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AMERICAN AND BRITISH DIPLOMATS IN YUGOSLAVIA ON HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION OF 1956

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Based on the diplomatic reports of US representatives in Belgrade and Zagreb, as well as the British diplomatic cables and newspaper articles to which foreign diplomats are referring, the article gives a reconstruction of the Yugoslav government officials' day-by-day reaction to the events in Hungary from October and November 1956. It shows pragmatic adaptation in the Yugoslav stance on the "October Revolution" in Hungary in 1956, the Yugoslav party giving US diplomats excuses for their choices, the commentary in Washington.

Key words: Hungary 1956, Mađarska 1956, Imre Nagy, James Riddleberger, Josip Broz Tito, Wladislaw Gomulka, Poland 1956, self-management

1. YUGOSLAV IDEOLOGICAL ZENITH AND IDEOLOGICAL FERMENTATION OF THE BLOC

Nikita Khrushchev's journey to Yugoslavia in 1955 was the most important journey he took for the world communist movement or, at least, they saw it like that in Belgrade. The Soviet leader's arrival in May 1955, after Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito declined to travel to Moscow, was reported in the Yugoslav media as a great diplomatic success, and rightly so. Journalists compared this to the newly signed Austrian State Treaty and the meeting of Asian and African states' representatives in Bandung¹. The journey of Soviet highest officials to Belgrade came as a great

1 NARA, RG 59, Records of the Department of State Internal Affairs of Yugoslavia 1955–1959, Decimal File 768, Roll no. 4; 768.00/May Day/5.655, May Day in Belgrade, 1955.

surprise to everyone. The daughter of Nikolai Bulganin, the Premier of the Soviet Union, who was travelling with Khrushchev, asked her father why he would have travelled to this fascist country, she had been hearing so many bad things about on the radio for years.² Just about a year later, it was clear that “the Soviet Canossa” was much more local in its range, important only for bilateral relations, and more of a confirmation of the established status after 1948 than a real “game changer”.

As reported by the Second Secretary of the US Embassy, J. C. Ausland, the May Day celebration of 1955, was pompous but with little enthusiasm. As opposed to the ratio of weapons shown in 1954 that was 80:20%, it was only 60:40% in favor of the US armament, in 1955. Yugoslavia was changing. There were more paintings of the classics of Marxism than previous years. The new allies in the Balkan Pact, the Greeks and Turks, were praised, but also the Burmese and Indians. It was the way Yugoslavia positioned itself between the two blocs.³ The American diplomat finished his report with irony: “When the parade was over, Tito left the tribunal with a wave to the populace, got into his shiny, black Rolls Royce and – under the banner of the hammer and sickle – drove away”.⁴ The thing that the May Day parade showed was the restoration of relations with Moscow. In May 1955, Khrushchev expected that his visit would have been enough for Tito to return to the arms of the USSR and correct his predecessor’s bad politics that way. The Eastern Bloc had to be strengthened and relaxed, and Yugoslavia had to be brought back to its place. The journey to Asia was supposed to expand the influence of the Kremlin outside the “traditional”, European area. At the end of the year, Khrushchev travelled to Burma, India and Afghanistan. At the beginning of December 1955, Yugoslav diplomats in Rangoon expected the arrival of the Soviet delegation with great interest. A few months earlier the encounter could have been uneasy. Now, Khrushchev walked to the table of four Yugoslavs. At the Yugoslav table, the over-

2 Americans wondered the same. In a comprehensive report of February 1956 about major political trends in Yugoslavia during 1955, US diplomats said: “The most interesting and perhaps the most important aspect of Yugoslav policy during 1955 was the regime’s experiment in cooperation with men who only a short time ago were condemning it as fascist.” (Dragović 2000, 12)

NARA, RG59, LOT 66 D487, PPS Office Files 1956; F780007-0724, Memorandum of Conversation, June 29th, 1956, Call of Yugoslav Ambassador on Secretary.

3 NARA, RG 59, Records of the Department of State Internal Affairs of Yugoslavia 1955–1959, Decimal File 768, Roll no. 4; 768.00/May Day/5.655, May Day in Belgrade, 1955.

4 NARA, RG 59, Records of the Department of State Internal Affairs of Yugoslavia 1955–1959, Decimal File 768, Roll no. 4; 768.00/May Day/5.655, May Day in Belgrade, 1955.

weight General Secretary of the CPSU was surrounded by two tall men: a giant military envoy, Ilija Radaković, and Chargé d’Affaires, Miroslav Kreačić. Then he looked at their young, elegant wives and said: "Ah, you, Yugoslavs, are very strange people." (Jakovina 2002) What was important for the Yugoslavs, was to break the isolation from the East, open economic cooperation, reduce the dependence on the West, and that the different paths to socialism become, if possible, the politics of all the countries of the Bloc.

It was clear that things were changing, but that still wasn't the definite moment of realization that the Kremlin had really changed their stance on Stalin and everything that happened at the center of the communist movement. A true change happened in Moscow on February 25th in 1956, on the last day of the 20th Congress of the CPSU. Although many people in Yugoslavia probably mostly remembered the part of Khrushchev speech about Tito⁵, the blow delivered on the cult of personality and the condemnation of Stalin had dramatic consequences. Yugoslavia was a test case, a place in the speech that was supposed to serve as an example of Stalin's disgraceful role in international relations. Shortly after the Moscow surprise, US Ambassador in Belgrade, James Riddleberger, (in Belgrade from the summer of 1953 to January 1958) reported that the Yugoslavs spoke and were not entirely sure how to rate the 20th Congress of the CPSU, but they all considered it positive. The cult of personality was condemned and different paths to socialism were recognized, and with that Moscow came as close to Tito as possible.⁶ Khrushchev also mentioned parliamentary methods in achieving socialism. It was interpreted by US diplomats, who had not yet allowed party relations to be established, to be a step in the right direction.

A few weeks later, the Yugoslav government had a far clearer view of the new circumstances. "We should be supportive of Khrushchev's group," said Tito

5 "It would be enough for me to raise my little finger- and Tito would be gone. He would fall from power." We paid a high price for that "raise of his small finger". That statement reflected Stalin's grandiosity mania, but that was the way he did things... But that did not happen to Tito. It didn't matter how high he raised not only his little finger, but everything else, Tito did not fall. Why? The reason was that, in this case of disagreements with the Yugoslav comrades, Tito had a country and a people who had learnt a difficult lesson of struggle for freedom and independence, a people who gave support to their leaders."(Hruščov 1970,70)

6 NARA, Records of the Department of State, Internal Affairs of Yugoslavia 1955–1959, Decimal File 768; .00/1-355 to .00/9-2656; Roll no. 1; 768.00/2-2456; Confidential, Secretary of State; Riddleberger, February 24th, 1956.

at the Executive Committee of the CC LCY Session at the beginning of April, 1956. "The reputation of Yugoslavia in the world today demands greater activity in our foreign policy."⁷ Reservation towards Moscow was no longer desirable; those fighting "bureaucratic Stalinist elements" needed help. Even more needed to be done with Burma and Egypt. The US military aid had to be cancelled. The changes in the "eastern countries", Bulgaria and Hungary, had to be monitored. The relations with them were well developed, "although there was some wavering there". "Strengthening of the socialist forces doesn't happen along the bloc line. This does not mean that we would calmly observe strengthening of the antisocialist forces. The Russians have a narrow view of India and Burma, they want to reduce them to mere satellites of theirs, and that is how they sow the seed of distrust in these countries." Everything that Tito said, along with the others at the meeting, basically traced or suggested the way Yugoslavia was supposed to act internationally in the upcoming months. It also showed how great the differences were in relation to Moscow, but also how big were the ambitions of Belgrade. The State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Koča Popović, said that Yugoslavia was at its peak, it was the "forerunner of these new relations", the changes.⁸ Popović emphasized that it was important to stay out of the blocs, because any meddling of neutral forces in the bastion of socialism was weakening the world process (Jakovina 2009, 459–480). At the same session, Edvard Kardelj underlined that "Eastern Europe is increasingly affected by the fear of Stalinism and it needs help." Yugoslavia was not included in the "the Russian socialist bastion", but it was included in the "socialist bastion of the whole world". The firm commitment to socialism in the Yugoslav way and the sense of influence on the world events- which was a fact, given the fierce campaign that Yugoslavia was exposed to- determined the changes in the next few months. Never modest, they were now convinced in Yugoslavia that they were actively "co-creating" the policies of the great powers.

Next, a proposal followed by the Supreme Council for the exchange of parliamentary delegations' visits, as a continuation of good relations growth. A Yugoslav contact in the State Secretariat for Foreign Affairs commented that it would be hard to refuse this, when such visits to western parliaments occurred regularly. Only after a long wait, on April 14th, did Moša Pijade respond to the offer of Feb-

7 AJ, CK SKJ, Zapisnik sa sednice IK CK SKJ održane na Brionima. 2. april 1956.

46 8 AJ, CK SKJ, Zapisnik sa sednice IK CK SKJ održane na Brionima. 2. april 1956.

ruary 9th, 1955. This was an indication that there were still some uncertainties in Belgrade.⁹ Then, the Hungarians requested the same, followed by the others from Eastern Europe. Journalists and diplomats at the US embassy, in Knez Miloš St., knew what kind of impression a large number of such visits could have created in public, especially in the West. The usual media practice was to report extensively and in detail, but they did not find that the proposal should have been removed.¹⁰ Finally, it was an easier way to present the Yugoslav views to their politicians and encourage the positions they might have had in common.

