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**FOREWORD**

# THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION OF 1956: Yugoslav and Post-Yugoslav Perspectives

*FIVE YEARS AGO WE LAUNCHED A COLD WAR* research and publishing program covered by *LimesPlus* journal with the issue *Challenging the Shadow of the Iron Curtain* (2013) dedicated to the urban culture and the everyday life in Eastern Europe (Balkans-Finland-Baltic states). This volume, *The Hungarian Revolution of 1956: Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav Perspectives* was conceived during the roundtable discussion of Croatian and Serbian historians held in Belgrade on 13 December 2016. Our main topic was Yugoslavia, with its policies and the public impressions, and the neighboring Hungarian Revolution of 1956. Instead of the semi centennial, we managed to mark only the sixty years from the Hungarian Revolution. The delay probably confirmed unwillingness in a general need to face all the consequences of the absence of organized resistance to the Soviet domination and communism in the Second Yugoslavia. The inability of Yugoslavia to understand and support the Cold War resistance movements in Eastern Europe (DDR, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, occupied and annexed Baltic republics) was one of the permanent symptoms of its general political weakness that led to its violent end and disintegration.

The 1956 was one of the “worst” years of the Cold War. After the failure of the discontents in DDR in 1953, and in Poland and Hungary in 1956, Eastern Europe was left to decay and dictatorship until the Prague Spring in 1968. After the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution, the U.S. left their allies in the Suez crisis. Yugoslavia approached the Soviet Union. The Western Europe remained deprived of political and moral willingness to accept the consequences of the Soviet occupation and repression, and the collectivist experiments in Eastern Europe, regardless the previous experiences, and similarities, with Nazism and fascism.

Yugoslavia played an important role in Hungarian Revolution. Despite the known facts, we needed new research, perspectives and interpretations. The central points were the Khrushchev and Malenkov meeting with the Yugoslav pres-

ident Tito on the Brijuni residential resort, and the forthcoming Tito's success to persuade Khrushchev to choose János Kádár instead of Ferenc Münnich as the new Hungarian leader. The faith of Hungarian refugees, especially these who fled in Yugoslavia, was not of a less importance within the cadre of the neighboring relations.

For me, personally, this topic has an additional peculiar importance. My father, historian and professor Radovan Samardžić collaborated for several years with professor Béla Király, the army general and the commander of the National Guard in the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, who led the attack on the building of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. From 1964 professor Király taught Military History at Brooklyn College, New York. Maybe that is why this volume could be dedicated to all our successful human ties and all our missed chances.

In Belgrade, 25 December 2017.

*Nikola Samardžić*

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**THE HUNGARIAN  
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**Part I**

**THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION  
IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT**



# REVOLUTIONS OF 1848 AND 1956 – PARADIGM OF BUILDING THE NATIONAL IDENTITY OF HUNGARIANS\*

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*The national identity of the Hungarians was built in several stages and several directions during the process of historical longevity. Firstly, it had been profiled through the anti-Ottoman and anti-Habsburg struggle; later on it was formed as unification of the territories under the Crown of St. Stephan, to receive later on anti-Russian and anti-Soviet features. The Revolutions of 1848/1849 and 1956 are particularly characteristic in this respect. The national defeats that followed the aforementioned Revolutions were consolidated by the anti-Habsburg and anti-Turkish tones / 1848 /, and especially anti-Soviet / 1956 /. Thus, the cult of freedom, national sacrifice and tragedy, which was dominant earlier too, has now been upgraded into one of the most important components of the contemporary national identity of Hungarians, particularly highlighted by the reflection of the events of the fall of the Berlin Wall and of Accession to the EU and NATO.*

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**Key words:** Revolution 1848, Revolution 1956, Hungary, national identity, Habsburg, Austro-Hungary, Trianon, Soviets, Imre Nagy

*T*HERE ARE MANY FACTORS THAT DETERMINED the identity frame and the form of the creation of the Hungarian national political concept in the modern age. Deeply entrenched firstly in the anti-Ottoman, and then anti-Austrian tradition, at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the creators of

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\* This article is written as a part of the Republic Project Territories of Vojvodina in the Context of European History (177002)

the concept of the Hungarian political and stately nation had before them an open space with a look into the past. They took as idiom the tradition of the crown of St. Stephen / St. István, which served as a point of support in their ideas and thoughts. The myth of the painful defeat at Mohacs in 1526, when Hungary was the only obstacle to Ottoman advancing on the Christian Europe, represents a part of one of the points of reference that we referred to. Discords caused by the dissolving of the Hungarian medieval state, anarchy among the aristocracy, mutual intolerance within the ruling class, all this is of secondary importance compared to the courageous last act of the defense of the Christian Europe, symbolically connected to the death of the last medieval monarch, King Lajos (Louis). Painful and tragic defeats such as Mohács in 1526, Világos in 1849, then Trianon in 1920, and finally the Revolution in 1956 give a lasting stamp to the sense of martyrdom in shaping of the Hungarian national identity.

The fierce anti-Ottoman and anti-Habsburg fight, reflected in the battles of the Long War in 1593–1606, followed by the Bocskai's uprising, the movement of Gabriel Bethlen, the war of the kurucs of Imre Thököly, and the uprising of Francis Rákóczi were all eclectically added to the idea of a unique Hungarian political nation and Hungarian state and historical law embodied in the Hungarian Parliament. The end of the Great Turkish War (1683–1699) when the prerogatives of Hungarian independence were handed over to Emperor Leopold. Similar was the case of the status of Ardeal resolved by Diploma Leopoldinum (1691). (Rokai et al. 2002; Kann and Zdenek 1984; Okey 2002)

Discontent with the violent re-catholicizing inspired by Cardinal Leopold Kollonitsch was particularly prominent in the anti-Habsburg ideas, already strong in Aerdel. Hence, we'd like to point out to the the uprising of Francis Rákóczi with the slogan *Cum Deo pro Patria et Libertate*, which became one of the key points of support for creation of the national identity of Hungarians. The first dethroning of the Habsburgs in 1708 at Onod, gave rise to the same route during the Revolution of 1848. In addition, there was the adoption of Hungarian Pragmatic Sanction in 1723, which, together with the large number of laws in the 1751, 1764, and 1790–1791, strengthened and determined the idea of state continuity within the Habsburg Empire<sup>1</sup>. It was the Hungarian Pragmatic Sanction that was the *spiritus*

1 At the Diet meeting 1790–1791, the gradual affirmation of the Hungarian language began. Article 16 stipulated the establishment of a Hungarian language department in gymnasiums, academies and universities. Then, in 1805, the Article 4 of the Law

*movens* of the idea to determine the legal and political position of the Hungarians in Monarchy on the legal grounds, and that idea would become the starting point for the negotiations and agreements of both sides all the way up until the Settlement in 1867. (Kann 1964a; Kann 1964b)

In the time of national revival, founding of institutions such as the Academy, library, the National Theater, as well as the launch of a whole series of newspapers and the adoption of laws that replaced the Latin language with Hungarian in the state administration, laid the foundations for the National Revolution, which, in the midst of the European Revolution<sup>2</sup> of 1848, became one of the factors of

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enforced the decision that all the letters of the Hungarian court office and the National Assembly must be written parallelly in Hungarian and Latin. Article no. 8 of the Law from 1830 passed the order that every official, save for those in Croatia, must know the Hungarian. Laws which had as a purpose gradual Hungarianization were all passed by 1832. From January 1, 1834 onwards, only those who knew Hungarian language could become lawyers. Not long afterwards, the proposal was disputed that the laws should be passed only in Hungarian, and the lawsuits on the Royal Council should be conducted also only in Hungarian. According to the article 6 of the Law from 1840, the Latin language was replaced by Hungarian. In the same year, the rule was that in non-German municipalities, all church books should be kept in Hungarian and the transfer should have lasted no more than three years (Article 6, point 7). The Law of 1844 (Article 2, Count 3) stipulated that the members of the Hungarian Parliament could use exclusively Hungarian language. On the other hand, Hungarian politicians considered the session of the councils of 1832–1836 as a reforming one. One of the basic ideas came from Count Miklós Veseleni. According to his idea, the Hungarians were surrounded by the ocean of Slavs and Romanians, so it was necessary to strengthen their own political position and form a new political elite. Regarding the introduction of the Hungarian language, it was considered that the Latin language got obsolete and that there was no possibility of its further use, and that it was necessary to educate people and prepare them for new challenges. From that moment, Hungarian as a language was in the service of legislation, government affairs and especially education. The Law on the Language of 1844 protected the Hungarians from German clerks. German remained the language of correspondence with the imperial authorities. Vasin 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Hungarian national revival began with a greater intensity in the late 18th century. Ferenc Kazinczi is among the reformers of the language. The dialect of the Danube region of Hungary was taken as the basis. The dialect from the area of the upper Tisa was also partially represented. The synthesis of these two dialects made what became contemporary Hungarian. The first standing acting society was founded in 1790 in Pest, while the first permanent theater was founded in 1837 under the name of Pestan Hungarian Theater (since 1840 National Theater). What is considered to be the beginning of the press in Hungary was the publication of *Mercurius Veridicus ex Hungaria* in 1705. The first permanent newspapers were the *Pressburger Zeitung* founded in 1764, and the first newspaper in Hungarian was *Magyar Hirmondo*, which started in 1780. Not long afterwards *Magyar Kurir* came out. Modern press in today's sense of the word begins in the 1930s. The circles close to the Count Szécheni founded *Jelenkor* in 1832. The famous

determining the survival of the Habsburg monarchy, and the permanent determinant of the development of the national identity of the peoples of the Monarchy itself, up until its end in 1918. The fall of the Chancellor Metternich on March 13, 1848, that is the proclamation of the Statute of Freedom in Austria, was a signal and encouragement the youth in Pest to formulate on the following day the Hungarian National Program in 12 points, with the requirements of respect for civil liberties and equality. The first Hungarian government was formed on March 17, led by Lajos Batthyány as president and Lajos Kossuth as the minister of finance<sup>3</sup>. The Hungarian Parliament in Požun very soon (April 11) adopted 31 law (the so-called *April Laws*), which were supposed to completely change the political order of Hungary. The ruling elites in Vienna were left with nothing but to agree on a compromise, since the bulk of the imperial forces was engaged in heavy fighting in Italy, especially since March 1848. However, the peace lasted shortly - until Radezki pacified the situation in Italy, and Windisch-Graetz quenched the Czech Revolution in June 1848. In the meantime, since 1848, Hungarian revolutionary government started its own war with Serbs and Croats who, having the very same Hungarians as the role model, stated their requirements in March and May 1848 (Kann and Zdenek 1984).

