

SOVIET-YUGOSLAV RECONCILIATION AS A BASIS FOR UNDERSTANDING TITO'S ROLE IN THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION OF 1956

Original Scientific Paper

Milivoj BEŠLIN
University of Belgrade
Institute for Philosophy
and Social Theory

Momir SAMARDŽIĆ
University of Novi Sad
Faculty of Philosophy

This paper analyzes Soviet-Yugoslav relations in the context of the first major crisis between the two countries that started in 1948. The focus is on the period after Stalin's death, which was followed by a period of detente and reconciliation. This process was not without tensions because the interests of the two countries were in opposition to one another. While the Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, wanted to return Yugoslavia to the Soviet sphere of influence, Tito considered Yugoslav independence won during the conflict with Stalin as his foreign policy priority. Due to these circumstances, the Hungarian rebellion in the autumn of 1956 against the Soviet occupation was the catalyst for further development of relations between Yugoslavia and the USSR, and these relations are a necessary frame of reference for understanding the politics of Yugoslavia during this Hungarian crisis.

Key words: Hungarian Revolution, 1956, Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Nikita Khrushchev, Josip Broz Tito, Imre Nagy

*I*F ONE TAKES INTO CONSIDERATION THE framework of Cold War international order, the division of spheres of influence and the importance of the formative interwar period for most Yugoslav communists, who were inextricably linked with Moscow and the Comintern, it would

come as no surprise that relations between socialist Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union were never merely an issue of foreign policy, but were also an internal political topic *par excellence* (Clissold 1975). The journey for Yugoslavia, from a country perceived in the West after the Second World War as “the most loyal Soviet satellite” to the perception of Tito as a cancer and a potential leader of the dissolution of the Eastern Bloc, was a long one (Lis 2003).

Relations with the Kremlin, the hegemon of the Eastern Bloc, were undoubtedly primary for Yugoslav diplomacy, and therefore became a sort of personal domain for President Tito as well as one of the most delicate issues not just in terms of foreign policy, and access to it was permitted only to a select few. Tito even demanded that the Yugoslav ambassador in Moscow send regular reports to him personally along with those routinely sent to the government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Mićunović 1984, 33; Kuljić 2005, 302). However, Soviet-Yugoslav relations oscillated in the postwar period between divergence and conflict, and cooperation and understanding, and this was illustrated by three such major crises between Moscow and Belgrade identified by researchers: 1948, 1958, and 1968. The first escalation of hostilities occurred in 1948 with the Comintern Resolution, Stalin’s harsh accusations against Tito and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, and a total breakdown in relations between the two countries (Kačavenda 1999; Dedijer 1969; Banac 1990; Radonjić 1979; Petranović and Dautović 1999; Kardelj 1980, 99–137). For the Yugoslav president it was, as he would later admit, the most difficult experience of his life. Even though Tito exhibited great determination and perseverance in the resistance against Stalin, he also demonstrated a high degree of flexibility due to his fears that a continuation of the conflict would lead to the open anti-Stalinism and anti-Soviet sentiment characteristic of most of the Western world.

Improved relations with the West remained the only alternative until Stalin’s death when the new leadership in Moscow demonstrated a desire to overcome antagonisms. In June 1953, three months after Stalin’s death, the Soviets revealed their intention to send an ambassador to Yugoslavia, thus indicating a desire to normalize relations (Luburić 1999, 145–146). The appointment of a Soviet ambassador to Yugoslavia on June 17, 1953, and the reciprocal act by Yugoslavia were the first steps in this normalization (Luburić 1999, 153). The Yugoslav ambassador, Dobrovoje Vidić, arrived in Moscow later that year on September 21. The highest party body, the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of

the Soviet Union, at Khrushchev's initiative, had previously declared normalizing relations to be a necessity. The Soviet objectives were clear: Yugoslavia had to be pulled away from the West, further integration into the Balkan Alliance (whose agreement was almost finalized) needed to be stopped, the Yugoslav paradigm's impact on other countries of the Soviet sphere needed to be reduced, and finally, the country had to be gradually pulled back into the Eastern Bloc.