The situation intensified. The Polish authorities released Władysław Gomułka from custody in April 1956, and then invited him to be a part of the Government. This Titoist had two conditions: a high position in the party, and the dismissal of the Defense Minister and the Marshal of the Soviet Union, Rokossovsky. Not before October 19th did the Polish United Workers' Party (hereinafter: PUWP) do what was expected. First, there were protests in Poznań on June 28th, 1956. By the tone in newspapers' reports, American diplomats were clear that the Yugoslavs' expectations and wishes for realization of the satellite states' freedom were limited.¹¹ Yugoslavia condemned the Polish authorities and former Stalinists, but also the "reactionary elements" that fought for collapse of socialism. The Yugoslav media editorials expressed no doubt that there was a foreign element involved, but then denied such Soviet accusations by putting articles from US sources in the spotlight. It was clear to Belgrade authorities that the demands were not only economic; there was also a demand for democratization (Kemp-Welch 2008, 92). On Saturday, October 20th, at the Central Committee of the PUWP, Gomułka said that there was more than one path to socialism. "There is the Soviet path, there is the Yugoslav path, but there are other paths too. The Polish people will defend itself by any means and will not move from the road of democratization", claimed the new Polish leader (Eisenhower 1965, 59). Demonstrations in support of the Hungarians, held in front of the Central Committee of the PUWP, the So-

9 NARA, RG59, Records of the Department of State Internal Affairs of Yugoslavia 1955–1959, Decimal File 768, Rool no. 4; 768.00W/4-1555.

10 NARA, RG59, General Record of the Department of State, Bureau of European Affairs, Office of East European Affairs; Khrushchev's Trip to Yugoslavia, No. 2007 225/63, September 25th, 1963.

11 NARA, RG59, Records of the Department of State Internal Affairs of Yugoslavia 1955–1959, Decimal File z68, Rool no. 4; 768.00(W)/7-656, Joint Weeka; Oliver M. Marcy, First Secretary of Embassy.

viet Embassy and a part of the old royal castle, were declared the beginning of the Warsaw-Budapest-Belgrade alliance (Kemp-Welch 2008, 104).

Matyas Rakosi, a Hungarian, Stalinist leader, marked the protests in Poznan, at the end of June, as an “imperialist provocation”. He said that the Americans sent parachutists to cause disorder, and he temporarily retained his position (Swain and Swain 1945, 97). The Soviets were aware that dissatisfaction was huge, but it temporarily slowed down Khrushchev’s course. The Hungarian workers rebelled and went into solidarity strikes. The “Petofi” circle, created by the government as a youth forum, was banned after a long session on June 27th, when there was a discussion about the freedom of the press and Imre Nagy, the Prime Minister from 1953 to 1955, was called to return to the party. Mikoyan arrived in Budapest from Moscow and demanded that Rakosi finally step down, which was announced on July 18th. Ernő Gerő became the head of the Hungarian Workers’ Party, which is barely a step in a satisfactory direction. Mikoyan went to Belgrade on vacation. The Hungarians believed that Rakosi’s dismissal happened on Tito’s request, and that after the appointment of Ernő Gerő, Mikoyan went to report to Tito (Ivanji 1956, 56, 58, 67–68). He returned to Budapest on July 21st. Gerő complained to Mikoyan that the improvement of relations with Yugoslavia would be difficult, that the opponents of the party took over the Yugoslav model of socialism development, and that the “Yugoslav Agency” collaborated with Hungarian intellectuals. After Yugoslav media openly called for Nagy’s return to the party on August 24th, Gerő was convinced that Belgrade was deeply involved in all the events (Swain and Swain 1945, 99).

The year of 1956 was in many ways crucial to Yugoslav foreign policy, but also to Eastern Europe. Tito signed the Moscow Declaration in Moscow in June, accepting the concept of “different paths to socialism”, one of the values Belgrade never forgot or missed a chance to emphasize (Mićunović 1977, 138–141). The return visit to the USSR, as was reported by US diplomats, did not make a satellite country from Yugoslavia, but it made it an ally, primarily an ideological one.¹² Politically, Yugoslavia was still between the blocs. Tito denied that he had ever said that the two countries would marsh shoulder to shoulder in a future war. Tito’s triumphal visit also revealed to the Yugoslav side some of the troubling elements

12 RG59, LOT 66 D487, PPS Office Files 1956; F780007-0723, June 22nd, 1956, Tito's Trip to the USSR. (... left Yugoslavia a fellow-traveller rather than a committed member of the Soviet bloc).

in the CPSU hierarchy, particularly the “prolonged existence and strength of Stalinist elements”.¹³ Leo Mates, the Yugoslav ambassador to the United States, told Secretary of State Dulles, on June 29th, 1956, that the visit strengthened Yugoslavia’s independent position, but that Tito’s impression was also that more and more satellites countries have been becoming more independent.¹⁴ It didn’t mean that independence would be anti-Soviet, but Dulles didn’t expect that. The problem didn’t lie with the Soviet borders or with regimes such as Finland or Yugoslavia. Dulles claimed that the problem was in non-free regimes, as demonstrated by the uprising in Poland (in Poznan in June 1956). It was evident in the low standard of living in Hungary, and in Czechoslovakia before coming under the Soviet rule. Tito showed, as Dulles said, that the countries in that area should be independent. Tito and Dulles spoke alone on Brijuni in 1955, anticipating trends that began to intensify.¹⁵

In the late summer of 1956, the Yugoslav parliamentary delegation travelled to Czechoslovakia. On the same day, September 3rd 1956, the Polish Sejm delegation visited Belgrade. A day later, a trade union delegation headed by Đuro Salaj travelled to Bucharest.¹⁶ Newspapers were filled with news of arrival of the heads of the Greek Orthodox Church, the Moscow Soviet, the Greek royal couple, Israeli parliamentarians, the head of the Norwegian Workers’ Party visit, the Bulgarian parliamentary delegation’s visit, Sukarno’s visit to Yugoslavia, the visit of Federal People’s Assembly delegation, headed by Moše Pijade, to the Federal Republic of Germany etc. Much of the news in autumn was about the Suez crisis.¹⁷ In the up-

13 NARA, RG34, Records of the Department of State Internal Affairs fo Yugoslavia 1955–1959, Decimal File 768, 00/9-2756 to 00/1-2758, Rool no. 2, 768.00/10-2256, Memorandum of Conversation between Ilija Jukić, former Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs in pre- War Yu and an Embbassy Officer in Rome, October 22nd, 1956.

14 NARA, RG59, LOT 66 D487, PPS Office Files 1956; F780007-0724, Memorandum of Conversation, June 29, 1956, Call of Yugoslav Ambassador on Secretary.

15 Dwight Eisenhower wrote about this in his response to Tito on November 12th, 1956. Jakovina 2003.

16 *Borba*, 4.9.1956.; We sincerely wish that our visit serves to further strengthen the trust between the peoples of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia; Polish Sejm delegation arrived in Belgrade; *Borba*, 5.9.1956.; Our union delegation led by Đuro Salaj arrived in Bucharest.

17 *Borba*, 12.9.1956; Welcome! Selamat datang!; 18.9.1956. A joint Yugoslav-Indonesian statement was signed, the Federal People’s Assembly delegation travels to the Federal Republic of Germany on September 25th; *Borba* 24.9.1956. A formal luncheon in the Federal People’s Assembly was held in honour of Bulgaria’s parliamentary delegation;

coming weeks, Suez crisis took the spotlight and Koča Popović travelled to New York to UN Security Council Meeting.

The Yugoslav media reported on September 20th that Nikita Khrushchev had arrived in Belgrade for a short vacation.¹⁸ That was the second meeting of Khrushchev and Tito in 1956. Tito's guest visited Belje, Kopar, Brijuni, Zagreb, where the Zagreb Fair remained open for an additional day, and he launched the ship called "Uljanik".¹⁹ Yugoslav newspapers briefly reported that "Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev and President Tito attended the performance of the Indian Art Ensemble, together with the Deputy Prime Minister of India, Anil Chanda, who was also visiting Yugoslavia". The "Dances and Songs of the People of India" in the Pula National Theater was a gathering place for the Croatian party and government officials.²⁰ Previously, on September 21st, *Politika* newspapers had announced that the Indian Ensemble was to have concerts at the National Theater in Belgrade on September 24th and 25th, and then move on to Novi Sad, Zagreb and Ljubljana, but the plan was changed.²¹ On September 24th, *Borba* newspapers reported that the ensemble had arrived and had been welcomed in Belgrade.²² What remained unclear to the reader was the decision to send the ensemble to Pula, on a "royal command". "Norway would become a republic overnight" commented a Norwegian minister. "The British ambassador said that in case something similar had happened in Britain, it would have created a republican party overnight".²³ US diplomatic sources commented the concert in Pula ironically, but the visit of the General Secretary of CPSU to Yugoslavia was regarded as a way to "ease the

Borba, 10.10.1956. President Tito had an intimate dinner with the Greek royal couple; the delegation of the Federal People's Assembly arrived in Warsaw.

