

Yugoslavia and the Cold War

Co-editor's note: During the early years of the Cold War, Yugoslavia became one of the focal points of the East-West rivalry. As part of its "containment" strategy, the United States tried to promote fissures within the Communist world that would undercut Soviet expansionism and eventually lead to the disintegration of the Soviet empire. As recent studies have shown, the break between Joseph Stalin and Josip Broz Tito was hailed as a major success of this "wedge strategy" and influenced U.S. policy towards Moscow's Eastern European and Asian allies in the ensuing years. After the split became evident in 1948, the Truman administration adopted a policy of "keeping Tito afloat" by extending military support and economic aid to Tito. Efforts to promote Tito's influence among the satellites and to entice Tito to join NATO, pursued by both the Truman and the Eisenhower administrations, however, failed. His increasing commitment to the non-aligned movement and rapprochement with the Soviets in the mid-1950s increasingly undermined U.S. support for Yugoslavia. Though the aid program was eventually terminated, the United States continued to support "Titoism" as an alternative to the Soviet model.¹

Much less is known about the origins, process and impact of the Soviet-Yugoslav split within the Communist world. What changed Stalin's mind about the Yugoslavs, whom, in 1945, he considered heirs to his throne and who considered themselves his most faithful disciples? What turned Tito and other top Yugoslav communists in the words of John L. Gaddis, "from worshipful acolytes into schismatic heretics?"² Did policy differences over a Balkan entente with Bulgaria or Yugoslav ambitions towards Albania cause the rift? Or was it, as Vojtech Mastny has argued, an "incompatibility of affinities" — the very Stalinist disposition and fervor of the Yugoslav Communists, which, despite their genuine devotion for the Soviet fatherland and socialism, antagonized the Soviet leader?³

With the following essays and documents, the Cold War International History Project presents new evidence on Yugoslavia's role in the early years of the Cold War. Research on this subject is not an easy task. In Moscow, tougher declassification policies and shrinking archival budgets have posed difficulties. Even more desperate is the situation in the former Yugoslavia where the recent conflict has left archives in shambles. Despite these difficulties, **Leonid Gibianskii**, a senior research fellow at the Institute of Slavonic and Balkan Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences, has unearthed major new findings in the archives in Moscow and Belgrade. His first article covers key episodes in Soviet-Yugoslav relations — the 1946 and 1948 Stalin-Tito meetings. Based on access to Yugoslav as well as Soviet materials, Gibianskii compares

Soviet and Yugoslav documents on the meetings. **Csaba Békés**, a research fellow at the Institute for the History of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, offers an interesting snapshot of both Stalin's thinking about the establishment of the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform) as well as Yugoslav (and Hungarian) perspectives on the organization in 1947. By contrast, the document found and published by the Russian historian **Dmitrii Volkogonov** throws new light on one of the more bizarre efforts in the late Stalin years to eliminate the Yugoslav leader. Documents obtained from the Russian Foreign Ministry Archives by former CWIHP fellow **Andrei Edemskii** illuminate the difficult process of Soviet-Yugoslav rapprochement in the mid-1950s. **Gibianskii's** second essay, as well as the documents concluding this *Bulletin* section, explore the evolution of Soviet-Yugoslav relations in the aftermath of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. The essay was first presented as a contribution to the 26-28 September 1996 conference on "Hungary and the World, 1956," a major international scholarly conference co-sponsored by the National Security Archive (Washington, DC), the Institute for the History of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution (Budapest), and the Cold War International History Project.⁴

The transcripts of the 1946 and 1948 Stalin-Tito meetings also inaugurate a major CWIHP initiative on "Stalin as a Statesman." Based on the recently-published appointment books for Stalin's Kremlin office, the Cold War International History Project will try to document Stalin's conversations and correspondence with foreign leaders as comprehensively as possible, with a view to capturing "the voice of Stalin" in the Soviet foreign policy-making process. The compilation and comparison of transcripts, memoranda, cables and other sources from both Russian and other archives will allow researchers to draw conclusions about Stalin's thinking on foreign policy issues from a richer and broader source base. For example, the 1948 Stalin-Tito conversation, printed below, sheds light not just on Stalin's views on Yugoslavia, but also on his feelings about the Chinese Communist revolution. "Triangulations" of this kind promise new insights for all historians of Stalin and the early years of the Cold War.

¹ See, most recently, Lorraine M. Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat. The United States, Yugoslavia, and the Cold War* (University Park, 1997).

² John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know. Rethinking Cold War History* (New York, 1997), 49.

³ Vojtech Mastny, *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity. The Stalin Years* (New York, 1996), 37.

⁴ For further information on the conference, see *CWIHP Bulletin* 8-9 (Winter 1996/7), 355-357.

The Soviet Bloc and the Initial Stage of the Cold War: Archival Documents on Stalin's Meetings with Communist Leaders of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, 1946-1948

by Leonid Gibianskii

I. The Documents

Documents pertaining to Joseph Stalin's meetings with Eastern European communist leaders hold particular importance in the study of the initial stage of the Cold War. As a rule, records of such meetings, stored in Russian and Eastern European archives, contain extremely important materials for the purpose of clarifying: how relations developed between Moscow and its dominions (both individually and collectively) during the first postwar years; what kind of problems arose within the bloc; and what Soviet actions were taken to resolve them in the Kremlin's interests, what correlation existed at various times between Soviet policies and the "people's democracies" regarding the state of their relations with the West; how these relations and developments in the international arena were viewed by Stalin and his Eastern European interlocutors; and what questions were discussed and what goals were set on the given topic. In this regard, the archival documents printed below on the 27-28 May 1946 meeting of the Kremlin boss with a visiting Yugoslav government delegation headed by Josip Broz Tito as well as the 10 February 1948 conference, also in Moscow, of Stalin and his inner circle members (Viacheslav Molotov, Andrei Zhdanov, Georgii Malenkov, Mikhail Suslov) with leading officials from Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, are of particular interest.¹

Both these meetings occupy important places in the early history of the Soviet bloc and have figured more than once in the historiography on this period. Until recently, however, the original documents pertaining to these meetings remained inaccessible in the archives of Moscow, Belgrade, and Sofia, and researchers could refer only to the descriptions of both meetings contained in the official biography of Tito, published after the Soviet-Yugoslav conflict of 1948 and written by one of the leading Yugoslav propagandists of the time, Vladimir Dedijer,² as well as—with regard to the second meeting—in the memoirs of two Yugoslav participants Milovan Djilas and Edvard Kardelj, published significantly later.³ In addition, these accounts, which for many years constituted the sole source of information for both these events and which were widely used in Western and Yugoslav historiography (the study of this topic was for a long time forbidden in the USSR and in most other communist countries), were not sufficiently complete; they omitted much of significance; inaccuracies and misrepresentations

also abound. In the case of Dedijer, who used the Yugoslav records of both meetings, the omissions and misrepresentations stemmed from deliberate selectiveness with data, made to correspond to the official Yugoslav version of events, formulated after the conflict of 1948.⁴ The same is also characteristic of Kardelj's memoirs, where this tendency was apparently further abetted by the fact that the author, one of the founding architects of the official Yugoslav version, came to believe, after many years of repetition, in his own inventions especially those concerning the 10 February 1948 meeting. At the same time he could not consult the original documents as he was dictating his recollections while seriously ill, only a few months before his death.⁵ Djilas, on the other hand, was already a dissident when writing his memoirs and was not interested in following the official version, and in this respect his account is more trustworthy. However, in a number of instances he was let down by his memory, and as a result he allowed mistakes and inaccuracies and at times suffered the influence of by-then habitual stereotypes brought into usage by Dedijer. All of this was fully discovered only in recent years, when I was able, finally, to examine the original archival materials pertaining to both meetings.

With regard to Stalin's 27 May 1946 meeting with Tito and members of the Yugoslav delegation accompanying him, there are two known documents: a Yugoslav record in handwritten Serbo-Croatian discovered in the Josip Broz Tito Archive in Belgrade (*Arhiv Josipa Broza Tita*);⁶ and a signed typewritten copy of the Soviet record of the meeting, stored in the Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (APRF) in Moscow.⁷ The Yugoslav record was made by members of the Yugoslav delegation: Blagoe Neshkovich, at the time head of the Serbian Communist Party Central Committee and the Serbian government, and Koche Popovich, chief of the General Staff of Yugoslavia. The Soviet record was written down by the USSR Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Anatolii Lavrent'ev. Both records were co-published in 1993 in the Moscow journal *Istoricheskii arkhiv* (the Yugoslav record in Russian translation) by Yuri Murin, associate of the APRF, and myself, along with my introduction and footnotes.⁸

As for the Soviet-Yugoslav-Bulgarian meeting on 10 February 1948, there are archival documents kept by each of the three sides. The Josip Broz Tito Archive in

Belgrade has an extensive handwritten Yugoslav report by Djilas (in Serbo-Croatian using the Cyrillic alphabet), which he put together upon his return from Moscow on the basis of notes he took during the course of the meeting, and which was presented during the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CC CPY) Politburo meeting on 19 February 1948.⁹ In addition, the Tito archive contains a ciphered telegram reporting on the meeting and its results, sent from Moscow to Belgrade by the Yugoslav delegation on the day following the meeting with Stalin.¹⁰ Among the documents of the former Central Party Archive of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party (CC BCP), currently stored in the Central State Archive (Tsentralen d'rzhaven arkhiv) in Sofia, there is a stenographic record of the 10 February 1948 meeting, made by Traicho Kostov, at the time Georgii Dimitrov's closest associate in the Bulgarian government.¹¹ This same archive also contains a record made by Vasil Kolarov, another Bulgarian government official present at the meeting; it is essentially a repetition of Kostov's stenographic record, having been put together using Kostov's material, with the exception of a few stylistic corrections and small addenda.¹² Finally, the APRF contains a still-classified Soviet record of the 10 February 1948 meeting. This record, the text of which I was also able to examine (but which is not printed below), was made by the Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, Valerian Zorin, who attended the meeting.¹³

For both the 1946 and 1948 meetings, the records of all the participating sides are on the whole compatible and sometimes almost entirely correspond in the essential contents of the discussions. At the same time, on certain questions touched upon at the meetings, the records of each side contain relatively significant discrepancies in their accounts of the course of the discussion and in their focus on the opinions expressed. At times, one record contains something that is not mentioned in another. As a rule, the Soviet records are shorter, drier, more formal, exhibiting a more generalized character, whereas the Yugoslav and Bulgarian records are more detailed, often punctuated with verbatim dialogue and expressions, particularly those of Stalin and Molotov. A comparative analysis of these archival documents allows one to piece together a fairly complete picture of both meetings, the reasons and reasoning behind them, the topics discussed, and the decisions arrived at.

II. The Background

The 1946 meeting was first proposed by the Yugoslav side in connection with questions of further Soviet economic and military-technical assistance to the Communist regime in Yugoslavia. As early as 1944, Kardelj had raised the question of joint-stock enterprises with the USSR for the purpose of exploiting mineral deposits in Yugoslavia.¹⁴ In the spring of 1945, CC CPY Politburo member Andrea Hebrang, the chief economic official (he headed the Economic Council, the Yugoslav Planning

Commission, and the Ministry of Industry), reiterated the proposal for Soviet participation in the exploitation of Yugoslav natural resources, by offering concession rights as well, to which Moscow replied by agreeing to the creation of joint enterprises, but not to concession rights.¹⁵ In addressing the Soviet government in September 1945 and February 1946, Hebrang, in the name of the government of Yugoslavia, put forth a program for the establishment of such enterprises not only for excavation, but also for his country's refining industry and the construction of power plants and transportation systems.¹⁶ Despite its positive response, the Soviet side delayed practical ratification of these plans, and only in mid-April 1946 did the new USSR ambassador Lavrent'ev inform Kardelj and Hebrang of Soviet interest in the Yugoslav proposals. The ambassador, however, discovered a certain amount of hesitation on the Yugoslav side: in their preparations to send a delegation to Moscow for trade negotiations, they strictly limited its authority to the finalization of an agreement for bilateral shipment of goods for 1946, while postponing the discussion of fundamental questions of economic collaboration for a later time. This was noted by Lavrent'ev in his discussions with Kardelj and Hebrang.¹⁷

The hesitation evident in Belgrade was brought about by complications within the Yugoslav government. By limiting the assignment of the delegation that was to go to Moscow, Tito lowered its status, thus allowing him, in turn, to designate the Minister of Foreign Trade, Nikolai Petrovic, as its leader, and not Hebrang, as was previously planned. Tito told one of his close associates that Hebrang could not be sent to the USSR, because he supported a misguided economic policy. When he found out about this, Hebrang asserted that Tito's main reason for not wanting to send him to Moscow was the fact that following Hebrang's visit there in January 1945, a number of telegrams from the Soviet government began to be addressed not any longer just to Tito or to Tito and Kardelj, but to Tito, Kardelj, and Hebrang.¹⁸ Hebrang believed that Tito viewed this as a sign of special relations between the Kremlin and Hebrang and a danger to the hierarchy which had formed within the Yugoslav government. During the discussion with Lavrent'ev on 17 April 1946, in response to the ambassador's question regarding the change in the Yugoslav position on economic negotiations, Hebrang did not mention his suspicions, but immediately following the meeting laid them out in a letter to Kardelj, apparently counting on his support. Kardelj, however, did not support Hebrang, and handed the letter over to Tito.¹⁹ The latter promptly called a Politburo meeting on April 19, during which he sharply condemned Hebrang. During this and the following meeting on April 24, the Politburo sided with the condemnation and resolved to exclude Hebrang from the Politburo and remove him from the majority of his government posts.²⁰ Alarmed by the apprehensions voiced by Lavrent'ev to Kardelj and Hebrang concerning the Yugoslav position on

the economic agreement with USSR, on April 18 Tito received the Soviet ambassador and announced that in the near future he himself would go to Moscow in order to sign the agreement on economic cooperation.²¹

In that same meeting with Lavrent'ev, Tito also said that the projected economic cooperation must also include the Yugoslav military-industrial sector, meaning Soviet assistance "in the establishment of infrastructure for military production."²² Such assistance had been in part already rendered in the past, but Tito wanted it to be continued and further broadened, and as early as January 1946 he had spoken regarding this matter with the previous USSR ambassador in Belgrade, Ivan Sadchikov, in particular noting the possibility of using projected Soviet-Yugoslav joint-stock enterprises for building the Yugoslav military industry.²³ There was a plan to send a special military delegation to the USSR to discuss these questions; candidates for this delegation were mentioned in the CC CPY Politburo meeting on April 9.²⁴ Now, in his discussion with Lavrent'ev on April 18, Tito announced his intentions to conduct negotiations with the Soviet government on this matter himself during a visit to Moscow.²⁵

On April 29, Lavrent'ev informed Tito of the Soviet government's positive response towards the proposed visit to Moscow for the purpose of discussing the aforementioned questions.²⁶ Later, the Soviet government abruptly moved forward the date of the visit: on May 7, the ambassador informed Tito that the visit had to take place during the second half of May, and that in addition the Soviet government wanted to discuss with him the question of the Yugoslav-Albanian Treaty on Friendship, the completion of which was being planned by Belgrade.²⁷ The treaty projected by Yugoslavia and its accompanying agreements on closer economic, military, and border cooperation, calculated to integrate Albania with Yugoslavia in an increasing manner, drew serious attention in Moscow, where the possibility of Albania's inclusion into the Yugoslav federation as a result of the Yugoslav-Albanian talks was not being ruled out.²⁸ While not explicitly opposing Belgrade's special patronage toward Tirane, the Soviet side nevertheless preferred to restrain the development of any further contacts, in particular by deferring, at least for the near future, the completion of the secret Yugoslav-Albanian military agreement planned by Belgrade and any decision on Albania's inclusion in the Yugoslav federation. In the report "On the question of Yugoslav-Albanian relations," compiled by the chief of the Balkan Sector in the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Aleksandr Lavrishchev, in preparation for Tito's visit to Moscow, this position was based on the need to avoid a possible negative reaction from the West which would have complicated Yugoslavia's and Albania's positions in the international arena.²⁹ Whether this was the real reason for the Soviet position or not, it is clear that the Soviet leadership decided to hasten Tito's visit in order to sway him towards the Kremlin's desired position with regard to

Yugoslav-Albanian relations.

A week before his visit, Tito told Lavrent'ev that, in addition to those issues mentioned above, the agenda for the Moscow talks should also include "general foreign policy questions," including those pertaining to the upcoming peace conference in Paris and the question of Yugoslav relations with Bulgaria.³⁰ Clearly, he considered it important to discuss with the Soviet leadership the more significant aspects of the international situation given the unfolding Cold War, including the coordination of actions between the USSR, Yugoslavia, and the other Soviet-bloc countries. Of course, the Yugoslav leader had to be particularly troubled by those international problems that directly affected Yugoslavia: specifically, those concerning the Balkans and the Mediterranean-Adriatic region. As for Yugoslav-Bulgarian relations, what was implied was the completion of the Treaty of Friendship, followed by the union of the two countries in a federation, which had become a topic of discussion among Moscow, Belgrade, and Sofia as early as late 1944-early 1945. At that time, neither the plan for establishing the federation, nor the wish to sign a treaty of alliance between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, could be implemented. The reasons for this were the vetoes placed on these intentions by London and Washington as participants in Allied control over Bulgaria, as well as disagreements over the structure of the future federative union: Yugoslavia wanted for Bulgaria to have the same status as each of the six federation units of Yugoslavia, that is, essentially become subordinate to the latter, whereas Bulgaria, supported by Stalin, was in favor of a "dual federation" with equal status between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria.³¹ Later, Tito's interest in the federation with Bulgaria waned significantly. He reacted negatively to the Bulgarian proposal to return to the question of the treaty and the federation, put forth in April 1946 by the Bulgarian envoy in Belgrade, Petro Todorov, pointing out that under current circumstances such steps would still be inexpedient, in particular prior to the settlement of Bulgaria's postwar international situation. Tito notified Lavrent'ev of his position and requested Moscow's opinion on this account.³²

III. The Meetings

It is clear from the Soviet and Yugoslav records of the meeting between Stalin and Tito in the Kremlin on 27 May 1946 (printed below) that the discussion centered primarily on questions of Soviet economic assistance to Yugoslavia through the creation of joint-stock enterprises, on assistance in establishing the Yugoslav military industry and equipping the armed forces, and on Yugoslav-Albanian and Yugoslav-Bulgarian relations.

The result of the discussion regarding the first two questions was the signing of an agreement on 8 June 1946, which provided for the establishment of a number of joint-stock enterprises in Yugoslavia (for extracting and refining crude oil, excavating bauxite, and producing aluminum, excavating and producing lead, exploration and mining of

coal, ferrous metal production, civilian aviation, the Danube ship industry, the Yugoslav-Soviet Bank, and, in the future, lumber and cellulose-paper industry), as well as for Soviet technical assistance in many branches of the Yugoslav economy (in electrical, food, textile, chemical and metal-working industries, in the production of construction materials, and in agriculture,),³³ and for an understanding to follow this with the signing of a concrete agreement on supplying the Yugoslav army through a long-term loan and shipments for the Yugoslav military industry.³⁴

With regard to Yugoslav-Albanian relations, Stalin, judging from the records of the meeting, stated his endorsement of the closest possible alliance between Albania and Yugoslavia and even for Belgrade's patronage towards Tirane, but clearly strove to avoid Albania's direct inclusion in the Yugoslav federation. The archival documents obtained up to now do not clearly answer the question whether his arguments for postponing unification until the resolution of the Trieste question were a true reflection of the Soviet position or merely a tactical ruse, in actuality concealing the desire to obstruct completely Albania's unification with Yugoslavia. In either case, as a result of the Moscow negotiations, the question of unification was, for the time being, removed from the agenda. In addition, the Soviet side, having given its consent to the Treaty of Peace and Mutual Assistance and to an agreement for close economic cooperation between Yugoslavia and Albania, notified the Albanian government of its support for the signing of these agreements and "for orienting Albania toward closer ties with Yugoslavia," and facilitated the signing of the aforementioned Yugoslav-Albanian documents in July 1946.³⁵

The Soviet and Yugoslav records demonstrate that during the meeting with Stalin, Tito argued his position against a federation with Bulgaria. But the Yugoslav record does not contain Stalin's disagreement with Tito's position, while the Soviet record directly states that Stalin insisted on the importance of such a federation, though he believed that at first one could limit oneself to the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance. It is unlikely that the Soviet record would contain something which Stalin did not actually say; thus, in this instance it is probably true to fact. However, it remains a mystery why Stalin rejected Molotov's observation at the meeting that it would be better to postpone the Yugoslav-Bulgarian treaty until the signing of a peace treaty with Bulgaria. Indeed, Molotov's remark was invariably the Soviet position both before and after the meeting.³⁶ Perhaps the answer to this mystery will be found in further research.

As for the discussion of "general political questions," mentioned by Tito before the trip, they were also touched upon: during the Kremlin meeting itself there was a discussion on a possible strategy with regard to the handling of the Trieste question in Paris, the current and future status of Yugoslav relations with Hungary and Greece, and, during further conversation at the evening

dinner in Stalin's dacha that followed the Kremlin meeting (and which is absent from the Soviet record but sparsely summarized in the Yugoslav version), among other things, problems of strengthening of the Soviet bloc, relations between Communist parties, the situation in Greece and Czechoslovakia, the Italian "craving for revenge," and the question of the Polish-Czechoslovak dispute over Tesin (Cieszyn) were mentioned. Judging by the handwritten notes made by Tito during the return-trip from Moscow, the visit also included a discussion of Austria, Yugoslav-Austrian relations and Yugoslav relations with the other Slavic countries.³⁷ However, as with much of the dinner discussions at Stalin's dacha, the contents of these are not mentioned in the document.

As for the Soviet-Bulgarian-Yugoslav meeting on 10 February 1948, this took place exclusively on the basis of Moscow's demands. The reasons were Stalin's strong dissatisfaction with the foreign policy moves of Sofia and Belgrade, undertaken without Soviet permission or even in defiance of Kremlin directives.³⁸ There had been three such moves. The first was the public announcement by the governments of Bulgaria and Yugoslavia in early August 1947 that they had agreed upon (i.e., were on the verge of signing) a treaty on friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance. This was done in direct defiance of Stalin's orders which specified that the Bulgarian-Yugoslav treaty had to wait until a peace treaty with Bulgaria had come into effect. Following a sharp, though not public, outcry from the Kremlin, Dimitrov and Tito, in a display of disciplined submission, acknowledged their mistake. However, in January 1948 two more moves were undertaken without Moscow's consent. First was Dimitrov's statement to the press regarding the possibility of a federation and a customs union of East European "people's democracies," even including Greece, in which such a regime would be established. The other move was Tito's appeal to Hoxha for consent to deploy a Yugoslav division in Albania. In this appeal, to which Hoxha responded positively, the Yugoslav leader warned of a Western-supported Greek invasion of Albania, but Djilas later maintained that in fact Tito wanted to use the deployment of forces to fortify the Yugoslav position in Albania, fearing a loss of ground as a result of growing Soviet participation in Albanian affairs. In either case, the Yugoslav move was taken without consultation with the Soviet leadership, which, having learned of the plans to send a division to Albania, sharply condemned such actions via Molotov's telegrams to Tito. Although subsequently the Yugoslav leader halted the deployment of the division, high-ranking Yugoslav representatives were swiftly sent to Moscow. At the same time, Bulgarian emissaries were also being sent there in connection with the aforementioned statement by Dimitrov, which had already been publicly condemned by *Pravda*, and subsequently Dimitrov himself went to the Soviet capital.