In January 1954, the Yugoslav party began what became known as the Đilas Affair, in which Milovan Đilas, one of the foremost protagonists of de-Stalinization and greater distance from the Soviets, was dismissed from all functions and banished from public life.¹ This created conditions for the emergence of the first Eastern European dissident, of whom *Urbi et Orbi* announced the “worm is in the apple,” but also sent a message to the Soviets that Tito would deal with all radical anti-Soviet elements within his surroundings. It did not take long to receive an answer.

Symbolically, on June 22, 1954, a proposal arrived concerning the re-establishment of friendly relations at both the state and party levels. Uncoincidentally, this letter was sent two days before the final meeting of diplomatic representatives from Greece, Turkey, and Yugoslavia, which had been focused on adopting a draft agreement on the future Balkan Alliance (Luburić 1999, 307–309; Dimić 1998, 26). The Yugoslav president perceived the Soviet initiative as a “tremendous victory.” A relaxing of tensions was undoubtedly in the interest of Yugoslavia, which had lived for years with the constant threat of war, and had been subject to daily border skirmishes with Soviet satellites, in which hundreds of Yugoslav soldiers had been killed. Tito believed that the new Soviet leaders did not have the power of Stalin, and that a period of transition of power in the Soviet Union would be a good time to normalize relations while simultaneously rejecting any possibility of returning to the Eastern Bloc. The Yugoslav political leadership perceived itself as the winner in an unequal battle with the Soviet Union, and Tito felt not only on equal footing in relations with Khrushchev, but also began to perceive himself as a role model for aspirations for reform within the Eastern Bloc. A particularly important point for Tito was that the end of hostilities with the USSR would mean continuing con-

¹ In a letter to Tito on June 22, 1954, Nikita Khrushchev wrote that, “Đilas, that pseudo-Marxist...contributed significantly to the deterioration in Yugoslav-Soviet relations,” thus putting him in the same rank with Lavrentiy Beria, whom the Soviets had declared to be a traitor. Luburić 1999, 308–309.

vergence with the West, viewed then as a threat to Yugoslavia's social and political system, would become less of a necessity (Dimić 1998, 26–27).

Now that visible progress in normalizing relations—the Yugoslav precondition for a meeting at the highest level—had been achieved, there was an exchange of letters at the highest level, and on May 15, 1955, news of an upcoming Soviet-Yugoslav summit was announced to the press. On the same day, the Soviet Union and the countries of the Eastern bloc signed the Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance in the Polish capital, forming the Warsaw Pact as a military alliance in response to the creation of NATO. The Soviet delegation landed at the Belgrade airport on May 26, 1955, and its leader and first secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev, immediately began with praise for the Yugoslav struggle against fascism in the Second World War, saying that the aim of this visit by the Soviet state and party delegations was to “strengthen friendship and cooperation.” While remembering the joint struggle of Soviet and Yugoslav troops in the liberation of Belgrade, Khrushchev also said that good relations had been hampered and emphasized his “sincere regret,” but placed all the blame for this development on the “provocative role...of the enemies of the nation, Beria and Abakumov.”² He said that the party leadership had thoroughly investigated the evidence for which “serious accusations and insults” against Yugoslavia and its leaders had been based. “The facts,” he said, “show that these materials were fabricated by the enemies of the people, despised agents of imperialism, who have infiltrated the ranks of our Party through fraud.” (Luburić 1999, 388–389) Thus the Soviet leader stayed within the boundaries of the propaganda of a totalitarian regime while still attempting to explain the causes of the conflict in 1948. However, the arrival of the Soviets in Belgrade, the expression of regret over the conflict, and the attempts to establish an even closer relationship on as much of an equal basis as possible were perceived in Western circles (with good reason) as a repentance visit, and referred to it as the Kremlin's Canossa.

2 In his secret speech Khrushchev gave a completely different but certainly significantly more realistic interpretation of the causes of the Soviet-Yugoslav conflict in 1948. While defining Stalin's role in the conflict with Yugoslavia as “shameful,” Khrushchev said that there was no real motive for the conflict with Yugoslavia. According to Khrushchev, Stalin had been “monstrously magnifying” the drawbacks of the Yugoslav leadership and this is what had led to a conflict with a “friendly country.” On the same occasion, the new Soviet leader recounted that Stalin had said to him: “It would be enough to just move my little finger and Tito will be no more. He will fall.” Vrhovec and Čepo 1970; Aksjutin 1989, 14–18.