18 *Borba* 20.9.1956; Nikita Khrushchev arrived in Belgrade; *Politika* 20.9.1956. Nikita Khrushchev arrived in Belgrade.

19 *Borba* 24.9.1956; Khrushchev i president Tito attended the launch of the ship called „Uljanik“.

20 *Borba*; 27.9.1956. N.S. Khrushchev i president Tito arrived in Belgrade; *Politika*, 26.9.1956, „N.S. Khrushchev i president Tito saw the performance "Dances and Songs of the People of India". The symbolism of movement of the Indian Art Ensemble; BMD (article reports on the performance, but they don't say that „the National Theatre“ was actually in Pula).

21 *Politika*, 21.9.1956. Indian classical songs and dances in our theatres.

22 *Politika*, 24.9.1956. Indian cultural delegation arrived.

23 NARA, RG 59, Records of the Department of State Internal Affairs of Yugoslavia 1955–1959, Decimal File 768, 00/5-759 (cont) to 00/(W)/10-1956, Roll no. 4; 768.00(W)/9-2156. Joint Weeka No. 38.

difficulties” between Moscow and Belgrade, related to “the question of how much autonomy would the USSR allow to the European communist parties, especially in the satellite countries.”²⁴ It seemed that the Yugoslavs encouraged the Italian communist leader Togliatti to question “polycentrism” in communist parties, and moreover, the fact that the Soviets seemed to quickly reintroduce discipline and criticize “national communism”, and demand that “the Yugoslav influence in the satellite countries be disabled”. It was first learned by the British in Budapest, and then confirmed by the Indian ambassador in Belgrade that the Soviets issued a warning that the CPSU, rather than the LCY, was to serve as a model.²⁵ Yugoslav diplomats also spoke about this to their US colleagues, stressing that “Belgrade finds it is necessary to re-examine its views on Soviet moves in Eastern Europe”.

Much more serious news was that Tito and his guest, immediately after that tour in Yugoslavia, travelled to the USSR on a “vacation”. The newspapers didn’t bring the news with much excitement. “President Tito and Nikita Khrushchev travelled to the USSR”; “President Tito travelled to the USSR”, *Politika* and *Borba* reported on September 28th. “It is clear now that, whatever the difficulties in the USSR and the satellite countries, Tito now plays an important role, a role which, at this moment, we cannot assess, and such that can lead to profound changes in the Yugoslav-Soviet and Yugoslav-Western countries relations”, commented US diplomats.²⁶ In addition to the meeting and hunting with the Soviets, Tito surprisingly met with the new Hungarian leader Ernő Gerő, who replaced Matyas Rakosi on July 18th, 1956. “President of the SFRY J. B. Tito and his wife arrived this morning in the summer house where the First Secretary of the Central Committee of CPSU Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev was resting. The First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party Ernő Gerő, also on a holiday in the Crimea, arrived there too. They walked along the seashore, where they met with the citizens recovering in the sanatorium “Livadija”²⁷...” *Politika* only added that Gerő took a walk to the nearby hill with Tito and Khrushchev, but that was all the news about him.²⁸ Nobody wrote about this meeting anymore. John Foster Dulles, whose communication with Belgrade was intensified, said on October 2nd

24 Khrushchev's Trip to Yugoslavia, No. 2007 225/63, September 25th, 1956.

25 Khrushchev's Trip to Yugoslavia, No. 2007 225/63, September 25th, 1956.

26 NARA, September 27th, 1956, Tito's Sudden visit to Russia, (Mr. Elbrich).

27 *Borba*. 1.10.1956, President Tito visited Khrushchev's summer house on Jalta.

28 *Politika*, 2.10.1956, President Tito visited Khrushchev's summer house.

at the press conference in the State Department, that the US does not consider Tito's visit to the USSR a sign of a change in the "general line of politics" of the SFRY.²⁹ At a later date, the spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Branko Drašković, said that Tito's visit to Crimea was private.

The changes in some camps of the Bloc continued to accelerate. In the summer of 1956, the commander of the Soviet units in Hungary, Yevgeni Malashenko, reported that hardly anyone came to the concerts of Soviet orchestras in Székesfehérvár anymore, which would have been common before. The mood among the people also changed (Sebestyen 2006, 101). László Rajk was buried again in Budapest. The speeches held at the funeral showed "determination and active efforts of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (hereinafter: HSWP) and the government to sweep up the remnants of the recent past", so they were not to be considered very significant.³⁰ The national funeral of the "Titoists", held on October 6th, exactly on the day of execution of 13 Hungarian generals who rebelled against the Habsburg Monarchy in 1849, contributed to the seriousness of the situation, but also sent a message to Belgrade that the relations should be improved (Gough 2006, 75; Kemp-Welch 2008, 107, Gati 2006, 136. After the funeral, they visited a monument to Stalin and then the Yugoslav embassy, protesting in front of the first one and cheering Tito and the Yugoslav path to socialism at the latter one (Kemp-Welch 2008, 107). The first interview with the widow was published by Zagreb's newspapers *Vjesnik* (Zelmanović 1956, 193–200)³¹. *Borba* reported on October 15th that the decision to exclude Imra Nagy from the HSWP was annulled. His mistakes, as big as they were, were not enough to justify the exclusion. More of an impact had "the personal bias of comrade Rakosi". Nagy warned that the reasons why this happened and the disagreement within the party are neither necessary nor welcome. However, he would do everything to restore order within the party, in accordance with his "Marxist-Leninist beliefs and principles, as well as with

29 *Borba*, 4.10.1956. Minister Dulles on President Tito's visit to USSR; *Politika* 3.10.1956., Dulles said there were no changes in Yugoslav's politics.

30 *Borba*, 13.10.1956, Tito-Kruschov meeting was mutually wanted and useful for the politics of active coexistence.

31 *Borba*, 7.10.1956. The bodies of László Rajk and his comrades, executed in 1949 and 1950, were buried yesterday; Gavro Altman.

communist and human moral". After all, he agreed with the party line in the summer of 1953.³²

2. YUGOSLAVIA AND HUNGARIAN OCTOBER REVOLUTION:

Yugoslavia had a role in the Bloc, but some countries hardly knew much about what was happening in Yugoslavia. The language barrier was a big one and a decade of anti-Slavic propaganda was intensified in Rakosi's time. The Hungarians knew that Yugoslavia was under attack by their Stalinist leaders, they knew about their "self-management", knew that Belgrade did not obey Moscow, and that was enough to know. The Americans reported that the Yugoslav officials thought that Tito had long felt that the events in Hungary where Titoism was mentioned were commendable, but they were unhappy with the growing deflection from "liberalism" that depraved Marxism.³³ Many people in Yugoslavia found the fact that one Stalinist was replaced by his own right hand stupid and responsible for the later crisis.

Ernö Gerö and the Hungarian delegation historically visited Yugoslavia and stayed a long time. Ferenc Münnich, the previous Hungarian ambassador in Moscow, was also a part of the delegation and he handed credentials to Tito on October 11th.³⁴ Münnich had served as ambassador to Moscow before he was sent to Belgrade and he was, as described by a British colleague of his, "a seemingly pleasant old chap". He was always friendly, with a bit cynical sense of humor, more talkative than most ambassadors of satellite countries, and he spoke German and Russian well. However, he never talked about anything seriously, never expressed any opinion of his own. The old cynic "would be a great puppet", but there was no way he could make a "serious statesman or popular leader".³⁵ The British diplomats

32 *Borba*, 15.10.1956. The decision to exclude Imra Nagy from the HSWP was annulled in the autumn of 1955.

33 NARA, Records of the Department of State, Internal Affairs of Hungary 1955–1959, Decimal File 764, 00/8-1056 to 00/11-356, Rool no. 3, 764.00/10-156, Budapest.

34 *Borba*, 12.10.1956. President Tito received credentials from ambassadors of Sweden, Hungary and Finland's delegate.

