

DOKUMENTI

until the disease of political decay and mutual distrust and disease which are now so rampant are eradicated. These evils destroyed former Russia and they may well destroy this state, unless the existing conditions are treated with a firm and clean hand.

I shall try to keep the Department informed, not only as to any general political development which may take place, but also as to the political tendencies within the various racial groups.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,  
John Dyneley Prince<sup>487</sup>  
John Dyneley Prince,  
American Minister

Enclosure:

1. Copy of cartoon.<sup>488</sup>

File No. 800 – Quintuplicate.

**85.** 1926., svibanj 24., Izvješće poslanika Johna Dyneleyja Princea State Departmentu o padu koalicijske vlade NRS-a i HSS-a, najavljenoj parlamentarnoj istrazi protiv Rade Pašića.

NARA, M 358, R 4, 860h.00/285

[...]<sup>489</sup>

LEGATION OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Belgrade, May 24, 1926.

Despatch No. 10

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

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<sup>487</sup> Vlastoručno.

<sup>488</sup> Vidi sliku 7.

<sup>489</sup> Državni pečat.

Sir:

Referring to my telegram No. 19 (860H.00/282), dated May 15, 11 A.M., reporting that the Prime Minister had presented to the King the resignation of the Cabinet as the result of a disagreement between the Radicals and the Croatian Agrarian members of the coalition Government over provisions for Parliamentary investigation of corruption, I have the honor to report the following developments in the internal situation which led to the resignation of the Cabinet and which have now resulted in a reorganization of the Cabinet under Mr. Ouzounovitch again to continue the Radical-Croatian Agrarian coalition.

It was mentioned in Mr. Paddock's despatch No. 3069 of the 4th instant that the interpellations on corruption laid before Parliament by the Opposition chiefly concerned the activities of Mr. Pashitch's son, Rade Pashitch. The specific accusation raised against him was that he had used his influence with a view to illegally intervening in favor of a Czech industrial enterprise, a creditor of the State, and of having received from that firm for his services the sum of five million Czech crowns. On the 14th instant, replies to the interpellations were made by the Prime Minister and by the Ministers of Communications, of Finance, and of Foreign Affairs. While stating that they did not observe from the documents at their disposal that Mr. Rada Pashitch had interfered in any way in the settlement of accounts between the Government and the Czech firm, the Prime Minister and the other Ministers mentioned declared, in a rather vague statement, that the Government was ready to take all necessary measures to prevent persons guilty of irregularities from avoiding responsibility. At the close of the meeting, representatives of the Radical Club and of the Croatian Agrarian Club presented separate resolutions as to the Parliamentary investigation regarding corruption. The former emphasized the confidence of Parliament in the Cabinet and provided for the formation of a Parliamentary inquiry committee with the object of investigating the case of Rada Pashitch and other similar cases within six months, whereas the latter (The Croatian Agrarian Club) provided for the submission to Parliament by the Government within one month of a Bill against corruption and for the formation of a committee to investigate Rada Pashitch's case within two months. After a statement by the Prime Minister that he agreed with the resolution of the Radical Club and that he would consider a vote in its favor as an expression of confidence in his Cabinet, Parliament proceeded to vote on the Radical resolution with the result that it was rejected by a majority of 150 votes of the Croatian Agrarians and the Opposition against 127 is of the Radicals.

Following this disapproval of the Government. Mr. Ouzounovitch on the 15th instant presented the resignation of his Cabinet to the King, as reported in my telegram. His Majesty did not, however, accept the resignation and intrusted Mr. Ouzounovitch to proceed to negotiations with the Raditch Party for the continuation of the Radical-Croatian Agrarian coalition, and eventually with other parties for the formation of a Cabinet of larger coalition. The following three days were marked by efforts of Mr. Ouzounovitch to find a basis for the continuation of the coalition with the Raditch Party. At the same time, he began negotiations with Davidovitch Democrats and with the Bosnian

Mussulman Party for the participation of these two parties in the formation of the Cabinet. The conditions which the last mentioned parties presented were not however accepted by the Radicals, but Ouzounovitch succeeded in reaching an agreement with the Croatian Agrarians for the continuation of the former coalition. According to this agreement, the Croatian Agrarian Club gave its acquiescence to the adoption of the resolution proposed by the Radicals for the Parliamentary inquiry committee on corruption, as mentioned above. The Croatian Agrarians consented also to the withdrawal from the Cabinet of Mr. Paul Raditch, Minister of Agrarian Reform, as demanded by Ouzounovitch. Furthermore, it is reported that Mr. Stephan Raditch gave a written promise to Mr. Ouzounovitch that he would not offer impediments to the work of the Government. Stephan Raditch subsequently declared to the press that he was going to withdraw temporarily from political activity and that he would not hold any public meetings during the next two months. On the 8th instant it was accordingly announced that all the Ministers were to remain in office with the exception of Mr. Paul Raditch, whose portfolio has been taken over by Mr. Šibenik<sup>490</sup>, a Croatian Agrarian, formerly Second Vice-President of Parliament. It is reported that Parliament, which did not meet pending a clearing of the situation, is now to be reconvened on the 26th instant.