Changes on the battlefield, and soon afterwards on the political scene too, prompted the beginning of the war between Austria and Hungary, which began on October 3, 1848. In such a situation, conflicts between imperial and Hungarian Revolutionary Army spurred very quickly. Ban Josip Jelačić became the imperial commissioner, with all military and civil authority. After Radezki's victory in Italy, and the breakdown of the Czech Revolution, the court decided to start the war against the Hungarians as well<sup>4</sup>. Conflicts that lasted for months in which the Hungarian Revolutionary Army recorded great successes gave way to the Hungarian national spirit and, much later, had a considerable influence on creating

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newspapers, *Pesti Hirlap*, came out the first time in 1841 under the editorial office of Lajos Kossuth. The first Hungarian daily newspaper was *Budapesti Hirado* from 1848.

3 First Hungarian Government form 1848 was comprised of President Lajos Batthyáni, Count István Szécheni as Minister of Transport, Lajos Kossuth as Minister of Finances, Ferenc Deák, Minister of Law, József Eötvös, Minister of Education and Religion, Gábor Clausul, Minister of Economy, Bertalan Szemere, Minister of Internal Affairs, Lazar Mesaroš, Minister of Defence, and Prince Paul Esterhazy, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

4 Ban Jelačić began his campaign to Hungary on September 11, 1848. As early as September 14, Bacani decided to form the home-guard troops, and Hungarians were stopped on October 30 in a battle near Schwechat.

an idealistic and romantic picture of the heroic struggle for freedom. Since the beginning of 1849, the Hungarian army was leading the offensive. General Bem defeated imperial troops in Aerdel. The influence of the radical current, led by Count Tokay, general Mór Perczel, and László Madaras was on the rise among the Hungarians. Their main idea was to establish the republic and overthrow of the Habsburgs. The peak of the Hungarian Revolution took place on April 14, 1849, when the Habsburgs were dethroned and when Hungary declared its independence, with Lajos Kossuth as the regent. Strong anti-Habsburg tradition culminated in Debrecen, as a continuation of strong and perceived ideology that that stemmed from the uprising of Ferenc Rákóczi. On August 9, the Russian and Austrian troops defeated the Hungarian army in Timisoara. Kossuth abdicated on August 10th and fled to Turkey. General Artur Gergei surrendered to the Russian army near Világos on August 13, 1849. On October 6, 1849, thirteen Hungarian generals were executed in Arad. The scenes of execution from Arad were permanently incised in the culture of memory as one of the most significant events in the tragic history, a symbol of destruction of the ideal of freedom, the aspirations for respecting the rights and legality, and indication of continuing the persistent and constant struggle of Hungarian elites for their national state within the state of the Habsburgs. In this respect, the Revolution of 1848–1849 represented another important identity link, a thread that connected traditions, which carefully kept the memory of the revolutionary and most beloved politician of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – Lajos Kossuth. In the communist historiography of the Second World War, the cult and spirit of the revolutionary Kossuth was especially well-nurtured and exemplified as an illustration of demolition of the old order and awakening of the new social justice, the republican ideas out of which the grew the ubiquitous and nationalist-romantic image of injustice and the breakdown of the Revolution, reflected in the czar-russian army near Világos. (Микавица et al. 2016)

Since the renewal of the system of limited parliamentarianism / the end of Bach's Absolutism / the passing of the October Diploma (1860) and the February Patent (1861), the idea of a compromise between the Habsburgs and the Hungarian political elites had begun to be implemented and was finally realized with the Settlement in 1867. The core of the politicians gathered around Gyula Andrassy and Deák Ferenc, accepted the dynasty and Austria, but on the foundations of the

so-called Hungarian pragmatic sanctions of 1723<sup>5</sup>. From that moment on, until

5 The issue of reorganizing the Empire began with the October Diploma. The Hungarian part got back the administrative bodies. The Hungarian Royal Regent Council was established in Budim and Hungarian Royal Courtroom was centered in Vienna. The territory of Hungary was reunited. This situation did not last long. The adoption of the February Patent brought new regulations in terms of national centralism. In April 1861, the Hungarian National Assembly was convened. At the session, two currents were formed. The first was led by Ferenc Deák, who is in his *Address* (his option was called the Address Party) insisted on a common state with Austria on the basis of the Pragmatic Sanction. The second current led by count László Teleki (Party of Decrees) considered that the future state must rest on a personal union like the one in 1848. Deák's idea was more dominant. Demands were that Francis Joseph must be crowned as Hungarian king and that the Hungarian government must be formed. Immediately after the submission of the Address, the Parliament was dissolved, because of the refusal of the Hungarian Parliament to send its deputies to the Reichsrat, as a common imperial council. Dissatisfaction of Hungarians was great. In the period 1861–1865 the county system did not work, Aerdel, Croatia and Slavonia were out of Hungarian territories. The entire state apparatus was managed from Vienna. Hungarian politicians led by Deák, József Eötvös, Lajos Moczary and Ágoston Trefort were of the opinion that Hungary must remain part of the Monarchy, but as an equal partner. Aristocracy brought its memorandum in 1863. The writer was Count Apponyi György. An independent Hungarian government with some joint affairs was proposed as a solution. Ever since 1864, negotiations between representatives of the court and Hungarian politicians had been intensified. In April 1865, Deák published his Easter article in which he wrote that Hungarians were ready to pass their laws in line with the needs of the survival of the Empire. Since August 1865, the session of the Hungarian Parliament began, where the preparation and adoption of the Settlement was planned. On February 17, 1870, the Emperor Francis Joseph appointed Gyula Andrassy as Prime Minister. On May 29, 1867, the Parliament voted the 12th article of Law and thus legalized the Settlement (the emperor Franz Jozepf was crowned on June 8, 1867 for the apostolic king of Hungary, while the crown was placed on his head by Gyula Andrassy, the prime minister, former Huszar colonel who had been sentenced to death by the kangaroo court during the Revolution of 1848–1849). The two parts of the monarchy were united in the person of the ruler. Common affairs were: foreign policy, military and finance (for financing the army and foreign policy). In all other matters, member states were completely independent and accountable to parliaments and governments. The common ministers were appointed by the ruler, without agreement with the members of the governments of Austria and Hungary. There was a Collegium comprised of common wealth ministers, while some of the other ministers of the member states were invited to attend some sessions. Above this collegium there were two delegations of the member states, with 60 delegates each. Very important person for the functioning of the newly created state was a joint minister of finance. Out of the eleven ministers of finance appointed by the First World War, only four were Hungarians. As regards the political scene in Hungary, it gradually grew stratified after the Settlement. Deák's party was formed before the adoption of the Settlement in 1866. It was comprised by those who were for settlement with the monarch. There were aristocrats, conservatives, liberals, members of the nobility, citizens, while other than Deák, the leading figures were Eötvös and Andrassy. The supreme opposition party was the Moderate Left led by Kalman Tisa. They

the end of the Monarchy, the anti-Habsburg emotions frequently appeared when the Parliament was discussing financial questions, or those military or foreign affairs interest, mainly as a political platform in terms of pressure on the Viennese court. (Микавица 2011) By gaining their part of the Double Monarchy with wide powers in the internal administration, the Hungarian elites tried to find their model for resolving the national question. The transfer of the Kossuth Lajos's body in 1894 was a manifestation that put the relationship between the Hungarians and the Habsburgs to a test, but did not endanger the state order. Nevertheless, identities-wise, the events from the Revolution lived in the consciousness of the Hungarian elites, and very often the speeches of the Hungarian deputies in the Hungarian Parliament mentioned Hungarian conflicts with the Habsburgs and the necessity of preserving and respecting the Pragmatic sanctions. Often, one could have read about the events in Világos and Arad. In this respect, the assessment of the Russian politics was very often twofold. Depending on the relations of the Austro-Hungarian Empire with Russia, the danger of a new attack of the Russian Empire was kept being mentioned together with the way in which the Revolution had been suppressed. Ever since the time of formation of the Entente Cordiale and the further break between Russia and Austria, insisting on Russian domination in the Slavic world and pointing to the need to connect the Slavs from Monarchy, especially the Serbs with Russia, was becoming more and more intense. Svetozar Miletić, for example, even though he was a critic of the Tsarist regime, called very often on Slavic unity and closer connection with Russia. The same was the case of Laza Kostić and Mihailo Polit Desančić, leader of the Liberals in Hungary. During the Russian-Turkish war of 1876–1877, the Serbian public was daily reported on Russian successes and failures with very often panegyric texts about the Russian army and criticism of the Hungarian elites who celebrated Turkish military success. Mihailo Polit Desančić, especially in his later years, predicted and insisted on the collapse of the Double Monarchy in the potential war with Russia. Very similar ideas were often also made by radical leader Jaša Tomić, which certainly caused