35 FO 371/122399, Northern Department, Sir W.G. Hayter, Moscow to Mr. Reilly, 23rd Nov 1956, Comments on Ferenc Münnich, former Hungarian Ambassador in Moscow who is playing a prominent part in the Kadar Government, NH 10110/793.

guessed that Münnich belonged to a group of “old communists”, the Spanish Civil War fighters, led by László Rajk’s widow, who were now linked to Nagy supporters, a nationalist and a more pragmatic group of communists.³⁶ The interviews of the leading politicians were considered satisfactory for the Yugoslavs, with an emphasis on “self-management and democracy”.³⁷

After the new delegation from Romania arrived and there were no more planned meetings with Tito (since Ranković was the one to attend the final meeting on October 22nd), Gerö did not seem to be afraid of the events in Hungary anymore. He left Yugoslavia for Budapest on October 22nd, on the same day when hundreds of students gathered at the Budapest University of Technology and started writing a list of requests, until someone proposed they organized a protest the next day in support of the Polish people and praising General Bem, a Polish hero of the 1848. The students wrote a manifesto with 16 requests, one of which was for the withdrawal of Soviet forces. After arriving in Budapest, Gerö gave an optimistic statement about reunifying the socialist bloc. The Yugoslav declaration wasn’t published before October 24th, only after Hungary had already changed. Before that, there were protests, Gerö was deposed, a monument to Stalin was demolished, and the Soviets intervened for the first time. It was the beginning of the Hungarian “October Revolution”. Imre Nagy addressed the people gathered in front of the Parliament, and, as usual, he didn’t speak well. *Borba* reported the event in their last pages along with Gerö’s earlier speech upon arriving in Budapest.³⁸

On the evening of October 24th, 1956, Khrushchev and Bulganin attended an exhibition opening of Belgian masters’ paintings. US Ambassador Charles Bohlen could not talk to either of them. He wrote to Washington that they seemed even more somber and gloomy than before. Veljko Mićunović, the Yugoslav ambassador, came to him later and quite nervously asked if there were any news from Budapest. As Mićunović heard from Tanjug’s correspondent, the Soviet soldiers

36 FO 371/122376, Northern Department, Mr Fry to Mr. T. Brimelow, Esq, OBE, Foreign Office, Budapest, NH 10110/78, Reports on Manoeuvrings for power with the communist Party in Hungary since the fall of Rakossi, British Legation , Budapest, October 12th, 1956.

37 FO 371/122376, Northern Department, Mr Fry to Mr. T. Brimelow, Esq, OBE, Foreign Office, Budapest, NH 10110/78, Reports on Manoeuvrings for power with the communist Party in Hungary since the fall of Rakossi, British Legation , Budapest, October 12th, 1956; *Borba/Politika*, 23.10.1956. The world today; the Eighth Plenum of the CC of the PUWP

54 | 38 *Borba*, 24.10.1956. Events in Budapest; The meetings in Yugoslavia were the crossroads.

opened fire on the citizens. The situation was completely different from the one in Poland.³⁹

Nagy was appointed Prime Minister on October 25th and János Kádár replaced Gerö. The fighting in the streets did not stop, not even when the new government was created in Budapest. Riddleberger, the US ambassador to SFRY reported that panic among the Yugoslav officials on October 25th, 1956 could have been implicitly confirmed, because Mladen Iveković spoke at the central celebration of UN Day, which was in sharp contrast to Kardelj, who was the main speaker the previous year. The rumor was that everyone else was at the meeting discussing the events in Hungary. However, they did come to the reception at a later point, so the first US diplomat in Yugoslavia spoke with Pijade, Tempo, Velebit, etc. Iveković told him that the connection with the Yugoslav embassy in the Heroes' Square in Budapest was cut all day long, but the American diplomat did not believe him. Ernő Gerö's deposition was not shocking. "Tempo described Gerö as more of a Russians than a Hungarian." Srđa Prica, the acting Secretary of State, similarly talked about Gerö and said that the Yugoslav leadership felt sorry for the action of Soviet forces and the bloodshed. Prica hoped that the western countries would not intervene, despite the Soviet bloodshed, because their insistence on "reactionary and fascist elements" can only give an excuse for the Soviet use of force. Gerö was still "a Stalinist in his heart and limited intellectually." Unlike Gomułka, the Hungarian did not understand the interests and feelings of the masses and his "stubborn and limited view" contributed to the tragedy. "The Yugoslav government hopes that the new leadership will have a better understanding of the real situation" and that both, Gomułka and Nagy would arrange for the withdrawal of Soviet troops.⁴⁰

The events in Warsaw were different. Both Hungarian and Yugoslav flags could have been seen at the gathering of 300,000 Poles.⁴¹ A British diplomat in Belgrade reported that, according to Vladimir Velebit, Srđan Prica and Svetozar

39 NARA, Records of the Department of State, Internal Affairs of Hungary 1955–1959; Decimal 764, 00/8-1056to 00/11-356, Roll no. 3; 764.00/10-1456. (Mocow, October 24th, Bohlen).

40 NARA, Records of the Department of State, Internal Affairs of Hungary 1955–1959; Decimal 764, 00/8-1056to 00/11-356, Rool no. 3; 7664.00/10-2656, Belgrade, October 26th, 1956.

41 NARA, Records of the Department of State, Internal Affairs of Hungary 1955–1959; Decimal 764, 00/8-1056to 00/11-356, Rool no. 3; 764.00/10-256, Riddleberger.

Vukmanović Tempo, the Vice President of Federal Executive Council (hereinafter: FEC), the Yugoslav leadership expected a Titoist regime, like the Gomulka one in Warsaw, to be established in Hungary. However, “Gerö and Nagy” slowed down the transition. Gerö stayed in Yugoslavia a bit too long. “Velebit told me that Gerö was very upset during the last two days and in constant radio-connection with Budapest.” Unlike Gomulka, Nagy did not make careful preparations for taking over power. The Yugoslavs were afraid of the way Nagy would set the order. Gerö was blamed for the Soviet intervention. As Velebit told the British diplomat, Nagy did not seem to be strong enough to handle the situation. It was tragic for the Hungarians, as he said that there had not been strong personalities there.⁴² So it seemed that Nagy was a half-choice, a person Belgrade didn’t count on, or had much confidence in. That was the reason for the not so enthusiastic reaction to Nagy, which had been seen earlier.

As the Americans reported from Rome, the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Gaetano Martino was informed by his ambassador in Belgrade Guidotti, who kept his eye on the Italian Communists’ visit to Yugoslavia, led by Luigi Longo, that Tito was seriously scared because of the Hungarian situation, just as much as he was pleasantly surprised by the development in Poland. All that was happening could have sent the message to the Kremlin that “the encouragement of Titoism is a dangerous policy for the USSR and that those events could ultimately have dramatic consequences to the future of Tito’s relations with Khrushchev and the Kremlin.” The Italians were excited about the news from Budapest, the best to come to the West after the end of the Second World War. As Martino had just finished his meeting with Nehru, he hoped that the Soviet behavior would show New Delhi that there was no point in hoping for anything from Moscow.⁴³

The US analysts reported on October 26th that the Yugoslav media reported the situation in Poland closely and with approval, on “the border with enthusiasm”. What happened in Hungary filled them with anxiety and reservation. The United States was supposed to support the Polish independence. “The Yugoslav reaction, private and public, should have illustrated that the Yugoslav interests,

42 FO 371/122376, Northern Department; Belgrade, Mr. Hayman, October 26th, NH 10110/105, Reports on reactions of Yugoslaves concerning events in Hungary, October 26th, 1956.

43 NARA, Records of the Department of State, Internal Affairs of Hungary 1955–1959; Decimal 764, 00/8-1056to 00/11-356, Roll no. 3; 764.00/10-2656, Rome, October 26th, 1956.

at least in Eastern Europe, were not the same as those of the Soviet Union.”⁴⁴ The Yugoslav views were faithfully reflected in one unsigned commentary in *Borba* on October 23rd, 1956. “He praised Gomułka’s choices and decisions on the Eighth Plenum as a clear measure of socialism strengthening in Poland.”⁴⁵ The “mistakes made in the past, especially those in relation to socialist democracy,” would now be corrected. A way for improving relations with the USSR was now secured, but also with other equally socialist countries. At that point, Poland was the closest country to Yugoslavia. There was no other country with the ideas as close to the ones that Yugoslavia insisted on. Poland was also the most important one because it was the only one that could, not only withstand the Soviet pressure, as had been demonstrated, but could have been much more influential on the overall situation in the Bloc. It seemed that Yugoslavia had more direct mechanisms in connection to Hungary, but the more important thing was what Poland could do. In addition, Poland positioned itself close to what Yugoslavia had done, so it was necessary to cultivate such a trend, where “different forms only accelerated the pace of socialist development in the world”.

As Kos, the Third Secretary of the Foreign Affairs Department in the Americas, reported, the Yugoslavs thought that Nagy and Kádár hadn’t made the decisive moves that Gomułka had made in Poland. Gerö should have been removed and a government created immediately. Only this could have stopped the uprising that was now developing among the “rebels” in Budapest, in the west of the country and at the border with Yugoslavia. Nobody in Belgrade believed that 100,000 Hungarians were counterrevolutionaries, although there were some fascist elements. Disappointment erupted because the Stalinist repression lasted for ten years, the Yugoslav diplomat claimed, and because it turned out that socialism cannot be “brought on the Soviet Army bayonets.”⁴⁶ Kos said several important things, arguing that it is possible that Poland would now go even further than Yugoslavia and that both Budapest and Warsaw must agree on their own with the Soviets on their mutual relations. “I repeat the Yugoslav way is not the only possible one. We do not

44 NARA, Records of the Department of State, Internal Affairs of Yugoslavia, 1955–1959, Decimal file 768, 00/10-1656 to 022/11-156, Rool 5; 768.00(W)/10-2656, Weeka no. 43, October 26th, 1956.