During the conversation with Tito in Belgrade, Khrushchev mentioned the situation in Hungary, which was becoming increasingly complex. He reminded the Yugoslav president that in the Eastern Bloc, which still included China, “there are no disagreements or cracks.” However, problems had arisen only in Hungary “with that Imre Nagy.” As an Old Bolshevik who had long lived in Russia, he was, according to Khrushchev, a proposal by Lavrentiy Beria.³ However, Khrushchev continued, “he was a real opportunist,” but the Hungarian party “had a discussion with him,” he admitted “his faults” and “therefore will be given an opportunity to improve.” (Luburić 1999, 403) Tito did not comment on the situation in Hungary, primarily because he wanted to improve relations with the Soviet Union and convince Khrushchev to sign a joint declaration that would leave Yugoslavia more space for future diplomatic maneuvering. Because of this, all issues of potential disagreement outside of the main development of Soviet-Yugoslav relations were seen as ephemeral, even though his views were undoubtedly different than those of the Soviets.

Imre Nagy’s ideas were reminiscent of the independent reformist socialism already confirmed by Yugoslav practice, and Hungary was the first Eastern Bloc country after the Soviet Union to establish diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia. (Dimić 1998, 29) The Hungarian emancipatory movement Nagy announced in his June 1953 speech involved a discontinuity with the Stalinist practices of Mátyás Rákosi, restriction of repression, economic reform, etc. All this inevitably led to the creation of a different model of socialism and to a distancing from the Soviet paradigm as the only model. Yugoslav-Hungarian relations during the two years of Imre Nagy’s government had significantly improved. However, during the Soviet delegation’s visit in 1953 Tito pragmatically decided to focus all attention on relations between Belgrade and Moscow and on persuading the Soviet leader to accept the right of Yugoslavia to determine its own path to socialism. This was precisely the aim the key document of the policy of reconciliation, the Belgrade Declaration, was supposed to serve. It guaranteed the right to a different path to the development of socialism, and essentially meant that Yugoslavia was undisputedly the winner in this conflict.

The Belgrade Declaration, signed on June 2, 1955, by Yugoslav President Tito and Soviet Prime Minister Bulganin, states both sides agreed that “coopera-

³ Imre Nagy was an informant for the Soviet secret service for more than a decade. Ivanji 2007, 229.

tion between peoples” must be based on the principles of “respect for sovereignty, independence, integrity, and equality.” Acceptance and recognition of “peaceful coexistence...regardless of ideological differences and differences in social systems” was agreed on, as well as adherence to the principle of “mutual respect and non-interference in internal affairs...because issues of internal organization of different social systems and different forms of developing socialism are exclusively an issue for the people of individual countries.” At the same time, condemnation of “any aggression and any attempts to impose political and economic domination on other countries” was emphasized, along with the statement that the policy of military alignment “undermines trust among nations and increases the danger of war.” The following year, the Moscow Declaration was signed, which affirmed the key postulates of the Belgrade Declaration. (Bekić 1988, 667–734; Luburić 1999, 510–515; Kardelj 1980, 145–49; Rajak 2011, 135) The Soviet regime’s approval of a former member of the Bloc to develop its own path to socialism and granting the right to develop a different model of internal organization for the state undoubtedly opened a Pandora’s box of discontent among other members of the satellite states, which were developing under the watchful eye of the Soviet Union and according to a Soviet paradigm.

In June 1956, Eastern Europe was one of the topics at a meeting in Moscow between Tito and Khrushchev. Tito advocated for the position that Yugoslavia should normalize its relations with these countries without “Russian mediation.” His intention was to develop relations with the countries of the Bloc independently from the USSR, to avoid future interrelatedness, and for these relations to be determined by the fluctuations and changes in Soviet-Yugoslav relations. During this meeting Tito also described Hungary under the Stalinist Mátyás Rákosi as a neighbor with whom Yugoslavia had many difficulties in establishing good relations. The Soviet leader defended Rákosi by claiming that it was Stalin rather than he who had been responsible for the situation in Hungary, and that the leader of the Hungarian communist party “properly understands” the necessity of good relations with Yugoslavia. (Dimić 1998, 36–38)