As for the course of the meeting in Moscow, sufficient coverage is provided by the Djilas report printed below

with the aforementioned corrections and additions from other records included in the footnotes. However, certain points of the 10 February 1948 meeting merit clarification or additional commentary.³⁹

The first and perhaps the most important is the continual Soviet insistence throughout the meeting that the aforementioned foreign policy moves undertaken by Belgrade and Sofia without Kremlin consent constituted serious mistakes, insofar as they might be used by the USA and Britain against the interests of the USSR and the “people’s democracies.” In particular, as evidenced by the record of the meeting, Stalin placed special significance on the fact that these misguided moves might bolster the position of supporters of a more hard-line policy against the Soviet Union and its East European underlings, possibly enabling them to achieve success in the upcoming elections for the U.S. Congress and President in fall 1948. How much did this contention reflect the actual Soviet desire to avoid an unfavorable reaction in the West? And was there not some deliberate fomenting of fear on the part of the Soviets, as a means of precluding any kind of attempt at independent action, without consultation with Moscow, on the part of Bulgarian and Yugoslav leaders? At this time researchers do not have at their disposal the Soviet documents which would provide a clear answer to these questions. Undoubtedly, the Soviet leadership was sufficiently aware of potential Western reactions to particular statements or actions of either the Kremlin itself or the “people’s democracies.” Nevertheless, while accusing Sofia and Belgrade of making moves leading to an undesirable deterioration in relations with the West, the Soviet side at the same time considered it entirely acceptable to implement its own plans, which were obviously fraught with a potential escalation of conflict with the Western powers. It is sufficient to recall the Soviet-induced Communist coup in Czechoslovakia in February 1948, or (to an even greater degree) Soviet measures to limit access to Western sectors in Berlin three months later, which led to the Berlin blockade crisis. It seems that the basis for Soviet condemnation of the Yugoslav and Bulgarian initiatives was, in the final analysis, the dissatisfaction with the independence of the decisions themselves, undertaken by Sofia and Belgrade without sanction from Moscow, although it is entirely possible that at the same time the Kremlin was genuinely apprehensive of possible Western reactions to these moves.

The other significant point was the question of the origin of Stalin’s statement at the February 10 meeting of the possibility of creating three federations in East Europe: Polish-Czechoslovak, Hungarian-Romanian, and Bulgarian-Yugoslav-Albanian. As of now, historians do not have at their disposal documents which would provide a direct explanation for this. However, according to all records of the February 10 meeting, in speaking of the possibility of three federations, Stalin set this idea in opposition to the proposal for a federation or confederation of all East European countries, put forth by Dimitrov in the afore-

mentioned statement to the press in January 1948. This prompts the suspicion that the Soviet leader, in speaking of three federations, was in actuality only pursuing the goal of sinking Dimitrov’s proposal. It is perhaps significant, in this regard, that Stalin said nothing at all specific about either the Polish-Czechoslovak or the Hungarian-Romanian federations, mentioning them only in the most abstract form. Moreover, he spoke much more specifically of the federation of Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Albania. Clearly, only the latter of these was the immediate goal of his comment on federations, while the reference to the previous two seems more plausible as a strictly tactical move, used to camouflage his true intentions. As for the question of the Bulgarian-Yugoslav-Albanian federation, according to both the Djilas report, printed below, and the Soviet record of the meeting, Stalin stated that a union between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia must come first, only then followed by the inclusion of Albania into this Bulgarian-Yugoslav federation (the Bulgarian records do not contain such a statement). It is apparent that such a plan fundamentally differed from Belgrade’s intentions to merge Albania with Yugoslavia, and was therefore put forth as a counterbalance to these intentions. Finally, the Djilas report, as well as all the other records (though the Soviet record is not as direct as the others on this point), notes Stalin’s statement that the creation of the Yugoslav-Bulgarian federation ought not be delayed. This raises the question: Did he really favor such a development, and if so, why? Documents currently at our disposal do not provide a clear answer. After 1948, the official Yugoslav version always maintained that Stalin was attempting to force a Bulgarian-Yugoslav federation as a means, using the more obedient government of Bulgaria, more effectively to control Yugoslavia. However, no documentary evidence was ever given in defense of this, while historiography contains numerous and entirely different readings of his statements in favor of a swift unification of Bulgaria and Yugoslavia.⁴⁰

The third point is, how did the question of the Greek partisan movement come up during the February 10 meeting? All records note that its discussion arose in connection with the question of Albania. However, according to the Djilas report and—though not so directly—the Soviet report, Stalin began to express his doubts concerning the prospects of the guerrilla war in Greece in response to Kardelj’s conclusions regarding the threat of an invasion of Albania, while the Bulgarian records do not note such a connection. According to the Soviet record, still prior to the discussion of the Albanian question, Dimitrov was already asking Stalin concerning the prospects of future assistance to the Greek partisans. In any case, it is not clear from any of the records whether Stalin had planned before the meeting to discuss the future of the Greek partisan movement or whether the Greek question popped up spontaneously.

Finally, the fourth point is the manner in which Stalin raised the question of the importance of signing protocols

of commitment to mutual consultation between the USSR and Bulgaria and the USSR and Yugoslavia on foreign policy questions. The Djilas report states that this proposal was advanced by Stalin and Molotov within the context of accusations directed at Yugoslavia and Bulgaria for not informing Moscow of their projected foreign policy activities. At the same time, the Bulgarian and Soviet records portray the matter in an entirely different light: Stalin proposed to sign such a protocol in response to Dimitrov's complaint that Moscow gave out little information regarding its position on important foreign policy questions. Here, as in the case with the Greek partisan movement, we do not have at our disposal documents to determine whether Stalin was actually planning to raise this question, or whether he was simply availing himself of the opportunity provided by Dimitrov's statement.

The records printed below of Stalin's meetings with Yugoslav and Bulgarian communist leaders constitute an important source for historical study and point out directions for further archival research.

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¹ Editor's Note: The May 27/28 meeting only lasted 90 minutes before breaking up for an early morning snack. Stalin was a night owl and many of his summits (including the 1948 meeting included here) should be "double-dated," although for convenience, the earlier day is often used to identify meetings. On the abolition of nocturnal summons under Khrushchev, see John Gaddis, *We Now Know* (Oxford, 1997) p. 206.

² Vladimir Dedijer, *Josip Broz Tito: Prilozi za biografiju* [Josip Broz Tito: Materials for Biography] (Belgrade, 1953), pp. 447-453, 497-504. For a slightly different version, in English translation, see *Tito Speaks* (London, 1953) and *Tito* (New York, 1953).

³ Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin* (New York, 1962), pp. 114-120 (in Yugoslavia this could only be published almost three decades later: Milovan Djilas, *Razgovori sa Staljinom* (Belgrade, 1990), pp. 111-118); Edvard Kardelj, *Borba za priznanje i nezavisnost nove Jugoslavije 1944-1957: Secanija* [The Struggle for Recognition and Independence of New Yugoslavia 1944-1957: Memoirs] (Belgrade-Ljubljana, 1980), pp. 112-117.

⁴ Thirty years later Dedijer himself admitted this selectiveness, explaining that this was entirely due to the fact that he was writing the book from the perspective of the Yugoslav government. Vladimir Dedijer, *Novi prilozi za biografiju Josipa Broza Tita* [New Materials for Josip Broz Tito's Biography], vol.3 (Belgrade, 1984), pp. 283-284, 291-293.

⁵ While dictating his memoirs, Kardelj asked to verify, corroborate and expand many of his recollections on the basis of archival documents. See Edvard Kardelj, *Borba*, p. 14.

⁶ Arhiv Josipa Broza Tita, Kabinet Marsala Jugoslavihe (henceforth AJBT, KMJ), I-1/7, pp. 6-11.

⁷ Arhiv Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii (Archive of the President of the Russian Federation; APRF), fond (f.) 45, opis' (op.) 1, delo (d.) 397, listy (ll.) 107-110.

⁸ "Poslednii vizit I. Broza Tito k I.V. Stalinu" ([J. Broz Tito's final visit to J.V. Stalin], *Istoricheskii arkhiv* 2 (1993), pp. 16-35.

⁹ AJBT KMJ, I-3-b/651, pp. 33-40. Minutes of the CPY Politburo meeting on 19 February 1948 are in Arhiv Jugoslavije [Archives of Yugoslavia: henceforth AJ], fond 507, CK SKJ, III/31 a (copy).

¹⁰ AJBT, KMJ, I-3-b/651, pp. 45-46.

¹¹ Kostov's stenographic record, or more specifically its deciphered version in Bulgarian, was also included in Georgii Dimitrov's journal, stored in the same archive: Tsentralen d'rzhaven arkhiv (documents from the former Central Party Archives (TsPA), henceforth TsDA-TsPA), f. 146, op. 2, arkhivna edinitsa (a.e.) 19, ll. 103-128. The rights to the journal now kept in the archive, including Kostov's stenographic record, are held by Georgii Dimitrov's adopted son Boiko Dimitrov, to whom I am deeply grateful for giving me a copy of the text of this record.

¹² TsDA-TsPA, f. 147, op. 2, a.e. 62, ll. 5-35 (manuscript). Kolarov also noted in Russian some statements by Stalin and Molotov (*ibid.*, ll. 1-4).

¹³ The archive has a typewritten copy.

¹⁴ Minutes of conversation of Zorin and Gerashchenko, department heads in the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of USSR, with Kardelj and the chief Yugoslav military envoy in Moscow, Velimir Terzic, 23 November 1944. Arhiv vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii (Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, henceforth, AVP RF), f. 0144, op. 28, papka (p.) 114, d. 4, ll. 220-221.

¹⁵ Copy of Kardelj's letter to Tito, dated 28 May 1945, AJ, f. Edvard Kardelj, kutija (box) "Sabrana dela", t. IX (X), No. 9, p. 82; the USSR Embassy memorandum to the Yugoslav government (May 1945) in AJBT, KMJ, I-3-b/616.

¹⁶ Minutes of conversation between Lavrent'ev and Hebrang on 17 April 1946, AVP RF, f. 0144, op. 30, p. 118, d. 15, l. 26; memorandum "Economic Relations Between the USSR and Yugoslavia," 22 April 1946, AVP RF, f. 0144, op. 30, p. 118, d. 10, ll. 6-7.

¹⁷ Minutes of conversation between Lavrent'ev and Hebrang on 16 April and between Lavrent'ev and Hebrang on 17 April 1946, AVP RF, f. 0144, op. 30, p. 118, d. 15, ll. 20-21; Hebrang's letter to Kardelj, dated 17 April 1946, AJBT, KMJ, I-3-b/623, l. 1.

¹⁸ Hebrang's letter to Kardelj, dated 17 April 1946, AJBT, KMJ, I-3-b/623, pp. 1-3.

¹⁹ The letter still remains in Tito's archive: see previous footnote.

²⁰ Copies of minutes of these Politburo meetings, AJ, f. 507, CKSKJ, III/17; III/18. The decision was secret, and it was published only when the Soviet-Yugoslav conflict broke out in 1948; see *Borba* (Belgrade), 30 June 1948.

²¹ Minutes of conversation between Tito and Lavrent'ev, 18 April 1946, AVP RF, f. 0144, op. 30, p. 118, d. 15, l. 31.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Memorandum "On the creation of an industrial infrastructure for the production of ammunition in Yugoslavia," 27 May 1946, AVP RF, f. 0144, op. 30, p. 118, d. 10, ll. 19-20.

²⁴ Copy of minutes of this Politburo meeting, AJ, f. 507, CKSKJ, III/16.

²⁵ Minutes of conversation between Tito and Lavrent'ev, 18 April 1946, AVP RF, f. 0144, op. 30, p. 118, d. 15, l. 31.

²⁶ Minutes of conversation between Lavrent'ev and Tito, 29 April 1946, AVP RF, f. 0144, op. 30, p. 118, d. 15, l. 62.

²⁷ Minutes of conversation between Lavrent'ev and Tito, 7 May 1946, AVPRF, f. 0144, op. 30, p. 118, d. 15, l. 76.

²⁸ Minutes of conversation between Lavrent'ev and Kardelj, 23 April 1946, AVPRF, f. 0144, op. 30, p. 118, d. 15, l. 45; also see footnote 28.

²⁹ Memorandum, AVPRF, f. 0144, op. 30, p. 118, d. 10, ll. 1-3.

³⁰ Minutes of conversation between Lavrent'ev and Tito, 20 May 1946, AVPRF, f. 0144, op. 30, p. 118, d. 15, l. 100.

³¹ I considered this problem in my "Balkanskii uzel" [The Balkan Knot], in O.A. Rzheshhevskii, ed., *Vtoraia mirovaia voina: Aktual'nye problemy* [The Second World War: Contemporary Problems] (Moscow, 1995), pp. 96-101.

³² Minutes of conversation between Lavrent'ev and Tito, 22 April 1946, AVPRF, f. 0144, op. 30, p. 118, d. 15, ll. 39-41.

³³ Copy of "Agreement on Economic Cooperation Between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia," 8 June 1946, Arkhiv Ministerstva vneshnikh ekonomicheskikh svyazei Rossiiskoi Federatsii [Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations of the Russian Federation], fond: Treaty-Legal Department, op. 11876, d. 55, ll. 17-19.

³⁴ Negotiations for a concrete agreement were being carried out by a special Yugoslav military-trade delegation which arrived in Moscow in fall 1946. The type and the amount of materials designated for shipment to Yugoslavia were determined by the Soviet side on the basis of a Yugoslav procurement application, the first of which was handed over at the time of Tito's visit. See, e.g., the correspondence between the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Yugoslav Embassy in Moscow during November 1946-March 1947; AVPRF, f. 144, op. 6, p. 8, d. 3, ll. 121, 125, 132-143; *ibid.*, op. 7, p. 12, d. 1, l. 23.

³⁵ Minutes of conversations between Lavrent'ev and Enver Hoxha (the latter had arrived in Belgrade by then), 24 June 1946, and between Lavrent'ev and Hysni Kapo, Albanian Minister in

Yugoslavia, 1 July 1946: AVPRF, f. 0144, op. 30, p. 118, d. 15, ll. 167-168; and *ibid.*, d. 16, l. 1.

³⁶ See L. Ya. Gibianskii, "Problemy mezhdunarodno-politicheskogo strukturirovaniia Vostochnoi Evropy v period formirovaniia sovetskogo bloka v 1940-e gody" [Problems of East European International-Political Structuring during the Period of the Formation of the Soviet Bloc during the 1940s], in M.M. Narinskii et al., eds., *Kholodnaia voina: novye podkhody, novye dokumenty* [The Cold War: New Approaches, New Documents] (Moscow, 1995), pp. 103, 105, 106-107.

³⁷ These notes, untitled and undated, can be found in AJBT, KMJ, I-1/7, pp. 51-52.

³⁸ I have examined this episode elsewhere in more depth on the basis of Russian, Yugoslav, and Bulgarian archival materials. See, e.g., "The 1948 Soviet-Yugoslav Conflict and the Formation of the 'Socialist Camp' Model," in Odd Arne Westad et al., eds., *The Soviet Union in Eastern Europe, 1945-1989* (London & New York, 1994), pp. 30-39; "The Beginning of the Soviet-Yugoslav Conflict and the Cominform," in Giuliano Procacci et al., eds., *The Cominform: Minutes of the Three Conferences 1947/1948/1949* (Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli: Annali, Anno Trentesimo) (Milano, 1994), pp. 469-472, 474.

³⁹ Detailed analysis of this meeting can be found in: L. Ya. Gibianskii, "K istorii sovetsko-iugoslavskogo konflikta 1948-1953 gg.: sekretnaia sovetsko-yugoslavo-bolgarskaia vstrecha v Moskve 10 fevralia 1948 goda" [On the History of the Soviet-Yugoslav Conflict of 1948-1953: The Secret Soviet-Yugoslav-Bulgarian Meeting in Moscow on 10 February 1948], *Sovetskoe slavianovedenie* (since 1992 *Slavianovedenie*) 3 and 4 (1991) and 1 and 3 (1992). For a shorter analysis see my "The 1948 Soviet-Yugoslav Conflict...," pp. 40-42.

⁴⁰ For more details see L. Ya. Gibianskii, "K istorii..." *Sovetskoe slavianovedenie* no. 1 (1992), pp. 55 ff.

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I. Soviet and Yugoslav Records of the Tito-Stalin Conversation of 27-28 May 1946

A. The Soviet Record:

Record of Conversation of
Generalissimus I.V. Stalin with Marshal Tito

27 May 1946 at 23:00 hours¹

Secret

Present:

from the USSR side – [USSR Foreign Minister] V.M. Molotov, USSR Ambassador to Yugoslavia A.I. Lavrent'ev;

from the Yugoslav side — Minister of Internal Affairs, A. Rankovich; Head of the General Staff, Lieutenant-General K. Popovich; Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Serbia, Neshkovich; Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Slovenia, Kidrich; Yugoslav Ambassador to USSR, V. Popovich.²

At the start of the meeting com. Stalin asked Tito whether, in the instance of Trieste being granted the status of a free city, this would involve just the city itself or the city suburbs,³ and which status would be better - along the lines of Memel [Klaipeda, Lithuania] or those of Danzig [Gdansk, Poland].⁴ Tito replied that the suburbs of the city are inhabited by Slovenians. Only the city itself would be acceptable. Though he would like to continue to argue for including Trieste in Yugoslavia. Further, Tito, in the name of the Yugoslav government, expressed gratitude to com. Molotov for the support that the Soviet delegation showed in the discussion of the question of the Italian-Yugoslav border at the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Paris.⁵

Com. Molotov gave a report on the differences in status between Memel and Danzig, pointing out that the status along the lines of Memel is more acceptable.

Com. Stalin asked Tito about the industrial and agricultural situation in Yugoslavia.

Tito replied that all land had been sown the intermediate crop was awaited, and that industry was working well.

After which, com. Stalin invited Tito to present the group of questions which the Yugoslav delegation wished to discuss this evening.

Tito put forth the following questions: economic cooperation between USSR and Yugoslavia, military cooperation,⁶ and Yugoslav-Albanian relations.

Regarding the question of economic cooperation, Tito said that Yugoslavia did not want to turn to the United States for credit. If America were to agree to provide loans, then this would be tied to demands for political concessions from Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia does not have the means for further industrial development. The Yugoslav government would like to receive assistance from the Soviet Union, in particular, through the establish-

ment of mixed Soviet-Yugoslav associations. Yugoslavia has a fair amount of mineral and ore deposits, but it is in no position to organize production, since it does not possess the necessary machinery. In particular, Yugoslavia has oil deposits, but no drilling machines.

Com. Stalin said: "We will help."

Regarding com. Stalin's questions, whether Yugoslavia was producing aluminum, copper and lead, Tito answered in the affirmative, noting that Yugoslavia had many bauxite and ore deposits for the production of these metals.

Com. Stalin noted that the Ministry of Foreign Trade had informed Yugoslavia of its readiness to participate in talks regarding the establishment of mixed associations, but no final answer had been received from Yugoslavia. As a result, the impression was created that Yugoslavia was not interested in forming such associations.⁷

Tito objected, stating that on the contrary, he had spoken several times with ambassador Sadchikov⁸ about the Yugoslav government's desire to create mixed Soviet-Yugoslav associations.

Regarding com. Stalin's note whether it will not be necessary to allow other powers into the Yugoslav economy following the formation of mixed Soviet-Yugoslav associations, Tito answered that the Yugoslav government had no intention of allowing the capital of other powers into its economy.

Subsequently, com. Stalin summarized, saying that in this way the Soviet-Yugoslav economic cooperation was being conceptualized on the basis of forming mixed associations.

Tito affirmed this, stating that he was intent on presenting the following day his proposals, in written form, on this subject.⁹

With respect to the question of military cooperation, Tito said that the Yugoslav government would like to receive shipments from the Soviet Union to supply the military needs of Yugoslavia, not in the form of mutual trade receipts, but in the form of loans. Yugoslavia has a small military industry which could produce grenade launchers and mines. In a number of places there were cadres. But there were no corresponding arms, since the Germans carried them away. The Yugoslav government would like to receive some machinery from Germany as reparations for the reconstruction of certain military factories. But Yugoslavia cannot by itself provide for all of its military needs, and in this regard, the Yugoslav government is hoping for assistance from the Soviet Union.

Com. Stalin said that Yugoslavia ought to have certain military factories, for example, aviation [factories], for Yugoslavia may produce aluminum given the presence of rich bauxite deposits. In addition, it was necessary to have artillery munitions factories.

Tito noted that [artillery] gun barrels may be cast in the Soviet Union and then further assembly may be done in Yugoslavia.

Touching upon the question of Yugoslavia's water borders, com. Stalin said that, for the purpose of safeguarding them, it was important to have a good naval fleet. You need to have torpedo boats, patrol boats, and armored boats. Although the Soviet Union is weak in this regard, we will nevertheless, in the words of com. Stalin, help you.¹⁰ Regarding Albania, com. Stalin pointed out that the internal political situation in Albania was unclear. There were reports that something was happening there between the Communist Party Politburo and Enver Hoxha. There had been a report that Kochi Dzodzej¹¹ wants to come to Moscow in order to discuss certain questions prior to the party congress.¹² Enver Hoxha has also expressed desire to come to Moscow together with Dzodzej.

Com. Stalin asked Tito whether he knows anything about the situation in the Communist Party of Albania.

Tito, appearing unacquainted with these questions, replied that Hoxha's visit to Belgrade was being proposed for the near future. That is why he, Tito, believes that the reply to the Albanians should note that Dzodzej's and Hoxha's proposed visit to Moscow will be examined following Hoxha's visit to Belgrade.

Com. Molotov noted that we were trying to hold back the Albanians' efforts to come to Moscow, but the Albanians were determined in this.

Com. Stalin noted that the Albanians' visit to Moscow might bring an unfavorable reaction from England and America, and this would further exacerbate the foreign policy situation of Albania.

Further, com. Stalin asked Tito whether Enver Hoxha agreed with including Albania in the Federation of Yugoslavia.

Tito replied in the affirmative.

Com. Stalin said that, at the present time it would be difficult for Yugoslavia to resolve two such questions as the inclusion of Albania into Yugoslavia and the question of Trieste.

Tito agreed with this.

As a result, continued com. Stalin, it would be wise to first examine the question of friendship and mutual assistance between Albania and Yugoslavia.

Tito said that, above all, this treaty must provide for the defense of the territorial integrity and national independence of Albania.

Com. Stalin said that it is important to find a formula for this treaty and to bring Albania and Yugoslavia closer together.¹³

Com. Stalin touched on the question of including Bulgaria in the Federation.

Tito said that nothing would come of the Federation.

Com. Stalin retorted: "This must be done."

Tito declared that nothing would come of the federation, because the matter involved two different regimes. In addition, Bulgaria is strongly influenced by other parties, while in Yugoslavia the entire government, [though] with the presence of other parties, is essentially in the hands of the Communist Party.

Com. Stalin noted that one need not fear this. During the initial stages things could be limited to a pact of friendship and mutual assistance, though indeed, more needs to be done.

Tito agreed with this.

Com. Molotov noted that at the present time difficulties may arise from the fact that a peace treaty had not yet been signed with Bulgaria. Bulgaria was perceived as a former enemy.¹⁴

Com. Stalin pointed out that this should not be of significant importance.¹⁵ For example, the Soviet Union signed a treaty of friendship with Poland before Poland was even recognized by other countries.¹⁶

Further, com. Stalin summarized the meeting, saying that what the Yugoslav government is looking for in economic questions and in military matters can be arranged. A commission must be established to examine these questions.

Tito informed com. Stalin of Yugoslavia's relations with Hungary, notifying of Rakosi's¹⁷ visit to Belgrade. Tito declared that the Yugoslav government had decided not to raise the question of Yugoslavia's territorial demands against Hungary (demands on the Ban'skii triangle ["Baiskii triangle," the region along the Hungarian-Yugoslav border centered on the city of Baia.])¹⁸ in the Council of Ministers.¹⁹ Tito expressed his satisfaction with Yugoslavia's signing of an agreement with Hungary on reparation payments.

Com. Stalin noted that if Hungary wanted peaceful relations with Yugoslavia, then Yugoslavia had to support these endeavors, bearing in mind that Yugoslavia's primary difficulties were in its relations with Greece and Italy.

Recorded by Lavrent'ev.

[Source: *Archive of the President, Russian Federation (APRF)*, f. 45, op. 1, d. 397, ll. 107-110. Published in *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, No. 2, 1993. Translated by Daniel Rozas.]

B. The Yugoslav Record

Yugoslav Record of Conversation of I.V. Stalin and the Yugoslav Government Delegation Headed by J. Broz Tito, 27-28 May 1946

In the Kremlin

27.V.46*, 23:00 hours.

[*Recorded by B. Neshkovich.]

[Translator's note: the brackets used in the text are from the Russian translation of the Serbo-Croatian document. Any brackets and notes by the English translator will hereafter be denoted by "trans."]

[Present:] Stalin, Molotov, Lavrent'ev, Tito, Marko,²⁰
Kocha,²¹ Vlado,²² Kidrich, Neshkovich.