45 NARA, Rool 5; 768.00(W)/10-2656, Weeka no. 43, October 26, 1956; *Borba*, 23.10.1956. The world today; the Eighth Plenum of the CC of the PUWP

46 NARA, RG84, Records of the Department of State, 320 Greece 1956 to Hungary Nagy 1958; October 27th, 1956; Secstate 550, (Riddleberger).

ask for, I repeat, we do not ask for the leading role”, said the senior Yugoslav diplomat, and the US ambassador paid close attention to the most important words. It all didn’t last very long, just a few days before the Hungarian events had gone too far. Kos then denied a possibility for Kádár to come in front of Nagy, something the Americans suggested.⁴⁷

At the same time, Nagy was in power thanks to the Soviet tanks and he had no public support, claimed the Yugoslav sources. As Srđa Prica told his American colleagues, Belgrade saw in the emotion of the Hungarians the power that would drive democratization, and the people would make the reforms despite the Soviet troops.⁴⁸ Unlike many in the East, Yugoslavia did not say that the uprising in Budapest was supported from the West, but they were ready to accuse “domestic fascist elements” aided by “provocations of Stalinist elements.” In fact, the Yugoslav interpreted the protests and the revolt as two events: a general uprising, involving everybody, and the extremists going wild, who did not represent the will of the people.⁴⁹

The commentary of Jozse Smole, who had previously commented on Hungarian developments commentary, in *Borba*, published on October 29th, was highlighted in the embassy. *Borba* welcomed the Budapest government’s open statement, as Nagy clearly stated that the “great mass movement” is not “counterrevolutionary” but “a major national democratic movement” that could now finally prove itself. Smole clearly showed great concern over Soviet intervention, underlined that the Soviet withdrawal was the only hope for the new government. Intervention of the Soviet Red Army was a major problem for Yugoslavia.⁵⁰ At the same time as newspapers exploded with news on UN negotiations over Suez, when the tour of Koča Popović in New York was closely reported, the Israeli parliamentary delegation visited Yugoslavia. Tito hosted them at Brijuni and they left Yugoslavia feeling that

47 NARA, RG84, Records of the Department of State, 320 Greece 1956 to Hungary Nagy 1958; October 27th, 1956; Secstate 550, (Riddleberger).

48 NARA, RG84, Records of the Department of State, 320 Greece 1956 to Hungary Nagy 1958; October 27th, 1956, Embtel 546.

49 NARA, RG84, Records of the Department of State, 320 Greece 1956 to Hungary Nagy 1958; October 27th, 1956, Control 53 (Riddleberger with Kos).

50 NARA, Records of the Department of State, Internal Affairs of Hungary 1955–1959; Decimal, 764.00/10-2956. Belgrade October 29th, 1956, Riddleberger (Smole Editorial Today...)

they had achieved their goals.⁵¹ Only a day later, on October 31st, 1956, both Yugoslav and the world media exploded with the news of the Israeli attack on Egypt, the British ultimatum on Egypt, and vitriolic attacks compared to Nazi bombings during the war. Because of such reporting, as the Americans said, Srđa Prica, the head of the house while Koča Popović was on his tour, received complaints. The Americans wrote: “The way the “aggression” against Egypt was described was in sharp contrast to the refrained mentioning of the Soviet military action in Hungary”. At that point, the attack on Suez was just an “aggression”. From that moment on, Egypt overshadowed all the other news.

The US Consul reported from Zagreb on November 1st that there were “private celebrations due to events in Hungary”. Radio Zagreb’s reports about the events there were mostly based on Radio Budapest’s report, except for concealing the “anticommunist segment of the uprising.” The consul said quite confusingly and totally inaccurate, that “many people understand Hungarian”, so they can listen to Hungarian stations. “Although there are no, I repeat, no obvious manifestations, many Croats are beginning to think that if Hungarians can do everything, why not them?” The “traditional regionalism” was strengthened, and the police was paid extra to patrol in civilian.⁵²

On October 30th, Tito’s message to the Hungarians was published. “The appeal, apparently, marked the Yugoslav communists’ acceptance of the true anti-communist nature of the rebellion in Hungary, and not only the relatively violent struggle for liberalization and democratization, which the Yugoslavs have so far claimed both privately and publicly. The appeal for simultaneous ceasefire and full support for Nagy’s regime and program is a try to return the situation within the communist framework.” Tito’s comments that to continue armed struggles would only favor “bureaucratic deformation”, the Americans interpreted as facilitating the return of Stalinism to power. The statement that the continuation of fighting among brothers would have “immense negative consequences for the international workers’ movement”, could reflect the fear of Yugoslavia that the new regime in Hungary, completely subordinate to Moscow, might be uncomfortable in relation

51 NARA, Records of the Department of State, Internal Affairs of Yugoslavia, 1955–1959, Decimal file 768, 00/10-1656 to 022/11-156, Rool 5; 768.00/(W)/11-156, Join Weeka no. 44.

52 NARA, Records of the Department of State, Internal Affairs of Hungary 1955–1959; Decimal 764, 00/8-1056to 00/11-356, Rool no. 3; 764.00/11-156, Zagreb (Reabenold).

to the Yugoslav politics of “socialism through peaceful coexistence”.⁵³ Supporting Nagy was a call to bring everything back within the communist paradigm. The Red Army in Hungary could stop the processes of relations warming up and disgrace Belgrade.⁵⁴

The Yugoslav media reported on November 3rd, 1956 the reactions of the new Polish party leadership to the events in Budapest. The attitudes coincided: what was needed was peace and creating discipline in the “reaction forces”. Former leadership of HSWP had made a “tragic decision” and invited the Soviets to intervene. Now “the gangs of the reaction are bestially killing the communists”. It was a completely different situation in Poland and Yugoslavia did everything to cultivate all the processes personified by Gomułka.⁵⁵ This close co-operation with Poland continued, so the Americans reported that, on January 15th, 1957, a delegation of Polish engineers was hosted by their colleagues from Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav media welcomed the maturity of Polish voters, following the elections that confirmed the decisions of the Eighth Plenum of the PUWP, and their rejection of “civic reaction” and “Stalinist conservatism.”⁵⁶

Despite everything, the Americans were almost impressed by the way the Yugoslav journalists covered the events in Budapest. “The media cover of Julijus (Đuka) and Teslić (Vlada), of Hungarian story is still surprisingly objective.” Editorial commentary directed their fear toward inner reactionaries. Julijus, Teslić, and undoubtedly Ivan Ivanji and Đordje Zelmanović, were afraid of Red Army’s move and they reported accordingly.⁵⁷ The British analysis of the newspapers reports was different. In the first part of November, as the British claimed, the journalism reached its lowest point, “nadir”. Suez crisis and the war in the Middle East served well in concealing this “travesty of journalism”. It seemed that the speed with which Belgrade turned their back to Nagy and turned to Kádár was so great that even

53 NARA, Records of the Department of State, Internal Affairs of Hungary 1955–1959; Decimal, 764.00/10-3056, Belgrade to Sec of State, Riddleberger.

54 NARA, RG 84, Records of the Department of State, 320 Greece 1956 to Hungary Nagy 1958; October 30th, 1956, Secstate Washington 566, Control 261; (Riddleberger).

55 *Vjesnik*, 3.11.1956., Soviet forces and Polish attitude.

56 NARA, Records of the Department of State, Internal Affairs of Yugoslavia, 1955–1959, Decimal file 768, 00/10-1656 to 022/11-156, Roll no. 5; 768.00(W)/1-1057, Weeka no. 2.

