunately, we Croats had the opportunity to experience all the benevolence of such aid in some of our territories temporarily freed from partisans. It mainly consisted of starving our people on the coast and killing any thing Croatian which opposed the violence, disorder and anarchy brought about by the Bolshevik democracy. (13 February 1945) HN No. 1259, p 1.*

Following the usual pattern, a more subtle approach to the Crimean decisions was offered by *Spremnost*. Its columnist Milivoj Magdić wrote a positive review of Winston Churchill's speech before the House of Commons and Roosevelt's New Year message. Special attention was given to their care for the active implementation of principles from the Atlantic Charter, or the realization of the rights of every nation to self-determination. Nevertheless, Magdić concluded that Yalta had not resulted in the desired improvements, other than the confirmation of general guidelines, which put the smaller nations of Europe into risk. He lauded Churchill's statement that England would, once the war ended, seek solutions for free and unhindered democratic elections, but he reminded his readership of the problem with the state of Poland and unfulfilled obligations by the British. The problem, Magdić said, was that the British ideas of freedom and democracy differed considerably from the Soviet ones. He therefore repeated a rhetorical question put to Churchill by a British journalist:

*Should we understand the problem of Polish freedom in the manner of their being as free as we are in England, the United States and France, with their government unhindered, or will they become nothing more than a Soviet protectorate, forced to accept the totalitarian communist system against its will, through the superiority of arms? (4 March 1945) Nakon Krima, Spremnost No. 159, p 1.*

The author brought up the Polish question in his article, while actually thinking of the NDH and its post-war status. It would be determined by the *superiority of arms*, instead of the idealist principles of the Atlantic Charter, as if the value system of Western democracies was applicable to a German war-time puppet state, the Ustasha Croatia. Magdić considered Churchill's and Roosevelt's opinions on freedom, democracy and the right to self-determination fine and commendable, which was a significant move away from the previous Ustasha rhetoric. He was, however, aware that the conquered would not have the right to choose; in Southeastern Europe the Soviets would have the last say along with Tito's partisans, or, as he called them, the Bolshevik branch. Therefore, since Germany could not win, he rooted for the victory of the Western Allies. (15 April 1945) *Vjera u Hrvatsku, Spremnost* No. 165, p 1.

*Spremnost*, which had written about the Western democracies in a more benevolent style since Tehran, quite openly advocated the strife between the Soviets and the Western Allies, although the scenario was unrealistic. It was a propaganda strategy devised by the Ustasha government and influenced by Germans at the end of war. Such propaganda was specifically directed against the Soviets, with the desire to end the Alliance between the USSR and the Western Allies. Nevertheless, it would be rather pretentious to believe that articles from the *Spremnost* might have had any influence on the international political relations – they were not able to significantly influence even the political and war events in the NDH. It would be closer to truth that they reflected the fear with which the Ustasha elite faced the destiny that awaited them after the victory of the Allied forces, or the NOP led by Tito's communists. Reflecting on the former power and significance of Britain in Europe, articles in *Spremnost* actually invited the Western Allies to act and not to allow the Bolshevization of Eastern and Southeastern Europe; meaning that, if somebody had to establish their authority in the NDH, it should be the Western Allies.

It is paradoxical for Magdić to refer to the principles of the Atlantic Charter as if the German project of *Neue Europa* was founded on the values of Western democracies. Poland and the Ustasha Croatia had nothing in common, and the post-war destiny of Poland was largely determined by the German occupation and their secret agreement with Stalin from 1939. The NDH was a product of war, the product of German and Italian volition, and the Ustasha regime was the signee of the Tripartite Pact and belonged to the Axis forces. (Jelić-Butić, 1977, pp 61 and 85) The value system which the Ustasha government constructed from 1941 to 1945, modeled on the Nazi Germany, was incompatible with the program of the Atlantic Charter or the UN Charter. The assumption that Germans respected the rights of the smaller nations was invalid. The Nazi Germany occupied the greater part of Europe by the use of military force, abolishing some states and creating new ones. In the occupied states, it set up either its own government or the pro-Nazi regime, as was the case in the NDH, Slovakia and Norway. Apart from Poland, Eastern and Southeastern Europe did not hold much significance in the Allied negotiations. Issues discussed by the Allies generally focused on their military alliance and the collapse of Germany and Japan, along with war reparations and the division of Germany as the war drew to its end. Both Roosevelt and Churchill were aware they would have little influence on the post-war formation of governments in the territories



liberated by the Red Army. In the case of Yugoslavia, where the Resistance played the key part in the liberation of the country, the formation of government was left to Tito and the government in exile, as per the Soviet-British agreement on the 50/50 division of the spheres of influence. However, the post-war scenario in Yugoslavia, which was little to Churchill's liking, was the result of the military and political dominance of the NOVJ (People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia) under the KPJ (Communist Party of Yugoslavia) rule. (Jakovina, 2005, p 176; Reynolds, pp 102, 148-150)