Stalin: "Beautiful people, strong people."

[Stalin:] "A hardy nation."

Molotov: agreed.²³

Stalin: Asks how was our trip.

Tito [says] it went well...

Stalin (chuckling, ironically): "How is my 'friend'

[Russian word used in text] Shubashich?"

Tito (similarly) [says], he is in Zagreb, in the coop.²⁴
And also Grol.²⁵

Stalin (similarly): "And how is my 'friend' [Russian word used in text] Grol?"

Tito (similarly): "He's in Belgrade"...

[Tito:] "We always had measures to suppress them.

The parties exist only formally, though in fact they don't exist. In reality, only the Communist party exists."²⁶

Stalin chuckled pleasantly at this.

Stalin: "What kind of crop will you have?"

Tito: "An especially good one. The land has been well sown. In the passive regions²⁷ it will be good. The assistance of UNRRA²⁸ will not be needed. There will be lots of fruit."

Stalin: "Have you sown everything?"

Tito: "Everything has been sown."

Stalin: "What is your plan? What would you like to raise [for discussion]?"

Tito: puts forth economic and military questions.

Stalin during the whole time: "We'll help!"

* [Stalin] "How are Kardelj and Djilas?"²⁹[* Here a line was moved from below where it is denoted by * __*.]

T[ito]: "Well. We couldn't all come, and so only half of the government is here."

S[talin]: "The English and Americans don't want to give you Trieste!" (chuckling).

T[ito]: thanked for the support, [said] that the people send their greetings to Stalin and Molotov, [speaks] of the great political significance [of Soviet support].

Molotov: "But you still do not have Trieste..."

T[ito]: nevertheless, [Soviet support] is of great political importance...³⁰

* During the time that Tito [...]*

27.V.46**

23:00 h.

[** Recorded by K. Popovich.]

...1) S[talin]: "On our part we made a proposal to your comrades, responsible for economic questions, whether you would agree to the establishment of joint enterprises. We will hold nothing against you if you decline. Poland, for example, declined on the grounds that the Americans may, in their turn, raise questions of establishing joint enterprises."

T[ito]: "No, such is not my opinion nor the opinion of other leaders - [on the contrary, we think] it is necessary."

2) S[talin]: "...I agree to the establishment of these enterprises as you see fit...". (M[olotov]: "In those fields that are more beneficial both for you and for us...")

S[talin]: expressed interest in where our oil and bauxite deposits are located. "You have very good baux-

ite." T[ito] explained where the deposits were, as well as the locations Bora, Trepcha and Rasha³¹ - and that we have good coal, but not coke for house ovens.

3) M[olotov said that] one of the Italian economic arguments for receiving Rasha is the fact that without it Italy would only be able to meet 20% of its demand.

4) The army.

S[talin]: "This is right, that in the event of war, because of the difficulty of supply, that [there ought to be] as much military industry in the country as is possible. It would be good to develop the aviation industry, given the rich bauxite deposits, and, as for artillery, the forging ought to be done within the country."

S[talin]: "For coastal defense, you need to build formations of fast, light, and mobile ships, for Italy will be left with a sufficiently strong Navy (about two squadrons)."

T[ito]: "... In Boka Kotorska³² ships of 30,000 tons can be stationed."

S[talin]: "These days they build ships of 60,000 tons. Currently we are having great difficulties in naval fleet construction, but we must assist you. I agree to assist you with equipment for munitions and light firearms factories. We will also assist you with cadres, who will help to organize officer improvement schools, which would in 1-2 years be turned into an Academy (on the level of the Frunze [Academy]).

Shipments for the Yugoslav Army will be made outside the framework of trade agreements - that is, free and on credit.

It is very important that you have a naval fleet. We will assist you in the construction of shipyards and bases and corresponding naval cadres.

We will assist you with the extraction of oil. Together with munitions factories, it is important to reestablish arsenals, with which we will also assist you. It is necessary to examine the possibility of constructing aviation-engine factories."

5) Albania*.

[Further, two lines are crossed out:]S[talin]: "What do you think of [doing] with Albania?"

T[ito]: "Sign...".T[ito] [with regard to the naval fleet]: "We must know whether our border will be along Albania or the coast."

S[talin]: "What exactly are you proposing?"

T[ito]: "To sign one good treaty to help Albania - a treaty to defend independence, this will help both in the given situation and with regard to the naval threat."

S[talin]: "This is a new formulation, but it ought to be examined and worked out. You worked out a good treaty with Czechia and found a new formulation: not only against Germany and its allies during the war, but also against its future allies.³³ But one needs to think about it more and find an appropriate formulation.

Right now is not the time for a federation (not with Bulgaria either). Most important now is the question of Trieste, and this must be decided first. But if you want a

treaty right now, both are possible (Trieste and Albania) at the same time” (at this he chuckled).

T[ito]: “Three times we put off Enver Hoxha’s visit to B[el]g[ra]de, since we were planning on a meeting with you. Generally speaking, we are ready to sign an agreement with Albania assuring [its—trans.] “sovereignty.” ***.

[***Here text has been inserted from below, marked by ***** _ *****.]S[talin]: “Do you know Enver? What kind of person is he?***** [**** Further text is crossed out: “They were trying to visit us, but they do not want to send Enver by himself - they want Kochi Dzodzej to accompany him.” This phrase is printed in a slightly altered form further below.] Is he a communist? Are there any internal problems of their own - what is your information on this?”

T[ito]: “I did not see Enver Hoxha [sic—trans.], he is a young man, but in the course of the war he became popular..

***** We will work out an agreement and foster circumstances for greater closeness.”

S[talin] agreed.*****

T[ito]: “...and in general, the government consists of young people. As far as we know, there aren’t any kind of special problems.”³⁴

S[talin]: “They were trying to come here, but they do not want to send Enver alone, but Kochi Dzodzej wants to come with him - as some kind of restraint. What do you know of this?”

T[ito]: “We are not aware [of this] nor of the presence of some kind of disagreements.”

S[talin]: “We are constantly putting off their visit. What do you think, should we receive them? We think that there is no need.”

T[ito]: “Yes, we can take care of everything with them.”

S[talin]: “Right now it would be inconvenient for us and for them. Better if we help them through you.”³⁵

S[talin]: after this, expressed the opinion that something is amiss in the Alb[anian] Politburo.

Marko: “Comrades in the Politburo do not see Env[er] Hoxha as a sufficiently solid party member, and thus they always insist on him being accompanied by Kochi Dzodzej as the most senior party member in the Politburo. At the April plenum they discussed the question of the party line, especially with regard to Yugoslavia and the S[oviet] Union, and ascertained certain mistakes, and excluded Seifulla Maleshov³⁶ from the Politburo as a bearer of these mistakes. Since then, the leadership has been more consistent.”

T[ito]: “We can resolve this question with them.”

S[talin]: “Good.”

6) Bulgaria.

S[talin]: “Are you currently in favor of a federation with Bulgaria?”

T[ito]: “No. Now is not the time. For they have not yet definitively resolved many things: the army, the

bourg[eois] parties, the monarchy and the Bulg[arian] position on signing a peace treaty.”

S[talin]: “Correct, but they must be offered help.”
7) Hungary.

T[ito]: “We have no territ[orial] demands. Since the int[ernal] polit[ical] situation has been corrected there, we have dropped our territ[orial] demands in accordance with your advice.”³⁷

S[talin]: “Right. If you have good relations with your nor[thern] neighbor, then Greece will also look at you differently... And does Greece raise any demands with regard to Yugoslavia?”

T[ito]: “There were provocations against us, but not in recent times.”

S[talin]: “The Eng[lish] maintain an army there in order to prop up the reactionary forces, and yes, possibly for other reasons as well.”

T[ito]: (laughs): “We have demands against them: Aegean Maced[onia] and Salonikki.”

M[olotov]: “Yes, Salonikki is an old Slavic city. You need access to the Aegean sea.”

S[talin]: “Damn it* [*Russian words used in document.] Many comrades have gone to Bulg[aria], but things are not moving, not developing as they should. The com[munists] have influence, but they do not hold corresponding positions in the state apparatus. We should have told them to remove Stainov.³⁸ Currently we have there the Sec[retary] of the Min[istry] of For[eign] Affairs.”** [*Russian word used in document.]

T[ito]: “I later explained to Rakosi that we demanded Petchui³⁹ because of strat[egic] reasons and in order to help the Hung[arian] communists, since the reactionary forces were beginning to raise their heads.”

S[talin]: “And did they really believe you?..”⁴⁰

S[talin]: “And what further plans have you for tonight?”

T[ito]: “We don’t have [a plan].”

S[talin] (laughing): “Leadership, but without a state* [*Russian word used in document.] plan!” (laughing).

Vlado: “We accommodated ourselves to meet with you.”

S[talin]: “Then we can have a snack.”** [*Russian word used in text and alongside in brackets an explanation in Serbo-Croatian is given: “to eat something”.]

M[olotov]: “If you are inviting us, then with great pleasure.”

At the villa****

[*** Russian words used in text with explanations in Serbo-Croatian alongside in brackets.]

S[talin]. Regarding Togliatti⁴¹: theoretician, journalist, can write a good article, a good comrade, but to gather people and “guide” them - this he cannot do; he has difficult circumstances there.

Torres [Thorez] and Duclos: good comrades.⁴²
Jose (Diaz)⁴³ was good, intelligent. Passionaria⁴⁴ is

not the same, she cannot gather and lead; at this difficult time she is in no condition to govern. In Rumania there are good young comrades.

In Germany F. is a good leader, Pieck - "the father"**** [****Russian word used in document.], is gathering people and resolving various questions...⁴⁵ Germans are nothing without orders.

The International - there's nothing to say.⁴⁶
Referenda - "but it's nonsense"*****⁴⁷

[**** Russian words used in quotes in the document.]

Warlike people are trying to draw in the Greeks.⁴⁸

"Do you want another war, to have your backs beaten again, to have Slavs lose another ten million? - If you do not want this, then the Slavs must unite in a single front with the Sov[iet] Union."

The idea of revenge in Italy.

Realism and idealism of Benes:⁴⁹ realist, when shown strength, but would be an idealist if he felt he was in possession of strength (this is an answer to Tito's remark: Benes is an English person, though a realist).

"Firlinger⁵⁰ will go with the communists."

Relations between Czechia and Poland: Entertaining as a pre-election maneuver; fact is, they did not undertake any dip[lomatic] steps.⁵¹

Yugoslavia is a democracy* [*further crossed out: "new"] of a special type (non-Soviet type), different from all others.

"We are Serbs, Molotov and I ... we are two Serbs..."** [**Phrase composed of Russian words.]

"Slovenian"*** [***Russian word used in text.] mercenary intelligentsia."⁵²

Eucalyptus.⁵³

"Tito must take care of himself, that nothing would happen to him ... for I will not live long ... laws of physiology..., but you will remain for Europe..."⁵⁴

Churchill told him about Tito..., that he is "a good man." - St[alin]: "I don't know him, but if you say so, that means he must be good. I will try to meet him."⁵⁵

Let Djido come, so I could rest under his care... "I will cure my migraine under his care."⁵⁶

"Bevin - an English Noske"⁵⁷

Vlado inquired about Marko, and after Marko, about Vlado...

"Beriiia - Marko - who will subvert whom?"⁵⁸

[Source: *Arhiv Josipa Broza Tita. Fond Kabinet Marsala Jugoslavije. I-1/7. L. 6-11. Original. Manuscript. Document obtained and translated into Russian by L. Gibianskii; translated into English by Daniel Rozas.*]

¹ According to the register of persons received by Stalin, the meeting lasted from 23:00 hours, 27 May 1946, to 00:30 hours, 28 May 1946. Note by Yu.G. Murin, Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (APRF), Fond (f.) 45, Opis' (op.) 1, Delo (d.) 416, List (l.) 95 ob.

² I. V. Stalin (Djugashvili; 1879 (1878)-1953 - chairman of the

USSR Soviet of Ministers, member of the Politburo, secretary (essentially general secretary) of the Central Committee [CC] of the All-Union Communist Party (bolshevik) (TsK VKP(b)); Josip Broz Tito (1892-1980) - chairman of the Council of Ministers of Yugoslavia, general secretary of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY); V.M.Molotov (Skriabin: 1890-1986) - vice-chairman of the Council of Ministers, USSR Minister of Foreign Affairs, member of TsK VKP(b) Politburo; A.I. Lavrent'ev (1904-1984); Aleksandr Rankovich (1909-1983) - Politburo member, secretary of CC CPY, in charge of organizational and cadre affairs; Kocha Popovic (b.1908); Blagoe Neshkovich (b. 1907), also CC secretary of the C[ommunist] P[arty] of Serbia; Boris Kidrich (1912-1953), at the 7 May 1946 meeting of the CC CPY Politburo was appointed to the post of Chairman of the Economic Council and Minister of Industry and Trade (AJ-CK SKJ.III 19) in place of Hebrang (see introduction), the official appointment took place in June after returning from Moscow; Vladimir Popovic (1914-1972).

Only the more important Yugoslav activists who had arrived in Moscow were present at the meeting with Stalin. In addition to those noted above, the delegation accompanying Tito in his visit to USSR included the assistant Chief of the General Staff Rade Khamovich, Chief of Staff of the Air Force Zdenko Ulepich, directors of the departments of the Navy and of Military Industry in the Ministry of People's Defense of Yugoslavia, Srechko Manola and Miyalko Todorovich, commander of the People's Defense Corps of Yugoslavia (state security force) Jovo Vukotich, member of the Union Planning Commission Zvonko Morich, author Radovan Zogovic, in charge of cultural policy affairs and CC CPY agit[ation]-prop[aganda]. See Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (AVPRF), f. 144, op. 6, p. 8, d. 2, ll. 169-170; Arhiv Josipa Broza Tita (Josip Broz Tito Archives, Belgrade), F. Kabinet Marsala Jugoslavije [hereafter AJBT-KMJ], I-1/7, L.1.)

³ The majority of the Trieste population was Italian, while the adjoining region [oblast'] was settled primarily by Slovenians and Croatians. Yugoslavia, with the USSR's support, claimed this entire territory, which had been included as a part of Italy following World War I. The Yugoslav proposal was to grant Trieste the status of a separate federal unit, within the parameters of the Federated Yugoslav state, while granting the port of Trieste the jurisdiction of a free port. The Western powers came out against transferring Trieste and its adjoining regions to Yugoslavia. Western diplomats were discussing possible compromises by granting Trieste and its adjoining regions the special status of a "free city." Later, by the end of June 1946, such a proposal was made by France.

⁴ Under the Versailles treaty of 1919, Danzig (Gdansk) and an adjoining region, up until that time under claim by Poland from Germany, were given a special status under the protection of the League of Nations. Danzig had the status of a demilitarized free city with its own laws and government organs, while control of its foreign relations and its water and rail transport lines was held by Poland, to whose customs system it also belonged. Memel (Klaipeda) and its adjoining region, until 1919 having also belonged to Germany but now claimed by the new Lithuanian state, was at first put under the control of the Entente, and then transferred to Lithuanian authority under the conditions of the special convention of 1924. It stipulated significant autonomy for Memel in its internal affairs, laws and executive organs, but which nevertheless had to operate under the parameters of the Lithuanian constitution.

⁵ The Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) of the USSR, USA,

Great Britain, France and China was created by the decision of the Potsdam conference in preparation for a peace treaty with Germany and its former European allies. At the CFM meeting in Paris during 25 April - 16 May 1946, where, among other things, the peace treaty with Italy was being drafted for later examination by the Paris peace conference, a central point of discussion became the establishment of a new Italian-Yugoslav border, in connection with the problem of Trieste and its adjoining territory. The Soviet delegation under Molotov's leadership actively supported Yugoslav territorial claims.

⁶ During the meeting with Lavrent'ev on 18 April 1946, Tito announced his intention to visit Moscow to discuss economic cooperation, and also noted that such cooperation "must also include the sphere of military industry." (See AVP RF, f. 0144, op. 30, p. 118, d. 15, l. 31.) Yugoslavia, having received from the USSR during 1944-46 large-scale shipments of weapons, ammunition, military equipment, and military machinery (including equipment for 32 infantry divisions, several aviation divisions, tank and artillery brigades), had made similar requests previously. Since the summer of 1945, Yugoslavia had been sending requests to the Soviet government for captured factories, workshops, and materials for the production of ammunition, mainly from Soviet occupation zones in Germany and Austria. The Soviet side tried to fulfill these incoming requests in part. (Ibid., d. 10, ll. 18-19; *ibid.*, f. 144, op. 5, p. 5, d. 2, ll. 44, 46, 49-50; *ibid.*, op. 7, p. 12, d. 1, l. 43.) However, Tito, who had proposed even in January 1946 to send a military delegation to Moscow for the purpose of agreeing on a general plan for the training and equipping of a 350-400,000 men-strong Yugoslav army, tried to get the USSR to render broader assistance in the construction of the Yugoslav military industry, possibly through mixed Soviet-Yugoslav enterprises. (Ibid., f. 0144, op. 30, p. 118, d. 10, ll. 19-20.) On April 9, during an expanded meeting of the CC CPY Politburo, the members of the military delegation which was to go to USSR for negotiations were mentioned: K. Popovic, Z. Uleplic, S. Manola, M. Todorovic (Arhiv Jugoslavije (Archives of Yugoslavia, Belgrade), F. SKJ, CK SKJ [hereafter AJ-CK SKJ] III/16), that is, the same people who later accompanied Tito to Moscow.

⁷ Stalin was referring to the situation as of mid-April 1946 (see introduction). However, following this, the trade delegation led by the Minister of Foreign Trade Petrovic, which visited Moscow during the first half of May, was assigned the task, in addition to preparing an agreement for mutual shipments of goods, of also holding negotiations to draft agreements on economic cooperation, including the establishment of joint enterprises. Thus, these questions were discussed by the delegation during its negotiations with the Soviet partners prior to Tito's arrival. (See AVP RF, f. 0144, op. 30, p. 118, d. 12, l. 5; *ibid.*, d. 15, ll. 38, 90.) On the question of joint enterprises, there were disagreements, which had emerged already during late April, when separate negotiations commenced in Belgrade on the first of these, an aviation enterprise: the Yugoslav delegates considered the Soviet version of the agreement on this enterprise unacceptable to Yugoslavia. The examination of this question was transferred over to the Moscow talks on the general problems of organizing future enterprises. Both sides expressed mutual dissatisfaction with each other's position with regard to the negotiations on the aviation enterprise. (See *ibid.*, d. 10, ll. 6-7; d. 15, ll. 89-90; Arhiva Saveznog sekretarijata za inostrane poslove SFRJ (Archives of the Federal Secretariat for Foreign Affairs of the SFRY [Socialist Federation of Yugoslavia], Belgrade), Politicka arhiva (hereafter ASSIP-PA), 1948 god. F-I, Pov. 1535; V. Dedijer, *Novi prilozi za biografiju Josipa Broza Tita* [New

Materials for Josip Broz Tito's Biography], T. 3 (Belgrade, 1984), pp. 244-245.)

⁸ I.V. Sadchikov (b. 1906), USSR ambassador to Yugoslavia from March 1945 to February 1946. He was replaced by Lavrent'ev.

⁹ On the following day Tito proposed that in order to make comments the Yugoslav delegation should take the draft of the agreement put together by the USSR Ministry of Foreign Trade. (See AVP RF, f. 0144, op. 30, p. 118, d. 15, l. 119.) As a result, on 8 June 1946, concurrently with the inter-government agreement on mutual shipment of goods for 1946 (Historical-Foreign Economic Department of the Ministry of Foreign Economic Ties of the Russian Federation, f. Treaty-Legal Department, op. 11876, d. 55, ll. 14-16), Mikoian and Petrovic signed an agreement on economic cooperation. This agreement provided for the creation of eight Soviet-Yugoslav joint-stock enterprises in Yugoslavia: extraction and refinement of crude oil, extraction of bauxite and production of aluminum, extraction and production of lead, exploration and extraction of coal, ferrous metal production, civilian aviation, the Danube shipping company, and the Soviet-Yugoslav bank. It also provided for further examination of the proposed lumber and paper-cellulose enterprise. The agreement contained the overall equal-term scheme for enterprise organization, while the actual establishment of each of these was to be formulated by separate concrete agreements. (See *ibid.*, ll. 17-19.) In addition to the establishment of enterprises, the agreement provided for Soviet technical assistance to Yugoslavia in areas of electrical, food, textile, chemical, and metal forging industries, as well as the production of building materials and in agriculture (*ibid.*, l. 17). Like other documents signed during this visit, the agreement on economic cooperation was not published. The joint communique issued in connection with the visit stated only that "decisions were made concerning close economic cooperation between both friendly countries." *Pravda*, 12 June 1946.

But the carrying out of the agreement met with difficulties. By February 1947, an agreement had been reached only with regard to the establishment of two enterprises: civilian aviation and the Danube shipping company. As for the others, the main stumbling block was tied to the production of Yugoslav mineral resources: Yugoslavia insisted that the value of mineral deposits be counted as part of their share of the investment, while the Soviet side maintained that the overall value of mineral deposits could not be counted as investment. (See AVP RF, f. 0144, op. 30, p. 118, d. 16, ll. 75, 109-110.) This was discussed by the CC CPY Politburo in late September 1946, where frustration with the Soviet position was voiced, with some members, as Lavrent'ev later found out, going so far as to compare this to the "capitalist countries'" mining of Yugoslav mineral resources before the war. (See AJ-CK SJK. III/21; AVP RF, f. 0144, op. 30, p. 118, d. 16, ll. 75-76.) And when in early 1947 the Yugoslav government sought decisive action from Molotov and even Stalin himself for the swift establishment of the planned enterprises on the basis of Yugoslav proposals, Stalin, during a 19 April 1947 meeting with Kardelj, announced that there must be no further establishment of enterprises and proposed instead to assist Yugoslav industrialization through Soviet shipments of complex machinery and materials, access to blueprints and technical documentation, and the dispatch of specialists on terms of credit. (See ASSIP-PA, 1947 god. F-IV, Str. Pov. 125, 1234, 1238; AJBT-KMJ, I-3-6/639, ll. 2-3; *ibid.*, I-3-6/646, ll. 9-11.) Yugoslavia agreed, and the corresponding agreement was signed in Moscow on 25 July 1947.

¹⁰ The outcome of the visit was announced in a joint communique: "The government of USSR agreed to equip the Yugoslav Army with weapons, ammunition, etc. on conditions of long-term credit, as well as to assist in the reestablishment of the Yugoslavian military industry." (*Pravda*, 12 June 1946.) However, no concrete agreement had been signed at this point. It was to be worked out in special negotiations. Even during Tito's visit, the Yugoslav General Staff forwarded requests, on the basis of which the Soviet General Staff determined the type and quantity of materiel to be shipped to Yugoslavia, and a portion of the shipments began to arrive even before the forthcoming agreement. (See AVP RF, f. 144, op. 6, p. 8, d. 3, ll. 132-134; *ibid.*, op. 7, p. 12, d. 1, l. 23.; ASSIP-PA, 1945/1946 god., F-IV, Str. Pov. 968; *ibid.*, 1947 god., F-IV, Str. Pov. 1881.)

¹¹ Enver Hoxha (1908-1985) - first secretary of the CC CPA [Com. Party of Albania], chairman of the Council of Ministers of Albania. Kochi Dzodzej - organizational secretary of CC CPA, vice-chairman of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Internal Affairs, the number-two man in the Albanian government at the time. In 1948 he lost in the power struggle against Hoxha, was stripped of all posts, arrested, and executed in 1949.

¹² In February 1946 the CC CPA Plenum resolved to call the First CPA Congress on 25 May 1946. However, the Congress was not called until November 1948.