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favored a civil state and rejected the Settlement because of the fear that the Hungarian part would become dependent entirely on the Austrian one. As a main task, the party had the preservation of the independence of Hungary, through a peaceful parliamentary ways. The third important group was the Extreme Left Party (Forty-one-Party) led by Joseph Madarash, whose actual leader was Lajos Kossuth. It demanded a complete separation from Habsburg by peaceful means. (Пал 2001; Kann and Zdenek 1980; Okey 2002; Sked 1989)

suspicion of the Hungarian political public. The Russo-Japanese War of 1903–1905 caused a real flood of negative emotions and mutual debates on both sides. The Serbian liberal press mostly lamented Russian defeats, while the Hungarian press celebrated Japanese victories. Mutual accusations in this regard were expressed at the sessions of the Hungarian Parliament. Serbs and Slovaks, less often Romanians, were portrayed as part of the Russian Pan-Slavic outpost and were characterized as peoples who would be among the first to betray Monarchy and, in the first place, Hungarians. In this particular case, the anti-Russian sentiments were essentially aimed at Pan-Slavism, which especially disturbed the Hungarian elites because of the frequent voices that Monarchy itself should be reorganized in the fashion of Trialism/ especially since 1906. (Vasin 2015)

Regarding the famous events of 1956, the continuity in identity creation is unambiguous and has an important role. The collapse of Hungary (Trianon 1920), then very often the justification of the regime of Horthy (the establishment and return of the old territories seized in 1920, rebuilding of the St. István state). In the interwar Hungary, learning about the loss of historical territories was one of the boiling points of the national tensions. The former Hungary was reduced to a third of its territory, and therefore approaching Mussolini, and then Hitler, was explained by political pragmatism and national (justified) revisionism for the injustices suffered by the winning forces. Within the policy of Horthy's approaching to Italy and Germany, anti-Communist and anti-Soviet ideological concepts had considerable significance. Thus, already from the beginning of the 1930s, the climate of the mixture of revanchism and anti-communism, was flourishing. This was conducive to the strengthening of national frustration, which would also be reflected in the events of Hungarian occupation / liberation of a part of Slovakia in autumn 1940, and the occupation of a part of Yugoslavia in April 1941 / repression of the civilians in Bačka which culminated in January 1942, expulsion of colonists settled after 1918, and settlement of 15,000 Hungarians from Bukovina /.

A significant number of Hungarian units, actively participated in the Eastern Front since 1941, with the ideological matrix of anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism. The defects that Horthy's units experienced with high death toll increased the fear of the Soviet breakthrough in Hungary. The balance was the following: out of 45,000 soldiers every tenth was killed, every third wounded, and three quarters of military equipment was destroyed so the division was returned to Hungary in 16 December 1941. The catastrophic defeat of the Hungarian army of 200,000 people

it the battle of Voronezh in January 1943 / one third of the soldiers were killed, one third captured, was the prelude to the dismantling of Horthy's Hungary. Ever since the second half of 1943, the public was daily informed of the crimes that the Soviet army was committing in the occupied territories. Images of the war with the Soviets in the autumn of 1944, were added to the already existing image, which we already addressed. National tragedies, awareness of defeat, but also the constant return to their own image of values, were an important part of the events of 1956. Deportations, arrests and murders of the Jewish (about 400,000 of them) and persecutions in March 1944, were put in the context of the pressure of Hitler's Nazi Germany. Abdication of Miklós Horthy on October 15–16, 1944, arrival of Ferenc Szálasi and the Arrow Cross Party only accelerated the process of liquidating the Jewish population and destroying of their property, more than it raised resistance to the Soviets. From January 20, 1945 onwards, Hungary effectively ended its active military participation in the war, when the truce was signed in Moscow between the representatives of the USSR, the United States and the United Kingdom. Slowly but surely, since the fall of 1945, the Soviet influence in Hungary was becoming predominant and more permanent. During the second half of 1945 and the first half of 1946, this time 160,000 Germans were deported.

Although on the elections on November 16, 1945 they won 16% of votes, the communists became part of the executive government. The middle class and the small holders who won the election, strongly anti-Soviet-oriented, were suppressed under pressure and eventually marginalized. (Rokai et al. 2002) The methodology of the work of the communist / Bolshevik party that took power in East Europe based on the cult of leaders / dictators was not that much different in Hungary either. During 1945, 620,000 landless people received estates; until 1950, 59,429 persons were trialed before courts (477 were sentenced to death). The Communist Party itself, from several thousand members in the autumn of 1944, reached nearly half a million members by the mid-1945. Leading people were Mátyás Rákosi, Imre Nagy, János Kádár and László Rajk. A special treaty with the USSR was signed on September 25, 1945. On the following in 1947, the Communist Party became the leading political force in the country. A bad foreign policy situation for Hungarian interests that culminated in the expulsion of Hungarians from Slovakia, Zakarpattia and Yugoslavia gave Stalin the opportunity to strengthen the position of the Communist Party which, on the other hand, supported him in his attempts to deal with Broz Yugoslavia. Nationalization of schools, persecution of Catholic priests,

capture of the opponents, were only a part of the coloring that accompanied the strengthening of the power of the Communist Party in Hungary. Stalin's death (March 1953) and the election of Nikita Khrushchev and the re-examination of Stalinist politics influenced also the events in Hungary, firstly hierarchically in the communist party according to the Soviet model by removing Rákosi and his marginalization (July 1953). With the arrival of Imre Nagy, the previous Stalinist policy in Hungary itself started to be questioned. An enormous number of intellectuals gathered around the Petőfi circle (symbolically related to the Revolution of 1848) suggested demands for change, a pronounced anti-Soviet note and a return to certain national traditions forgotten after 1945.

The events of October 1956 begin symbolically on October 6 (the same day when the Hungarian generals, commanders of the Hungarian Revolutionary Army in Arad, were executed in 1849, among which a particularly important place had Serb Janoš Damjanić) when László Rajk, Tibor Senjaji, Andras Salai, György Pálfi (a former Horthy's general who joined the Workers Party), convicted and executed on the mounted process during October 1949, and at the funeral was attended by about 100,000 people. Antal Apró, a member of the Central Committee of the Workers Party, emphasized that it was a matter of rehabilitation of innocent convicts, while the public was looking for the culprit in the Rákosi regime. (Congdon, Kiraly and Nagy 2006)

On October 17, 1956, the association of writers requested for March 15 (1848) to be declared a national holiday as the day of the Revolution / Uprising. Students from the Technical Faculty in Szeged on October 22 requested (in Revolutionary 16 points) for Koshut's coat of arms be returned as the national symbol of Hungary and for the Soviet troops to withdraw from the country. In the meantime, Rakosi withdrew, and the demonstrations were scheduled for October 23. In the following 10 days, until November 4, the political survival of Hungary was being resolved mostly on the streets of Budapest. The rise and fall of Imre Nagy, the formation of the new government on October 25, withdrawal from the Soviet Warsaw Pact on November 1, engaging Cardinal Mindsenti in international political mediation (asylum in the US embassy), together with the famous events in the Yugoslav embassy (November 4–22) and the Soviet tanks on the streets of Budapest, all this gives a sketch for the collective and individual portrait of Hungarian Revolution of 1956. Idea of national and personal freedoms, abolition of a totalitarian regime, struggle for civil rights and freedoms, attempts to bring Hungary

out of the hands of the Soviet authorities were suppressed by Soviet tanks, in street fights and in the final collapse of the Revolution. The epilogue was 2,500 people killed, 20,000 wounded, while in the period from 1956 to 1959, 35,000 people were processed, out of which 22,000 were convicted and 360 executed. In the first weeks after the revolution, 20,000 people left Hungary. The image of the first attempt to overthrow the Soviet authorities remained as a permanent collective identity clue in the minds of Hungarians. (Congdon, Kiraly and Nagy 2006; Kissinger 1994; Calvocoressi 2009; Samardžić 2008)

The Revolutions of 1848 and 1956 represent components in the culture of memory and formation of the national identity that are two of the three points of support for this long process (Rákóczi Uprising). Hundreds of memorials throughout Hungary, symbols and flags from 1956, the constitution of two national holidays in March and October, symbolizing 1848 and 1956, the Museum of Terror and Victims of 1956, but also a constant reminder of the most famous heroes of the nation Koshutt Lajos and the events in Arad 1849, give a picture and a guideline for looking at the idea and creation of contemporary identity in Hungary in today's, turbulent political times. The ideas and images of the two Revolutions that ended in the short-term defeats, in the long-term identity regard gave the possibility to the national elites to upgrade and expand collective consciousness by strengthening the idea of freedom, resistance to foreign violence, as well as the idea of nation's specificity and essential belonging to the Western world. That is why the decision was made in 1989, when a break with the Soviet-Communist politics was decided and succession was made simply and consensually. Hungary's path to the EU and NATO was natural and expected. The Ideas of the Revolutions of 1848 and 1956 are therefore one of the pillars of support of this road, that is in the minds of Hungarians based on the idea of freedom, the struggle for the preservation of Hungary and the wider European and Christian heritage of the old central European state.