But, after Khrushchev delivered a report entitled, “On the Cult of Personality and Its Consequences,” also known as the Secret Speech, at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the situation in Hungary became more complex. However, according to Veljko Mićunović, the ambassador to Moscow, relations between Yugoslavia and Hungary had been improving while Rákosi was

head of the state. The situation in Hungary during 1956 began worsening, and in mid-July Mićunović spoke with the Soviet leader. Then, Khrushchev sent a message to Tito stating that the Soviets were determined to use “all means” to “handle the crisis in Hungary.” This was understood as a direct threat to Yugoslavia. The Soviet Union, Khrushchev thought, “cannot allow a break in the Bloc’s first line of defense.” According to Mićunović, the aim of openly threatening Yugoslavia with the Red Army was to ensure the message would be “properly understood” and would result in silence during the dramatic events that were expected in Hungary. (Mićunović 1984, 107–108)

A secret letter to Mátyás Rákosi and other socialist leaders sent on July 13, 1956, to all the communist parties of the Bloc countries is an excellent source for an analysis of the level of Soviet concern regarding the danger of the possible virulence of the Yugoslav example. The Soviet regime’s determined and resolute position, as displayed in this document, that the communists in the Eastern Bloc countries had no right to be guided by the example of Yugoslavia in fact devalued the importance of the Belgrade and Moscow declarations. It even mentioned that the Yugoslav draft of the declaration had been dismissed as opportunistic. Finally, it emphasized that there were many issues on which the two parties differed, because “the Yugoslavs continue to observe things in their own way.” (Dimić 1998, 40) In addition to disavowing the documents already signed, in the Soviet interpretations Yugoslavia did not appear as an independent international entity but rather as an object of Soviet foreign policy. At the same time, differences in the policies of the USSR and Yugoslavia were attributed to Yugoslav “delusions” and to its economic dependence on the West caused by the failure of the self-management model of socialism. This secret document written for internal use in the countries of the Bloc also contained an allusion made by the Soviets that the return of Yugoslavia to the Bloc was possible because it had promised to “become better.” In contrast to officially signed declarations, Mićunović considered this document to reflect the real policy of the USSR towards Yugoslavia. (Mićunović 1984, 127–128; Žarković 2017; Rajak 2011, 163–165)

However, on July 16 relations between Hungary and the Soviet Union seemed to be improving. Khrushchev told Mićunović that the visit to Budapest by Anastas Mikoyan, the First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union, had gone unexpectedly well and it had been agreed that Rákosi would resign. According to Khrushchev, this was a necessary step in

resolving the Hungarian crisis. At the same time, the Soviet leader told the Yugoslav diplomatic representative that after successfully resolving the crisis in Hungary, Mikoyan would make a stop in nearby Yugoslavia. It was obvious, Mićunović thought, that the idea behind the Mikoyan's visit without a previous invitation was to send a clear message to the world that Yugoslavia was a major Soviet ally in resolving the Hungarian crisis. (Mićunović 1984, 109) This was not only incorrect but also dangerous because Yugoslavia was being drawn unwillingly into events in Hungary, which would later become dramatic during the coming autumn. For the Soviets, it was an opportunity to compromise Yugoslavia, and thus its development model, and to disparage the Yugoslav neutral, "out-of-Bloc" policy. On the other hand, in Budapest the assessment was that the Hungarian opposition and the rebel movement enjoyed the support of Yugoslav media and diplomatic representatives, and thus it was believed that Yugoslavia needed to be given a warning due to its support of "non-party elements" in Hungary.

At the July 18–21 session of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Working People's Party, Mátyás Rákosi was replaced and thus enabled further reform and de-Stalinization of Hungary. The rehabilitation and subsequent ceremonial reburial of László Rajk, executed in Stalinist purges in 1949 as a Titoist spy, was a preparation for public resistance to the Soviet occupation. These processes began to turn Hungary towards Yugoslavia with the recognition that its southern neighbor was indeed creating a form of socialism Hungary could aspire to. Publicly withdrawing libels addressed in previous years to Yugoslav leaders was recognition of an erroneous position toward the neighboring country and its population, and they were a part of the process of dealing with Stalinist crimes in Hungary. Hungarian Communists were clearly demonstrating a tendency toward deepening friendly relations with Yugoslavia, especially in the areas of science and culture. (Dimić 1998, 44–46)