¹³ The memorandum "On Yugoslav-Albanian Relations," put together by the director of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Balkan sector, A.A. Lavrishchev, in preparation for Tito's visit to Moscow, labelled the completion of the Yugoslav-Albanian Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance "useful and important," and contained only the recommendation to avoid mentioning Italy in the treaty, adopting instead the wording from the Yugoslav-Polish treaty signed in March 1946, which could be used against Italy if it tried to "renew aggression." (The Yugoslav-Polish Treaty provided for mutual military and other assistance using all available means, if one of the countries "is drawn, as a result of invasion, into military operations against either Germany, a country which had been allied with Germany during the last war, or any other country which had directly or by any other means allied with Germany or its allies in such an aggression.") As for the "discussion of incorporating Albania into the Yugoslav Federation," the memorandum recommended to put this off, "in order not to exacerbate the international positions of Yugoslavia and Albania." It further specified that it be put off until peace treaties were signed with Italy and Austria, and Albania was included into the UN. "By the same reasoning" it advised to refrain from signing a secret military agreement between Yugoslavia and Albania, and to "simplify the border situation without signing a special agreement, so as not to attract British and American attention to this matter." (See AVP RF, f. 0144, op. 30, p. 118, d. 10, l. 3.)

In his meeting with Tito, Stalin stayed close to this strategy. However, it is unclear whether his arguments to put off federation for the time being were an actual expression of the Soviet policy or simply a tactical ploy, intended to shield the real Soviet efforts to prevent Albania's unification with Yugoslavia altogether, which later became one of the reasons for the 1948 conflict. As a result of the 1946 Moscow talks, the question of direct Albanian unification with Yugoslavia was for the time being removed from the agenda. In addition, the Soviet side, having given Tito the "okay" for the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance and the Agreement on Close Economic Cooperation with Albania, informed the Albanian government that it had come out in favor of these agreements and of further "Albanian orientation toward

closer relations with Yugoslavia." This had an influence on the Albanian position and in particular on Hoxha, who arrived in Belgrade in late June 1946, where he consulted with Lavrent'ev before signing the corresponding Yugoslav-Albanian documents in early July. (*Ibid.*, d. 15, ll. 167-168; *ibid.*, d. 16, l. 1.)

¹⁴ Already since late 1944, the leadership of the communist parties of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, having come to power, began talks on uniting both countries into a federation. The talks were sanctioned, if not even initiated, by Stalin himself, who at the time was in favor of expediting the creation of such a body. Apparently, he had intended this as a means to significantly strengthen the "people's democracy" in Bulgaria: first, with the help of the more stable communist regime in Yugoslavia, and second, reckoning that by uniting with Yugoslavia—a member of the anti-Hitler coalition—Bulgaria would successfully shed its status as a vanquished nation and consequently escape U.S. and British prerogatives stemming from their participation in the establishment of allied control. In early 1945, however, the Western allies, exercising these prerogatives, vetoed the establishment of the Yugoslav-Bulgarian federation. And when Stalin in turn decided to have Yugoslavia and Bulgaria for now sign only a Treaty of Alliance and Mutual Assistance, the veto was extended to this as well. The matter had to be put off to follow the signing of a peace treaty with Bulgaria. See L. Ya. Gibianskii, "U nachala konflikta: balkanskii uzel" ["The Beginning of Conflict: the Balkan Knot"], *Rabochii klass i sovremennii mir* 2 (1990), pp. 172-173.

In early 1946, although the peace treaty was still far off, the Bulgarian side began to pose the question to the Soviet and Yugoslav governments of resuming the Bulgarian-Yugoslav talks on federating, broken off a year ago. This was done mainly in January 1946, during the Moscow visit of the Bulgarian prime-minister and the ministers of foreign and internal affairs. In his reply Molotov pointed out the importance of holding off on federation and the Treaty of Alliance until a more opportune moment. (ASSIP-PA, 1945/1946 god., F-1, Str. Pov. 433, 434.) Nevertheless, in April the Bulgarian envoy in Belgrade posed the same question to Tito and Lavrent'ev. Tito, like Molotov, told the Bulgarian envoy that such steps, if taken prior to signing a peace treaty with Bulgaria, would cause harm. Nevertheless, in relating this to Lavrent'ev, the Yugoslav leader stated "in a significantly decided tone that he cannot currently support the idea of establishing a federation with Bulgaria," as the latter continued to remain a formal monarchy, and in particular because the communist party influence in Bulgaria was "incomparably weaker" than in Yugoslavia. However, certain that Bulgaria would once again raise this question, Tito asked the Soviet ambassador to ascertain Moscow's position on signing the Yugoslav-Bulgarian Treaty of Friendship. (See AVP RF, f. 0144, op. 30, p. 118, d. 15, ll. 39-41, 47-48.) And in the discussion with Lavrent'ev a week before his visit to the USSR, speaking on the agenda for the Moscow talks, he pointed out the importance of examining Yugoslav relations not only with Albania, but with Bulgaria as well. (*Ibid.*, l. 100.)

The Yugoslav position coincided with the Soviets', as reflected in the MFA USSR report by Lavrishchev, "On Relations between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria." The report was completed on 27 May 1946, the day of Tito's arrival in Moscow and his reception by Stalin. Its accompanying suggestions for talks with the Yugoslav leader stated that although "the establishment of the Yugoslav-Bulgarian federation would correspond to the interests of both countries," it would be a mistake to undertake its creation, as well as to conclude the Treaty of Friendship and

Mutual Assistance between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, prior to signing a peace treaty with Bulgaria and resolving "difficult internal-political questions" within both countries. (Ibid., d. 10, ll. 13-17.)

¹⁵ It is unclear why, contrary to the previous Soviet position expressed in Lavrishev's report and in Molotov's statements during the meeting, Stalin suddenly announced that the Bulgarian-Yugoslav treaty could be concluded prior to signing the peace treaty with Bulgaria. However, at the meeting with Stalin a few days later, which, along with Tito and accompanying Yugoslav officials, also included the Bulgarian leaders Georgii Dimitrov, Vasil Kolarov and Traicho Kostov, it was decided that the Bulgarian-Yugoslav treaty would be signed after concluding the peace treaty with Bulgaria. In addition, it was provided that the matter would involve the closest cooperation between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. See N. Ganchovskii, *Dnite na Dimitrov kakvito gi vidyakh i zapisyakh* (Sofia: 1975), vol. 1, p. 220.)

¹⁶ The reference is to the regime that appeared in Poland in July 1944 with the arrival of Soviet forces, and which was established by the Soviet Union and Polish communists relying on its military presence. On 21 April 1945, when the treaty between USSR and this regime was concluded, the Western allies continued to recognize the Polish government in exile.

¹⁷ Matyas Rakosi (1892-1971) - General Secretary of the Hungarian Communist Party, deputy prime-minister.

¹⁸ The question of Yugoslav territorial claims on Hungary was raised by the Yugoslav representatives to the Soviet government already towards the end of the war. In particular, Hebrang, assigned by Tito to visit Moscow in January 1945 (see introduction), put forth to Stalin claims to the region of the city of Pecs and the "Bais triangle." Stalin at the time replied that such a question could be put before the allied powers only in the event that the Yugoslav population in these regions started to "clamor" for unification with Yugoslavia. The question of possibly posing Yugoslav territorial demands to Hungary and relocating Hungarians from Yugoslavia was discussed in April-May 1946 by Yugoslav and Soviet representatives of various ranks. In late April 1946, Tito also discussed the matter with Rakosi, who had come to Belgrade. The Yugoslav leader expressed readiness not to put the territorial demands on Hungary before the Council of Foreign Ministers and the Paris Peace Conference, but with the condition that the Yugoslav minorities in Hungary be granted ethnic rights and Yugoslav economic interests be ensured in border regions. Rakosi agreed. (See AVP RF, f. 06, op. 7, p.53, d. 872, l. 16; *ibid.*, f. 0144, op. 30, p. 118, d. 12, l. 6; *ibid.*, d. 13, ll. 19, 22-23; *ibid.*, d. 15, ll. 39, 64-65.)

¹⁹ Reference is to the Council of Foreign Ministers (see note #5).

²⁰ Pseudonym of Aleksandr Rankovic.

²¹ Koca Popovic.

²² Vladimir Popovic.

²³ According to Dedijer's account given in his book, Stalin said this when Tito began to introduce to him members of the Yugoslav delegation, and Molotov nodded his head in agreement with Stalin's words. See Vladimir Dedijer, *Josip Broz Tito: Prilozi za biografiju [Josip Broz Tito: Materials for a Biography]* (Belgrade, 1953), p. 448.

²⁴ Ivan Subasic (1892-1955) - June 1944-March 1945 prime-minister of the Yugoslav monarchy's government in exile, signed an agreement with the National Liberation Committee of Yugoslavia with Tito at its head and took the post of foreign minister within the national coalition government formed by Tito in March 1945. Resigned in fall 1945, stating that his agreement

with Tito had not been fulfilled by the ruling regime. Afterwards lived in Zagreb under surveillance by state security organs.

²⁵ Milan Grol (1876-1952) - during the war, member of the monarchy's government in exile, in March 1945 took the post of vice-premier in Tito's united government. Resigned in August 1945, accusing the ruling regime of being in the hands of the CPY and thus in violation of the Tito-Subasic agreement, and became one of the leaders of the legal opposition formed in fall 1945. Following the first elections to the *skupscina* (parliament) in November 1945, when the opposition was defeated and was practically destroyed, Grol retired from politics and devoted himself to the theater.

²⁶ Following the 1945 elections, the opposition parties were in effect liquidated, while the parties comprising the People's Front, run entirely by the CPY, began to take on an increasingly fictitious and deceptive character.

²⁷ Regions that do not export foodstuffs, particularly bread, and are even unable to support themselves.

²⁸ The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency.

²⁹ Eduard Kardelj (1910-1979) - member of the Politburo, Secretary of CC CPY, vice-chairman of the Council of Ministers, chairman of the Oversight Commission of Yugoslavia; Milovan Djilas (b. 1911) - member of the Politburo, Secretary of CC CPY, minister without portfolio.

³⁰ Reference made to Molotov's support at the CFM meeting in Paris, 25 April - 16 May 1946 (see note #5).

³¹ Known deposits of non-ferrous metals.

³² The gulf on Yugoslavia's Adriatic coast.

³³ Such a formulation was not contained in the Yugoslav-Czechoslovak, but in the 1946 Yugoslav-Polish agreement on friendship and mutual assistance (note 13). The agreement of friendship, mutual assistance and cooperation in peacetime, signed by Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia on 9 May 1946 made no mention of former German wartime allies. It stated that the signing parties would render each other military and other assistance using all available means, if one of them "is brought into conflict with Germany, the latter having repeated its aggressive policies, or with any other country which had aligned itself with Germany for the purpose of aggressive action."

³⁴ Tito was obviously being sly, as evidenced by the following reply from Rankovic, who referred to both the CC CPA Plenum which had expelled Maleshov from the government (see introduction), and the clear criticism by a number of Albanian Politburo members toward first Party secretary and head of government Hoxha.

³⁵ The Soviet Union's assistance to Albania, in particular military assistance using Yugoslavia as a go-between, was undertaken immediately following the war. When in summer 1945, during the first Moscow visit by the Albanian government delegation, the question of arming and equipping the Albanian army was being discussed, the USSR government enacted a resolution to send shipments of arms and other military materiel to Albania "via the government of Yugoslavia," that is, within the context of shipments to Yugoslavia. (See "New documents on the Great Fatherland War," *Kommunist [The Communist]* 7 (1975), p. 52.) On the eve of Tito's visit to Moscow in May 1946, Kardelj expressed to Lavrent'ev the opinion that USSR trade operations in Albania must be carried out by mixed Soviet-Yugoslav enterprises, once these were established. See AVP RF, f. 0144, op. 30, p. 118, d. 15, l. 108.

³⁶ Seifulla Maleshov (b. 1900) - member of the CC CPA Politburo in charge of economic policy; expelled from the Politburo by the CC CPA Plenum in February 1946.

³⁷ See note 19.

³⁸ Petko Stainov (1890-1972) - Bulgarian foreign minister 1944-1946, activist in the union "Zveno"—a party belonging to the Fatherland Front controlled by the Communist party. In early June 1946, during a meeting with Dimitrov, Kolarov and Kostov (see note 15), Stalin announced that "you must show your teeth to the rightist Zvenists" and that another prominent member of "Zveno," Damyan Velchev, must be removed from the post of Minister of War. (See Tsentralen d'rzhaven arkhiv - Sofia (Central State Archives - Sofia), former Tsentralen partien arkhiv [hereafter TsDA-TsPA] under TsK on BCP, f. 1, op. 5, A.e. 3, l. 134.) Stalin's orders were carried out in both cases.

³⁹ See note 19. Pechui—Serbian name for the city of Pecs in Hungary.

⁴⁰ Judging by handwritten notes made by Tito upon his return from Moscow, during the visit the Soviet side had discussed, along with the aforementioned topics, the question of Austria and Yugoslav-Austrian relations, as well as Yugoslav relations with other Slavic countries. (See AJBT-KMJ. I-1/7, ll. 51-52.)

⁴¹ Palmiro Togliatti (1893-1964) - general secretary of the Italian Communist party.

⁴² Maurice Thorez (1900-1964) - general secretary of the French communist party; Jacques Duclos (1896-1975) - member of the Politburo, secretary of CC F[rench]CP, second in rank at the time. Dedijer's description of the meeting with Stalin on 27 May 1946 states that "the leader" had mentioned a "great deficiency" in Thorez. "Even a dog that doesn't bite, said Stalin, shows its teeth when he wants to scare someone, but Thorez can't do even that..." Dedijer, *Josip Broz Tito*, p. 451.

⁴³ Jose Diaz (1895-1942) - general secretary of the Spanish Communist party, died in the US.

⁴⁴ Pseudonym of Dolores Ibarruri (1895-1990), who became the general secretary of the Spanish Communist party following J. Diaz's death.

⁴⁵ Wilhelm Pieck (1876-1960) - leader of the German communist party, became one of the two chairmen of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) following the April 1946 merger of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) and the Social-Democratic party into the SED in the zone of Soviet occupation. It is unclear who the writers referred to by "F."

Dedijer's account of the evening dinner mentions that Stalin, in characterizing the leaders of foreign Communist parties, expressed his opinion, alongside those already mentioned, regarding the chairman of the Czechoslovak communist party Klement Gottwald and the general secretary of the Communist Party of Great Britain Harry Pollit. See Dedijer, *Josip Broz Tito*, p. 451.

⁴⁶ The phrase obviously referred to the impossibility of reestablishing the Comintern. Apparently Stalin told the Yugoslav delegation the same thing he had said ten days earlier in his meeting with Dedijer, Kolarov and Kostov, of which an unidentified record has been preserved, written most likely by Kostov. According to this account, Stalin told the Bulgarian delegation: "We will never reestablish the old style of the [Communist] International. It was created with the example provided by Marx, who expected that revolution would take place concurrently in all countries. However, this does not correspond to our current ideology." In additional remarks, Stalin criticized the Comintern, stating that its directives had tied the hands of the Communist party, which "we untied" "when we dissolved the Comintern." (See TsDA-TsPA under CC on BCP, f. 1, op. 5, A.e. 3, l. 138.) In reality, Comintern directives were issued by Stalin himself. And even following the announced

dissolution of the Comintern in 1943, Stalin by no means had given up on administering via directives to the leadership of Communist parties—only the organizational forms and the concrete mechanism of such administration were changed. Thus, in speaking of the impossibility of reestablishing the "old style of [the Communist] International," he spoke only within that context. At the same time he discussed with the Yugoslav and Bulgarian guests his plan to set up a new organizational structure for the international communist movement: an informational bureau which would unite a number of communist parties.

According to the Yugoslav delegation members' accounts reported by Dedijer, the question of establishing the information bureau was raised by Stalin during a conversation with Tito, and later during the joint meeting with the Yugoslav and Bulgarian delegations, when he emphasized that the new organ must maintain an informational character and its decisions would not be binding on a communist party which disagreed with the decision. (See Dedijer, *Josip Broz Tito*, pp. 453, 471.) That the question was put forth in this manner is supported by the handwritten notes Tito made a few days after returning from Moscow. (See AJBT-KMJ, I-3-s/11, ll. 1-2.) Most likely these remarks, including the statement that there "can be no talk" of reestablishing the Comintern, were a tactical move intended to help his interlocutors "swallow" his idea to create the Informbiuro (Cominform) as some kind of entirely different "democratic" organ of which they had no reason to be wary.

⁴⁷ Possibly the reference is to the Greek referendum to be held on 1 September 1946 to decide whether to continue the monarchy, which was a focus of intense political struggle.

⁴⁸ Greece was at the time the arena of a sharp and intensifying confrontation which in the second half of 1946 began to erupt into an armed struggle between the partisan forces and the Greek government, with the former having been created under the leadership of the Greek Communist party and receiving assistance from Yugoslavia, Albania, and Bulgaria, and the latter relying on military support from Great Britain and, later, the USA.

⁴⁹ Eduard Benes (1884-1948) - president of Czechoslovakia. Attempted in the years immediately following the war to navigate between the USSR and the West, but was forced into resignation following the de facto coup carried out in February 1948 by communists relying on Soviet political support.

⁵⁰ Zdenek Firlinger (1891-1976) - one of the officials in the Czechoslovak Social-Democratic party, head of the Czechoslovak government in 1945-1946, actively supported the communist party, including during the coup in February 1948.

⁵¹ Reference is made to the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry announcement delivered on 24 April 1946 to the ambassadors of USSR, USA, Great Britain and France, which officially put forth territorial claims on Poland for the so-called border region of Teshinskaya Silesia. The Czechoslovak-Polish dispute regarding Teshin continued for some time following the end of World War II and reached its peak around late April-May 1946, on the eve of the first post-war parliamentary elections in Czechoslovakia, held on May 26, a day before Stalin's meeting with Tito. From the record of conversation published herein, it follows that Stalin regarded the Czechoslovak announcement entirely as a pre-election maneuver. The question of Teshin was obviously raised by the Yugoslav guests, for even on May 7, in his discussion with Lavrent'ev, Tito inquired as to Moscow's opinion of the Czechoslovak demarche and informed him that the Polish ambassador to Belgrade had addressed him, Tito, with a request to influence the Czechoslovak government to renounce these

claims. AVP RF, f. 0144, op. 30, p. 118, d. 15, l. 77.

⁵² According to Dedijer's account, Stalin had spoken about the Slovenian intelligentsia with Kidric, himself a Slovenian, using a play on words—"podlaya [sycophantic] intelligentsia" and "podlinnaya [genuine] intelligentsia." See Dedijer, *Josip Broz Tito*, p. 452.

⁵³ Dedijer's book mentions that Stalin advised the Yugoslavs to plant eucalyptus, as this is the best tree for ship-building, and related how many years ago he had read in a book that this tree grows well in South America. So having received the seeds, he undertook to plant them in the Crimea where it took root very successfully and grew very quickly. Stalin promised to send eucalyptus seedlings to Yugoslavia. See Dedijer, *Josip Broz Tito*, pp. 452-453.

⁵⁴ In Dedijer's account of the 27 May 1946 meeting these words are tied to an episode where, following a lengthy period during which the guests had sat at the dinner table, Stalin stood, walked over to the record player in the corner, and began to play record after record—all Russian folk songs. While listening to one of the records, he started to sing along and dance. Molotov and others present met this with exclamations of how robust Stalin was, from which followed Stalin's response about the laws of physiology, which dictated that he would not live long. Stalin added that Tito must take care of himself in order to be there for Europe. And further, according to this account, Stalin looked at Molotov and noted: "Viacheslav Mikhailovich will remain here...." He then proposed to Tito to drink to "bruderschaft" [brotherhood] (and then to all the other Yugoslav guests); they clinked glasses, embraced, and then "the leader" with the exclamation "I still have strength left!" grabbed the Yugoslav leader by the armpits and lifted him three times. (See Dedijer, *Josip Broz Tito*, p. 452.) However, the Yugoslav political and cultural activist Josip Vidmar later maintained that, upon returning from accompanying Tito to Moscow, Kidric told of a different scene at the evening dinner at Kuntsevo: it was he, Kidric, who grabbed and lifted Stalin, and that the latter laughed and spoke compliments. See J. Vidmar, *Obrazi* (Ljubljana, 1980), p. 396.

⁵⁵ Prime-minister of Great Britain Winston Churchill (1874-1965), having met Tito in August 1944 in Italy, said this to Stalin during his visit to Moscow in October 1944. In actuality, Stalin by this point had already met Tito in person, when the latter secretly visited Moscow in late September.

⁵⁶ Djido—Djilas' pseudonym. Stalin knew from Tito that Djilas suffered from headaches.

⁵⁷ Ernest Bevin (1881-1951) - one of the leaders of the Labor party and a trade-unionist in Great Britain, foreign minister during the early years following World War Two. Gustav Noske (1868-1946) - German Social-Democratic activist, member of government following the November 1918 revolution in Germany, became famous as one of the organizers of the suppression of revolutionary action taken by the radical wing of the German labor movement.

⁵⁸ L.P. Beria (1899-1953) - member of CC VKP(b) Politburo, vice-chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers. Dedijer's account states that Stalin joked about Beria and Rankovic, both in charge of security organs in their respective countries—who will subvert whom? According to this account, also present among the Soviet participants at the evening dinner at Kuntsevo, aside from Stalin and Molotov, were A. A. Zhdanov, Beria and N.A. Bulganin. See Dedijer, *Josip Broz Tito*, p. 451.

Report of Milovan Djilas about a secret Soviet-Bulgarian-Yugoslav meeting 10 February 1948¹

Kardelj and Vacaric arrived in Moscow on Sunday, February 8, and until Tuesday, February 10, nobody gave them any news. On Tuesday before noon Baranov² phoned to say that Kardelj and the others should stay put, because in the evening, at nine o'clock we would be invited to the Kremlin. Lesakov told us that the Bulgarians arrived on Monday, but stressed that these were "the top guys" from Bulgaria—Dimitrov, Kolarov and Trajco Kostov.

Indeed, we were invited to the Kremlin at nine o'clock in the evening. We arrived punctually, but since the Bulgarians were late, we sat for 10-15 minutes in Stalin's reception room, and when they joined us, we walked in [to Stalin's office].

So, the meeting took place on Tuesday, February 10, at 9:15 Moscow time, and it lasted about three hours. When we entered [the room], Soviet representatives were already there. Those present at the meeting were: Stalin (at the head of the table), Molotov, Malenkov, Zhdanov, Suslov and Zorin (to the right side from Stalin along the table), and Dimitrov, Kolarov, Kostov, Kardelj, Djilas, Vacaric (to the left side from Stalin along the table).