A circumstance which is quite important in the local internal situation is the split which occurred in the Radical Party on the occasion of the vote on the resolutions regarding the corruption investigation. It will be recalled that such a split had been developing for a long period, following the dispute between the Radical leaders, Mr. Pashitch and the more liberal Mr. Ljuba Yovanovitch, and that this division became imminent after the latter's expulsion from the Radical Party. During the vote, Mr. Yovanovitch and eleven of his partisans left the Chamber and later informed the President of Parliament that they had formed a separate Club, independent of the Radicals. On the same day, the Radical club expelled these eleven deputies from the party and addressed messages to the local party committees in the districts where they had been elected inviting them to disapprove their action, which was done in each case, thus evincing again the strong influence exercised by the central committee of the Radical Party and, primarily, by Pashitch on the rank and file of the party. The attitude of Mr. Yovanovitch's party in the present situation is not yet entirely clear, but it is probable that it will support Mr. Ouzounovitch's Cabinet, in so far as the latter may proceed to the clearing of the administration from corruption.

I wish especially to emphasize the role played by the King during the last crisis. It is noteworthy that His Majesty not only refused to accept the resignation of Mr. Ouzounovitch's Cabinet, but acted in such a way as to transform a crisis which, in spite of the insignificance of its cause, threatened the very continuation of the Radical-Croatian Agrarian agreement, into a mere temporary discord which has now been adjusted

<sup>490</sup> Šibenik, Stanko, političar. Bio član Hrvatske seljačke stranke, zastupnik u Narodnoj skupštini, ministar agrarne reforme (1926.), poljoprivrede (1929. – 1931.), šuma i rudnika (1929. – 1931.). (*Ko je ko u Jugoslaviji*, 146).

without practically any change in the situation. I may add, however, that the action of the King in this connection does not appear to have been appreciated and has even aroused certain criticism, as shown by the two newspaper articles, translations of which I enclose herewith. The first is an extract from an article published in the Belgrade Radical *Vreme*, entitled "Raditch and the Crown", and the second is an extract from an article of the Zagreb *HRVAT* (Croat) organ of the Croatian Federalists, entitled "An innovation in the Constitution". Although the political ideas of these two newspapers are entirely divergent, the substance of these articles is de facto practically the same and they represent a severe criticism of the King's action, masked by attacks in one case on Mr. Raditch and on the other hand on Mr. Ouzounovitch.

Owing to its numerous reorganizations and to the frequent changes of Ministers, the Government has not been able to proceed to the fulfillment of its legislative programme since the passage of the Budget on March 30th last, notwithstanding the many important pending Bills, such as the Bill on the Supreme Administration of the State and the Bill regulating equalization of taxes. I may state that the majority of the party leaders are palpably neglecting the welfare of their country as a whole and appear to be thinking only of their own party interests. This situation is aggravated by the fact of the real existence of corruption which is widespread among all classes of Government officials (See Legation Despatch No. 8 (860h.00/284)).<sup>491</sup> The withdrawal from the Radical-Croatian Agrarian coalition government of the leaders, Messrs. Pashitch and Raditch, may have a beneficial effect on the further development of affairs, but only presupposing that the politicians shall not act from the background as the real heads and promoters of what is now known here as the "beheaded" Cabinet. Such action on their part, however, will probably be carried on as heretofore. Practically all Mr. Pashitch's intimate associates in his party, are considered as guilty of numerous irregularities and the predominance of the aged leader would accordingly certainly be prejudicial to a clearing up of corruption. On the other hand, Mr. Stephan Raditch's unbalanced and irritable character appears to render his constant interferences with the various branches of the administration very dangerous for stability in domestic affairs. I have no reason to suspect the Prime Minister to be insincere in his promises to proceed from words to action in combatting corruption, but his task will undoubtedly meet with many difficulties created both by Mr. Pashitch and Mr. Raditch.

In concluding this despatch I may add that the best future prospect for Mr. Ouzouovitch's Cabinet would seem to be the avoidance of too close a contact with the various interests and influences involved, more intimate connection with which elements might tend to ruin his Ministry and weaken its position at the start, thus leaving but little hope for the strength and vitality of the present administration. The investigation of Rada Pashitch's activities, called for by Parliament as stated, will doubtless be a very serious test of the strength of the existing Government.

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<sup>491</sup> Dopisano rukopisom.

DOKUMENTI

I have the honor to be, Sir,  
Your obedient servant,  
John Dyneley Prince<sup>492</sup>  
John Dyneley Prince,  
American Minister.

Enclosures:

- 1.- Translation of extract from an article in the VREME of May 18th entitled: "Raditch and the Crown".
- 2.- Translation of extract from an article in the HRVAT of May 19th entitled: "News in the Constitution".

File No. 800-Quintuplicate

Copy to E. I. C., Paris.

86. 1926., lipanj 16., Izvješće poslanika Johna Dyneleyja Princea State Departmentu o „Bijeloj ruci“ u kojem se iznosi mišljenje da je utjecaj ovoga društva sada puno manji negoli je to bio u prošlosti, kada je osnovano kao protivnik organizacije „Crna ruka“. Ono postoji i sada, a u svojoj srži radi se o „srbofilnoj vojno upravljanoj skupini koja nastoji ostvariti i ojačati srpsku dominaciju nad ostatkom sadašnje Kraljevine, odnosno isključiti što je više moguće novopripojenih nacija Hrvata i Slovenaca od obnašanja previše visokih funkcija koje imaju utjecaj na kontrolu države.“

NARA, M 358, R 4, 860h.00/287

[...] <sup>493</sup>

LEGATION OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Belgrade, June 16, 1926.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Despatch No. 24

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

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<sup>492</sup> Vlastoručno.

<sup>493</sup> Državni pečat.