In the NDH press, Yalta was connected to the beginning of the Cold War, although without the slightest justification. The wartime events of 1942 and 1943 on the Eastern front, the Tehran conference and the Churchill—Stalin meeting in Moscow in (October) 1944 had determined the fate of Eastern Europe and the Soviet dominance much earlier on. In the meantime, Stalin was declared victorious, the USSR a leading world force, and Britain, quite unfounded, a crumbled empire. The message to the Croatian public was that the Ustasha fought on the *right*, Anti-Bolshevik side, and that it was expected the Americans and the British would soon fight the Soviets. This was the context in which World War III was predicted. The Alliance between the USA, the United Kingdom and the USSR was not shaken in Yalta, as the NDH press wrongly interpreted. In the Crimean negotiations, all the participants both gained on one and lost on the other side, but their firm determination to militarily, politically and even economically destruct the Nazi Germany – which, essentially, included the NDH – was only strengthened.

Roosevelt managed to get Soviet consent for the formation of the UN and the Security Council, which American diplomacy considered a major step towards the creation of international security and post-war cooperation of the great forces. He also got the Soviets to assent to enter the war against Japan as soon as Germany capitulated. In return, Stalin received territorial concessions in the Far East, a part of Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands. Churchill ensured the participation of France in the division of Germany and equal participation in the Commission which would organize the governance of the post-war Germany. With American support, he also managed to thwart the imposition of excessive war reparations to Germany, preventing the Soviet request for the quantification of war debt. (*February 12, 1945, Joint Communiqué On Crimea Conference*, Reynolds, 2007, pp 116-123; Rothberg, 1966, pp 86-97) In addition, trying to prevent the formation of the communist government in Yugoslavia, Churchill wanted to accelerate the implementation of the Tito—Subašić agreement in Yugoslavia. He meant to expedite the formation of the Provisional Government of the DFJ (Democratic Federal Yugoslavia) and expand the AVNOJ (Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia) with members of the last Yugoslav Assembly which had not been compromised by collaboration with the enemy – which was among the Crimean conclusions. The original form of the Yalta decisions was available to the Newspaper Department of the GRP (Head Office for Propaganda) from 12 February, when HDU *Croatia* reported Tasso's news from Moscow. The data was, however, used partially and their context was changed in accordance with needs of the Ustasha political propaganda. (*Izveštje o krimskoj konferenciji; Izjave triju savezničkih vodja*; Working materials for the production of articles, HDA, HDU *Croatia*, Box 94)

#### 4. San Francisco – San Fiasco

The great Allied conference in San Francisco (*Encyclopedia of the Nations, The making of the United Nations*, United Nations web edition), to which the NDH press dedicated a significant amount of space, would mark the unresolved dilemma from Yalta, stated the overview of the neutral press of the MVP's Investigative Bureau. The problem was in the interpretation of the terms "democracy", "democratic elections" and "democratic state" due to which, the overview said, the international problem in the form of Poland had already escalated, leading to the problem of Hungary, Romania and the Baltic states. Unlike Western Allies, the Soviets interpreted democracy as the autocracy of a communist party, which the regime press of the NDH used as the leitmotif on the San Francisco conference.

The formulation of Yalta conclusions was acceptable for the Western Allies, claimed an MVP report of 20 March 1945, because they had not clearly observed the Soviet political plans for Eastern and Southeastern Europe. The American and British attitude was that *the main role of the Soviet Union in 1945 would be to finally end fascism and Nazism, and to help the liberated countries in creating a new democratic Europe, free of any form of fascism*. However, the report concluded, the Soviet realization of the Crimea conclusions in Eastern Europe was diametrically opposed to British and American expectations, and represented a new form of imperialism, justified by the will of the freed nations. (20 March 1945) *Mala razmimoilaženja među saveznicima*, Swiss press overview No. 881, MVP Fonds – Investigative Bureau, Box 28.

In line with instructions by the MVP's Investigative Bureau, *Hrvatski narod* dedicated the entire editorial on 4 April 1945 to the forthcoming council in the USA, warning about the unsettled accounts between the Allies from Dumbarton Oaks and Yalta. Even prior to the council, it was said, Stalin had managed to *undermine the results*, or the future of the United Nations. He ensured his right to veto in the Security Council, and it was supposed he had done the same in the

Assembly of the League of Nations. The Soviets, it was continued, were using their victory on the battlefield in a political sense, to form the governments in Hungary, Poland, Finland and Bulgaria by force. The right to veto also enabled the Soviets to partake in military activities along the USSR border, without any fear of an intervention by the international organization for peace and security. For these reasons the San Francisco meeting was doomed to failure, *Hrvatski narod* concluded. (4 April 1945) HN No. 1300, p 1.