Molotov spoke first. At first, he stressed that this was already a matter of serious disagreement between them [the Soviets] and Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. These disagreements were inadmissible both from the party and the state point of view. As examples of the serious discord he gave three: firstly, the conclusion of the Yugoslav-Bulgarian Treaty of Union—lack of coordination between the USSR, on one hand, and Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, on the other hand; secondly, the declaration of Dimitrov about a Federation of East European and Balkan countries, including Greece—lack of coordination between the USSR, on one side, and Bulgaria, on the other; thirdly, the introduction of a Yugoslav division into Southern Albania (Korcha)³—lack of coordination between the USSR, on one hand, and Yugoslavia, on the other. As to the first point, he stresses that the Soviet government informed the Yugoslav and Bulgarian governments—and they agreed to this—that one should not conclude a treaty with Bulgaria until the expiration of limitations imposed by the Peace Treaty [with Bulgaria in 1946]. However, the Yugoslav and Bulgarian governments concluded the treaty, and the Soviet government learned about it from the newspapers. With regard to the second point he stresses that comrade Dimitrov grew too fond of press conferences. Meanwhile, if Dimitrov and Tito make announcements for the press, the whole world believes that such is also the view of the Soviet Union.⁴

At this moment, Stalin cut in to remind [us] that the Poles who were in Moscow in those days, spoke against [the Federation]. That means that the Soviet representatives first asked them what they thought of Dimitrov's declaration. And they said that they agreed, but when

Stalin told them that the Soviet Union was against it, they also said that they were against, but they had previously believed that this was a position and request of Moscow.⁵ Stalin adds that the subsequent clarification by Dimitrov (he probably had in mind the announcement of the Bulgarian telegraph agency) explained nothing. Stalin quotes from this announcement that says how Austria-Hungary had thwarted a customs union between Bulgaria and Serbia, and adds that it means—the Germans had worked against a customs union, and now we do (i.e. the Soviet Union).⁶ Stalin adds that Dimitrov diverts attention from domestic issues to foreign affairs—Federation, etc.⁷

Then Molotov passes to a third point of disagreement and stresses from the very beginning that they [in Moscow] accidentally learned about the entry of the Yugoslav troops into Albania. The Albanians told the Russians that they thought that the entry of the Yugoslav troops had been coordinated with the Soviet Union, and meanwhile it was not so. At that moment Molotov began citing some sort of dispatches, and Stalin told him to read them aloud. He asks Stalin which message he should read. Stalin leans [over] and points out [one]. Molotov reads a message from [Soviet ambassador in Yugoslavia] Lavrent'ev about his meeting with Tito. From this reading, it becomes clear that the message is an answer to the question of the Soviet government if there is a decision about the entry of Yugoslav troops into Albania, and it says that such a decision—coordinated with Hoxha—really exists, that the motive comes from the notification about a probable attack against Albania; then the message points out that Tito said that he does not agree with Moscow that in case of an entry of Yugoslav troops into Albania, the Anglo-Americans would intervene beyond a campaign in the press. Tito, according to the message, said that, if it came to anything serious, Yugoslavia and the USSR would sort it out [*raskhlebivat kashu*] together, however, after the Soviet demarche about this issue he would not send a division [to Albania]. At the end, Molotov points out that Tito did not inform them about his disagreement with Moscow. He stresses that disagreements are inadmissible both from the party and state viewpoint and that disagreements should be taken out [for discussion], and not concealed, and that it is necessary to inform and consult. One must be cautious with regard to press conferences.⁸

Following Molotov, Dimitrov spoke. He, as well as the other Bulgarians and Kardelj (he was the only one among the Yugoslavs who spoke), did not give his reasons coherently, because Stalin kept interrupting him. He said that what Yugoslavia and Bulgaria publicized at Bled was not a treaty, but only a statement that a future treaty had been agreed upon. Soviet representatives affirm that they learned about this affair from newspapers, etc.⁹ Dimitrov stresses that Bulgaria's economic difficulties are so serious that it cannot develop without cooperation with other countries. It is true that he got carried away at a press conference.¹⁰ Stalin interrupts and tells him that he wanted to shine with a new word, and that is wrong, and it

is a mistake because such a Federation is not feasible.¹¹ Dimitrov says that he did not target the USSR by his assertion that Austria-Hungary had blocked a Bulgarian-Serb customs union. He stresses, at last, that there are essentially no disagreements between the foreign policies of Bulgaria and the Soviet Union.

Stalin interrupts and asserts that there are substantial differences and there is a practice of the Leninists—to recognize differences and mistakes and to liquidate them. Dimitrov says that they make mistakes because they are only learning foreign policy, but Stalin replies to this that he [Dimitrov] is a senior political figure who had been engaged in politics for forty years, and in his case it is not mistakes, but a different perception [than the USSR's] (he [Stalin] said it two or three times during the meeting, addressing Dimitrov).¹² As to the repeated emphasis by Dimitrov on the fact that Bulgaria must get closer with other countries for economic reasons, Stalin says that he agrees if one speaks of a customs union between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, but if one speaks of Romania (later, as I recall, he also mentioned Hungary), then he is against it. In general, when he spoke about such ties of Bulgaria with which the Soviet Union disagreed, most often [he] cited Romania as an example. It happens as a result of a clause about the customs union in the Bulgarian-Romanian treaty and because, I believe, that the joint Bulgarian-Romanian communique calls for coordination of plans between Romania and Bulgaria. These issues were raised at the meeting and often referred to by Soviet representatives. They have in mind a forthcoming conclusion of the treaties between Bulgaria and Hungary, and [Bulgaria and] other countries. Thus, Soviet criticism of Romanian-Bulgarian relations touches on future Bulgarian-Hungarian relations, and, obviously, on the relations of Yugoslavia with Hungary and Romania.

Then Kolarov began to speak. He says about this part from the Bulgarian announcement regarding a customs union between Serbia and Bulgaria, where nobody meant to hint at the USSR, and as to the customs union between Romania and Bulgaria, the Romanians are also all for it. Besides, the Romanian-Bulgarian treaty had been earlier sent to the Soviet government and it already made only one amendment so that an article [on the joint defense] against any aggressor would be replaced by an article against Germany or a power that could be in alliance with it, and there were no comments on the Bulgarian-Romanian customs union. Then a brief exchange between Stalin and Molotov occurs. Molotov confirms what Kolarov says. Stalin stresses again that he is against the Bulgarian-Romanian customs union, although Bulgarians have a reason to think otherwise, on the basis of dispatches. He stresses that he did not know that there was an article about a customs union in the Romanian-Bulgarian treaty that had been previously sent to the Soviet government. Dimitrov says that that it was the very cause why in his statement he went further than necessary.¹³

Stalin says to him that he [Dimitrov] wanted to

surprise the whole world and adds that it looked like the secretary of the Comintern was explaining tediously and meticulously what should be done and how. [Stalin] says that this gives food to American reactionaries [*reaktziia*]. He then speaks about the significance of the American elections and [says] that one should be careful to do nothing to give the reactionaries arguments that could facilitate their victory. In his opinion, we should not give the reaction anything to snatch at [*nikakoi zatsepki*]. The current American government still contains itself, but money bags [*denezhniie meshki*] and sharks can come to power. The reactionaries in American, when they hear such statements, say that in Eastern Europe there is not only a bloc in the making, but [the countries] are merging into common states. He tells Dimitrov and the others that they are overdoing it [*perebarshchivaiut*], like the Young Communists and then like women take everything to the streets. Then he makes a linkage to the issue of Albania. The three world powers—the USSR, England, and America guaranteed Albania's independence by a special agreement. Albania is our weakest spot, because other states are either members of the United Nations, or recognized, etc., but Albania is not [recognized]. If Yugoslav troops entered Albania, the reactionaries in England and America would be able to use it and step forward as defenders of Albanian independence. Instead of sending troops we should work intensely to build up the Albanian army, we should teach the Albanians, and then, if they are attacked, let the Albanian Skupcina [parliament] appeal to Yugoslavia for help. He makes an example of China, where nobody¹⁴ can reproach the USSR,¹⁵ but the Chinese are fighting well and advancing; he then adds that the Albanians are not worse than the Chinese and they must be taught. Then he adds that we should sign a protocol about joint consultations.¹⁶ He says that the Bulgarians and the Yugoslavs do not report anything [to the Soviets], and they [the Soviets] have to find out everything on the street, usually ending up faced with a *fait accompli*.

Kostov then begins to complain how hard it is to be a small and undeveloped country. He would like to raise some economic issues. Stalin cuts him short and says that there are competent ministries to do it, and this is the discussion of the differences.

Kardelj starts to speak.¹⁷ On the first point [of disagreements] he says that it was not a treaty that was published, but only a communiqué about the discussion leading to a treaty; he adds that we [Yugoslavs and Bulgarians] were too hasty. This triggers an exchange similar to that when Dimitrov made the same point. [Andrei] Zhdanov intervenes and says that they [in the Soviet Union] learned about this matter from the newspapers. On Albania he says that not informing them on that was a serious error. Stalin cuts in and says that we [in Yugoslavia] oversimplify this matter, but it is a complicated matter.¹⁸ Kardelj then mentioned the constant Greek provocations, the weakness of the Albanian army, and that

we are linked to Albania economically and that we underwrite [*soderzhim*] its army. Two or three times Stalin interrupted. For instance, regarding a Greek invasion of Albania, he said that it was possible. Then he asked if the situation was really such that one should not have any faith in the Albanian army, and added that the Albanians must be taught and their army must be built up. Molotov says that they have no information about any kind of attack on Albania and wondered that we withhold our information from them. Then, reacting to Kardelj's explanation that the anti-Albanian campaign in Greece is worsening, Stalin demanded [to know] if we believe in the victory of the Greek guerrillas. Kardelj responds that we do. Stalin says that recently he and the rest of his collaborators have had grave doubts about it. He says that one should assist Greece [i.e. guerrillas] if there are hopes of winning, and if not, then we should rethink and terminate the guerrilla movement. The Anglo-Americans will spare no effort to keep Greece [in their sphere],¹⁹ and the only serious obstacle [*zakavika*] for them is the fact that we assist the guerrillas. Molotov adds that we are constantly and justifiably blamed for assistance to the guerrillas. Stalin says that if there are no conditions for victory, one must not be afraid to admit it. It is not for the first time in history that although there are no conditions now, they will appear later.²⁰ Then Kolarov speaks and tells that the American, British and French embassies appealed to them [Bulgarians] with a warning not to recognize the government of Markos.²¹ Kolarov says that the American ambassador is courteous, but the British ambassador is arrogant. Stalin cuts in and says that it means that the American is a great scoundrel and they [ambassadors of the US and UK] always trade roles. Stalin also said that we should not link the future of our state with a victory of the guerrillas in Greece. On Dimitrov's comment that a victory of the Monarchists-Fascists would seriously aggravate the situation in the Balkans, Stalin says that it is not proven.

Then Dimitrov and Kolarov spoke about other matters that did not relate to the agenda of the meeting. Among other things, Molotov cited a paragraph from the Yugoslav-Bulgarian treaty which read that Yugoslavia and Bulgaria would act in the spirit of the United Nations and would support all initiatives directed at the preservation of peace and against all hotbeds of aggression. Molotov cites from the treaty to reject Dimitrov's attempts at a linkage between the struggle against "hotbeds of aggression" with the actions of the United Nations. Stalin adds that it would mean a preventive war which is a Komsomol [i.e. juvenile] stunt, a loud phrase, material for the enemy. Stalin then tells a story, hinting at the Komsomol behavior, that there was a seaman in Leningrad after the revolution who condemned and threatened the whole world by radio.²² Molotov then spoke about oats that Albania asked the USSR for, and that Tito had told Lavrent'ev that Yugoslavia would give oats, and after that the Yugoslavs are instructing the Albanians to buy oats in Argentina.²³ Stalin

said half-jokingly that the Yugoslavs are afraid of having Russians in Albania and because of this are in a hurry to send their troops.²⁴ He also said that the Bulgarians and Yugoslavs think that the USSR stands against a unification of Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, but it does not want to admit it. Molotov raised some kind of a point from the Bulgarian-Romanian communiqué about the coordination of plans and mentioned that it would have been essentially a merger of these states. Stalin is categorical that this is inconceivable and that Dimitrov would soon see for himself that it is nonsense, and instead of cooperation it would bring about a quarrel between the Romanians and Bulgarians. Therefore mutual relations should be limited to trade agreements.

Then Stalin laid out a Soviet view that in Eastern Europe one should create three federations—Polish-Czechoslovak, Romanian-Hungarian and Yugoslav-Bulgarian-Albanian.²⁵ Bulgaria and Yugoslavia [he said] may unite tomorrow if they wish, there are no constraints on this, since Bulgaria today is a sovereign state. Kardelj says that we were not in a hurry to unify with Bulgaria and Albania, in view of international and domestic moments, but Stalin reacts to it by saying that it should not come too late, and that the conditions for that are ripe. At first, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria must unite, and then let Albania join them. This should be agreed upon through People's Skupcina [parliaments], by the will of the peoples. Stalin thinks that one should begin with political unification and then it would be difficult [for the West] to attack Albania. As to a Bulgarian-Yugoslav unification, Stalin repeatedly stressed that this question has ripened, and one even began a discussion about the name of [a united] state.

Then Kardelj returned to the issue about what after all one should do in Albania, but [Stalin's] answer boiled down to what Stalin said earlier, i.e., the Albanian army ought to be taught, and that Albania should ask for assistance in case of aggression. As to oats, Kardelj says that it is possible that the enemy interfered to spoil Yugoslav-Soviet relations (Molotov kept silent).²⁶ Then Kardelj says that he does not see any big differences between Yugoslavia and the USSR in foreign policy. Stalin interrupts him and says that it is incorrect, that there are differences and that to hide them would mean opportunism. We should not be afraid to recognize differences. Stalin stresses that even they, Lenin's pupils, many times disagreed with him. They would have a quarrel on some issue, then talk it over, work out a position and move on. He believes that we should put the question more boldly about the guerrillas in Greece. Then he mentions the case of China again, but now he raises another aspect. In particular, that they [the Politburo] invited the Chinese comrades and considered that there were no conditions for successful uprising in China and that some kind of "modus vivendi" [with the Guomindang] had to be found. The Chinese comrades, according to Stalin, in words agreed with the Soviet comrades, but in practice kept accumulating forces. The Russians twice gave them assistance in

weapons. And it turned out that the Chinese, not the Soviet comrades, were right, as Stalin says. But he does not believe that the case of the Greek guerrillas falls into the same category. On China he says that they [the Soviets] do not have their people there, except in Port Arthur [Lushunkov] which is a neutral zone according to the treaty with the Chinese government. He spoke about the tactics of the Chinese who avoided attacking cities until they had accumulated sufficient strength.²⁷

Kardelj speaks again and says it was a mistake that we [the Yugoslavs] failed to inform them. Stalin interrupts him and says that it was not a mistake, it was a system [a policy] and that we do not inform them on anything.

Then Stalin and Molotov propose a protocol on mutual coordination of foreign affairs. Kardelj agrees with that. Stalin proposes that we inquire of them [the Soviets] on all questions of interest to us, and that they would also inform us about everything.²⁸

Then Dimitrov diverted the conversation to economic and other issues. When Dimitrov says there are important economic issues, Stalin cut him short by remarking that he would speak about it with a joint Yugoslav-Bulgarian government. During subsequent discussion Stalin raised a question about how the Albanians would react to such a union, and Kardelj and Djilas explained to him that the Albanians would accept it well, because it would be in their national interests, considering that eight hundred thousand Albanians reside in Yugoslavia.²⁹ Stalin also said with regard to Albania that one on our side [*u nas odin*] has already committed suicide,³⁰ and that we want to overthrow Hoxha and that it should not be done hastily and crudely—"the boot on the throat"—but gradually and indirectly. Stalin says again that at first Yugoslavia and Bulgaria ought to unite, and then Albania should join them. And Albania must declare itself about its desire to join. Then Kostov raised the question that the [Bulgarian-Soviet] treaty about technical assistance, also about patents, licensing and authors' rights, is not favorable for the Bulgarians (he failed to mention if this treaty has already been signed). Molotov said that this matter will need consideration, and Stalin said that Kostov should submit a note [to Molotov].

Then we discussed the answer of the Sovinformburo to the slander of the Americans regarding [their] publication of the documents on Soviet-German relations.³¹ Kardelj gave a positive assessment to the answer published in *Pravda* and Dimitrov says that the Western powers wanted to unite with Germany against the USSR. Stalin replies that he had nothing to hide [*on vse vynosit otkrito*], and the Western powers did not speak openly, in particular that Europe without Russia means against Russia. Molotov remarks during the conversation that the Bulgarians do not put enough camouflage on the number of their troops and that it exceeds the clauses [about limits] in the Peace Treaty, and the Bulgarians may be criticized for it. Dimitrov said to this that, on the contrary, the number is even below the limit stipulated by the Peace Treaty.

Molotov was satisfied with that [answer] and did not mention it again.³² Dimitrov raised the issue about the conclusion of a treaty on mutual assistance between the USSR and Bulgaria. He stressed that it would be of great significance for Bulgaria. Stalin agreed with this, but added that among the Quisling countries³³ [the USSR] would first conclude treaties with neighbors: with Romania—this treaty is almost ready, with Hungary and Finland.

Then Stalin underlines that we (i.e. Yugoslavia and Bulgaria) must build up our economy, culture, army, and that a federation is an abstraction.

Suddenly Stalin asked about “our friend Pijade,”³⁴ Kardelj told him that he is working on our legislation.

Kardelj asked [the Soviets] about their opinion what answer should be given to the Italian government who asked the Yugoslav government to support Italian claims to govern their former colonies. Stalin said that these demands must be supported and asked Molotov how [the Soviet side] responded. Molotov says that they still have to respond and that he believes they should wait. Stalin told them that there is no point in waiting and the answer should be sent immediately. He said that former Italian colonies should be put under Italian governance [trusteeship] and remarked that kings, when they could not agree over the booty, used to give [disputed] land to a weakest feudal so they could snatch it from him later at some opportune moment, and that feudal lords invited a foreigner to rule them so they could easily overthrow him when they become fed up with him.

On this note the conversation ended.

I would remind [*napominaiu*] that the criticism of Dimitrov by Stalin, although rough in form, was expressed in friendly tones. This report was composed on the basis of notes taken at the meeting and from memory.

[Source: *Arhiv Josipa Broza Tita, Fond Kabinet Maršala Jugoslavije I-3-b-651, ll.33-40. Translated by Vladislav Zubok (National Security Archive)*]

¹ [Translator’s Note: In *Conversations with Stalin* (1962) Milovan Djilas recounted this meeting in great detail. He mentioned that he had submitted a written report of that meeting to the Yugoslav Central Committee, but that he could not get access to it when he wrote the book. As the comparison of the document with the book reveals, Djilas’ memory retained with remarkable precision some pivotal moments of the conversation.—V.Z.]

² Baranov, Leonid Semenovich—assistant director of the CC VKP(b) [Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks)] Department of Foreign Policy.

³ The statement concerns the Yugoslav intention of deploying a division, which never took place.

⁴ In the Bulgarian records, particularly Kolarov’s account, this is presented in the following manner:

“It seems to us that com. Georgii Dimitrov has taken a fancy to press conferences and interviews, thus giving opportunity to be prompted with questions which ought not be discussed in the first place. This is misguided and undesirable. During the course of

the interview a plan was set forth which goes too far without any attempt to consult with whomever it may concern. A question was put forth of creating a federation or a confederation, a customs union that would include both Poland and Greece. Com. Georgii Dimitrov speaks of all these things without being granted authority by anyone concerned. This is misguided in principle and is tactically harmful. This eases the burden of the creators of the Western bloc.” And further: “We must take the position in such a way that all would know—both enemies and friends—that this is our point of view. We consider this absolutely wrong and unacceptable in the future.” This is contained in slightly abbreviated form in the Soviet record as well.

⁵ According to Bulgarian and Soviet records this was spoken by Molotov, not Stalin. Kolarov’s account puts it in the following manner: “When we spoke with the Polish comrades, they said: We thought that this was Moscow’s opinion. Everyone thinks that if Dimitrov or Tito speaks of a number of countries, it originates from the USSR. In essence, the Polish comrades said that they are against Georgii Dimitrov’s idea and consider it misguided.”

⁶ According to the Bulgarian and Soviet records, this was also spoken by Molotov, while Stalin supplemented this with separate remarks.

⁷ Before these statements by Stalin, the Bulgarian records, particularly Kolarov’s account, show the following remarks by Molotov:

“[Czechoslovak President Eduard] Benes’ newspaper immediately hastened to write that ‘Dimitrov puts out communist plans, and now the Czech communists must answer.’ On the other hand, this position of Georgii Dimitrov contradicts the declaration of the nine communist parties.” The same is corroborated by the Soviet record.

⁸ According to Bulgarian and Soviet records, this statement by Molotov sounded more categorical. Kolarov’s account records the following words: “In the future, com. Georgii Dimitrov must rid himself and us of the risks of such statements.”

⁹ [Translator’s Note: This intervention is presented dramatically in Djilas’s book. “‘Yes, but you didn’t consult with us!’” Stalin shouted. “We learn about your doings in the newspapers! You chatter like women from the housetops whatever occurs to you, and then the newspapermen grab hold of it.” (p. 175)—V.Z.]

¹⁰ The Bulgarian and Soviet records note somewhat stronger self-criticism by Dimitrov. Kolarov recorded his words: “This was harmful and fundamentally misguided. This was self-indulgence. Such statements will not be repeated in the future.”

¹¹ According to Bulgarian records, in particular Kolarov’s, Stalin said: “We wanted to say another word. The Poles and Czechs are laughing at your federation. Ask them—do they want it?” The same is corroborated by the Soviet record.

¹² According to the Bulgarian records, in particular Kolarov’s account, Stalin said to Dimitrov: “You are a politician and must think not only of your own intentions, but also of the consequences of your statements.” Later, returning once more to this question, the Soviet leader said to Dimitrov: “You are an old politician. What possible mistakes could one speak of? You may have another goal in mind, but you yourself will not admit it. You must not give interviews so often.” According to the Soviet record, Stalin, noting that Dimitrov has apparently another goal that must be revealed, added that these are not little children sitting here, and Dimitrov is not a “pre-schooler.”

[Translator’s Note: This part of the conversation is dramatized in Djilas’ book in the following dialogue:

“Stalin, decidedly and firmly: ‘There are serious differences,

Why hide it? It was Lenin's practice always to recognize errors and to remove them as quickly as possible.'

Dimitrov, placatingly, almost submissively: 'True, we erred. But through errors we are learning our way in foreign politics.'

Stalin, harshly and tauntingly: 'Learning! You have been in politics fifty years—and now you are correcting errors! Your trouble is not errors, but a stand different from ours.'

Then Djilas writes that Dimitrov's ears "were red, and big red blotches cropped up on his face covering his spots of eczema. His sparse hair straggled and hung in lifeless strands over his wrinkled neck. I felt sorry for him...The Lion of the Leipzig Trials...looked dejected and dispirited." (pp. 176-177)—V.Z.]

¹³ The entire conversation recorded by Djilas about the draft of a Bulgarian-Romanian treaty sent to the Soviet government, which in turn expressed no objections over the article on the customs union, is absent from the Soviet and Bulgarian records. Kolarov's account contains only the following phrase: "Kolarov points out that the treaty with Romania had been harmonized with Moscow."

¹⁴ [Translator's note: "nobody" here means the United States and Great Britain, not the Communist Party of China. This phrase reveals Stalin's emphasis on realpolitik as a method to prevent "imperialists'" consolidation and intervention into Balkan affairs.—V.Z.]

¹⁵ The Bulgarian records contain the following words expressed by Stalin over this matter: "You see the kind of war that is raging in China. We don't have a single one of our soldiers there."

¹⁶ According to Bulgarian records, the question of signing a protocol on mutual consultation arose in connection with Dimitrov's statement on 10 February concerning Moscow: "We also receive little information from here." Stalin responded: "You have the right to demand from us to keep you informed. Let us then put together a protocol on obligatory consultation between us on all important international questions." This is similarly recorded in the Soviet record.

¹⁷ [Translator's note: According to Djilas, "he was red and, what was a sign of agitation with him, he drew his head down between his shoulders and made pauses in his sentences where they did not belong." (p. 179)—V.Z.]

¹⁸ [Translator's note: The exchange on the failure to inform the USSR on sending Yugoslav troops to Albania was more serious and emotional, according to Djilas' book: "'Stalin shouted, "This could lead to serious international complications..." Kardelj explained that all that had not yet been final and added that he did not remember a single foreign problem but that the Yugoslav Government did not consult with the Soviets... "It's not so!" Stalin cried. "You don't consult at all. That is not your mistake, but your policy—yes, your policy!" Cut off, Kardelj fell silent and did not press his view." (pp.179-180)—V.Z.]

¹⁹ [Translator's Note: In Djilas's book Stalin says: "No, they have no prospect of success at all. What do you think, that Great Britain and the United States—the United States, the most powerful state in the world—will permit you to break their line of communication in the Mediterranean Sea! Nonsense. And we have no navy. The uprising in Greece must be stopped, and as quickly as possible." (p. 182) —V.Z.]

²⁰ As noted in the Bulgarian records, in particular in Kolarov's account, Stalin cautioned the Yugoslav side against careless involvement in Albania, where the USA and England might strike back, claiming to be defenders of Albanian independence. With this in mind, Stalin put this question to Kardelj: "If the Greek partisans are defeated, will you go to war?" Kardelj replied in the negative. To which Stalin said: "I am arguing on the basis of

an analysis of the current forces of the partisans and their enemies. Recently I have started to doubt the prospects of a partisan victory. If you are not convinced that the partisans will win, the partisan movement ought to be wrapped up. The Americans and the English are very interested in the Mediterranean sea. They want to have a base in Greece and will spare no means to preserve a government that listens to them. This is an important international question. If the partisan movement is wrapped up, then they will have no reason to attack you. It's not so easy to start a war now. If you are convinced that the partisans have a chance of victory, then that's a different matter. But I somewhat doubt it."