57 NARA, Records of the Department of State, Internal Affairs of Yugoslavia, 1955–1959, Decimal file, 764.00/11-256., November 5th.

disciplined journalists could not hide it.⁵⁸ On November 2nd, it was highlighted that there were more and more “Horthyist and clerical elements” that were involved in the revolution and how it all went in a undesirable direction. The American diplomats claimed that, on November 4th, there were reports on killing people in the streets who had been seen wearing “brown shoes” like those worn by ÁVH (the secret police), although such shoes could have been bought elsewhere. Rumors spread that the communists were being expelled from their apartments. American diplomats added: “The Yugoslav UDBA (State Security Administration) agents can be occasionally recognized by their new, robust, black shoes, and especially by their light blue shirts.”⁵⁹ Overall, the Americans continued to report that the state-run newsletter printed in English “strongly supported Nagy” by arguing that any other policy in Hungary, other than the one implemented by Nagy, would have endanger “the interests of socialism and of Hungary”. Against such politics were “reactionary elements”, which were against the Hungarians’ struggle for socialist democracy and did not believe in Nagy. It was to be hoped that the Hungarian people would have rejected all “anti-socialist tendencies”. At the end of the text, they commended the Soviet Union” declaration on the relationship with the socialist countries, which had, unfortunately, been announced very late. Ambassador Riddleberger thought that this was undoubtedly an allusion to the Yugoslav example and certainly a “possible Yugoslav pressure on the Soviets”⁶⁰

Riddleberger talked to Kos again on November 5th, a few hours after the Soviet Red Army re-intervened in Hungary. It happened after the secret visit to Brijuni by Nikita Khrushchev in the night between November 2nd and 3rd (Mićunović 1977, 157–163). The Yugoslavs repeated that they had had nothing against the expansion of the Hungarian government with the elements of the Small Entrepreneurs and Peasants’ Party; they were for the Soviet withdrawal, but not for the return of the old regime. Later, things went too far, and Nagy tried to humor everyone, even the “Horthyist elements”. All this logically led to the Soviet intervention, which would have never been such, as Kos thought, had the French and

58 FO371/122389, Northern Department, From Chancery, Belgrade To Southern Dept, 10th November 1956.

59 NARA, Records of the Department of State, Internal Affairs of Yugoslavia, 1955–1959, Decimal file 768, 00/10-1656 to 022/11-156, Roll no.5; 5764.00/11-256., November 5th.

60 NARA, Records of the Department of State, Internal Affairs of Yugoslavia, 1955–1959, Decimal file, 764.00/11-156. (Belgrade to Sec State, Riddleberger).

British not intervened at the same time in Egypt.⁶¹ The British-French intervention began on October 31st. Yugoslavia disregarded that the Soviet preparations were bound to have happened earlier, but the fact was that the crisis had become “double” and the Soviets certainly had some use of it. Kos’s opinion was that the Soviet intervention was temporary and the events in Hungary were a warning that the Soviets wouldn’t have been able to rule forever with terror. János Kádár was another problem. It was possible that he would not have been independent, Kos said, but added that Kádár could have achieved some of the goals, since his views and program were similar to Gomulka’s. Then again, all of this could have had a negative impact on the events in Poland, claimed Kos.⁶² Riddleberger commented that Kos avoided saying whether the Yugoslav condemnation of the French and the British in the UN would be the same as their disapproval of the Soviets or tougher. Even in cases of far greater threats, the Yugoslav regime was firm on the Soviets. Now, “whether for security or ideological reasons” their interpretation of interests led them to the same side as the Soviet, even though “they were not, and I repeat, they were not exposed to any direct pressure and although their allegedly fundamental principle of “different paths” was endangered”.⁶³

Koča Popović talked about the Hungarian events with Riddleberger upon his return from the US, and after he had meetings in the cabinet, the longest one being with Svetozar Vukmanović Tempo. It was unrealistic to expect that the Soviets would have allowed Hungary to leave. Kádár unfortunately came to power with the help of “Russian bayonets” but he would have to make concessions, claimed the Yugoslav diplomacy chief on November 5th, 1956. It was expected that the final result would have been the weakening of the Soviet Bloc. “The Minister then went the furthest I have ever heard him in asking the United States not to change their policy, to have faith in the Yugoslav estimates of developments in the East, and to bear in mind what the US State Secretary John Foster Dulles said in Brijuni

61 NARA, RG84, Records of the Department of State, 320 Greece 1956 to Hungary Nagy 1958; Control 53, November 5th, 1956. (Riddleberger).

62 NARA, RG84, Records of the Department of State, 320 Greece 1956 to Hungary Nagy 1958; November 5th, 1956, Control 53 (Riddleberger with Kos).

63 NARA, RG84, Records of the Department of State, 320 Greece 1956 to Hungary Nagy 1958; November 5th, 1956, Control 53 (Riddleberger with Kos).

in 1955. It is a pity that Yugoslavia, since it is already so satisfied with American politics, does not state that more in public”, Riddleberger commented.⁶⁴

The Hungarian crisis turned increasingly into a refugee crisis. Diplomats from the US Consulate in Zagreb went on a hunt near Čakovec, on November 6th, 1956. “A lot of rabbits, not one Hungarian” Rabenold reported to the US Embassy in Belgrade. An employee of the Consulate, a Hungarian from Subotica, travelled home too, but there was much more activity there. Soldiers and civilians surrendered in Horgoš and were all put in camps.⁶⁵ A few weeks later the hunting in Čakovec was cancelled, and rumors broke that there was a 20km long military zone along the border with Hungary.

When asked by the British Ambassador Hayman on November 10th, whether he felt that the Hungarian events tore the Belgrade and Moscow declarations, Srđa Prica was very “flat” in his response. He was confident that the Soviet government would have not turned the clock back, did not believe that there would have been Soviet armed pressure on Belgrade. It would, however, take some time for the spirit of the Moscow declaration to be renewed. Yugoslav ideology would be in crisis, there would be talks again about one path to socialism and the Soviets would probably reproach Yugoslavia again. That is why Belgrade was distanced from the speed of change in Budapest. Prica also distanced himself from Kádár. Yugoslavs had used to put much hope in the Hungary’s new first man, but now, thanks to the Soviets, there was little hope for him becoming a Hungarian Gomułka. The Yugoslavs were upset by the announcement of the former politicians’ return, especially considering the memory of Hungarian aggression, and they could not justify the return of those forces.⁶⁶

Kádár wasn’t an open Titoist. He was the best that could be found in Hungary, a politician who would stand between the Soviets and the West. Ambassador Maks Bace conveyed to the US chargé d’affaires in Sweden that, for Yugoslav diplomats, Kádár was a guarantee that the country would not sink into chaos. And chaos meant that the Red Army stayed. The withdrawal of the Red Army from the

64 NARA, RG84, Records of the Department of State, 320 Greece 1956 to Hungary Nagy 1958; November 5th, 1956, Control 53 (Riddleberger with Kos); Control 93, November 7th, 1956. (Riddleberger with Popović).

65 NARA, RG 84, Records of the Department of State, 320 Greece 1956 to Hungary Nagy 1958; November 6th, 1956; Control 81. Rabenold.

66 FO371/122389, Northern Department, Mr.T.P.Hayman, Belgrade, 10th November 1956, Prica’s views on the Future course of events in Hungary.

SFRY border would be a good solution for Belgrade.⁶⁷ An Italian expert for Yugoslavia, Orlandi Contuccio, thought that Yugoslavia was worried that, if the Stalinist regime came back to power, the events in Hungary could lead to the isolation such as the one in 1948. At the same time, Hungarian developments were popular among people, and those changes were also popular even among the authorities, at least up to a point. That meant that it was important to do two things, mutually exclusive, at once: express sympathy with the Hungarians and maintain close ties with Moscow.⁶⁸

The media wasn't informed about Nagy's visit to the Yugoslav embassy and the American diplomats in the beginning reported they could not get confirmation of Nagy's whereabouts from the Yugoslav hosts. The lower officials pretended to know nothing. Prica merely stated that he would issue a statement in a few days, Velebit said nothing.⁶⁹ The ordinary citizens of Zagreb and Belgrade, however, reacted to the Soviet intervention. Belgrade Orchestra held a concert that included "three old Hungarian songs for men's choir", on November 19th, in Zagreb. The applause that Belgrade musicians received was louder and longer than usual, and it was a big topic of conversation in Zagreb the next day.⁷⁰

Because of the prolonged crisis, the situation for the authorities in Belgrade was more unpleasant. Belgrade backed Kádár, who grew inflexible in the negotiations. The Yugoslav government was worried about what to do with Nagy if negotiations failed. The Soviets would probably try to create a "Stalinist Hungarian army" in order to leave Hungary more easily, but it would not come to that easily or quickly. The Yugoslavs stressed out that Kádár accepted a large part of Nagy's program. The Soviets obviously did not intend to sharpen the relations with Yugoslavia to the extreme. However, apart from Poland and Hungary where Tito's speech wasn't fully published before the Soviet reaction, there were some ridic-

67 NARA, RG84, Records of the Department of State, 320 Greece 1956 to Hungary Nagy 1958; ; American Embassy, Stockholm, November 14th, 1956. Memorandum of Conversation.

68 NARA, RG34, Records of the Department of State Internal Affairs of Yugoslavia 1955–1959, Decimal File 768, 00/9-2756 to 00/1-2758, Rool no. 2; 768.00/11-956; Rome, November 10th, 1956.

69 NARA, Records of the Department of State Internal Affairs of Hungary, 1955–1959, Decimal file 764, 00/11-1356to 00/11-2256, Roll no. 5, 764.00/11-1456, November 1st, Riddleberger.