Finding fault in advance with the outcome of the San Francisco meeting, *Hrvatski narod* published news from Swedish papers *Svenska Dagbladet* to promote its negative forecast. Accordingly, the greatest problem before the sessions even started was the number of votes given to each of the great forces, and whether the USSR had the right to a larger number of votes than Britain and its dominions. Stressing the problem of Poland, on the basis of commentaries from the Portuguese *Voz* and the English *Daily Mail*, special attention was given to the fact that the Allies had agreed to the Soviet request to exclude the Polish government in exile from activities in the League of Nations, and that Stalin had openly asked for Poland to be represented at the international conference by the Lublin Committee. *Hrvatski narod* warned there was a substantial divergence of opinion which could, in the long run, have repercussions on international relations and the flipside of the post-war world. The stumbling block, it was said, were the two diametrically opposed ideological positions of the Western Allies and the Soviet Union: *Because, while Western nations claim the world should become democratic, the Bolsheviks cultivate the worst form of state totalitarianism.*

Quoting the *Daily Mail* in its commentary on the anticipated conference in San Francisco, *Hrvatski narod* re-introduced the problem of small nations and the right to veto which was seized by the great forces: *Smaller states are disturbed due to the right of veto in the council of security, by which the great five have reserved the right of decision-making, and also due to the lack of any mention of morality, justice or law in the decisions of the said council.* Referring to British sources, *Hrvatski narod* came to the ironical conclusion that it would be tragic if the lack of consensus within the Allied ranks turned the San Francisco conference into *San Fiasco*. (6 April 1945) *Sastanak u San Franciscu*, HN No, 1302, p 1.

On the basis of the new values, promulgated by the Atlantic Charter, *Novine* deemed unacceptable not only the concept of the veto but also the requests made by the USA and the USSR for the multiplication of their votes in the Assembly of the League of Nations. (3 April 1945), *Novine* No. 181, p 1. In its article *Saveznički kompleksi*, Zagreb weekly *Spremnost* also broached the issue of veto and regretfully concluded that the concept of post-war world did not significantly differ from the earlier policies which had been based on power and military force. The perk of veto wielded by the four or five permanent member states, *Spremnost* concluded, lessened the significance of smaller nations in Assembly of the League of Nations, reversing the tide of history to the starting point. (15 April 1945) *Spremnost* No. 165, p 5.

## 5. Conclusion

During the final months of the war, the NDH press gave its best to prove there was strife between the Allies and that the joint warfare of the USA, Great Britain and the USSR was absurd. It was an important propaganda task for the Ustasha regime. There was an attempt to create an impression in public that the Allied Forces were dissolving, due to which there was a need to mobilize human and material resources in the strife against communism. In the Ustasha ranks it was believed that such a development would aid their foreign policies, opening the possibility of negotiations with the Western Allies. These beliefs constituted a significant argument for the post-war fate of the NDH. The hope, expectedly, turned out to be unreasonable since Germany and its satellites had already lost the war. An imaginary separate peace was a utopia for the NDH, since the Allies had previously agreed in Moscow that the Ustashes would appear before the courts of law of the DFJ, the already restored state of Yugoslavia.

During February, March and April 1945, the dailies *Hrvatski narod*, Sarajevo's *Novi list* and *Hrvatski list* would dedicate a large number of articles to disputes in the Allied ranks. As a rule, *Hrvatski narod* used to publish articles covering such issues on the front or back cover (the latter being page 6 or 4). In the final four months, in exactly one hundred issues – from issue No. 1225 on 3 January 1945 to issue No. 1325 on 5 May 1945 – there were 44 articles published. This means that the editors of *Hrvatski narod* dedicated a significant amount of space to the Allies and their conflicts nearly every other day. *Hrvatski list* was in circulation until mid-April 1945 – from issue No. 1 on 3 January to issue No. 73 on 7 April – and published 24 articles on the subject, usually on the cover or page 2. Sarajevo's *Novi list* published 17 articles, mostly on pages two or three, from issue No. 1119 on 6 January to issue No. 1188 on 28 March. These articles predicted the imminent dissolution of the Allied Forces, World War III and the apocalyptic future of the world.

The Ustasha propaganda could not offer a viable solution for the NDH, but spitefully lamented the disputes among

the Allies, offering explanations for Croatian alliance with Germany. The goal was to prove to the NDH public that the Soviets had played their Allies and were using the war against Germany to propagate communism in Europe. It was also the reaction of the Ustasha propaganda to the Tito—Šubašić agreement, the association of the NKOJ (National Committee for the Liberation of Yugoslavia) and royal government in London, and to the acceptance of Yugoslav communists by the Western Allies. The new Yugoslavia, however, would prove the strength of alliances between the USSR and the Western Allies, since their war strategy – aimed at the final victory over Germans – was more important than even the most significant political disputes. Validating communists led by Tito was not a problem for Churchill and Roosevelt, but a military and strategically viable move, and an acceptable political situation for the restoration of Yugoslavia. In this concept there was no room for the NDH and the beaten Ustasha ideologies.

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