The Bulgarian records note the following remark by Kostov: "We believe that a defeat of the partisan movement in Greece would create a very difficult situation for other Balkan countries." To this Stalin replied:

"Of course the partisans must be supported. But if the prospects for the partisan movement are falling, it is better to postpone the fight until better times. That which is lacking in relative forces cannot be supplemented with moans and exclamations. What is needed is a thoughtful reckoning of forces. If this shows that at the present time the matter is moving nowhere, one must not be afraid to admit it. There have been other instances when partisan movements were terminated given an unfavorable situation. If it's impossible today, it will be possible tomorrow. You are afraid to state the question clearly. You are under the impression of a "moral obligation." If you cannot lift the weight which you have hoisted upon yourselves, you must admit it. You must not be afraid of some kind of a "categorical imperative" of moral obligation. We do not have such categorical imperatives. The entire question rests in the balance of forces. We go into battle not when the enemy wants us to, but when it's in our interests." Further discussion of the Greek question, following these observations by Stalin, is recorded in the Bulgarian records: "Kardelj: Over the next several months the chances of the partisans will become clear.

Stalin: In that case, fine, you can wait. Perhaps you are right. I also doubted the abilities of the Chinese and advised them to come to a temporary agreement with Jiang Jieshi [Chiang Kai-Shek]. They formally agreed with us, but in practice continued on their own course—that is, mobilizing the forces of the Chinese people. After this, they openly raised the question: we will continue to fight; the people support us. We said: fine, what do you need? It turned out that the conditions were very favorable to them. They turned out to be right, we turned out to be wrong. Maybe we will turn out to be wrong here as well. But we want you to act with certainty. Kolarov: Will America allow a partisan victory?

Stalin: They won't be asked. If there are enough forces for victory, and if there are persons capable of employing the force of the people, then the fight must be continued. But one must not think that if things are not successful in Greece, then everything is lost."

The Soviet record overall corroborates this course of discussion, but sets it down in significantly condensed form, without a number of details. In particular, it does not record Kostov's remark found in Bulgarian records on the difficult consequences the defeat of the Greek partisans would bring to other Balkan countries (in the Djilas report this remark is attributed to Dimitrov), and Kardelj's negative reply to Stalin's question whether Yugoslavia would go to war in the event of a Greek partisan defeat. In addition, the Soviet record corroborates Kardelj's optimistic assessment, noted by Djilas, of the prospects

of a partisan victory in Greece, though at the same time noting his qualification that this is possible only in the absence of direct US assistance to the Greek government, apparently meaning intervention by the American military.

²¹ The reference is to the creation of a Provisional Democratic Government of Greece, declared by the decision of the leadership of the Communist Party of Greece in late December 1947. This government would be headed by the commander of the partisan forces, member of the Communist Party Politburo, Markos Vafiadis, known at the time as “general Markos.” The Bulgarian records note that at the 10 February 1948 meeting Stalin said on this subject: “The bordering countries must be the last to recognize the Markos government. Let others, who are further away, recognize it first.” This statement by Stalin—that Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Albania must refrain from recognizing the Greek revolutionary government, and allow other “people’s democracies,” not bordering Greece and not accused of interfering in its internal affairs, to recognize it—is absent from the Soviet record. However, it does contain a statement by Kardelj (not present in the Bulgarian records) declaring that it would be better for Albania or Bulgaria to recognize Markos, and not Yugoslavia, for the latter is a member of the UN.

²² [Translator’s Note: This “seaman” must be Fedor Raskolnikov, a famous Bolshevik and agitator of the Baltic fleet, later a Soviet emissary to ignite the Muslim revolution in Asia. He defected in 1937 from Bulgaria, where he was ambassador and wrote a letter to Stalin denouncing his regime and the purges of Bolsheviks in the USSR.—V.Z.]

²³ On 13 December 1947, Lavrent’ev, on orders from Moscow, informed Tito of the Albanian government’s request for a shipment of 5 thousand tons of oats from the USSR, and inquired whether Yugoslavia had any objections to this. Two days later, Tito replied to the ambassador that the shipments from the USSR are not needed: Albania will receive the oats from Yugoslavia. However, the oats promised by Yugoslav never arrived in Albania. Even after the meeting in Moscow, during the second half of February 1948, Lavrent’ev, in his discussion with Kardelj, attempted to find out why this occurred. Kardelj explained this through a misunderstanding and lack of cooperation between the corresponding government bodies in Yugoslavia. AVP RF, f. 0144, op. 32, p. 128, d. 8, ll. 3, 8, 96, 102-103, 114-115.

²⁴ The Bulgarian records note this statement by Stalin in the following manner: “The Yugoslavs, apparently, are afraid that we will take Albania away from them. You must take Albania, but wisely.” The Soviet record notes this statement by Stalin in more detail. It notes his words that “the Yugoslavs, apparently, are afraid that we will take Albania from them, and that’s why they want to deploy their forces there sooner. They believe that we are tearing away from them their union both with Bulgaria and with Albania, and want to present us with a fait accompli.”

²⁵ The Bulgarian records present this thought by Stalin in the following manner: “Only three federations are possible and naturally inherent: 1) Yugoslavia and Bulgaria; 2) Romania and Hungary and 3) Poland and Czechoslovakia. These are the possible and realistic federations. A confederation among ourselves is something far-fetched.” Somewhat further along in the Bulgarian records are the following words by Stalin: “You must not delay with uniting three countries—Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania.” The Soviet record does not include the idea of three federations, and only mentions that Stalin remarked on the natural rapprochement between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary, and Poland and Czechoslovakia, while calling the idea of a single federation of all countries “nonsense.”

According to the Soviet record, Stalin used the term “federation” only in connection with the Bulgarian-Yugoslav union, though also noting that first Bulgaria and Yugoslavia could be united, and then Albania could also be included. Neither the Soviet nor Bulgarian records contain any mention of a conversation, found in the Djilas report, regarding the name of the united Yugoslav-Bulgarian country.

²⁶ Kardelj’s reply on possible enemy interference in the shipment of oats is not mentioned either in the Soviet or Bulgarian records. The Soviet record mentions only Kardelj’s words that the question of oats is unclear to him.

²⁷ Ed. Note: For the Bulgarian version of this Greek-Chinese comparison, see footnote above.

²⁸ The Bulgarian and Soviet records do not contain such a dialogue between Stalin and Kardelj. According to the Bulgarian records, such a dialogue took place between Stalin and Dimitrov.

²⁹ According to the Bulgarian records, this was stated not by Kardelj and Djilas, but by Stalin himself.

³⁰ [Translator’s Note: This is a reference to Nico Spiru, a member of the Albanian leadership with links to Belgrade, who committed suicide in November 1947.—V.Z.]

³¹ [Translator’s Note: Early in 1948 the US Department of State published the documents on the Nazi-Soviet talks and agreements in 1939-41, seized in Germany at the end of the Second World War.—V.Z.]

³² According to the Soviet record, Dimitrov said nothing of the kind, and, indeed, said that the Bulgarian government would take measures to cover more carefully their forces and weapons.

³³ [Translator’s Note: In other words, the countries that collaborated with Nazi Germany during the Second World War.—V.Z.]

³⁴ [Translator’s Note: A member of the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party. On Stalin’s remarks about Pijade to Djilas, see *Conversations with Stalin*, p. 154.—V.Z.]

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Soviet Plans to Establish the COMINFORM in Early 1946: New Evidence from the Hungarian Archives

by Csaba Békés

It has been long debated by scholars when the idea of forming a new Communist world organization after the Second World War was raised. In the absence of relevant sources the still prevailing classical interpretation suggests that this idea was a Soviet reaction to the Marshall Plan introduced in the Summer of 1947 and after the Soviet Union's refusal of the plan, the formation of the Eastern Bloc and its 'executive committee', the COMINFORM, was a logical next step in breaking off relations with the West. Surprisingly enough, no evidence of any kind has emerged from Russian archives from the time of their partial opening in 1991 pertaining to this important topic. However, documents discovered by Russian scholar Leonid Gibianskii in the Tito archives in Belgrade show that the idea of setting up such an organization was already discussed during the talks between Stalin and the Yugoslav leader in Moscow in May-June 1946.¹

Documents from Hungarian archives not only confirm that a Soviet plan to re-establish a Communist-world organization was in the making already as early as March 1946, but they also show that the implementation of the plan was postponed in order to avoid its potential negative effects during the forthcoming elections in France, Czechoslovakia and Romania as well as in the course of the ongoing European peace settlement.² This proves that the idea of setting up the later COMINFORM, rather than

being a reaction to the intensification of frictions between the allies, originally was a part of a wider Soviet scheme aimed at fostering Communist takeover in East Central Europe by peaceful means, while preserving Soviet-Western cooperation as well.

The document published below, is an excerpt from the speech of Mátyás Rákosi, General Secretary of the Hungarian Communist Party at the 17 May 1946 meeting of the Central Committee of the HCP.³ As part of a long survey on current international issues, he informed the CC members about the Soviet conception on the setting up of a new Communist-world organization. He gave a detailed analysis to his audience of how this new body would be different from the KOMINTERN using exactly the same arguments presented at the time of the setting up of the KOMINFORM in September 1947. Between 28 March and 2 April 1946, Rákosi had been on a secret mission in Moscow, where he was trying to achieve better terms for Hungary at the forthcoming peace conference.⁴ On 1 April 1946, he met with Stalin and Molotov, and it is likely that at this point he received the information he presented later to the Central Committee.⁵

Besides stressing the general importance of the document as the earliest known evidence of Soviet plans for the establishment of the later KOMINFORM, it is also worth noting that during recent talks between the Hungar-

Speech by Mátyás Rákosi, General Secretary of the Hungarian Communist Party at the Meeting of the Central Committee, 17 May 1946

[...] Finally I would like to raise another question, which, like socialism, we have not spoken much about so far. This refers to the creation of a new International. The comrades know that the third International had to be dissolved, because progress proved that it damaged rather than benefited the growth of the communist parties. [...] When we arranged the third International, I remember the trouble we went to to show that we wanted a centralized, strong International with executive powers, similar to how Marx imagined the International in 1864, and not just the sorting office and so on that the second International became before the First World War. And this was the catastrophe of the third International. Because instead of every country looking separately for the conditions for revolution, and not trying the impossible task of centralizing and directing the whole movement, it directed it from the center. The result was that the parties gave up independent politics, continually looked in the direction of the center, and waited for its instructions. This view led the comrades to announce the discontinuation of the third International. And afterwards, now that the International has been discontinued, the parties are coming forth one after the other to say how the existence of the International limited their progress, e.g. most recently we heard from our Yugoslav comrades how much such a central institution held them back, which, unaware of local conditions, sometimes demanded quite the opposite of what they needed. So such an International can no longer be established. On the contrary, the International should be such that it does not hinder the progress of individual parties, that it provides a means for individual parties to execute the tasks leading to the liberation of the proletariat, bearing local circumstances in mind. I should immediately say that as far as this is concerned, the new International cannot be compared to the previous ones. This will not be an organizing body; its task will be to compose, to help in making objections, to communicate the good or bad experiences of one country's communist party to that of another country, that they should learn from their neighbors' experiences and losses. This will undoubtedly be very useful, as not just us, but communist parties the world over are beginning to feel that without the exchange of experiences and objections they cannot produce adequate plans on international questions. It is such an International that we now intend to establish, and this International will help rather than hinder the international communist movement. On the same note, the view will change that was widely spread at the third International, for

example, that we have to wait for the conditions for revolution to appear in at least a bunch of countries, and only then can we instigate the revolution. I remember that when the situation was revolutionary in Germany in 1923, in all the neighboring countries we prepared for such revolutionary action, so that there could be a revolutionary situation in more than one country at the same time. I remember that in the Czech Republic, France and other countries where the situation was not nearly as developed as in Germany, we prepared assistance programs, similar uprisings, etc. History has shown that that was wrong. Now we are going to follow another route. Here I should immediately say that not many people are aware of this interpretation of the dissolution of the International, because they did not talk about it very much in this period and therefore completely incorrect views are spread amongst some of the parties. For example when we were with the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia and we tried to reconcile the Hungarian Communist Party's line on the question of the Hungarians in Slovakia with that of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, the comrades announced the theory that the International had to be dissolved, because the international aspirations [meaning "national aspirations" — Cs. B.] of the individual Communist Parties are so much at odds with each other, that they could not be fitted into the agenda of an International. Because of this they calmly recommended to us that we should attack the Czech Communist Party, while they attack the Hungarian Communist Party. We rejected this theory. We were convinced that this was wrong, and that Stalinist reasoning would say something totally different. There is not even a trace to show that the national aspirations of the particular communist parties do not fit into the International; it points to completely different reasons. Now that communist parties have everywhere become stronger and come to the fore, there should be pressure for the institution of the Communist International or some other international communist body. At the moment this is being disturbed by the whole list of parties preparing for elections. The comrades know that they are preparing for elections in France, Czechoslovakia and Romania, and that our comrades there are otherwise occupied. They are also occupied with the question of peace. But as soon as the elections die down and peace is agreed, at that moment this will come to the fore and then we will establish some kind of international body. One part of this conception is that in these changed circumstances, whenever a country achieves the conditions for the liberation of the proletariat or for socialism, this will be carried out, with no regard for whether the respective country is in a capitalist environment or not. This is also a new perspective, which simply means that in a country where as a result of the work of the communist party these conditions are present, it has to be realized. This is fresh encouragement for all Communist Parties, because now it will principally be dependent on their work whether or not the conditions for the liberation of the proletariat are created in their own country.

[Source: Archives of the Institute for Political History (AIPH), Budapest, 274. f. 2/34. Translated by David Evans.]

ian and the Yugoslav Communist leaders the latter complained about how the KOMINTERN, unaware of local conditions, sometimes demanded quite the opposite of what they needed. Paradoxically, although Tito and the Yugoslav leaders now themselves became proponents of the new Communist organization, their eventual rupture with the rest of the Soviet bloc was caused by exactly the same Soviet attitude. Rákosi's speech also provides an important contribution to the "blueprint debate" on whether Stalin had a plan to sovietize these countries. The conception, outlined by Rákosi, obviously repeating what he had heard in Moscow, shows a cautious, but determined, policy: in those countries where the Communist party itself would be able to create favorable internal conditions for a smooth and peaceful takeover, they would be allowed to do so. However, at this stage, in the spring of 1946 Stalin, eager to maintain cooperation with the Western Allies, did not plan to permit any kind of forceful takeover, relying on direct Soviet support, or implying civil war.

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¹ L. Gibianskii: "Kak voznik Kominform: Po novym arkhivnym materialam," *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia* (1993), No. 4. 135-136,

quoted by: Robert C. Tucker: "The Cold War in Stalin's Time," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 21:2 (Spring 1997), 275. See also Leonid Gibianskii, "The Soviet Bloc and the Initial Stage of the Cold War," in this issue of the CWIHP *Bulletin*.

² I first presented this finding at the international conference: Internal Factors Facilitating Communist Takeover in East Central Europe 1944-1948, Opocno, Czech Republic, 9-11 September 1993, see: Csaba Békés, "Mad'arská politická krize na jare 1946," *Suodobé Dejiny* (Praha), 1994, No. 4-5, pp. 509-513.

³ Archives of the Institute for Political History, (AIPH) Budapest, 274. f. 2./34.

⁴ For the story of this Hungarian Communist initiative see: Csaba Békés, "Dokumentumok a magyar kormánydelegáció 1946. áprilisi moszkvai tárgyalásairól. (Documents on the negotiations of the Hungarian Government Delegation in Moscow in April, 1946)" *Régió* (1992), 3, 161-194; for an English version see: "The Communist Parties and the National Issue in Central and Eastern Europe (1945-1947). An Important Factor Facilitating Communist Takeover in the Region," *6. Martie 1945: Incepturile comunizarii Romaniei. Editura Enciclopedia*, (Bucharest, 1995), 245-253.

⁵ No minutes of that meeting have been found to date on either side. After returning from Moscow Rákosi reported on his visit at the 3 April Politburo meeting but according to the then prevailing practice no minutes were taken. However, on 18 April, he gave a speech at the meeting of party secretaries of factories and plants in Budapest, where he briefly summarized the Soviet ideas on setting up a new Communist World organization (AIPH 274. f. 8/14).

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Stalin's Plan to Assassinate Tito

[*Co-editor's Note: The following excerpt is from a document, discovered and published by Russian military historian Dmitrii Volkogonov (1928-1995) in the Presidential Archive of the Russian Federation in Moscow, outlining various options to assassinate the Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito with the help of Iosif Romual'dovich Grigulevich alias "Max," a Soviet agent who had been involved earlier in operations to kill Trotskii and later became a historian and corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Sciences. The document, classified as top secret and prepared in the Ministry of State Security (MGB), was addressed personally to Stalin (in its only copy). While, according to Volkogonov, Stalin did not indicate his authorization of the operation on the document, it is likely that he approved of it since preliminary preparations began. Grigulevich, for example, had to write a "farewell letter" to his wife to cover up Soviet government involvement in case the assassination failed. Following Stalin's death in March 1953, however, the operation was terminated.*]

"The MGB USSR requests permission to prepare a terrorist act (*terakt*) against Tito, by the illegal agent 'Max'," Comrade I.R. Grigulevich, a Soviet citizen and member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union since 1950 ([biographical] information attached).¹

"Max" was placed in Italy on a Costa Rican passport, where he was able to gain the confidence and enter the circles of South American diplomats as well as well-known Costa Rican political and trade figures visiting Italy.

Using these connections, "Max", on our orders, obtained an appointment as the special plenipotentiary of Costa Rica in Italy and Yugoslavia. In the course of his diplomatic duties, in the second half of 1952, he visited Yugoslavia twice. He was well received there, with entrée into circles close to Tito's clique; he was promised a personal audience with Tito. "Max's" present position offers us opportunities to carry out active measures (*aktivnye deistviia*) against Tito.

In early February of this year, we summoned "Max" to Vienna for a secret meeting. While discussing options, "Max" was asked how he thought he could be most useful, considering his position. "Max" proposed some kind of active measure against Tito personally.

In relation to this proposal, there was a discussion with him [Max] about how he imagined all of this and as a result, the following options for a terrorist act against Tito were presented.

1. To order "Max" to arrange a private audience with Tito, during which a soundless mechanism concealed in his clothes would release a dose of pulmonary plague bacteria that would guarantee death to Tito and all present. "Max" himself would not be informed of the substance's nature, but with the goal of saving "Max's" life, he would be given an anti-plague serum in advance.

2. In connection with Tito's expected visit to London, to send "Max" there to use his official position and good personal relations with the Yugoslav ambassador in England, [Vladimir] Velebit, to obtain an invitation to the expected Yugoslav embassy reception in Tito's honor.

The terrorist act could be accomplished by shooting with a silent mechanism concealed as a personal item, while simultaneously releasing tear gas to create panic

among the crowd, allowing "Max" to escape and cover up all traces.

3. To use one of the official receptions in Belgrade to which members of the diplomatic corps are invited. The terrorist act could be implemented in the same way as the second option, to be carried out by "Max" who as a diplomat, accredited by the Yugoslav government, would be invited to such a reception.

In addition, to assign "Max" to work out an option whereby one of the Costa Rican representatives will give Tito some jewelry in a box, which when opened would release an instantaneously-effective poisonous substance.

We asked Max to once again think the operation over and to make suggestions on how he could realize, in the most efficient way, actions against Tito. Means of contact were established and it was agreed that further instructions would follow.

It seems appropriate to use "Max" to implement a terrorist act against Tito. "Max's" personal qualities and intelligence experience make him suitable for such an assignment. We ask for your approval."

[*Published on 11 June 1993 in Izvestiia. Translated by Natasha Shur (CWIHP)*]

Dmitrii A. Volkogonov (1928-1995) was a prominent Russian military historian. For several years, Volkogonov headed the Institute of Military History of the Soviet Army and since 1991 chaired a special parliamentary commission which oversees the handling of the former Soviet archives. His numerous publications include Iosif Stalin: Triumf i tragediia (Moscow, 1989) and Lenin: Politicheskii portret (Moscow, 1994).

¹ Not printed.

The Turn in Soviet-Yugoslav Relations, 1953-55

By *Andrei Edemskii*

Between the spring of 1953 and July 1955, relations with Yugoslavia changed sharply from collaborating with Yugoslavia “as a bourgeois country” (May 1953) to Mikoian’s May 1955 toast with Yugoslav leaders to the “prosperity of Yugoslavia.” Unfortunately, the correspondence carried out in 1954 and early 1955 between the central committees of the two ruling parties is not available in the archives. Other documents, however, can illuminate the earlier stages of the shift. Below, two Foreign Ministry internal reports prepared by M. Zimianin in May 1953 and October 1954 illustrate the radical change of opinion reached at the 31 May 1954 Presidium meeting in which the need to foil the “anti-Soviet plans of the Anglo-American imperialists and to use all means to strengthen our influence over the Yugoslav people” prevailed, opening the door to rapprochement. [Ed. Note: N. Bulganin discussed this decision and the ostensible resistance to it by Molotov and the Foreign Ministry during the July 1955 plenums, excerpted in this CWIHP Bulletin]

About the Situation in Yugoslavia and its Foreign Policy

To Comrade V. M. Molotov Top Secret

The internal policy of the Tito clique, after breaking with the USSR and peoples’ democratic countries, aimed at restoring capitalism in Yugoslavia, at the liquidation of all the democratic accomplishments of the Yugoslav people, and at the fascistization of the state and army personnel.

In foreign policy, the efforts of the ruling circles of Yugoslavia aim at broadening economic and political ties with capitalist states, first and foremost with the USA and England. This has made Yugoslavia dependent on them and has drawn it [Yugoslavia] into aggressive blocs organized by the Anglo-American imperialists....

27 May 1953

[Source: AVPRF f. 06, op. 12a, por. 74, pap. 617, ll. 7-12.
Translated by David Wolff]

On Recent Yugoslav Foreign Policy (second half of 1954)

Yugoslavia’s foreign policy measures in the second half (July-October) of this year have been dictated, as far as can be judged by sources, by the government’s attempt to strengthen the country’s position by improving relations with the countries of the capitalist camp and by normalizing relations with the USSR and other countries of the democratic camp...

The [Fourth European] Sector [of the Foreign Ministry] considers it possible to come preliminarily to the following conclusions and proposals:

The Soviet Union’s policy on Yugoslavia has pro-

duced serious positive results, has increased the influence of the USSR among the peoples of Yugoslavia, has helped explode the aggressive, anti-Soviet plans of the USA in the Balkans, and made difficult the actions of anti-Soviet elements in Yugoslavia itself.

At the same time it is impossible not to see that the Yugoslav ruling circles have normalized with the USSR within the bounds of their self-interest...

Under the given conditions, it seems appropriate to put forward measures for the further development of Soviet-Yugoslav relations that would force the Yugoslav government to come closer to the USSR and the peoples’ democracies.

We make the following proposals.

To poll (*zondazh*) the Yugoslav government regarding joint action with the USSR against US plans to draw Italy and the Balkan Union into a broadening of anti-Sovietism in the region. To clarify the position of the Yugoslav government on establishing diplomatic relations with the GDR.

If the test [results] of the Yugoslav government on two or three major foreign policy questions are positive, this will be an important condition towards the resurrection of the Treaty on Friendship and Mutual Aid between the USSR and Yugoslavia [of 1945].

21 October 1954

Head of the IV European Sector of the Foreign Ministry
Zimianin

[Source: AVPRF f. 021, op. 8-a, por. 184, pap. 11, ll. 16-21.
Translated by David Wolff]

Andrei Edemskii, a former CWIHP fellow, is a researcher at the Institute of Slavonic and Balkan Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Soviet-Yugoslav Relations and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956

By *Leonid Gibianskii*

[Co-editor's Note: The following essay by Leonid Gibianskii, a senior researcher at the Institute of Slavonic and Balkan Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow and coeditor [with Norman Naimark] of *The Establishment of Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe, 1944-1949*, introduces a fascinating set of documents on Yugoslav-Soviet relations in the wake of the Soviet invasion of Hungary on 4 November 1956. Though the immediate concern was the fate of Imre Nagy, the reform communist leader of the Hungarian Revolution, who had fled to the Yugoslav embassy in Budapest, the documents make clear that both Moscow and Belgrade were aware that more fundamental issues in the Soviet-Yugoslav relationship were at stake. The full version of Gibianskii's essay, which was abbreviated for this introduction, can be found in the *CWIHP Electronic Bulletin* (cwiwp.si.edu). The documents printed below were obtained by the National Security Archive and CWIHP and translated by Benjamin Aldrich-Moodie. Additional documents may be found in the *CWIHP Electronic Bulletin*.]

