

Yugoslavian Reality Reflected in a Parliament Speech of Nikola Pašić (Case Study)

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Abstract: *The study is an analysis of the parliamentary speech held on the 7 of June 1923 by Nikola Pašić, the most important politician in the first years of Yugoslavia. A characterisation of the political life is made and the main issues that created tensions between Yugoslavian nations from the beginning and questioned the viability of the new state are emphasised. On one hand, the analysis attests the artistry, in this case the rhetorical artistry, through which the Serbian Prime Minister managed to impose his will and avoid violence. But, most of all, it reflects the fundamental contradictions which, in time, led to the disintegration of Yugoslavia.*

Ever since Yugoslavia had come into being, on the 1 December 1918, the new state had not been able to find its peace.

Following an endless sequence of tense political confrontations, on the 7 June 1923, the Skupština, the Yugoslavian Parliament, was again under great pressure. As usually, the voices of Croatian, Slovenian, Muslim and other deputies were heard, incessantly claiming the same issues: that the Serbs had monopolised the state's ruling and that they exerted it to the detriment of the other Yugoslavian nations.

When the atmosphere built up tension to a dangerous level, Nikola Pašić, the experienced Serbian Prime Minister, stepped in the arena with a vast speech through which he once again managed to divert the attacks of the opposition. He benefited in this undertaking from his extensive practice in the political arena, as well as from an ability that had made him famous. In this particular situation, his rhetorical talent and his great political prestige were the winning cards, successfully combined and thrown into the game. However, although in the reality of those times Pašić came out victorious, his speech, when X-rayed in the light of the present, emphasises almost all the severe problems that have undermined the Yugoslavian State ever since its beginning.

First of all, a brief contextualisation must be done.

The end of the First World War had created the circumstances for the application of the Yugoslavist ideology. It was a political current built around the idea that the South-Slavic peoples were mere branches of a unique people's tree trunk, cut off by history. This theory's conclusion was that people should act in a reparative manner and reunite what history had separated, i.e. unify all these peoples into a single state, thus creating a Yugoslavia. At the end of the war, these ideas won over a great part of the political elite, following an extended germination in rather vague and utopian projects within the

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