70 NARA, RG34, Records of the Department of State Internal Affairs of Yugoslavia 1955–1959, Decimal File 768, 00/9-2756 to 00/1-2758, Rool no.2, 768.00/11-2356,

ulous accusations in the satellite countries that the Yugoslavs interfered with the internal affairs of the satellites, and they totally minimized the Soviet intervention in Hungary.⁷¹

The US ambassador Riddleberger was invited to dinner at Kardelj's residence on the evening when Nagy left the embassy. Riddleberger told the State Department that immediately after entering the residence, upset Kardelj "asked me if I heard anything about Nagy's whereabouts. The US ambassador replied that he had concluded from the radio news that the Soviets took him. "He also thought it could be true, but he speculated whether Kádár could have deceived the Yugoslav government."⁷² During the evening, Kardelj learned on the phone that Nagy had been sent to Romania. That was the end of any hope for Nagy-Kádár agreement. "He added that the Soviets wanted to avoid at all costs Nagy escaping to Yugoslavia." "What will Belgrade do now?" asked Riddleberger. "The only thing to do is to print the whole exchange," answered Kardelj. Everything that happened showed that "the Stalinist wing was now dominant in the Kremlin". The Soviets would now try to discredit Yugoslavia, and the Hungarian uprising would be quenched. The Soviet action will be a clear message to all the satellites that would think of rebelling.⁷³

The first reaction of Edvard Kardelj obviously wasn't the last version and attitude of Belgrade. The official communiqué of the SFRY Government on Nagy case was issued on November 23rd, claiming that everybody left the embassy on their own will. Nagy left it on November 22nd, after Kádár's government had given written assurances that no measures would have been taken against him. The Third Secretary of the Foreign Affairs Department, Kos, said that the Hungarians at the embassy "could stay if they wanted to." Nagy agreed to Kádár's request to hold negotiations on Hungarian territory, but he didn't think Nagy would have approached the new government soon because he requested that all Soviet troops withdrawn from the Hungarian territory first. When asked by the Americans whether the Soviets gave guarantees to the Yugoslavs regarding Nagy's security, the answer was that it was not necessary, because "the Russians couldn't over-

71 NARA, RG84, Records of the Department of State, 320 Greece 1956 to Hungary Nagy 1958; November 20th, 1956, Control. 216.

72 NARA, RG 84, Records of the Department of State, 320 Greece 1956 to Hungary Nagy 1958; November 24th, 1956, Embtel 704 (Riddleberger).

73 NARA, RG 84, Records of the Department of State, 320 Greece 1956 to Hungary Nagy 1958; November 24th, 1956, Embtel 704 (Riddleberger).

power Kádár now". Kos repeated that the representatives of "the revolutionary workers' councils" urged Nagy to come closer to them, which allegedly was the reason for him to leave the embassy. However, Dobrivoje Vidić, demanded from the Hungarian embassy charge d'affaires the information on why Nagy had not gone home.⁷⁴

The tone of reporting changed dramatically only after Nagy had been kidnapped. Hungary's explanations of his willing departure to Romania were "sharply" rejected, the Americans reported. "The Yugoslavs are bitter and insulted by Nagy's abduction that violated written assurances" given to the Yugoslav government by Hungarian authorities that there would be no maltreatment. The most energetic protest was firstly made to the first Hungarian embassy charge d'affaires on November 24th, with a warning that such a breach of the agreement would not go without consequences to their relations. The same document was submitted to the Soviets in Belgrade, but, as the Americans reported, "with a gentle and cautious" addition stating how "surprised" they were by the behavior of the Soviet authorities in Hungary, and with "hope" that the Soviets "would do everything necessary" so the agreement is respected. Prica informed the Americans that they would have waited a few days for the Hungarian response and would have done something after that. Yugoslavia would insist on some kind of resolution.⁷⁵ Belgrade waited for several days, and then, at the beginning of December, the newspapers re-activated the whole case, rejecting the idea that it was an internal matter of Hungarian authorities.

The British appeared to be given more accurate data by the Assistant Secretary of State Dobrivoje Vidić, on December 3rd. By then, the Yugoslavs had been quite pessimistic about whether they would receive a reply to their protest letters from November 24th. They thought that Kádár would not have changed his rhetoric on Nagy. As Yugoslavs had mentioned in their protest letters the violation of international law, when asked whether Belgrade would take measure in Hague or the UN, Vidić said that he wouldn't have put much into it. Belgrade wanted to point out that in the case of Nagy there was an agreement between two govern-

74 NARA, Records of the Department of State, Internal Affairs of Hungary 1955–1959, Decimal file 764, 00/11-2356 to 00/12-756, Roll no. 6, 764.00/11-2356; Riddleberger.

75 NARA, Records of the Department of State, Internal Affairs of Yugoslavia, 1955–1959, Decimal file 768, 00/10-1656 to 022/11-156, Roll no 5; 768.00(W)/11-3056, Nagy Kidnapping.

ments and it wasn't just Hungarian internal affairs. "Vidić himself said that the Romanian authorities originally proposed to the Yugoslavs that Nagy travelled to Romania. The Yugoslavs agreed, but with a condition that Nagy agrees to that, which he didn't do. Vidić believed that it was Kádár's intention to allow Nagy and his friends to go back home, at least temporarily", so the Soviet intervention on the bus surprised everybody. Vidić argued that, despite everything, "Kádár was an honest man" who could change his mind. He admitted that the workers' councils are the only expression of the people's will, but not a logical response, and that Kádár had the right to refuse their participation in the government. The Assistant Secretary of State claimed that the relations with Moscow should have remained as good as possible under current conditions, but that would have not been ideologically possible anyway. The British complained that London had been upset because of Belgrade's unequal view of the two military interventions and their unusually quick and sharp condemnation of London for the Suez Canal crisis. Vidić admitted that such reaction could have upset the West, but it was even more troubling for the Soviet Union. Yugoslavia had to follow its own policy.⁷⁶

3. AFTER THE REVOLUTION: HUNGARY AND YUGOSLAVIA

All correspondents returned from Budapest, except for one. The tone on Kádár was sharper. There was an increasing number of refugees, and that was what the diplomats reported intensely. At the beginning of 1957, the number of refugees in Yugoslavia was increasing by 600 every day in January. American diplomats, based on their sources, estimated that the number of Hungarian refugees in SFRY was about 10,000 in 15 refugee camps. As the US ambassador Riddleberger was briefed by Amir Hoveyda, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, after visiting nine camps for Hungarian refugees, "food, accommodation and care for refugees, with the exception of the camp in Gerovo, were surprisingly good despite the increasing number of refugees and the Yugoslavia's financial difficulties."⁷⁷ The US diplomats assumed that if the refugees stayed too long in Yu-

76 FO371/122399, Northern Department, From Belgrade to FO, Sir. F. Robets, December 4th, 1956. Addressed to FO telegram No.862 of Dec 3rd.

77 NARA, Records of the Department of State, Internal Affairs of Yugoslavia, 1955–1959, Decimal file 768, 00/10-1656 to 022/11-156, Rool 5; 768(W)/1-1057, Weeka no. 2.

goslavia, it would put Belgrade in a difficult situation with the Soviets, who would probably request for them to return.

Dalibor Soldatić, the ambassador of the SFRY in Budapest, was withdrawn and Jovo Kapičić was appointed in his place. Kapičić had previously, on October 16th, accompanied the Hungarian leadership of Gerő- Kádár to the laying of wreaths on the grave of the Unknown Hero, and walked with them on Terazije square and Kalemegdan fortress.⁷⁸ Upon his return, Soldatić was appointed the Chief of Protocol in the Department for Foreign Affairs.

One of the more obvious indications of the Yugoslav attitude towards Hungary was the viewing of the US documentary produced by The United States Information Agency (USIA), which was about the Hungarian developments. While the process of censorship was not over yet, the film was seen, in the FEC club, by 19 leading politicians, including Edvard Kardelj, Aleksandar Ranković, Moša Pijade, Koča Popović, Mijalko Todorović. The Soviet film on the same subject was rejected as mere propaganda. The audience laughed at some parts of that film and rated the American version “the better of two approaches” of the propaganda machinery. One copy, as people from USIA in Belgrade claimed, was sent to Tito. It was the first case that an USIA film made it into such an exclusive society, which would be the case from then on.⁷⁹

The events in Hungary showed the differences between Belgrade and Moscow in relation to other socialist parties. The principles were not in accordance. Moscow was governed by state interests, and the unity of the socialist world was in fact the Soviet politics and state domination. To do this, everything could be used. Yugoslavia was afraid of such changes in Hungary, which would sharpen the Cold War. Belgrade was not aware that Washington was afraid of the same thing and they did not really plan to do much to “pull” Hungary to the West. Such was even the US reporting from Belgrade. They paid more attention to how far Belgrade would have gone, then they expected any dramatic disturbances within the Bloc, and they certainly were not willing to do anything themselves.

Tanjug reported on 6.3.1957. there were 18.407 refugees in SFRY. 16.000 still with no status. 1410 Hungarians went back, 401 stayed in YugoslavIA, 257 went to the West.

78 NARA, Records of the Department of State, Internal Affairs of Yugoslavia, 1955–1959, Decimal file 768, 00/10-1656 to 022/11-156, Roll no. 5; 768.00(W)/12-14456; Borba, October 17th 1956, Talks between HSWP delegation and LCY continue.