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## ***Revolucije 1848. i 1956 – paradigma izgradnje nacionalnog identiteta Mađara***

Nacionalni identitet Mađara izgrađen je u više etapa i više pravaca tokom procesa istorijskog dugog trajanja. On je profilisan najpre kroz antiosmansku i antihabzburšku borbu, da bi kasnije primio oblik objedinjavanja teritorija Krune Sv Stefana i vremenom antiruska i antisovjetska obeležja. Posebno su Revolucije 1848/1849 i 1956. karakteristične u tom pogledu. Nacionalni porazi koji su usledili posle pomenutih revolucija učvršćeni su antihabzburškim i anti-ruskim tonovima /1848/ i posebno antisovjetskim /1956/. Tako se kult slobode, nacionalnog požrtvovanja i nacionalne tragedije koji je bio dominantan i ranije sada nadogradio u jednu od najvažnijih komponenata savremenog nacionalnog identiteta Mađara, posebno naglašenih kroz refleksiju dešavanja od pada Berlinskog zida pristupanja EU i NATO.

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***Ključne reči:*** Revolucija 1848, Revolucija 1956, Mađarska, nacionalni identitet, Habzburzi, Austrougarska, Trijanon, Sovjeti, Imre Nađ

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# HUNGARIAN KALEIDOSCOPE: The 1956 Hungarian Revolution in the Dense Network of International Connections\*

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*"Tell me what you think about Hungary and I will tell you who you are..."*

*Zycie Gospodarce, Warsaw, November 26, 1956*

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*Revolutions are always highly complex events which can complicate historical remembrance. To understand their impact, it is important to take a holistic view of their progression and connections, especially in the interconnected modern world. This paper prevents some of the variety of impacts of the event and the ways in which various networks, from the individual to the international, were affected by and affected the event. Incorporating the multitude of networks and positions affected by the revolution allows for a construction of a more complex understanding of history. While the space available does not allow for a full investigation of the variety of networks touched on by the revolution of 1956 it, by providing a sample of the complex networks involved, provides a new framework for further research. Taking a holistic approach to the revolution this paper reviews the variety of complex networks affected by the revolution and the impact of existing networks and systems of belief on the responses to the crisis.*

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**Key words:** Networks, Hungarian Revolution, 1956, Historical Memory, Refugees

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1956 was a turbulent year for both the Socialist and Capitalist world. The year added the “Secret Speech”, a crisis in Poland, a revolution in Hungary, and a war over the Suez Canal to a world still recovering from the Korean War and the Formosa Crisis. However, the Hungarian revolution was no simple increase in tension as it aggravated tensions within the Socialist bloc, revealed underlying hypocrisies in US foreign policy, and resonated with Hungarian émigré communities and flooded the west with a wave of refugees. How should we, more than fifty years after the event, understand the complexities involved in the event itself and the responses by various governments and organizations throughout the world?

In order to understand this, we must recognize the nature of the interconnected world in which we live and have lived. All actors are embedded in a dense network of connections, from the bipolarity of the interstate system, to religious networks, to the inter-personal networks formed through family and community. The existence of these networks complicates any attempt to understand the dramatic events which took place in Hungary 1956 and explains the variety of reactions to the event. Despite this complication, it is important to take a holistic approach because it is specifically these dense networks, the interactions between them, and the impact of the event upon them which must be remembered. To ignore any one of these networks, such as the Jewish exodus from Hungary or the impact on Hungarian émigré communities in Canada and the US, is to ignore important aspects of the impact of the revolution. Indeed, the study of networks allows cultural and historical studies to move beyond presumptions of causality to study the transformation of forms and contact between different forms (Levine 2015, 113).

Admittedly this is a project which cannot be entirely undertaken in the space available in the space allowed. However, just because it is impossible to optimize it does not mean that it is not a valuable undertaking. This article shall attempt to add to the discussion on the remembrance of this tumultuous event by highlighting the variety of networks which were touched by the revolution and attempt to show how it is necessary to take this holistic approach to remembrance. Proceeding first through a discussion of the event the article will then proceed through a discussion of the variety of networks; national and international, local and global,

24 | which were impacted by the events of 1956.

## 2. HISTORY

The Socialist bloc in 1956 was rocked by a fundamental crisis of leadership and confidence when the process of de-Stalinization formally began as Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev. Khrushchev attempted to exorcise the ghost of Stalin from the Soviet system by denouncing Stalin, and his crimes, to the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU and to have his speech printed and distributed amongst the communist parties in the bloc (Paczkowski and Bukharin 2015, 372). Intending to shore up support at home and to expose the crimes of the “cult” of Stalin so a new historical memory could be constructed the speech instead provoked reactions and questions which pushed the interrogation of the past and of the system beyond the ambiguous “official” line taken in the speech (Jones 2013, 23–4). The first cracks appeared in Poland where, in addition to dealing with a crisis in leadership caused by the resignation of the entire Polish Politburo, workers began demonstrating in Poznan demanding increased bread and better conditions (Luthi 2008, 54). These protests, which were eventually resolved to the satisfaction of the Soviets and to a certain extent the protesters, served as an inspiration for the events in Hungary.

Students began protesting, officially, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October when students from the Technical University joined those of the Arts Faculty and marched together to the statue of General Bem, a hero from the revolution of 1848 (Cox 2006, 42). However, events quickly spiralled out of the governments control and by the 24<sup>th</sup> Soviet troops had been requested by General Secretary of the Hungarian Working People’s Party Ernő Gerő (Granville 2001, 453). The popular ex-Chairman of the Council of Ministers Imre Nagy was invited back into the government that night and, despite initial optimism, it became clear that events were beyond his control and the Soviets invaded to overthrow his regime and install János Kádár (Cox 2006, 42). These events, which proceeded with all the turmoil and chaos as befits a revolution, touched on many networks from the international to the national which helped frame their interpretation of and responses to the events.

## 3. CHINA

As there was no independent media in China during the 1950s it represents the least networked state to be discussed here. However, there still existed networks of individuals within the ruling clique of China and of course China was embedded in the international system and as such was embedded in the political

and ideological networks which made up the system. Internally the party created a single, official narrative of events as presented in its newspaper: *The People's Daily* (Renmin Ribao). However, this presentation of events was by no means a single coherent discourse which reflected the evolving position of the regime at different stages of the revolution.

October 27 marked the first report in *People's Daily* titled: "Students in Budapest and other cities held peaceful demonstrations; counterrevolutionary elements infiltrated and created armed riots; Hungarian government invited Soviet army in Hungary to restore order" which set the tone for the following few days that the political upheaval was dying down<sup>1</sup>. November 1<sup>st</sup>, the newspaper published the "*Declaration by Soviet Government on the Principles of Development and further Friendship and Cooperation between the Soviet Union and Other Socialist States*", in which the Soviet government said it was ready to negotiate the withdrawal of its army in Budapest with the new Nagy government.<sup>2</sup> On the following day, the paper published the Chinese government's statement supporting the Soviet stance<sup>3</sup> but this peace was not to last as, however, and the relaxed tone lasted only until November 4. An editorial on the front page claimed that the Nagy government "is not *halting* its treacherous activities against Hungarian socialism and Hungarian national interests" and declared its support for "Hungarian working people's struggle"<sup>4</sup> On 5<sup>th</sup> November, the entire front page was dedicated to the developments in Hungary and included a report that "counterrevolutionaries" had humiliated Chinese embassy personnel<sup>5</sup> and another article which described that "Nagy government and counterrevolutionaries had completely exposed themselves"<sup>6</sup>. Thereafter the reports in *People's Daily* finally became consistent, celebrating the "great victory of Hungarian people" while condemning the Nagy regime which "paved the way for the counterrevolutionaries"<sup>7</sup>.

With an uncritical glance at those reports, one might believe that the confusing position on the Hungarian Revolution of *People's Daily* simply mirrored

1 *People's Daily*, October 27 1956, 5.

2 *People's Daily*, November 1 1956, 1.

3 *People's Daily*, November 2 1956, 1.

4 *People's Daily*, November 4 1956, 1.

5 *People's Daily*, November 5 1956, 1.

6 *People's Daily*, November 5 1956, 1.

26 | 7 *People's Daily*, November 5 1956, 1.

the volatility of the Soviet policy towards the uprising. In reality the situation was more complex and was based on both the interpersonal and international networks of the Chinese Communist Party. Indeed, even something as basic as coverage of the event was determined by the ability of information to pass through the Chinese diplomatic network. *People's Daily* did not report on the event until the 27 October (Zhihua 2007, 24) as communications between the Chinese embassy in Budapest and the Foreign Ministry in Beijing had broken down from 23 to 26 October. This does not mean that the government was unaware of the events as Khrushchev informed Liu Shaoqi that Soviet troops had entered Budapest on 24 October, with Liu deciding not to make a comment. Thus, Chinese party did not play a role in the decision of first Soviet military intervention (Zhihua 2007, 26; Vámos 2014).

From 27 to 29 October, Beijing was promoting inter-Communist state relationship based on *Pancho Shila*, in an attempt to weaken Soviet control over other socialist countries (Zhu 2016, 82). This was the reason behind the Soviet declaration on equal relations adopted on 30 October, which was then published in *People's Daily* on 1 November. However, Mao soon changed his mind after reading Soviet cable report on Hungarian situation on 30 October (Zhihua 2007, 32; Zhu 2016, 83). Chinese Party now stood firmly against Soviet withdrawal from Hungary. On the next day, the Soviet presidium changed their mind at Liu's suggestion. This time China's role was crucial to the decision of the second Soviet intervention (Zhihua 2007, 24).