Much has been written about Soviet-Yugoslav relations with respect to the Hungarian Revolution. Even during the unfolding of the events themselves and the immediately following period, this subject became a topic of discussion in mass media channels and in the press. Later it was touched upon to a lesser or greater degree in the historiography. However, in both cases, this was done, as a rule, on the basis of only those facts which were available from public Soviet or Yugoslav declarations and actions. The behind-the-scenes side of the relations between Moscow and Belgrade regarding the 1956 events in Hungary remained hidden long afterwards: both sides, each for its own reasons, preferred to keep this secret.¹

The curtain of secrecy was partially lifted in the 1970s, first when Nikita Khrushchev's memoirs, which had been written, or, more precisely, recorded by him against the will of the Soviet Union after his removal from power,² were published in the West; and secondly in Yugoslavia, where, not without obstacles, the memoirs of Veljko Micunovic, who had been the Yugoslav ambassador to the USSR during the 1956 Hungarian crisis, came to light.³ These publications contained some previously unknown evidence about secret Soviet-Yugoslav contacts in connection with the development of the revolution in Hungary and its suppression by Soviet troops. However, despite the importance of the publication of this evidence, it was very incomplete, and in a series of cases, imprecise, as a result of the political-ideological prejudices of each of the authors, but also because the disgraced Khrushchev, deprived of the chance to refer to documents, was sometimes betrayed by his memory, while Micunovic, who had his daily notes at his disposal, had to stay within the confines of the official Yugoslav version of the time in his

depictions of Belgrade's policy.

Only since the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, with the fall of the Soviet and Eastern European communist regimes, has the opportunity arisen for the first time to examine previously unavailable archival materials. In particular, I researched a number of aspects of this subject using documents from Yugoslav and Russian (former Soviet) archives.⁴ In addition, a significant number of relevant Russian, Yugoslav, and Hungarian archival documents have been published.⁵ This article is based on both already published materials as well as unpublished documents from Moscow and Belgrade archives.⁶

Moscow's and Belgrade's concern towards the Hungarian revolution both differed and coincided simultaneously. Recently-released documents, including those contained in the aforementioned publications,⁷ leave no doubt that the Soviet leadership viewed the events in Hungary from the very beginning as a deeply threatening event, which had to be stopped at all costs. For this reason, the Soviets decided on 23 October and again on 31 October to move troops into Budapest.⁸ The Yugoslav situation with regard to the Hungarian revolution was more difficult. Belgrade was not at all interested in preserving Moscow's ultra-conservative henchmen (Matyas Rakosi and Erno Gerö) and the severe Soviet mandate in Hungary. To the contrary, the relative liberalization of the regime and the weakening of Soviet control in a neighboring country could open the relatively alluring prospect of the emergence, alongside Yugoslavia, of another similar Communist country standing outside of the Soviet bloc or at least significantly independent from the Kremlin. However, while the Yugoslav leadership's conception of the permissible changes in their neighboring

country was somewhat broader than the far more conservative conceptions of the Kremlin rulers, it could approve of liberalization in Hungary only to the degree that it did not threaten the existence of communist power there. Steps taken by Belgrade at the very beginning of November were a reflection of this ambiguous position.

Judging by its actions, the Soviet leadership considered the Yugoslav position to some extent ambiguous. Having decided on October 31 to militarily intercede again and to replace Nagy's government with a new government subservient to Moscow, the CC CPSU Presidium believed it necessary to hold talks regarding the impending military strike with Tito, the leaders of Bulgaria, Romania, and Czechoslovakia (the agreement of which was never in doubt) and with the new leadership in Poland.⁹ The goal pursued by the Kremlin was obvious: afraid that Tito and Wladyslaw Gomulka might condemn the impending military action, Soviet leader Nikita S. Khrushchev tried to incline them through direct negotiation toward some sort of agreement with it, using the argument that a counter-revolution had taken the upper hand in Hungary, threatening the complete liquidation of socialist development and the establishment of Western control there. As is made clear in Khrushchev's memoirs, this very argument was set out at the secret meeting of Khrushchev and CC CPSU Presidium members Viacheslav Molotov and Georgii Malenkov with Gomulka and the premier of the Polish government, Juzef Tsirankevich in Brest on November 1. However, they could not convince Gomulka of the necessity of implementing the Soviet plan.¹⁰ With even greater disquiet, Khrushchev and Malenkov went on to the meeting with Yugoslav leader Josip Tito,¹¹ expecting, in Khrushchev's words, that it would be still more complicated.¹² But despite this expectation, quite the opposite occurred.

The secret meeting in Tito's residence on Brioni island which took place on the night of November 2-3 and at which Tito, together with his assistants Edvard Kardelj and Aleksandr Rankovich and in the presence of ambassador Micunovic, conducted negotiations with Khrushchev and Malenkov, was until recently known about partly from Khrushchev's memoirs, but for the most part from Micunovic's memoirs. According to the latter's testimony, there were no records made during the meeting, but afterwards he set down the contents from memory.¹³ In one of the documents of the former CC LCY archive, the existence of this record was mentioned, but I was not able to locate it.¹⁴ Clearly it was the basis for the account of the Brioni meeting in Micunovic's memoirs. But from other archival materials it becomes clear that the memoirs do not include much that was discussed. Both Khrushchev and Micunovic relate the following basic results of the meeting: when the high ranking Soviet visitors informed the Yugoslav side of the Kremlin's decision to employ military force in Hungary again in order to replace the Nagy government and to "defend socialism," Tito, to the "pleasant surprise" of Khrushchev and Malenkov, immedi-

ately and without reservations expressed his agreement with this plan, since, in his opinion, the Hungarian events had gone in the direction of "counter-revolution."¹⁵ True, later, when the suppression of the Hungarian revolution by the Soviet troops elicited widespread disappointment and condemnation from throughout the world, the Yugoslav leadership, in a secret memorandum to Moscow, maintained that at the Brioni meeting it had accepted the Soviet plan with reservations, as a "lesser evil," since Khrushchev and Malenkov had declared that no other means existed for preventing the restoration of capitalism in Hungary. However, from the very same memorandum, it followed that Yugoslav reservations did not at all call into question the undertaking of military actions, but instead stressed the importance of taking care to insure that the costs of "preserving socialism" to be incurred by the punitive measures employed by the Soviet forces should be held to a minimum. In essence, Tito stated in his correspondence that the Soviet leadership should "normalize" the situation in Hungary not solely by military force but by accompanying simultaneous political measures to create a suitable Hungarian government with Kadar at its head, which would consist of people who had not been compromised under Rakosi and were capable of uniting the forces supporting the "continuing progress of socialism."¹⁶ This accorded with the intentions of Moscow, which had already been planning such a step and of which Khrushchev and Malenkov immediately informed their Yugoslav counterparts.¹⁷

From the memoirs of Khrushchev and Micunovic as well as the subsequent secret correspondence between Moscow and Belgrade, it is clear that there were certain differences in the positions of Soviet and Yugoslav participants at the meeting. The Yugoslav side especially stressed that the government had to condemn the regime of Rakosi-Gerö, and put forth a program for surmounting the "Stalinist inheritance" and "reforming socialism," using the support of recently-emerged worker councils in Hungary.¹⁸ Although the Soviet notions of acceptable parameters for "reform" were significantly narrower than the Yugoslav, judging by the documents, they did not object to these proposals. As for the selection of people for the government in question, Khrushchev expressed his support for the candidacy of Ferenc Munnich as prime minister, while the Yugoslav side leaned more toward Kadar. In addition, the Yugoslavs favored including in the government certain persons close to Nagy. According to Micunovic, Geza Losonczy and Pal Maleter were mentioned. Khrushchev also noted the Yugoslav selection of candidates in his memoirs, but, without remembering their names, maintained that both were rejected as unacceptable.¹⁹

From the subsequent secret Soviet-Yugoslav correspondence it becomes clear that the Yugoslav agreement with the proposed Soviet military intervention was accompanied at the Brioni meeting with an agreement to give political assistance to the Soviet troops and in the

replacement of Nagy with a “revolutionary worker-peasant government.” Until recently, such an agreement was essentially unknown. It is not mentioned in Khrushchev’s memoirs, while Micunovic’s memoirs contain only an unclear suggestion that the meeting included a discussion of the question of Yugoslav efforts to “try to see whether something can be done with Nagy.” Micunovic did not explain what was meant by this, noting only that they had in mind “using influence on Nagy in order to minimize casualties and unnecessary bloodshed” and that the Soviet participants expressed a special interest in this.²⁰ It becomes clear from the correspondence that the Yugoslavs, before the start of Soviet actions, were to try to convince Nagy as well as his closest supporters from in the government to resign.²¹

In my earlier published work, I noted that Nagy’s resignation from the post of prime minister would, under these circumstances, signal his government’s liquidation; and this, in turn, would have created such a political and legal vacuum that in such conditions the self-declaration of a new government, created under Soviet aegis, would not have seemed like a direct overthrow of the previous government and the Soviet intervention itself would not have been formally directed against a recognized Hungarian government. That is why the Soviet participants at the meeting expressed such an interest in agreeing with Yugoslavia to combine their actions with Nagy’s resignation.²² In contrast to Micunovic’s memoirs, from which it may be concluded that his question was discussed at Soviet initiative, it follows from the aforementioned Soviet-Yugoslav correspondence that such was the proposal of the Yugoslavs themselves.²³ Of course, there is room for the possibility that the two may have overlapped. In any case, the Yugoslav promise would have been in practice, had it been realized, an aid in camouflaging the Soviet intervention and armed suppression of the Hungarian revolution. This character of the Soviet-Yugoslav understanding was acknowledged, obviously, by the Yugoslav participants in the negotiations at Brioni, insofar as they, as it follows from the archival documents, did not show a particular desire to enlighten their colleagues in the Yugoslav leadership about it. Judging by the minutes of the meeting of the executive committee of the CC LCY on November 6, at which Tito informed the rest of the members of this higher party organ about the Brioni meeting, the Yugoslav leader preferred to remain silent about the said understanding.²⁴

The Yugoslav side, however, did not fulfill its promise. The documents on which I was able to conduct research do not clarify the reasons for this. In the subsequent correspondence with Soviet leadership, Tito in general tried to assure Moscow that the Yugoslav side started to act immediately according to the agreement and undertook corresponding efforts in Budapest in the second half of November, but were unable to achieve concrete results. Kardelj informed the Soviet ambassador in Belgrade, Nikolai Firiubin, that on November 4, as was

agreed upon with Khrushchev, they contacted Nagy. But neither Tito nor Kardelj explained what exactly had been undertaken. In correspondence, Tito only tied the Yugoslav actions to the talks which had been conducted since November 2 between the Yugoslav diplomatic mission in Budapest and Nagy’s close collaborator Zoltan Santo, who came with the request that, in the event of the threat of an anti-communist pogrom, he and a few other communists from the government and party leadership, created to replace the collapsed HWP, be allowed to take refuge at the embassy.²⁵ From documents it is clear that the envoy Soldatic inquired from Belgrade with regard to Santo’s request and received an answer on November 3 that refuge would be given.²⁶ However, apart from this exchange, references to Nagy or, more importantly, his resignation, were not found. Nor did Tito say anything concrete in his later correspondence with Moscow.

Whatever the case may be, when at dawn on November 4 Soviet troops began actions to suppress the revolution and overthrow the Nagy government, the latter not only did not resign, but, to the contrary, broadcast an announcement on the radio condemning the Soviet intervention as illegal and then, with a large group of supporters, including Santo, took refuge at the Yugoslav mission. With this, the events took a turn directly contrary to what had been anticipated at the time of the Brioni meeting. Belgrade, having been informed of what had happened by Soldatic, found itself in a ticklish situation.²⁷

Intent on escaping from this extremely uncomfortable position, the Yugoslav leadership on November 4 informed the Soviets of what had transpired and affirmed that Yugoslavia would attempt to influence Nagy to retract his recent statement and, to the contrary, make a statement of his support for the Kadar government.²⁸ At the same time, Soldatic received instructions to try to convince Nagy of this and to prevent him and members of his group from carrying out any kind of activity and establishing any kind of contact outside the diplomatic mission.²⁹ However, the Soviet leadership immediately replied on November 4 that in light of the new situation (i.e., in which Nagy’s government was already overthrown by military force and the creation of the Kadar government already announced), it considered an address by Nagy to be unnecessary and proposed that Belgrade hand Nagy and his group over to Soviet troops. They, in turn, would hand them over to Kadar’s government.³⁰ Evidently in order to achieve a quicker extradition of Nagy and the rest, on November 5, Khrushchev and Malenkov sent a telegram to Tito, Rankovic, and Kardelj which spoke of the successful suppression of the “counter-revolution” in Hungary and emphasized that this action had been undertaken in accord with what had been agreed to at Brioni and that the results of this conference had made the most positive impression on the CC CPSU Presidium.³¹

The Soviet demands put Belgrade in a dead-end situation: on the one hand, the Yugoslav leadership by no means wanted to argue with Moscow, while on the other

hand it could not agree to surrender Nagy and his comrades to the Soviet military authorities or to the Kadar government for fear of serious discredit in the eyes of its own people as well as the outside world. Thus, on November 5, Tito, Kardelj, and Rankovic replied to Khrushchev with a proposal to send Nagy and the rest to Yugoslavia.³² On November 7, however, Khrushchev categorically rejected this offer in the name of the Soviet leadership and added a blunt threat: Citing the Brioni agreement, he warned that the proposal to send Nagy to Yugoslavia could be seen by Moscow as an example of Belgrade's secret solidarity with Nagy's policies and could cause "irrevocable damage" to Soviet-Yugoslav relations.³³

The Kremlin rejected Kadar's hesitant proposal, which was made to Andropov on November 8, regarding the possibility—in order to avoid heightening the tensions in relations with Yugoslavia—to allow Nagy and his group to go to Yugoslavia under the condition that a written document was received from Nagy stating his resignation from the post of prime minister of the overthrown government and written promises from him and the others not to harm Kadar's government. In response to the communication received from Andropov, Moscow instructed him to tell Kadar on behalf of the CC CPSU that it was not advisable under any circumstances to let Nagy and the others go to Yugoslavia, and that the Yugoslavs would be forced to agree to the demands for his surrender. As for Kadar's apprehension about aggravating relations with Belgrade, the CC CPSU Presidium confirmed the position set out in Khrushchev's communication of November 7 to Tito, Kardelj, and Rankovic.³⁴

Insofar as this position did not leave the Yugoslav leadership any possibility of slipping between the Scylla of confrontation with the USSR in case Nagy was not surrendered and the Charybdis of its public exposure as an accomplice to Soviet intervention in case he was handed over, on November 8, in a new message to Khrushchev on behalf of the CC LCY, Tito tried to explain to the Kremlin that Yugoslavia was simply not in a condition to permit the surrender of Nagy and the others to the Soviet or Hungarian authorities for fear of being discredited. At the same time, Tito tried in various ways to justify why the Yugoslavs had not achieved Nagy's resignation, after he with his entourage had shown up in the Yugoslav mission. In the message Yugoslavia's support for the Kadar government was forcefully emphasized, and it was proposed that a joint compromise resolution be found, including through an amnesty for Nagy and the others hiding in the Yugoslav mission in Budapest.³⁵ In the hopes that it would help soften Moscow's position and obtain the assent of the Kadar government, Belgrade gave a directive to Soldatic on November 9 to try to obtain from Nagy at least a formal announcement of his resignation from the post of prime minister of the fallen government.³⁶ However, Nagy refused.³⁷

Meanwhile, the Soviet leadership replied to Tito's

appeal of November 8 with a proposal on November 10 that Nagy and Losonczy (who had entered his government) be sent to Romania. The rest, on condition of a statement of loyalty to the Kadar government, could receive their freedom and remain in Hungary.³⁸ The departure to Romania was, in essence, tantamount to Nagy's surrender, but formally it was the compromise asked for by Tito. The Yugoslav government found it impossible to accept such a proposal, which Soldatic had already expressed to Kadar on November 11, noting that Nagy's departure to Romania could, in Belgrade's opinion, damage Yugoslav prestige and that Romania is not a suitable country for such a purpose.³⁹ It was clear that the Romanian scenario, involving a country of the "socialist camp" under Soviet control, was virtually tantamount to handing Nagy over to the Soviet military or to Kadar's government. In addition, such a scenario had no chance of Nagy's acceptance.⁴⁰ Belgrade, for its part, proposed two scenarios: either a declaration by Kadar's government guaranteeing Nagy and the rest freedom if they leave the Yugoslav diplomatic mission, or their unhindered departure to Yugoslavia.⁴¹

Like Belgrade, Moscow and its subordinate Kadar sought to find a solution to this situation, though each in their own interest. In contrast to Yugoslavia, which was in a hurry to resolve this question in order to rid itself of the source of difficulty with the USSR, the Soviets at first showed a tendency to outwait the Yugoslav leadership. But the continued formal existence of the Nagy government, which still had not resigned, seriously aggravated an already difficult domestic and international political situation for the Kadar government. This provoked great concern at the meetings of Kadar's temporary Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (CC HSWP) on November 11 and 16, at which the situation of the "two governments" was seen as one of the most important tasks.⁴² Diplomatic maneuvers ensued, when Kadar first assured Soldatic on November 16 that Nagy and his group could leave the Yugoslav mission without fear of being followed, and, if they wanted, leave Hungary. On the instructions of the Soviet side, he demanded on the following day in the form of a preliminary condition, a statement from Nagy and Losonczy that they no longer considered themselves members of the government, and, together with the others, would agree to support Kadar's government. The Yugoslavs for their part began to work towards the Kadar government's granting them a written promise that Nagy and the others could freely live at home without repression against them.⁴³

The arguments surrounding these positions, which continued until November 21, shifted entirely to the sphere of negotiations between Belgrade and the Kadar government;⁴⁴ the Soviet side, able to manipulate Kadar from behind the scenes, outwardly removed itself from the discussion regarding the Nagy question. Immediately, polemics arose between Hungarians and Yugoslavs (previously avoided by both sides) regarding general

principles of the Hungarian crisis and the evaluation of Soviet and Yugoslav policy in Hungary. The ground was laid by the publication in the 16 November issue of *Borba* of Tito's speech to party activists in Pula on 11 November. In his speech, the Yugoslav leader had justified the Soviet military intervention undertaken on 4 November as the lesser evil in the face of the threat of "counterrevolution" and expressed support for Kadar's government, but at the same time characterized the crisis as a consequence of the Soviet support given until the last moment for the Rakosi-Gero regime, including the first Soviet military intervention on October 24, which naturally provoked outrage in Hungary. Tito connected a similar orientation of Soviet policy in relation not only to Hungary, but also to other Eastern European countries of the "socialist camp" with the fact that among a portion of the Soviet leadership, the Stalinist legacy, which he characterized as a product of the system that had formed in the USSR, was still strong. Tito's speech itself and its publication in particular constituted a clear attempt to distance himself from Soviet policy in Hungary in light of disappointment with Moscow's actions both in Yugoslavia and the outside world, while at the same time defending Yugoslavia's agreement to intervention on 4 November and the support for the Kadar government. The Yugoslav action elicited a sharp reaction from the Soviet leadership, which, however, was expressed primarily in private, in Micunovic's meetings with Khrushchev and other members of the CC CPSU Presidium. Moreover, the Soviets emphasized that they did not want to see difficulties arise with Yugoslavia and charged Belgrade with breaking mutual agreements. The public response to Tito's speech, made in the form of material published in *Pravda* on November 19 and 23, rejected Yugoslavia's evaluations, although, in Micunovic's opinion, in relatively measured terms, as was the Moscow leadership's general position toward relations with Yugoslavia during these days.⁴⁵

This was also said in connection with Nagy's detention by Soviet troops and his group after they had left the Yugoslav mission on November 22. The proposal for his arrest had been sent back on November 17 to the CC CPSU Presidium by Malenkov, Suslov, and the secretary of the CC CPSU, Averkii Aristov, who were present in Hungary. And Kadar, who was negotiating with Yugoslavia and on November 21 made a written statement guaranteeing safety for Nagy and the others, had been aware of this plan, endorsed by the Soviet leadership, from the beginning.⁴⁶ When Nagy and the others, upon leaving the Belgrade mission were detained and forcibly sent to Romania, the Yugoslav leadership limited itself to a protest to the Kadar government, while to the Soviets on November 24 it expressed only "surprise" regarding this incident.⁴⁷

In its private contacts with Moscow, however, Belgrade showed increasing unhappiness with Soviet encouragement of the anti-Yugoslav campaign carried out in East European countries and by certain Western

Communist parties, especially the French, as well as the Soviet manner of acting without regard to Yugoslav interests or prestige, as in the case of Nagy's arrest. The expression of such disaffection was a long letter from Tito to Khrushchev dated 3 December 1956 which, among other things, repeated and intensified criticism of Soviet policy in Hungary and argued the wrongful nature of Soviet accusations against Yugoslavia with regard to the Brioni agreement and the Nagy question.⁴⁸

In essence, each of the sides occupied a simultaneously defensive and offensive position, trying to stick the other side with public and non-public demarches and to halt criticism made in its direction. The Yugoslav leadership used its public demarches for personal justification and for raising its prestige inside Yugoslavia and in the international arena (in this respect Kardelj's speech in the Skupshchina played the same role as Tito's speech in Pula).⁴⁹ For the Soviet leadership the campaign of criticism against Belgrade functioned as one of the means for reinforcing its control over Eastern European countries of the "Socialist camp" and over the world Communist movement.⁵⁰ Such friction continued towards further escalation of mutual accusations and counter-accusations for the rest of 1956 and into the first months of 1957, both in public statements and in a continued exchange of secret letters between Moscow and Belgrade. In particular, the response to the Yugoslav letter of 3 December 1956 became the Soviet letter from 10 January 1957, after which there followed the Yugoslav answer on 1 February 1957.⁵¹ But despite the sharpness of the polemic in this correspondence, both sides came to the same basic conclusion: they negatively evaluated the revolutionary attempt to liquidate the Communist monopoly over the government in Hungary and considered the military suppression of the revolution to be lawful.

**Cable, N. Firiubin to Soviet Foreign Ministry
4 November 1956**

Strictly secret

Copying is forbidden

Coded Telegram

From BELGRADE

PRIORITY

Kardelj informed me that on the night of November 4, they got in touch with Imre Nagy, as had been agreed upon with comrade Khrushchev.

Imre Nagy, Santo Zoltan and 11 more Hungarian communists are located in the Yugoslav embassy in Budapest. It is not yet known, Kardelj said, whether Nagy Imre made his last statement in the name of the government in Budapest. If he made this statement, they, the Yugoslavs, will try to get him to announce that he did so

under reactionary pressure [*nazhim reaktsiia*]. They also intend to come to an agreement with Imre Nagy so that he will make a statement supporting the government headed by Kadar in Sol'nok.

In Kardelj's words, such an announcement would facilitate the discussion of the Hungarian issue in the Security Council and the recognition of Kadar's government as the legal government. Kardelj, on Tito's instructions, requested the advice of the CPSU and the Soviet government as to whether to continue further talks with Imre Nagy. Tito also asked the Soviet government to convey to Kadar's government the request that they not repress those communists who did not immediately take the correct line during the recent events in Hungary.

Tito, in Kardelj's words, also asked the Soviet government to take measures to protect the Yugoslav embassy from possible attacks on it, especially if reactionaries find out that Nagy, who is located in the embassy, is supporting Kadar's government.

4/XI-56 N. FIRIUBIN

**From the diary
of D.T. SHEPILOV**

**Secret
7 November 1956**

**On a Conversation with the
Yugoslav Ambassador to the USSR, Micunovic**

At 14:10, I received the ambassador of Yugoslavia to the USSR, Micunovic. I told him that I had received his report on the conversation between Minister for Foreign Affairs Koca Popovic and the Soviet ambassador Firiubin in which Koca Popovic stated that a Soviet tank located alongside the building of the Yugoslav mission in Budapest opened fire on November 6 at 12:45 (Budapest time). The direction of the shot has not been established, but all of the windows in the Yugoslav mission were blown out and the window frames were damaged, and the event led to panic amongst the people located inside the mission.