79 NARA, Records of the Department of State, Internal Affairs of Yugoslavia, 1955–1959, Decimal file 768, 00/10-1656 to 022/11-156, Roll no. 5; 768.00(W)/1-1057, Weeka no.2.

Yugoslavia was scared by the big Soviet war activity at its borders. At the same time, little could be done without Moscow changing its position. Soviet intervention in Hungary, as the First Secretary of the Yugoslav Embassy Demajo said, significantly hampered the Soviet reputation and position in Asia and Africa.⁸⁰ In the light of the debate on Soviet imperialism at the conference in Bandung (Jakovina 2017), and helped by the joint action of France, Britain and Israel on Egypt, it seemed that the impulse towards a no-bloc politics was justified. It was the road that Yugoslavia started to pave, but it was now the most logical path for Belgrade. Tito eventually came out of all this with many scars, but Yugoslavia's special position wasn't ruined, the socialism in Europe wasn't broken, there was no conflict between the Cold War blocs, there was no renewal of Stalinism in Moscow, the United States did not lose their importance, and Yugoslavia's clear stance on Suez kept it in close relations with the Third World countries.

It seemed that Yugoslavia quite accurately estimated what the Soviets could and wanted to do. Perhaps Yugoslavia only slightly overestimated its power, but it was more exhausted in helping to break down the Stalinists, then to search for Titoists. Nagy was not one of those; he could have been tolerated, but not celebrated.

During the crisis, Tito gave a speech in Pula in 1956, about Stalinist spirit and methods, and he repeated it all in January 1957 on the session of Executive Committee of the LCY, saying that the Russians did not give up "stalinist methods", although the style of communication with Belgrade was not like it was in 1948.⁸¹ Ambassador Riddleberger wrote to Washington that, in the moments of honesty, the Yugoslavs admitted not to have any desire to quickly disintegrate either NATO or the Soviet Bloc, as that would lead to the regime's collapse in Yugoslavia. The interest of Yugoslavia was that the ideological disagreements never sharpen again and leave Yugoslavia isolated again, but they were not interested in the return of the Soviet government as it was in the Stalin era. Hopefully, Poland would endure and there would be another Gomułka.⁸²

80 NARA, Records of the Department of State Internal Affairs of Hungary, 1955–1959, Decimal file 764, 00/11-456 to 00/11-1256, Roll no. 4, 764.00/11-956, Conversation with Mr. Demajo (mr. Mark, EE, Hoctor, EE), November 9th, 1956.

81 AY, CC LCY III/67, Records of CC LCY Session on January 24th, 1957 in Belgrade.

82 NARA, RG34, Records of the Department of State Internal Affairs fo Yugoslavia 1955–1959, Decimal File 768, 00/9-2756 to 00/1-2758, Rool no. 2, 768.00/2-1857, February 18th, 1957, Belgrade.

Nagy's trial lasted a long time because, at first, there was a hope that Yugoslavia would return to the Bloc and that the conference of the world's communist parties in 1957 would heal everything and soften stubborn Yugoslavs (Gough 2006, 114). When that didn't happen, after relations with the West worsened and there was no meeting of the top officials, Imre Nagy was executed on June 16th, 1958. After that, the recent usual polemics and ideological tensions between Belgrade and Moscow multiplied and became serious. This act was considered directed against Yugoslavia. Now the fears of a real Soviet invasion intensified. Although some people said that Italy and the FR of Germany were not military significant in 1948, but it wasn't the case anymore. Many believed that the proximity of the border with Hungary and the Red Army was unpleasant. It was felt in cities like Varaždin, but also in arming Karlovac. All of that affected Tito's popularity, which was higher than usual.⁸³

In December 1959, Marshal of Yugoslavia Josip Broz Tito spoke at the session of the City Committee of League of Communists of Croatia (LCC) in Zagreb. He responded to János Kádár's critique of Yugoslavia at HSWP Congress for interfering with Hungarian affairs and "attack on two countries", Albania and China, "who were their friends" (Tito 1962, vol.15, 135–136). "Relations have improved" Tito said. "Why would anybody want now to point out our guilt and our interfering in Hungarian internal affairs?" "The unfortunate events" that had taken place, had been condemned both in Budapest and in Yugoslavia. One day all the documents would be opened and nobody would wrongly accuse the Yugoslav government and its leadership. Belgrade did not want Hungarian events to be discussed in the UN, "despite the fact that it does not bring any benefits to us", but they did consider that to be Hungarian internal affairs. Even though they had been given a hand of friendship, the Hungarians were not loyal.

Imre Nagy was like John Subašić, a man who, obviously, wasn't up to the task and was limited by some old ideas and loyalties. Nagy was actually ideal for Tito, but he went too far, more than he wanted. Yugoslavia wanted what Poland did, the thing Nagy could have done the first few days of his new mandate as a Prime Minister. Everything that happened after that was too much, too dangerous, unrealistic. It was dangerous to provoke the Soviets, more than to be a competition to

83 NARA, RG59, Records of the Department of State Internal Affairs of Yugoslavia, 1955–1959, Decimal File 768, 00/1-2858 to 99/5-759, Roll no.3, 768.00/6-2558, Am-consul Zagreb, June 25, 1958, Political notes June 10th through June 24th, 1958.

Yugoslavia. When Kádár came to power partly thanks to the lack of Yugoslavia's objection to Soviet intervention, he became a leader who was apparently supposed to rule for a long time in Hungary. What was to be done in such a case? It turned out that the decision to support Kádár was a logical one. He proved to be moderate. At the same time, they couldn't expect to have any influence over their neighbor if there wasn't any connection with the new authorities in Hungary. The reactions of the Yugoslav leadership during the crisis probably showed in part their confusion and inability to deal with the situation. However, they were not selfish when the unique Yugoslav position was concerned, perhaps only insisting on the already achieved standards in relation to Moscow. The standards achieved in 1945, which was a socialist revolution, were never called into question. Yugoslavization of Eastern Europe, something that had been thought of and wished for, completely failed in the events in Hungary in October and November 1956.

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Američki i britanski diplomati u Jugoslaviji o mađarskom oktobru 1956

U ovom članku oslikano je događajima neobično nabijenih nekoliko tjedana dramatičnih zbivanja u Europi, posebno Mađarskoj. Nakon smjene Mátiása Rákosija, imenovanja Ernö Geröa na mjesto čelnog čovjeka u Budimpešti, a onda i revolucionarna zbivanja koja su nakratko vratila Imre Nagyja i ostavile Janosa Kudara na vlasti za dugi niz desetljeća, pokazalo se koje su stvarne želje za reformama i kakav razvoj u Istočnoj Europi u Beogradu priželjkuju. Članak pokazuje kakve su bile reakcije jugoslavenskih političara na različite faze zbivanja u Istočnom lageru nakon 20. kongresa KPSS-a, ilustrira različiti

entuzijazam s kojim su u Beogradu pratili događanja u Poljskoj i Mađarskoj. Unatoč, objektivno, daleko većem utjecaju i bliskosti s Mađarskom, Gomulka u Varšavi i temeljitost, pa i postupnost tamošnjih promjena, bile su daleko više cijenjene i ohrabrivane u jugoslavenskom političkom vrhu, a onda i javnom mnjenju. Mađarska zbivanja zbog neobuzdane energije, koja se pretvorila u anti-komunistički ustanak, krugove u Beogradu su plašile. Mađari, smatrali su jugoslavenski diplomati, a javljale njihove američke kolege, nisu imali ličnosti koje su bile u stanju kontrolirati zbivanja, a jednako tako bili su prespori u smjenjivanju staljinističkog vođstva. U tekstu se nastojala dati i šira slika zbivanja 1956, dolasci važnih gostiju u Jugoslaviju, pokazati kako su mediji javljali o neugodnim događajima 1956; primjerice Titovom susretu s Ernő Geröm u Jalti, a što su prešućivali (Nagyjev odlazak u Jugoslavensko veleposlanstvo nakon gušenja mađarskih (kontra)revolucionarnih zbivanja). Kako su neki od izvještaja bilježili spontane reakcije jugoslavenskih diplomata i političara, koji do sada nisu bili poznati, riječ je o posve novim uvidima u stav Beograda i reakcije koje je javljao Generalni konzulat SAD-a u Zagrebu na Mađarsku krizu 1956. Tamošnja zbivanja bila su i završetak vjerojatno najvažnije vanjskopolitičke godine 1956; u Europi; za jugoslavensku diplomaciju i konačno shvaćanje da je uloga i mogućnosti Jugoslavena diplomatskom planu ograničeno Hladnim ratom, ali i spremnošću na popuštanje u Moskvi. Beograd je s jedne strane bio zbunjen, nesiguran, ali nije pokazivao sebičnost, ljubomoru, koja se katkada mogla pročitati u zapadnim historiografskim analizama.

Ključne reči: Mađarska 1956, Imre Nagy, James Riddleberger, Josip Broz Tito, Wladislav Gomulka, Poljska 1956, samoupravljanje.

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