This reveals the network effects of the positioning of the Chinese government and individuals. Although all avowedly, at the time, part of the same international movement the Chinese were unwilling to take any action or make any statement about the events in Hungary until they could verify the information for themselves and thus had little influence on events in Hungary during the revolution itself. The decision to re-invade, however, was more complex as Chinese leadership prompted the Soviet decision to oppose the Nagy government after receiving reports through the Soviet information network. Thus, information from the Soviet network was fed through the ideological lens of the Chinese leadership before being fed back into the Soviet Presidium. The network effects inherent in the Chinese and Soviet position thus allowed the Chinese government to position itself as an anti-imperialist bulwark internationally, through their role in the Ko-

rean War and recent Formosa Incident, while also hiding the weaknesses of their own centralized information network.

#### **4. UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Although we cannot know the impact of the Hungarian Revolution on the Chinese population we can study how the events resonated with the various networks and communities which make up the US. All levels of society were impacted, from the government down to civil society, by both the events and their fallout. The networks which were affected were changed for years to come which in turn impacted further networks both revealing the complexity of the events and the complexity of the interaction of networks in society.

Coverage of the events in Hungary was spotty at best which shaped popular reaction to the events and refugees. Although coverage began on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, which is admittedly ten days after the beginning of the revolution, some American news sources failed to provide full details until November 24<sup>th</sup> when *The Saturday Evening Post* finally deigned to cover the event (Varga 2002, 125). Even when they covered the event the facts were misleading or false due to the difficulty of establishing and maintaining reliable information networks on the other side of the Iron Curtain. Several newspapers assumed initially that Hungary would be allowed to follow its own independent path to Socialism and many assumed that Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia had been responsible for the uprising, at least indirectly (Varga 2002, 128).

The US establishment's response to the crisis was equally delayed and half-hearted, reflecting both the sheer volume of concurrent international events and underlying contradictions in US policy. Although international law considered the Soviets to be aggressors by the second intervention the US failed to offer anything substantial to support the Hungarians (Wright 1957, 268). The first US speeches given on the subject deplored the actions of the regime and offered sympathy for the people (Borhi 2004, 297) which was in line with US policy (Borhi 2016, 118). The US had been broadcasting messages of its "liberation policy" and "rollback" strategy through the Radio Free Europe since 1951 (Lendvai 2008, 185). Despite these stern words, and a half decade of strong diplomatic language, the US establishment chose to assure the Soviet leadership that there would be no intervention (McCauley 1981, 780). This contradiction, combined with the US me-

dia's focus on Poland and the Suez crisis, allowed Eisenhower to claim that he was defending freedom while taking no specific action (Varga 2002, 130). This position was vehemently opposed by the military which opposed any attempt to close off possible courses of action arguing that it might harm US credibility as an ally (Marchio 2002, 795). In the long term, it also forced a change in policy away from fostering a "spirit of resistance" and CIA action towards supporting the breakup of the Soviet empire by fostering nationalism (Marchio 2002, 787).

Humanitarian tendencies in the US rose to the fore after the failure of the US to respond forcefully to the crisis, supported almost universally by the wider US political establishment (Markowitz 1973, 52). The Government allocated \$40,000,000 to help which augmented the \$18,000,000 which was voluntarily raised (Sapir 1958, 310). Vice President Richard Nixon even flew to Austria to visit the refugee camps and a rapid response system was put in place which brought in, successfully, 38,000 refugees (Markowitz 1973, 58). While this was the largest number per capita it pales in comparison with other nations when wealth is considered as the initial outpouring of sympathy was eventually replaced with fears of communist infiltration (Markowitz 1973, 52). Indeed, this fear was present at the outset as the US banned refugees who were former communist party members from coming after December 27, 1952, unless they could prove they'd been involuntary members or were "defectors" (*United States: Immigration and Nationality Act* 1952, Sections 212 (a) (28) (I) (ii)). This contradiction, between the aspirations of US policy and the depths of US fears, would be a recurring theme in the Cold War and especially shaped the policy of the same Richard Nixon when he later became president (Kolodziej 1976, 125).

The issue of refugees revealed the complexity of the US's position, balancing its domestic history with its diplomatic needs. US governmental legal practice had not, historically, even distinguished between refugees and immigrants (Carey 1953, 66). However, progress was made prior to the revolution to deal with the war in Europe which culminated in the Displaced Persons Act of 1948 which allowed 341,000 as an emergency measure. Although this was not the first instance of the US making a distinction between refugees and immigrants it was the first emergency measure to deal with a specific refugee crisis which provided precedent for the invocation of parole power by the Attorney General to allow for an emergency group of 16,500 refugees, out of the 38,000, to be brought in (Roberts 1982, 4). The decision also overturned longstanding tradition which banned the importation of

workers who had been promised work upon arrival (Carey 1953, 69). Indeed, the US government took out advertisements asking for job offers to be sent in, including in academic journals (“Jobs for Hungarian Refugees” 1957, 187). However, it would take until 1980 for the US to adopt the UN’s definition of a refugee (Huyck and Bouvier 1983, 40). This reflects continuing ambivalence and difficulty within domestic legal and political networks towards bringing US domestic legislation in line with international humanitarian law.

The Jewish community in the US was particularly affected by this passage as, although a shocking 2% of the Hungarian population fled the Soviet invasion, 14% of the Hungarian Jewish population fled. This influx greatly altered the makeup of Jewish communities in the US in the Jewish areas of cities as entire communities were transplanted from Hungary to the US (Sapir 1958, 311). This transportation created a series of network clusters as pre-existing nodes in the Hungarian Jewish network community moved en-masse to the US (Levine 2015, 120). Non-Jewish refugee arrivals, however, did not experience the same concentration as the Hungarian community in the US as, while they were generally concentrated in Greater New York, they were in no way as concentrated as the Jewish Hungarian community often due to intra-group conflicts such as class and politics (Kosa 1956, 367). They did, in the end, make up the third largest contingent of Hungarians in the large Hungarian New Brunswick community disrupting local community networks and helping establish new, transnational networks with communities still in Hungary (Tamas 1997, 620)

## **5. SOCIALIST WORLD**

As in China little to no data exists on the individual networks impacted by the event and as such the network effects which can be studied are the interpersonal networks between leaders and leading cliques and the impact of technological networks on information diffusion and policy construction. A perfect confluence of these two networks was at play in the Romanian response and understanding of the crisis. Romania took an actively anti-Nagy stance to the revolution due to the reports issued by the Romanian ambassador to Hungary, Ion Popescu. His reports to the Romanian government were repeatedly criticized for being of poor quality, being usually late and even involving obvious spelling mistakes (Granville 2010, 312, 315). Instead of relying on direct information gather he often relied simply on

the reports generated by the East German ambassador Sepp Schwab, thus compounding his previous pro-Rákosi biases by parroting the Soviet line on the revolt rather than investigating the real causes (Granville 2010, 306). However, despite repeated reprimands by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs his close personal friendship with the leader Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, due to their time spent together in prison (Granville 2010, 316), he maintained his position and was even promoted afterwards (Granville 2010, 330).

Technological networks also disrupted both the Romanian and other governments' attempts to gather information about the crisis. Due to the violence communication lines were patchy during the crisis, as with the Chinese embassy, and newspapers stopped reporting after the fact as journalists went on strike (Granville 2010, 326). This shaped the understanding of events as some networks were disrupted while others managed to operate, changing with story was disseminated. Polish embassies and journalists maintained close links with the populace at large, thus shaping the Polish line to critique the "Rákosi- Gerő" clique (Granville 2003, 282–284) which contrasted with the Soviet line blaming foreign agents which was adopted by the Romanian establishment (Granville 2010, 306). This allowed the Polish government to walk the fine tightrope of reporting on the situation while maintaining sufficient allegiance to Moscow to avoid an intervention there (Granville 2003, 286). In East Germany, Walter Ulbricht performed the exact opposite feat as he was able to use the Stasi, an information network, and his interpersonal connections with the Soviet regime to enforce Stalinist discipline despite the emergence of the destalinization campaign even evidence of popular violence against communists in the GDR (Granville 1998).

As it was outside the Warsaw Pact, Yugoslavia was a unique case in the socialist world with its own networks, both personal and ideological. Tito maintained tentative links with Khrushchev and the Soviets, including meeting with the Soviets in 1955 and signing a joint declaration in Belgrade which was interpreted in the West as an attempt to allow Tito to "act as a kind of branch manager for some of the satellites" (Thorning 1956, 101). These meetings, however, were overblown and instead should be understood to be an outcome of Khrushchev's attempt to unify the Socialist camp through interpersonal network contact which continued through the revolution (Zonova 2007, 198). Even though these meetings came with substantial aid packages, including a promise of a combined \$456 million from the Eastern Bloc (Lovitt 1958, 159), these efforts were complicated due to the presence

of Yugoslav reporters and academics at meetings of Hungarian dissidents before the revolution (Granville 2003, 275). Indeed, even the message of Destalinization was complicated as it was filtered through the internal ideological network of Yugoslavia leading Tito to believe that it would lead to sovereign equality of all Socialist states, not solely being confined to Soviet-Yugoslav relations (Barghoorn 1956, 30). Rhetorically the situation was further complicated due to Tito's continued statements in support of the superiority of the "Yugoslav Way" which created the illusion of an offensive attitude much like Eisenhower's "Liberation" rhetoric, both of which came from a position of geo-political stalemate (Granville 1998, 497). The arrival, and generally temporary stay, of 20,000 refugees from the Hungarian revolution (Kosinski 1978, 321) created real consequences for this rhetoric, bringing the domestic and international networks into direct connection. Although these refugees paled in comparison with the 502,000 Hungarians in Yugoslavia, as of the 1953 census, the delicate national situation in Yugoslavia required equally delicate management, a situation of which Tito was well aware (Ludanyi 1979, 233).