I told Micunovic that I had just spoken with the commander of the Soviet military unit in Budapest and had instructed him to conduct a careful inquiry into the veracity of this fact. That will be done and the results of the inquiry will be conveyed to the ambassador. However, as a preliminary matter the commander of the Soviet military unit in Budapest categorically states that that sort of incident could not have taken place, since everything is completely calm in the region where the Yugoslav mission is located and since the tanks located near the mission were unlikely to have needed to open fire. However, I once again confirmed that the results of the inquiry as to the veracity or fictitiousness of the episode of which Koca Popovic had informed our ambassador would be conveyed to him as well.

In this regard I told Micunovic that on November 5 of this year, the Yugoslav ambassador in Hungary, Soldatic, made a request to the USSR ambassador in Hungary, com. Andropov, for the removal of the Soviet military unit which was located in the proximity of the mission building since at present the presence of this military unit near the Yugoslav mission was not necessary.

I told Micunovic that the Soviet military commander in Budapest for his part considers it possible to comply with the Yugoslav mission's request and to remove the Soviet military unit located near the mission.

I also told Micunovic that we cannot but be astonished by Koca Popovic's statement that "public opinion in Yugoslavia is quite strongly indignant." If we are talking about feelings, then our population, as well as every Hungarian patriot, is indignant to a far greater degree because of the fact that bankrupt degenerates and accomplices of counter-revolution such as Nagy and company, with whose knowledge worker-revolutionaries and communists were hanged on the streets of Budapest, took refuge in the Yugoslav embassy after their defeat.

Micunovic said that he had just acquainted himself with com. Khrushchev's letter of November 6 to coms. Tito, Kardelj and Rankovic. He cannot speak officially about the letter as a whole, but personally considers that its contents and conclusions contradict the understanding reached between com. Tito and coms. Khrushchev and Malenkov during their recent visit to Brioni.

Micunovic also stated that he does not differ with me in the judgment that Imre Nagy and his government cleared the way for counter-revolution. But there is an entire group of people with Nagy among whom there are honest communists. During the conversations at Brioni, it was stipulated that Imre Nagy and the others could improve the position of the new revolutionary worker-peasant government if in one way or another they announced their intention to assist this government or, at the least, not to speak out against it. The presence of Imre Nagy and others presently in the Yugoslav embassy does not contradict the understanding which took place between coms. Khrushchev and Malenkov and com. Tito and other Yugoslav figures during coms. Khrushchev and Malenkov's visit to Brioni.

I answered that insofar as I was informed of the contents of the conversation which took place at Brioni between coms. Khrushchev and Malenkov, on the one hand, and the leaders of Yugoslavia on the other, the Yugoslav government's provision of asylum to Nagy and his entourage in the Yugoslav embassy starkly contradicts the said conversation and understanding. Coms. Khrushchev and Malenkov informed the leadership of the party and the USSR government that com. Tito and the other Yugoslav leaders fully agreed with their Soviet comrades' conclusions that Imre Nagy and his confederates are not only political bankrupts, but are people who cleared the way for counter-revolution and who themselves became the accomplices of reactionaries and

imperialist forces. I know, for example, that during the conversation, com. Tito stated: "What sort of revolutionary is Nagy? What sort of communist is he if leading workers, communists and public figures were hanged and shot with his knowledge?"

In light of these facts, we are truly astonished and perplexed by the fact that the leaders of the Yugoslav government have sheltered the anti-people group headed by Nagy in the walls of the Budapest mission.

Micunovic once again repeated that he did not dissent from our assessment of Nagy. However, it is not necessary to create additional difficulties for the new Hungarian government and provoke the excitement and dissatisfaction of the Hungarian and Yugoslav population, as well as additional unpleasantness in the UN and in worldwide public opinion through certain actions relating to Nagy and his group, by which he meant that at present they are not taking part in any political activity and are keeping quiet.

I informed Micunovic that he would be received at 18:00 for a conversation with com. Khrushchev.

D. SHEPILOV.

Attested: [signature] [...]

.....

**Letter of the CC UCY to the CC CPSU
with an exposition of the views of the leadership of the
UCY on the events in Hungary**

8 November 1956, Brioni

To the first secretary of the CC CPSU,
comrade KHRUSHCHEV

Dear comrades!

We received your letter in which you stated the point of view of the Presidium of the CC CPSU on the issue of Imre Nagy and others who took refuge in our embassy in Budapest. We understand some of your arguments which are put forward in the aforementioned letter, and [we] consider them logical, but all the same we must sincerely say that in your letter we were deeply moved by the lack of understanding of our position and, especially, the lack of understanding of our readiness to resolve this issue in the spirit of reciprocal friendly relations, and not to the injury of the international reputation of Yugoslavia as a sovereign country. You agreed with us that Yugoslavia plays and in the future should play a very useful role in the world thanks to the reputation which it has acquired.

We will explain in detail to you here, which circumstances led to the current state of affairs, so that our position on this issue becomes clearer to you.

It is true that, during our conversations at Brioni, we agreed on the assessment that the weakness of Imre Nagy's government and the series of concessions made by that government to reactionary forces led to the risk of the destruction of the existing socialist achievements in Hungary. We agreed that the Hungarian communists

should not remain in such a government any longer and that they should rely on the laboring masses and resist reaction in the most decisive manner. There is no need to remind you that from the very beginning, and also throughout our entire conversation, we expressed our doubts as to the consequences of open help from the Soviet Army. But bearing in mind that, in accord with your evaluation that such help had become unavoidable, we considered that nonetheless it would be necessary to do everything possible in order to minimize harm to the task of socialism. You recall that we first stated our opinion that in such a position it would be best of all to create a government there in which people who had not compromised themselves during the regime of Rakosi would take part, and at the head of which would be comrade Kadar as a prominent communist who enjoys influence among the Hungarian laboring masses. We considered that it would be good if this government made a public appeal, and subsequently this was done. We agree with this appeal and for this reason in our public statements we gave full support to the government and the program which it announced. We believed that you agreed with this, that only such a government could once again restore contact with the laboring masses and gradually eliminate at least the serious [*tiazhelye*] consequences of the events in Hungary. You yourselves could see here [*u nas*] that in all of our arguments we were guided only by deep concern that the victories of socialism be preserved in Hungary and that the restoration of the old order, which would have had far-reaching consequences for all countries located in this part of Europe, including Yugoslavia, be prevented. In particular, in connection with all of this we put forward our thoughts on trying to keep communists, and perhaps Nagy himself, out of this government, in which different anti-socialist elements were located and which for this very reason was not in a condition to halt the [forces of] reaction on their path to power. Comrades Khrushchev and Malenkov did not reject these thoughts. On the contrary, they agreed with them, with some exceptions as to Nagy. We considered that in this government and around it there were honest communists who could be very useful in creating the new government of Janos Kadar and in liquidating the activity of anti-socialist forces. On the basis of this conversation at Brioni, we took some measures in Budapest on the afternoon of Saturday, 3 November of this year.

On November 2, Zoltan Szanto spoke with our representative in Budapest. In the course of this conversation, Szanto expressed the desire that he and some communists, if it were possible, could leave the building of the government and the CC and could find sanctuary in our embassy, since their lives were being threatened by reactionary bands of rioters. In the spirit of this conversation, our representative answered Szanto that we were ready to give them shelter if they made their escape immediately. We expected that they would answer on Sunday, the fourth of the month. However, on the morning

of the same day, the Soviet Army began its actions, and our conversations were ended. Instead of that, early in the morning of the same day, on the basis of previous conversations, Nagy and 15 other leaders of the government and the party together with their families arrived at our embassy. When we received the first report about this event from Budapest, we did not know whether the announcement which had been read, which you cite in your letter, was in fact Nagy's announcement or whether it was published without his knowledge. And so, Nagy and his group arrived on the basis of the conversations which had taken place earlier, before we from Belgrade could react to his announcement, for the authenticity of which we had no proof. As soon as we received word that Nagy and the others had taken refuge in the Yugoslav embassy, comrade Kardelj invited the counselor to the Soviet embassy in Belgrade, comrade Griaznov, and told him this fact. Despite the absence of such information, all the same, we then considered that an appropriate announcement by Nagy, if essentially in favor of the Kadar government, could still assist an easing of the situation in Hungary, as we proposed to you. Having not received an urgently requested reply from you in this regard throughout November 4, we refrained from further actions in that direction.

If attention is paid to all of this, then it becomes obvious that only as a result of the speed of events, matters were not clarified and problems were created, which it is now necessary to resolve. We believe that the question of whether our embassy in Budapest behaved correctly or not is now irrelevant, but that it is important that we jointly resolve the problem in the spirit of friendly relations, which we have already restored between our countries and our parties, since [the problem] in the final analysis appeared as a result of our conversation in Brioni, although, because of events which occurred during the night from Saturday to Sunday, things have developed in a different way than we proposed. After this, essentially, only their personal issue in regard to their request for asylum will remain to be decided.

We do not dispute some of your arguments as to the fact that granting asylum in Yugoslavia to members of the former Hungarian government, whose chairman has not resigned, could be negative, and do not think that we do not realize that all of this has also brought us some unpleasantness and complications. As we see from your letter, you have not accepted our proposal that Nagy and the rest of the group be transported, with your permission, to Yugoslavia, and that puts us, understandably, in a very difficult position. Specifically on that point, we would like you to treat the search for a joint way out of all of this with great understanding, since neither by the stipulations in our constitution on the granting of the right of asylum, nor by international custom, nor by other considerations which we cited earlier, can we break the word we have given and simply hand over these people. Here we must especially emphasize that such an action by us would provoke far-

reaching consequences in our country.

In your letter you say that this could have negative consequences for our relations as well, but we consider that this should not hinder the development of friendly relations between our parties and countries, [relations] which of late have already brought significant results. We consider that this issue can be resolved in such a way that it not harm either our country, or the Soviet Union, or the development of socialism in Hungary. We consider that the very friendship which exists between our two countries demands that the government of the Soviet Union regard the international prestige of Yugoslavia with great understanding, as it regards the prestige of the Soviet Union itself. If we did not behave in this way, the masses of our people could not understand either the politics of the Soviet Union or the politics of their own Yugoslav government. If we regard matters in this way, then we must believe that with the aid of the good will of both countries it is necessary to find a resolution which would not have a harmful influence on our friendly relations.

Bearing in mind such a state of affairs, it is difficult for us to believe that you, despite this, will not try to find another solution, all the more since we consider that, aside from transportation to Yugoslavia, there are also other possibilities for resolving this problem in keeping with international law, like, for instance, amnesty or something similar. We hope that you in the spirit of everything we have set out will once again examine your position.

In conclusion we would like once again to return to one argument from your letter. Despite the fact that some malevolent persons can interpret our relationship to Nagy and to the rest of the group in Budapest, we want to emphasize that we have absolutely no connection with this group, nor with the events in Hungary. Moreover, we reject the hint about our imaginary connection with the Petöfi club. Yugoslavia exists just as it is, with all its revolutionary past, with all its experience and understanding of socialist construction. If separate people in Hungary spoke about her [i.e. Yugoslavia], that does not give anyone the right to impute responsibility to Yugoslavia for internal events which have entirely different sources and other culprits. Precisely because we saw all of the dangers hidden in the stormy [events] in Hungary, we were extremely restrained and did all we could to act in a calm manner. This is evidenced by the arrival in Yugoslavia of the delegation of the Hungarian Workers' Party headed by Gerö. On the same principle we agreed with you in your assessment of the course of events in Hungary and publicly gave our support to the revolutionary worker-peasant government headed by comrade Kadar from the very first day. Accordingly, if someone now tries to accuse Yugoslavia of the events in Hungary, for which it bears not the slightest responsibility, we consider in such a case that it is in our common interest, and in the interest of socialism to repudiate such rumors.

With a comradely greeting

On behalf of the Central Committee

of the Union of Communists of Yugoslavia
(I.B. Tito)

[Source: *AP RF*, f. 3, op. 64, d. 486, ll. 61-67. Copy. TsKhSD. f. 89, per 45. dok. No. 38. Obtained by the National Security Archive and CWIHP. Translated by Benjamin Aldrich-Moodie (CWIHP).]

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¹ Practically nothing was changed in this sense by the publication of a collection of documents on Yugoslavia's policies towards Hungary in connection with the Hungarian revolution in 1959: *Politika Jugoslavije prema Madarskoj i slucaj Imre Nada* (Belgrade, 1959). It was compiled and published in connection with the trial that took place in 1958 in Hungary of the group of participants in the prominent revolutionary events of 1956 headed by Imre Nagy. The publication had a propaganda aim: to disprove the accusations made in the course of the trial of Yugoslavia's participation in statements against the pro-Soviet communist regime in Hungary. Although the collection, which consisted largely of newspaper publications, also included fragments of individual archival documents, as a result of the careful selection that had been exercised in its compilation, it lacked materials which would have exposed the behind-the-scenes dimension of Soviet-Yugoslav contacts in connection with the Hungarian revolution of 1956.

² *Khrushchev Remembers* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1970, 1971). I used the corrected Russian original of the recollections, which was published in the Moscow journal *Voprosy istorii* in 1990-1995 under the title of "Memoirs of Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev."

³ Veljko Micunovic, *Mockovske godine 1956-1958* (Zagreb, 1977); in this article the second edition (Belgrade, 1984) is cited. For an English-language edition, see Veljko Micunovic, *Moscow Diary* (London, 1980).

⁴ Leonid Gibianskij, *Magyarorsag, 1956: Hruscsov es Tito titkos levelezese*. - *Koztarsasag*, 1992, 25 szm, pp. 74, 76-77, 80-81; 26 szam, pp. 74, 76-77, 80-81; 27 szam, pp. 29-32; Leonid Gibianskij, "Le trattative segrete sovietico-jugoslave e la repressione della rivoluzione ungherese del 1956," *Storia Contemporanea* (Roma), 1994, no. 1, pp. 57-82. I touched on this problem briefly in: Leonid Ja. Gibianski, Witali, Ju. Afiani, Aleksandr S. Stykalin, "Zur sowjetischen Außenpolitik im Herbst 1956," in Inge Kircheisen, ed., *Tauwetter ohne Frühling: Das Jahr 1956 im Spiegel blockinterner Wandlungen und internationaler Krisen* (Berlin, 1995), pp. 42-44.

⁵ Of the most essential publications of documents, see: "Hungary, April-October 1956: Information of Iu.V. Andropov, A.I. Mikoian, and M.A. Suslov from Budapest," *Istoricheskii arkhiv* (Moscow), 1993, No. 4, pp. 103-142; "Hungary, October-November 1956: From the archives of the CC CPSU," *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 1993, No. 5, pp. 132-160; "Hungary, November 1956 - August 1957: From the archive of the CC

CPSU," *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 1993, No. 6, pp. 130-144; A "Jelcindosszie": *Szovjet dokumentumok 1956 - rol.* (Budapest, 1993); *Hianyzo lapok 1956 tortenetebol: Dokumentumok a volt SZKP KB leveltarabol* (Budapest, 1993); *Magyar-jugoszlav kapcsolatok 1956: Az allami- es partkapcsolatok rendezese, az oktoberi felkeles, a Nagy Imre-csoport sorsa.* *Dokumentumok* (Budapest, 1995); "How the 'Hungarian issues' were resolved: Working notes of the meetings of the Presidium of the CC CPSU, July-November 1956," *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 1996, No. 2, pp. 73-104 and No. 3, pp. 87-121. For an English translation, commentary, and annotation of the CC CPSU Presidium meetings on the 1956 Hungarian (and Polish) crises, see Mark Kramer, "Special Feature: New Evidence on Soviet Decision-Making and the 1956 Polish and Hungarian Crises" and Mark Kramer, trans. and annot., "The 'Malin Notes' on the Crises in Hungary and Poland, 1956," in *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, nos. 8-9 (Winter 1996/1997), pp. 358-384, 385-410.

⁶ In Moscow I researched documents in the former archive of the CC CPSU, now the Center for the Storage of Contemporary Documentation (henceforward TsKhSD); in Belgrade, I worked in the former archive of the CC of the Union of Communists of Yugoslavia, which now is a fond in the collection of the Archive of Yugoslavia (Arhiv Jugoslavije [henceforward - AJ], f. 507), and in the archive of the former united secretariat on Yugoslav foreign affairs (Arhiva Saveznog sekretarijata za inostrane poslove, Politicka arhiva [henceforward ASSIP-PA]). I also used xerox copies of some archival materials kindly provided by my colleagues from the Institute of Slavic Studies and Balkanists of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Vyacheslav Sereda and Aleksandr Stykalin, the latter of which I also thank for his help in translating documents from Hungarian.

⁷ See footnote 5.

⁸ For the transcript of this meeting of the CC CPSU Presidium, see "How the 'Hungarian issues' were solved," *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 1996, No. 2, pp. 82-83. For the discussion at the meetings of the CC CPSU Presidium on 28-31 October on the issue of whether to resort to a repeat operation by Soviet troops or to refrain from this, see *ibid.*, pp. 88-95, 97-102; No. 3, pp. 87, 90. The working notes of the said meetings confirm the circumstance mentioned in Khrushchev's memoirs, that the discussion of this issue in the CC CPSU Presidium was conducted in close connection with the negotiations between the Soviet leadership and the delegation of the CC of the Communist Party of China (CPC), which was in Moscow from 23-31 October to examine the events in Poland and Hungary (see: "Memoirs of Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev," *Voprosy istorii*, 1992, No. 11-12, pp. 83-84). In keeping with the data published in recent years in China, on 30 October 1956, the Chinese Politburo telegraphed a message to the delegation in Moscow to transmit Beijing's opinion to the Soviet leadership, that the Soviet troops should not be withdrawn from Hungary and should support communist power in that country. On 31 October, the Chinese delegation informed Khrushchev about this; see Chen Jian, "Beijing and the Hungarian Crisis of 1956," paper presented to the International Conference "Hungary and the World, 1956: The New Archival Evidence," Budapest, 26-29 September 1996, organized by the National Security Archive, the Institute for the History of the

1956 Hungarian Revolution, and the Cold War International History Project.

9 "Hungary, October-November 1956," p. 146.

10 "Memoirs of Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev," *Voprosy istorii*, 1994, No. 5 (hereafter - *Khrushchev's Memoirs*), pp 75-76; "How the 'Hungarian issues' were resolved," *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 1996, No. 3, p. 92.

11 On 31 October in the Soviet embassy in Belgrade, a telegram confirmed by the CC CPSU was sent from Moscow, in which Khrushchev proposed a secret meeting with Tito at any location in Yugoslavia or the USSR "in connection with the situation which had arisen in Hungary." On the same day, Moscow was informed in a telephonogram from the embassy that Tito agreed to a meeting and would prefer to conduct it in his residence on the island of Brioni, where he was then residing. See "Hungary, October-November 1956," p. 146; "How the 'Hungarian issues' were resolved," *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 1996, No. 3, p. 91.

12 *Khrushchev's Memoirs*, p. 77.

13 Micunovic, *Mosckovske godine*, pp. 157, 164.

14 AJ, f. 507, CK SKJ, IX, 119/I-91 (st. sign. 1-1/63), p. 4.

15 *Khrushchev's Memoirs*, p. 77; Micunovic, *Mosckovske godine*, pp. 158-159.

16 AJ, F. 507, CK SKJ, IX, 119/I-78, l. 2; 119-95, l. 7-8, TsKhSD, f. 89, per. 45, dok. 84, p. 18.

17 *Khrushchev's Memoirs*, p. 77; Micunovic, *Mosckovske godine*, p. 159.

18 TsKhSD, f. 89, per. 45, dok. 84, s. 18; AJ, F. 507, CK SKJ, IX, 119/I-95, l. 61; Micunovic, *Mosckovske godine*, pp. 159-160.

19 *Khrushchev's Memoirs*, pp. 77, 78; Micunovic, *Mosckovske godine*, pp. 159-161; AJ, F. 507, CK SKJ, IX, 119/I-78, l. 3.

20 Micunovic, *Mosckovske godine*, pp. 160-161.

21 AJ, F. 507, CK SKJ, IX, 119/I-77, l. 1; 119/I-78, l. 2-3; 119/I-92 (st. sign. 1-I/64), l. 3; TsKhSD, f. 89, per. 45, dok. 83, p. 4.

22 Gibianskij, *Magarorsag, 1956...* - Koztarsasag, 1992, 25 szam, p. 81.

23 See footnotes 53 and 54.

24 AJ, f. 507, CK SKJ, III/67.

25 AJ, f. 507, CK SKJ, IX, 119/I-78, l. 3; 119/I-95, l. 14, 64-65; TsKhSD, f. 89, per. 45, dok. 84, p. 21; "Hungary, October-November, 1956," p. 149.

26 *Magyar-jugoszlav kapcsolatok 1956*, p. 159.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 160. See Cable from Firiubin to Soviet Foreign Ministry, 4 November 1956, printed below.

28 "Hungary, October-November 1956," p. 119. Printed below.

29 *Magyar-jugoszlav kapcsolatok 1956*, pp. 160-161.

30 "Hungary, October-November 1956," pp. 149-150.

31 AJ, f. 507, CK SKJ, IX, 119/I-76.

32 About this telegram, see AJ, f. 507, CD SKJ, IX, 119/I-77, l. 1; Micunovic, *Mosckovske godine*, pp. 171-174.

33 AJ, f. 507, CK SKJ, IX, 119/I-77, ll. 1-4.

34 "Hungary, October-November 1956," pp. 151-153.

35 AJ, f. 507, CK SKJ, IX, 119/I-78, ll. 1-7. Printed below.

36 *Magyar-jugoszlav kapcsolatok 1956*, p. 190.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 191.

38 On the Soviet reply, see *ibid.*, pp. 194, 210; TsKhSD, f. 89, op. 2, d. 3, ll. 4-5; Micunovic, *Mosckovske godine*, p. 178; AJ, f. 507, CK SKJ, IX, 119/I-80 (st. sign. 1-I/57), l. 3.

39 TsKhSD, f. 89, op. 2, d. 3, ll. 4-5; published in Hungarian in *Magyar-jugoszlav kapcsolatok 1956*, pp. 210-211.

40 Nagy demonstrated a decisive rejection of compromise with the Kadar government and the Soviet side, and in relation to sending him to Romania, gave a categorical refusal to the Romanian representative, Walter Roman, who visited him ten days later. *Magyar-jugoszlav kapcsolatok 1956*, pp. 195, 285-286.

41 *Ibid.*, pp. 192-193, 210; TsKhSD, f. 89, op. 2, d. 3, ll. 4-5.

42 *Magyar-jugoszlav kapcsolatok 1956*, pp. 196-203, 230-232.

43 *Ibid.*, pp. 233-240; TsKhSD, f. 89, op. 2, d. 5, ll. 3-4.

44 On these negotiations, see *Magyar-jugoszlav kapcsolatok 1956*, pp. 241-257, 259-275.

45 Micunovic, *Mosckovske godine*, pp. 184-191, 195-199, 200-201.

46 TsKhSD, f. 89, op. 2, d. 5, l. 4; *ibid.*, d. 3, l. 11.

47 *Ibid.*, d. 5, ll. 19-26.

48 AJ, f. 507, CK SKJ, IX, 119/I-83; TsKhSD, f. 89, op. 2, d. 4, ll. 24-33. See *CWIHP Electronic Bulletin*.

49 The available documents so far do not permit an explanation of the extent to which differences inside the Yugoslav leadership might have played a role here.

50 Obviously, the struggle within the CC CPSU Presidium is also expressed here. Its more conservative members, above all Molotov and Kaganovich, in the course of the suppression of the Hungarian revolution, spoke against any even purely declarative criticism of the Rakosi regime by Kadar, and in reply to the objections of Khrushchev and a series of other officials in the Soviet leadership, scared them with the danger of the Kadar government's slide on "the Yugoslav path." See "How the 'Hungarian issues' were resolved," *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 1996, No. 3, pp. 111-112, 114-117.

51 The Soviet letter of 10 January 1957, signed by Khrushchev, is in TsKhSD, f. 39, per. 45, dok. 83; AJ, f. 507, CK SKJ, IX, 119/I-92. The Yugoslav response of 1 February 1957, signed by Tito, is in AJ, f. 507, CK SKJ, IX, 119/I-95, l. 1-35, 58-76, and TsKhSD, f. 89, per. 45, dok. 84. See *CWIHP Electronic Bulletin*.