These were the circumstances in which Khrushchev came to Yugoslavia on September 19, 1956, with his family on a private visit, allegedly for a family vacation. During dinner with Tito, he said he hoped to continue the rapprochement between the two countries, and that it would one day be "complete." Without a doubt, this meant the return of Yugoslavia to the Eastern Bloc. After that, the Yugoslav president was Khrushchev's guest on a holiday

98 | in the Crimea in early October 1956. Without any knowledge of the Yugoslav

delegation, Ernő Gerő, the first secretary of the Hungarian communist party, appeared in Crimea. An impression was created that Yugoslavia was slowly returning to the Bloc, and that a complex and sometimes confusing Soviet policy towards Hungary was at the same time Yugoslav policy. This was all part of a Soviet strategy to draw Yugoslavia within the Bloc and an attempt to pull it away from the West. (Mićunović 1984, 137–46) With this Crimean maneuver, Khrushchev thought Hungary would be kept in the Bloc and Yugoslavia finally drawn into it. Khrushchev thought Yugoslavia had to adapt to the Eastern Bloc, and not vice versa, because it was “not the unit that needs to catch up, but the soldier.” (Bogetić 2006, 61) The private nature of these encounters gave Tito an opportunity for maneuvering, so the talks were completed without a concrete agreement.

After Crimea, communication with Ernő Gerő continued in Belgrade in 1956 from October 15 to 22. The Hungarian side was willing to recognize and eliminate any unfairness from the past after the Resolution of Cominform. Tito pragmatically assented to the necessity of forgetting the past and thinking about future cooperation according to the principles of the Moscow Declaration. Gerő demonstrated great interest in the concept of Yugoslav socialism and different paths for its construction. However, the situation in Hungary was becoming increasingly complicated, and on the day after the party delegation returned riots broke out in Budapest, which then turned into a rebellion against the repressive Soviet system. By October 24, 1956, the state and the party system were in complete confusion due to the revolt's escalation, and the population was outraged by the growing presence of the occupying Soviet army. Some of the main demands were the introduction of a multi-party system and political pluralism. It had become obvious that a majority of Hungarian citizens opposed the Soviet Bolshevik system and that it could only be maintained by force, which the Soviets first used on October 24. However, the first intervention was limited and somewhat uneven, and ended in complete collapse, an escalation of the insurgency, and the spread of armed conflict and bloodshed throughout the streets of Budapest. The explosion of discontent among the population and a strong, immediate international reaction forced Soviet troops to temporarily withdraw on October 29 and 30, and to consent to political changes in Hungary. János Kádár replaced Gerő as the first secretary of the party, and Imre Nagy became the prime minister. Yugo-

slavia condemned the Soviet use of violence and supported political change. Tito sent a letter to the new Hungarian leadership on behalf of the Yugoslav state and party leadership praising the policy of democratizing public life, the introduction of workers' control, and even the initiation of negotiations on the withdrawal of Soviet troops. (Bogetić 2006, 62–63) The Yugoslav state and party leadership was obviously pleased with the possibility that there could be one more country with an independent policy and its own path to socialism such as the self-management model in Yugoslavia.

However, instead of bringing about peace, the political changes led to further escalation of the conflict. The armed struggle expanded from Budapest to the rest of the country, and political demands were radicalized with explicit anti-communist and anti-Soviet overtones. Finding themselves in a dramatic situation completely out of control, Imre Nagy and the party leadership adopted a decision to abolish the one-party system and to invite all the major political parties into the government, and demanded the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary. The Hungarian government declared its neutrality, announced its abandonment of the Warsaw Pact, and asked the UN and the great powers to guarantee its newly declared neutrality. This was a sign of the final overthrow of socialism in Hungary and a signal to the Soviets that anti-communist revolutions must be suppressed with utmost, brutal force. At the same time, there was a radical change in the Yugoslav position toward the events in Hungary, which was under the new leadership of Imre Nagy. The announcement of the removal of the communist monopoly, political pluralism, the restoration of the capitalist system, and the actions carried out by armed forces caused a disturbance in the Yugoslav leadership. It was a precedent Tito could not approve of, and he turned vehemently against Nagy. The Soviet response to the collapse of the Eastern bloc came quickly. On October 31, Soviet leaders decided at a meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee to break the revolution with military force and to establish a new puppet government in Budapest. Prior to the planned military action, it was necessary to attain support from the satellite states and Yugoslavia. The Polish and Czechoslovak leaders objected to a bloody suppression of the Hungarian revolution (referred to as a counter-revolution), unlike other communist countries that provided unconditional support to the Soviets. (Dimić 1998,