The complexity of these networks in the region help explain the variety of responses to the crisis and why many of the aims of destalinization, such as repairing the rift with Yugoslavia, failed to achieve their goal. Destalinization as a process revealed the tension inherent in Soviet policy: too much control weakens domestic support while too much autonomy threatens control (Jones 1977, 220). However, to simply place the states in the region upon this spectrum is to reduce the complexity of regional personal, information, and cultural networks to a single issue. Tito's complex relationship with the revolution, including fears of nationalistic spill-over and violence, played into his initial support of the Soviet invasion while his need to visibly appear and act independently of the Soviet Union vis a vis the third world and the West led him to allow Nagy asylum and thus led to the re-setting of Soviet-Yugoslav relations to their initial frosty status before destalinization began once Nagy was abducted (Granville 1998, 702). Indeed, the same ethnic fears were used as intellectual cover by Popescu in his messages shaping both his view of the crisis and the view of the Romanian government (Granville 2010, 316–317).

## 6. WESTERN WORLD

The international networks affected by these events represent the variety of communities as well as the relations between networks. Communist parties in Western Europe were all strongly negatively affected by these events, shedding members both locally and nationally (Thornton and Thompson 1997, 73). This was due to both the psychological impact of the “secret speech” and due to verbal and physical abuse by the general populace (Thornton and Thompson 1997, 82). Indeed, the Dutch Communist Party headquarters were the locations of protests and even riots after the second Soviet intervention (Hellema 1995, 174). However, this did not necessarily lead to the complete collapse of these parties as some managed to negotiate a subsidy from the Soviets which helped compensate for their loss in membership funds (Thornton and Thompson 1997, 73) while others distanced themselves intellectually from the Soviet line following furious internal debate (Denitch 1978, 151). The question of which parties could and did choose to continue to follow the Soviet line was down to informal network effects as, after the disbanding of the Cominform, there was no formal organization dedicated to coordinating and enforcing alignment with the Soviet brand of communism and control and influence was disseminated through networks of world communist leaders and apparatchiks (Bracke 2007, 58). Thus, individual social networks within communist party leadership groups helped maintain or weaken the communist parties in Western Europe as those who maintained coherence under domestic forms of legitimation, and thus were not so closely tied in with Soviet communism, were able to maintain support (Bracke 2007, 55).

Austria, as a country freshly liberated from Soviet occupation, was embedded in a particularly dense network of ideology, international politics, and population movements. The first impact was to drive Austria further into neutrality both as politicians reacted to the events and as the populace learned first-hand of the Soviet invasion (Lendvai 2008, 203). How could they not be impacted by the arrival of 95,000, then 150,000, and finally 170,000 refugees from November to January (Sapir 1958, 307)? These refugees were not simply new arrivals in the region as, due to the historic connections between Austria and Hungary, interpersonal and intellectual networks existed between these communities which in part acted as a draw for refugees (Granville 2006, 64). Indeed, just as individuals were flowing from Hungary to Austria after the revolution information had flown from Austria

to Hungary beforehand which inspired reformist farming communities along the border (Zonova 2007, 199). This jeopardized the newly adopted Swiss model of militarized neutrality, absent any guarantees from major powers. Internationally this was tricky as the US Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, wanted to use Austria as a Trojan horse to pull other EE states towards the US (Bischof 2000, 150). While this plan was obviously overly-ambitious, as has been addressed above, the events did have similar effects as with other Western countries with the added effect of rebuilding the perceptions of the armed forces, helping them overcome the shame of the Anschluss of 1938, and helping with the rehabilitation of their position in the state (Granville 2006, 70). To this day Austrian politics is riven by the revised position of the Austrian military, interfering with attempts to grapple with Austria's World War II past and stoking the hopes of the far right (Musner 2000, 79).

In terms of international alliances there was no concerted response due to the complexities of international networks. Although there was widespread condemnation led in part by Pakistan (Rajput 1973, 4) little else was done. The Dutch attempted to lead a diplomatic embargo of the Soviet Union but this had fallen apart by the 27<sup>th</sup> of December (Hellema 1995, 176). Indeed, despite the harsh language of Dutch diplomats they were domestically even harsher than the US when it came to the issue of refugees with Prime Minister Drees even requiring all refugees to sign a declaration that any "residence in the Netherlands would only be temporary" (Hellema 1995, 180). This distrust of immigrants also took on a racial element as the team in charge of selecting refugees for Dutch visas was instructed not to select any communists, AVH agents, criminals or gypsies (Hellema 1995, 181). Thus, domestic level considerations, and even individual ones such as racism, were transmitted into international policy which complicated any attempt to close ranks against Hungary and the Soviet Union. Even artistic policy was affected as the Hungarian pavilion at the 1958 Brussels Expo was used to legitimize the new Kadar regime for an international, individual, audience (Peteri 2012, 139).

Unlike the Dutch, the Canadians let in many refugees, without the same restrictions, which provided new impetus for the local community. Although the post-war wave of immigration of displaced persons had started in 1947 the stream of refugees became a torrent after the revolution, and after sustained efforts by Hungarian social and cultural networks within Canada (Lanphier 1981, 114),

34 | which resulted in 30,000 refugees arriving by the end of 1957 (Dreisziger 2000,

249). The class and cultural makeup of these refugees, different than that of the members of the pre-war wave of immigrants, aided in the collapse of leftist Hungarian organizations in Canada and the creation of new cultural ties and forms of media both within Canada and across the border with the US. New publications, such as *Kanadai Magyarorsag* and the Jewish *Menora Egyenloseg* shifted established new readerships in the region with the latter even becoming the principle paper of Magyar Jews in North America (Dreisziger, 2000, 250). These same emigrant community networks fed back into international individual and political networks in Europe when the émigrés returned on travel, often returning home to Hungary bringing stories of the West and even while travelling in Europe where they spread stories of Hungary and were, for a while after the revolution, considered as victims and heroes through-out the West (Lenart and Cooper 2012, 381).

## 7. CONCLUSION

What is to be learned about these events from this broad and winding study? First and foremost is that any attempt to draw singular lines of causation from event to conclusion are problematic. What is more important is to understand the sheer volume of voices who, by their cacophony, can shape policy in ways which would seem unclear from any singular study. This also affects the issue of memory as, when looking back for clear lines of causation, it can be easy to inadvertently miss out on some of the multitude of actors and networks who were touched and shaped by such an event.

Introducing a study of networks and network effects creates a more complete picture of the event and of those affected by it. Diaspora, religious, and political communities across Europe and the Western World, shattering pre-existing linkages and reshaping their ways of being and understanding. Information networks shaped leader's responses to the crisis and popular understanding of the events. Further research is needed to examine how exactly information was passed from node to node and how these networks interacted with other community and political networks. Failing to do so results in a partial understanding and memory of the event. While all information is valuable, including in depth studies of individual communities and leader's positions and responses, without a conceptual framework the information remains isolated and unrelated. This volume of actors and connections needs to be understood when remembering an event or the vari-

ety of impacts can be lost. And what is the study of history if not the study of the wonderful variety of events and personal experiences which make up our story?

## PERIODICALS

- “Celebrating the great victory of Hungarian people.” 1956. *People’s Daily*, November 5.
- “Declaration by the Soviet government on the Principles of Development and further Friendship and Cooperation between the Soviet Union and other socialist states.” 1956. *People’s Daily*, November 1.
- “Nagy government and counterrevolutionaries have completely exposed their true selves. Bloody terror reached an unprecedented scale.” 1956. *People’s Daily*, November 5.
- “Our embassy personnel in Hungary were humiliated by counterrevolutionaries.” 1956. *People’s Daily*, November 5.
- “Patriotic Hungarian People, struggle for the defence of socialism and defeat of counter-revolutionary restoration!” 1956. *People’s Daily*, November 4.
- “Students in Budapest and other cities held peaceful demonstrations. Counterrevolutionary elements infiltrated and created armed riots. Hungarian government invited Soviet army in Hungary to restore order.” 1956. *People’s Daily*, October 27.
- “The statement of the government of People’s Republic of China on the declaration by the Soviet government on 30 October 1956.” 1956. *People’s Daily*, November 2.

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### ***Mađarski kaleidoskop: Mađarska revolucija 1956. u gustoj mreži međunarodnih veza***

Revolucije uvek predstavljaju izuzetno kompleksne događaje koji uslođavaju i istorijsko pamćenje. Razumeti njihov uticaj značajno je za holistički pristup njihovom razvoju i vezama, posebno u umreženom savremenom svetu. Ovaj rad nastoji da očuva pojedine od mnoštva uticaja ovog događaja i načina na koje su različite mreže, od individualnih do međunarodnih, bile pod uticajem ovog događaja. Uključujući mnoštvo mreža i pozicija pod uticajem revolucije omogućilo je konstruisanje mnogo složenijeg razumevanja istorije. Kako prostor članka nije dozvoljavao potpunije istraživanje različitih mreža koje su dotaknute revolucijom 1956, odabirom određenih primera složenih umrežavanja, omogućilo je novu platformu za dalja istraživanja. Uzimajući holistički pristup revoluciji u ovom radu se daje pregled različitih složenih mreža dotaknutih revolucijom i uticaja postojećih mreža i sistema vrednosti u recepciji krize.