Due to these circumstances, Khrushchev and Georgy Malenkov, deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers, came to Tito's residence on the island of Brioni during the night of November 2-3. They were surprised when Tito supported the idea of military intervention. He said that "there has to be intervention if there is counter-revolution in Hungary." He described such a move as "the lesser evil" because he wondered "what kind of government is that when communists are murdered and hanged?" In an effort to cover up the brutality of such an act of aggression against a sovereign country and its legitimate government, the Yugoslav President proposed political preparations before the military intervention, and "to form or to declare something as a revolutionary government made up of Hungarians" with a political program prepared in advance for the people. The acceptance of this proposal would conceal the obviousness of aggression, and Tito was in some sense trying to relativize the negative effects of his support for intervention. By Tito taking such a stance on the issue, Yugoslavia became an accomplice to aggression, which was contrary to all its previously established postulates of foreign policy. The decision to intervene had already been made and the Yugoslav stance would not change anything, but Tito's unreserved support for the removal of a legal government supported by a majority of the population was a precedent that undermined the credibility of Yugoslav politics and its reputation in the world. Later under different circumstances, during the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, Tito would not make the same mistake. (Bešlin 2011, 351–368)

Tito felt that intervention should not be reduced to the "weapon of the Soviet Army," but should be accompanied by political activity, which was primarily the creation of a "revolutionary government" that would include a population still supportive of further socialist development and which had not been compromised during Rákosi's Stalinist government. Tito had proposed János Kádár because he thought he had the personality traits necessary at the time. At first, Khrushchev did not agree with this idea, but later adopted it. Tito and Khrushchev had clear disagreements over the cause of the rebellion in Hungary and about how to resolve it. The Soviet side reduced the causes to interference from the West, while Tito claimed that causes were the repressive regimes of Rákosi and Gerő, and thought a resolution of the crisis would be possible only on the basis of discontinuity with the Stalinist legacy, the principles of reform socialism, and the establishment of Hungary as an equal

member of the Eastern Bloc instead of an occupied country. However, it was clear that the new Hungarian government about to come to power through Soviet tanks and Hungarian blood would, at least in the beginning, be entirely dependent on directives from Moscow. By adopting Yugoslav suggestions in certain areas, the Soviets achieved their main goal: making Tito an accomplice to the bloody suppression of the Hungarian revolution and aggression against a sovereign state. Yugoslavia also agreed to persuade Imre Nagy to voluntarily withdraw before the intervention, as well as to support the establishment of the puppet Revolutionary Workers'-Peasants' Government of Hungary. By "voluntary" removing Nagy, Yugoslavia would remove part of its responsibility for supporting the intervention, and the Soviets could easily break the rebel's resistance. Both sides made use of the fact that Imre Nagy contacted the Yugoslav Embassy on November 2 asking for asylum. The Yugoslav government responded positively but suggested Nagy distance himself from the anti-communist and anti-Soviet decisions and actions of his own government. However, the Prime Minister refused to accept these suggestions. (Dimić 1998, 56–57; Bogetić 2006, 67–68; Žarković 2017)

On the morning November 4, 1956, Soviet military forces broke the rebel resistance, while over the radio Imre Nagy denounced the action as aggression and took refuge in the Yugoslav embassy in Budapest with his closest associates and their families. As the revolution was crushed by force, the destinies of Imre Nagy and other leaders of the Hungarian revolution came into the limelight of political events, and they were blockaded in the Yugoslav Embassy by Soviet military forces. The priority for the Yugoslav leadership at this point was to preserve what remained of its credibility, which had been seriously undermined by an inconsistent position during Hungarian crisis. The Soviet leadership resolutely refused a request to transfer Nagy and his associates from the Yugoslav embassy in the Hungarian capital to Yugoslav territory, which led to a serious deterioration of relations between the two countries. The government in Moscow explicitly requested that Yugoslavia go back on its promise of asylum given to Nagy, and extradite him to the USSR, or more precisely, to the new Hungarian puppet regime of János Kádár. Tito was in a hopeless situation. He did not want a new deterioration in relations with the USSR and the new Hungarian government but, on the other hand, fulfilling their demands would completely destroy Yugoslavia's international credibility, particularly among