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***Ključne reči:*** mreže, Mađarska revolucija, 1956, istorijsko pamćenje, izbeglice

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Lessons and Controversies**

**Part II**

**THE FOREIGN REPORTS**



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# AMERICAN AND BRITISH DIPLOMATS IN YUGOSLAVIA ON HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION OF 1956

*Original Scientific Paper*  
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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.*

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**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 Bandung<sup>1</sup>. The journey of Soviet highest officials to Belgrade came as a great

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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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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”.<sup>4</sup> 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 25<sup>th</sup> 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 Tito<sup>5</sup>, 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.<sup>6</sup> 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

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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."<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> 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 14<sup>th</sup>, 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 9<sup>th</sup>, 1955. This was an indication that there were still some uncertainties in Belgrade.<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> did the Polish United Workers' Party (hereinafter: PUWP) do what was expected. First, there were protests in Poznań on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 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.<sup>11</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup>, 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-

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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 27<sup>th</sup>, 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 18<sup>th</sup>. Ernö Gerö 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 Ernö Gerö, Mikoyan went to report to Tito (Ivanji 1956, 56, 58, 67–68). He returned to Budapest on July 21<sup>st</sup>. Gerö 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 24<sup>th</sup>, Gerö 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.<sup>12</sup> 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 22<sup>nd</sup>, 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”.<sup>13</sup> Leo Mates, the Yugoslav ambassador to the United States, told Secretary of State Dulles, on June 29<sup>th</sup>, 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.<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup>

In the late summer of 1956, the Yugoslav parliamentary delegation travelled to Czechoslovakia. On the same day, September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1956, the Polish Sejm delegation visited Belgrade. A day later, a trade union delegation headed by Đuro Salaj travelled to Bucharest.<sup>16</sup> 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.<sup>17</sup> In the up-

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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 20<sup>th</sup> that Nikita Khrushchev had arrived in Belgrade for a short vacation.<sup>18</sup> 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".<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup> Previously, on September 21<sup>st</sup>, *Politika* newspapers had announced that the Indian Ensemble was to have concerts at the National Theater in Belgrade on September 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, and then move on to Novi Sad, Zagreb and Ljubljana, but the plan was changed.<sup>21</sup> On September 24<sup>th</sup>, *Borba* newspapers reported that the ensemble had arrived and had been welcomed in Belgrade.<sup>22</sup> 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".<sup>23</sup> 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

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*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.”<sup>24</sup> 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.<sup>25</sup> 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 28<sup>th</sup>. “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.<sup>26</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup>, 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”<sup>27</sup>...” *Politika* only added that Gerő took a walk to the nearby hill with Tito and Khrushchev, but that was all the news about him.<sup>28</sup> Nobody wrote about this meeting anymore. John Foster Dulles, whose communication with Belgrade was intensified, said on October 2<sup>nd</sup>

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

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

26 NARA, September 27<sup>th</sup>, 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.<sup>29</sup> 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.<sup>30</sup> The national funeral of the "Titoists", held on October 6<sup>th</sup>, 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)<sup>31</sup>. *Borba* reported on October 15<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>32</sup>

## **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.<sup>33</sup> 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 11<sup>th</sup>.<sup>34</sup> 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".<sup>35</sup> 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.<sup>36</sup> The interviews of the leading politicians were considered satisfactory for the Yugoslavs, with an emphasis on “self-management and democracy”.<sup>37</sup>

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 22<sup>nd</sup>), Gerö did not seem to be afraid of the events in Hungary anymore. He left Yugoslavia for Budapest on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 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 24<sup>th</sup>, 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.<sup>38</sup>

On the evening of October 24<sup>th</sup>, 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 12<sup>th</sup>, 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 12<sup>th</sup>, 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.<sup>39</sup>

Nagy was appointed Prime Minister on October 25<sup>th</sup> 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 25<sup>th</sup>, 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.<sup>40</sup>

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

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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 24<sup>th</sup>, 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 26<sup>th</sup>, 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.<sup>42</sup> 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.<sup>43</sup>

The US analysts reported on October 26<sup>th</sup> 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 26<sup>th</sup>, NH 10110/105, Reports on reactions of Yugoslaves concerning events in Hungary, October 26<sup>th</sup>, 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 26<sup>th</sup>, 1956.

at least in Eastern Europe, were not the same as those of the Soviet Union.”<sup>44</sup> The Yugoslav views were faithfully reflected in one unsigned commentary in *Borba* on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1956. “He praised Gomulka’s choices and decisions on the Eighth Plenum as a clear measure of socialism strengthening in Poland.”<sup>45</sup> 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 Gomulka 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.”<sup>46</sup> 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

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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 26<sup>th</sup>, 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 27<sup>th</sup>, 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.<sup>47</sup>

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.<sup>48</sup> 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.<sup>49</sup>

The commentary of Jozef Smole, who had previously commented on Hungarian developments commentary, in *Borba*, published on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 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.<sup>50</sup> 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

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

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

49 NARA, RG84, Records of the Department of State, 320 Greece 1956 to Hungary Nagy 1958; October 27<sup>th</sup>, 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 29<sup>th</sup>, 1956, Riddleberger (Smole Editorial Today...)

they had achieved their goals.<sup>51</sup> Only a day later, on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.<sup>52</sup>

On October 30<sup>th</sup>, 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

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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”.<sup>53</sup> 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.<sup>54</sup>

The Yugoslav media reported on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 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.<sup>55</sup> This close co-operation with Poland continued, so the Americans reported that, on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 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.”<sup>56</sup>

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.<sup>57</sup> 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.<sup>58</sup> On November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 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 4<sup>th</sup>, 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.”<sup>59</sup> 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”<sup>60</sup>

Riddleberger talked to Kos again on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 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 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> (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

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58 FO371/122389, Northern Department, From Chancery, Belgrade To Southern Dept, 10<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>61</sup> The British-French intervention began on October 31<sup>st</sup>. 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.<sup>62</sup> 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”.<sup>63</sup>

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 5<sup>th</sup>, 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 5<sup>th</sup>, 1956. (Riddleberger).

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

63 NARA, RG84, Records of the Department of State, 320 Greece 1956 to Hungary Nagy 1958; November 5<sup>th</sup>, 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.<sup>64</sup>

The Hungarian crisis turned increasingly into a refugee crisis. Diplomats from the US Consulate in Zagreb went on a hunt near Čakovec, on November 6<sup>th</sup>, 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.<sup>65</sup> 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 10<sup>th</sup>, 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.<sup>66</sup>

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

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

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

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

SFRY border would be a good solution for Belgrade.<sup>67</sup> 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.<sup>68</sup>

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.<sup>69</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup>, 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.<sup>70</sup>

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 14<sup>th</sup>, 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 10<sup>th</sup>, 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.<sup>71</sup>

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."<sup>72</sup> 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.<sup>73</sup>

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 23<sup>rd</sup>, claiming that everybody left the embassy on their own will. Nagy left it on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 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-

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

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

73 NARA, RG 84, Records of the Department of State, 320 Greece 1956 to Hungary Nagy 1958; November 24<sup>th</sup>, 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.<sup>74</sup>

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 24<sup>th</sup>, 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.<sup>75</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup>. By then, the Yugoslavs had been quite pessimistic about whether they would receive a reply to their protest letters from November 24<sup>th</sup>. 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-

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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.<sup>76</sup>

### ***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."<sup>77</sup> The US diplomats assumed that if the refugees stayed too long in Yu-

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76 FO371/122399, Northern Department, From Belgrade to FO, Sir. F. Robets, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 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 16<sup>th</sup>, 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.<sup>78</sup> 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.<sup>79</sup>

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.

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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 17<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>80</sup> 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.<sup>81</sup> 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.<sup>82</sup>

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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 9<sup>th</sup>, 1956.

81 AY, CC LCY III/67, Records of CC LCY Session on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 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 18<sup>th</sup>, 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 16<sup>th</sup>, 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.<sup>83</sup>

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 24<sup>th</sup>, 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 Ernő 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.

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

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# BRITISH PERSPECTIVE ON HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION 1956

*Original scientific paper*  
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*The Hungarian Revolution caught unprepared Western powers preoccupied with the Suez crisis. The clashes between the Soviets and the Hungarians were the first, ever armed conflict between communist countries in Europe. The British position in the Hungarian Revolution 1956, as well as the French and American one, was based on the intent not to provoke the Soviet Union. Although British officials gave assurances they would not interfere in the Hungarian crisis, diplomatic sources evidently demonstrate that those events were very important for them. After the collapse of the Imre Nagy government and the Revolution the British primary focus was not to allow Soviets and Kadar's government to hide persecutions and humanitarian crisis that marked Hungary in the post-revolution period. The paper is based on the unpublished diplomatic reports of British diplomats in Budapest, Vienna, Moscow and New York, kept in the Foreign Office collections of the National Archives in London.*

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**Key words:** Hungarian Revolution, Imre Nagy, British, 1956, United Nations, Foreign Office.

*T*HE EVENTS OF THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION were among the most important turning points in the early stage of the Cold War and the reactions of Western powers to the events of 1956 proved to be a good example of later inertia and restrained attitude until the last stage of the Cold War.

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After events of October – November there were no doubts that the Cold War would be both protracted and bitter, with hostile armies facing each other across the divided Europe (Kissinger, 2006, 16).

The case of Great Britain and its attitude in those turbulent days is very hard to understand without taking into account the Suez crisis where both Great Britain and France were involved. The interests of both countries were to maintain good relations with Soviet Union and not to allow Soviets to be accused for exploiting the events taking place in Hungary (Bekes 2006, 502). Both British and French governments were caught unprepared by the developments in Hungary. French Foreign Minister Christian Pineau gave a report to the media on the crucial 26<sup>th</sup> October that France wouldn't intervene in Hungary (Bekes 2006, 502–503). Both French and British attitude was that they didn't want to be accused by Moscow that they are to be blamed for the beginning of the Hungarian Revolution. British stance was very similar to the French one as two nations had a similar challenges waiting for them in Egypt. Days before the outbreak of the Hungarian Revolution, Great Britain and France were engaged in negotiation with Israelis at the negotiation held in Sevres where they master planned the attack on Suez and Sinai.