Western countries, which had already been badly undermined by supporting the Soviet military intervention. In a letter to Khrushchev on November 8, 1956, Tito tried to explain the Yugoslav position and to secure amnesty for Nagy and other rebels, but was unsuccessful. The furthest the Soviets were willing to compromise was to extradite Nagy to Romania, or in other words extradite him to a Soviet satellite. (Rokai et al. 2002; Bogetić 2006, 69)

Tito gave a speech in Pula on November 11 that became a new cause for a breakdown in relations between the two countries. Tito declared that the Hungarian crisis and its tragic outcome had been the result of the support from the Soviet Stalinist Rákosi regime, which had produced the first intervention in October. “This mistake happened,” he said, “because they unfortunately still think that military force can resolve anything. But it doesn’t. See here how an unarmed people so fiercely resists when it has a single goal—to attain freedom and independence.” (Bogetić 2006, 70) On the other hand, Tito justified the intervention of November 4 as a “lesser evil” than “chaos, civil war, counter-revolution, and a new world war.” He stressed that Yugoslav support for this intervention was conditioned by the withdrawal of the Soviet Army as soon as the situation in Hungary stabilized. Tito’s attempt to distance himself from the USSR and the violent methods used in Hungary caused a fierce reaction from Khrushchev and a new crisis in relations. (Žarković 2017) As part of diplomatic efforts to remain on good terms with opposing sides in the Cold War, Tito asked the new Hungarian leader, János Kádár, to guarantee the safe return of Nagy and his associates. Reluctantly and with accusations that Yugoslavia was interfering in Hungarian internal affairs, on November 21, 1956, Kádár guaranteed this in writing. When the leaders of the Hungarian revolution left the Yugoslav embassy the next day, Soviet soldiers arrested them, took them into custody, and transferred them to Romania. Yugoslav protests against the violation of the agreement were in vain, and only provoked new accusations from Budapest of interference in Hungary’s internal affairs.

Even though Yugoslavia’s inconsistent actions during the Hungarian revolution undermined its international credibility, the country failed to develop stable relations with the USSR. In less than a year, a new crisis escalated in 1958, initiated by the Soviet leadership’s dissatisfaction with a new program of the monopolistic party in Yugoslavia, which was undoubtedly reform-oriented, and thus emphasized the distance from the Soviet model of politics and social

organization. Essentially, reconciliation with the Soviet Union was not possible. Pressure on Yugoslavia from Moscow and attempts to force the country back into the Eastern Bloc, which was a contemporary version of nationalistic Russian imperial pretensions in the Balkans, necessarily led to the only possible reply—refusal. The Yugoslav paradigm was dangerous for the unity of the Soviet monolith, and it threatened the fragile legitimacy of the post-Stalinist structure within it. The Yugoslav precedent of independent socialism without reliance on Moscow and the reform basis of the self-government model were perceived in the USSR as disruptive, and with good reason. Therefore, intervention in Hungary was a threat to Yugoslavia and a way to return the “rogue” country to the Soviet sphere of influence. Although this would formally never happen, after 1971–1972 and a more permanent shift on the part of the Yugoslav president to dogmatism, in the 1970s two models of society—Yugoslav and Soviet—would move towards convergence.

REFERENCES:

- Aksjutin, J. 1989. „Hruščov protiv Staljina.“ U *Hruščov: život i sudbina*, edited by Aleksej Serov, fale strane. Moskva: Novosti.
- Banac, I. 1990. *Sa Staljinom protiv Tita*. Zagreb: Globus.
- Bekić, D. 1988. *Jugoslavija u hladnom ratu*. Zagreb: Globus.
- Bešlin, M. 2011. „Odnosi Jugoslavije i Sovjetskog Saveza 1968: između nužnosti saradnje i principa slobode.“ *Istraživanja* 22: 351–368.
- Bogetić, D. 2006. *Nova strategija spoljne politike Jugoslavije 1956–1961*. Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju.
- Clissold, S. 1975. *Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union 1939–1973. A Documentary Survey*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Dedijer, V. 1969. *Izgubljena bitka J. V. Staljina*. Sarajevo: Svjetlost.
- Dimić, Lj. 1998. „Josip Broz, Nikita Sergejevič Hruščov i mađarsko pitanje 1955–1956.“ *Tokovi istorije* 1–4: 23–59.
- Ivanji, I. 2007. *Mađarska revolucija 1956*. Beograd: Samizdat B92.
- Kačavenda, P. (ed). 1999. *Jugoslovensko–sovjetski sukob 1948. godine* (zbornik radova sa naučnog skupa). Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju.
- Kardelj, E. 1980. *Sećanja – borba za priznanje i nezavisnost nove Jugoslavije 1944–1957*. Beograd–Ljubljana: Radnička štampa – Državna založba Slovenije.
- Kuljić, T. 2005. *Tito – sociološkoistorijska studija*. Zrenjanin: Gradska narodna biblioteka „Žarko Zrenjanin“.
- Lis, L., M. 2003. *Državanje Tita na površini – Sjedinjene države, Jugoslavija i hladni rat*. Beograd: BMG.
- Luburić, R. 1999. *Pomirenje Jugoslavije i SSSR-a 1953–1955: tematska zbirka dokumenata*, Podgorica: Istorijski institut Crne Gore.

- Petranović, B., and S. Dautović. 1999. *Velika šizma – četrdesetosma*. Podgorica: CID.
- Radonjić, R. 1979. *Sukob KPJ s Kominformom*. Zagreb: Centar za kulturnu djelatnost SSO.
- Rajak, S. 2011. *Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in the Early Cold War: reconciliation, comradeship, confrontation, 1953–1957*. London: Routledge.
- Rokai, P., Đere, Z., Pal, T. and A. Kasaš. 2002. *Istorija Mađara*. Beograd: Clio.
- Vrhovec, J., and Z. Čepo. (eds.). 1970. *Tajni referat N. S. Hruščova*. Zagreb: Stvarnost
- Žarković, P. 2017. „Jugoslavija i SSSR 1945–1980: Istorijat jednog hladnoratovskog odnosa.“http://www.yuhistorija.com/yug_second_txt01c1.html (last entry 20.9.2017.)

Sovjetsko-jugoslovensko pomirenje kao osnov za razumevanje Titove uloge u Mađarskoj revoluciji 1956.

Prvi sovjetsko-jugoslovenski disput pretvoren u krizu u odnosima između dve države 1948. imao je globalni značaj. Ipak, posle Staljinove smrti sledio je period popuštanja zategnutosti i evolutivnog pomirenja, koje je realizovano međusobnim posetama i potpisivanjem Beogradske (1955) i Moskovske (1956) deklaracije. Navedeni proces neće proći bez tenzija jer su interesi dve zemlje bili suprotstavljeni. Dok je sovjetski lider Nikita Hruščov želeo da vrati Jugoslaviju u interesnu sferu SSSR-a, Tito je opstanak jugoslovenske nezavisnosti, izvojevane tokom sukoba sa Staljinom, smatrao svojim spoljnopolitičkim prioritetom. U takvim okolnostima mađarska pobuna protiv sovjetske okupacije bila je katalizator daljih odnosa Tita i Hruščova, ali su ti odnosi bili i neophodan referentni okvir za razumevanje poteza koje je Jugoslavija povlačila u vreme krize u Mađarskoj u jesen 1956. Titova početna pacifikatorska uloga u Mađarskoj revoluciji pretvorena je u nedvosmisleni podršku sovjetskoj vojnoj intervenciji u prvim danima novembra kada je izgledalo da se komunistički poredak u susednoj zemlji nepovratno ruši. Težak jugoslovenski položaj, izazavan sovjetskim uspehom da Tita učini saučesnikom nasilnog gušenja pobune, bio je pogoršan kada je Sovjetima faktički izručen Imre Nađ, koji se uz garncije sklonio u jugoslovensku ambasadu u Budimpešti.

Ključne reči: Mađarska revolucija, 1956, Sovjetski Savez, Jugoslavija, Nikita Hruščov, Josip Broz Tito, Imre Nađ

Paper received: 15. VIII 2017.

Paper reviewed: 28. VIII 2017.

Paper accepted: 12. IX 2017.