American government was equally unprepared as British and French were when the events in Hungary broke out. On the October 26<sup>th</sup> the National Security Council, highest level advisory body, met for the first and the last time during the Hungarian Revolution. The result was the acceptance of the proposal made by Harold E. Stassen, the president's adviser on disarmament. His first suggestion was modified, and according to the revised plan, the US should either through Tito or through some other diplomatic channel attempt to convince the Soviets that a zone of strictly neutral, non-NATO countries, like Austria, would offer them as much security as satellite countries of the Warsaw pact (Bekes 1997, 500–501). The importance of this was that Americans stated that they don't look upon those satellite nations as potential military allies. That was the State Department position in their European policy until the end of the Cold War (Bekes 2006, 499).

Similar to the British and the French, the Americans were also more occupied with the situation in the Middle East. That's why their focus was on Egypt during the first few days of November and only the Soviet attack on Hungary on 4<sup>th</sup> November had alarmed them. However, they concluded that they had no means  
76 | of exerting its influence in the Soviet sphere of influence (Bekes 2006, 500).

The beginning of the Revolution in Hungary was looking less violent than the June riots in Poznan. However, public demonstrations on 24<sup>th</sup> October turned into full-blown uprising. The success of Wladyslaw Gomulka as Party leader in Poland, in the opposition to the Post Stalinist Soviet leadership, made a strong message to Hungarians. Momentum for the demonstration in Budapest was initially set by the demonstrations and demands made by students in Szeged (Rainer 2006, 246). Their actions made a chain reaction in other university cities across Hungary, which led to the student assembly at the Budapest Technical University on 22<sup>nd</sup> October. As students were unsuccessful in their wish to present their demands on the radio and decided to take to the streets on next day (23<sup>rd</sup> October). Their most important goals were: the departure of the Soviet troops from Hungary, a multi-party political system, the freedom of the opinion and the press, the removal of the Stalin statue and the new government. They also had very pragmatic demands, such as freedom of Hungary to sell its uranium to whomever they would prefer for the market price.<sup>1</sup> Two major factors motivated the demonstrations: they wanted to present their demands and to show their sympathy for the Polish reforms (Horvath 2006, 266–269). Hungarian Party leaders didn't seem to have been prepared for the demonstrations that changed its character from the students' demonstration into large scale civil protest. Imre Nagy addressed demonstrators on 23<sup>rd</sup> from the Parliament building in quite despondent way that disappointed the crowd. The open rebellion on the 24<sup>th</sup> couldn't be stopped even by the newly appointed Prime Minister Imre Nagy. Fights that broke on that day led to victory of the demonstrators, Soviet suffered their first casualties and loss of tanks and artillery in an East European capital since 1945. By the end of the month it looked like the Revolution was about to achieve its aims. On 28<sup>th</sup> October Imre Nagy announced the immediate withdrawal of the Soviet troops, Hungarian Secret Police (The AVO - Allamvedelmi Osztaly) was disbanded, an amnesty was announced for participants of the Revolution, the coat-of-arms from the Rakosi regime was replaced by the Kossuth coat-of-arm that was seen as the nationalistic by the communist in the postwar Hungary. The National holiday was restored at 15<sup>th</sup> of March. Just few days later, on 1<sup>st</sup> November Prime Minister Imre Nagy declared that Hungary was an independent and neutral state, something that Gomulka never did. The Soviet reaction was felt on 4<sup>th</sup> November with the full scale attack on Budapest that marked the beginning of the end of the 1956 Revolution.

1 [http://www.americanhungarianfederation.org/news\\_1956\\_16Points.html](http://www.americanhungarianfederation.org/news_1956_16Points.html)

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Still, by reading intelligence reports from Foreign Office in London and embassies and delegations in Budapest, Belgrade, Vienna, Washington, Moscow and Rome, it is clear that British were watching very closely all developments of Hungarian Revolution and that the humanitarian crisis was among their most important concerns. Their attitude towards the situation in Hungary, according to the sources available for this paper, were closest to the French one and were not necessary similar to the stance of the State Department.

The British mission was worried very early about the humanitarian crisis, and already by 28<sup>th</sup> October the Foreign Office sent the request to the embassy in Vienna to start collecting medical supplies for the Hungarian Red Cross.<sup>2</sup> In the early afternoon hours of 28<sup>th</sup> October 1956, we can trace the hope for the ceasefire between the Hungarian side and the Soviet troops in the text of the appeal made by three Western ambassadors. Austrians were already prepared by 26<sup>th</sup> October for the Hungarian frontier crossers and their actions were to follow Geneva Conventions, so any unarmed individual would be given asylum.<sup>3</sup>

Austrians furthermore organized the transport for the prospective asylum seekers from the border area. They were also preparing with the Red Cross International for the Hungarians fleeing to Austria. Even that early on, British representatives were asked if they could host some of the refugees.<sup>4</sup> One of the main concern of British delegation was distribution of the relief supplies though the Red Cross and with strong cooperation with Austrians that were present in Hungary already in the last days of October. The top concern was regarding medical equipment and drugs.<sup>5</sup> The British organized the first Convoy of the humanitarian aid on 2<sup>nd</sup> November, after the first option of sending it by plane from Vienna to Budapest was abandoned, since Soviets were controlling the airport, so the trans-

2 The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/122380 London 28<sup>th</sup> October 1956 to Vienna embassy.

3 The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/122380 Vienna 28<sup>th</sup> October 1956 Sir G. Wallinger to Foreign office and Whitehall.

4 The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/122380 Vienna 28<sup>th</sup> October 1956 Sir G. Wallinger to Foreign office and Whitehall.

5 The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/122380 Vienna 1<sup>st</sup> November 1956 Sir G. Wallinger to Foreign office and Whitehall.

port started its journey by land with as many as possible Union Jack flags hanged on lorries.<sup>6</sup>

In the report from North Atlantic council we can see the complexity of the situation in Hungary, since after the first fights started there was little hope that Imre Nagy was in control of situation, and it looked like none of the fighting sides trusted him. His position as well as the position of the Communist party in Hungary was completely opposite of the Gomulka's one in Poland. Polish scenario saw that the national emotion was channeled in his support, rather than against him.

Even one week after the start of escalation it seemed there was not much possibility for a compromise because Hungarian nationalists didn't want to lay down their weapons as long as Soviet troops were in Hungary. At the same time, it was concluded that Soviets most likely won't allow weakening of their position in satellite states by withdrawing from Hungary.<sup>7</sup>

NATO had made very swift reaction to ongoing process in Hungary: Governments of NATO members made appeal to the UN Security Council to consider the situation in Hungary. Appeal to the Soviet Government was focused on three key requests: to order its troops to cease all offensive actions in Hungary; halt further troop movement in Hungary and agree to the withdrawal of all troops from Hungary as soon as the situation permits. It was very important for the NATO to at least offer to Soviets some kind of assurance that the NATO won't establish any kind of military ties with Hungarian Government and that the best future model for Hungary would be the Austrian model of neutrality. NATO forces would use its bases in Germany and Italy only for offering and distribution of medical supplies, ambulances, doctors, nurses, food and any other humanitarian aid for the benefit of all Hungarians. All NATO Governments were encouraged to do whatever they can to mobilize world public and make an avalanche of telegrams to Moscow to make as much pressure as possible to stop further Soviet intervention.<sup>8</sup> – 27/10

The 31<sup>st</sup> October was the point of no return, as correspondence of foreign diplomats in the UN made it clear that the future of Hungary was very uncertain. Hungarian representative in the UN Mr. Koss had the opportunity to address Se-

6 The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/122380 Budapest 1s November 1956 to Foreign office and Whitehall.

7 The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/122380 Paris 27<sup>th</sup> October 1956 to Foreign office.

8 The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/122380 Paris 27<sup>th</sup> October 1956 to Foreign office.

curity Council although Mr. Sobolev (USSR) was against it and Mr. Brilej (Yugoslavia) abstained during the vote, other nine votes were in favor to give the floor to Mr. Koss.<sup>9</sup>

Soviet representative remained isolated as all the Security Council members accused Soviets of opening fire against Hungarian nationalists and stated that there was no justification for that. His reply was focused on suppressing of peoples' rights in Algeria, Cypress and Singapore. Mr. Sobolev tried to accuse Americans and British of plotting against Soviets in Hungary. Through the insight into diplomatic correspondence of Foreign Office it is clear that those accusations were groundless.<sup>10</sup>

During the last days of October the Secretary of State had among its top priorities the humanitarian crisis that was happening in Hungary.<sup>11</sup> British Red Cross was already active and was operating mostly through Austria, but Government Ministers were also organizing non-party meetings in order to raise money for medical aid for Hungary.<sup>12</sup>

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> November we could follow big diplomatic offensive of the US diplomats backed by British and French partners in the UN. As after intelligence report confirmed that Imre Nagy is willing to shift his alliance with West.<sup>13</sup> Sir Dixon, British representative in the UN, had faith in his plan that could see Soviets isolated in the Security Council and that could later lead only to the acceptance of the resolution on the situation in Hungary in the General Assembly.<sup>14</sup> Still, British diplomat thought that there were very slim chances that Soviets would not seek to go into reverse in Hungary. One of the few benefits of that could be improving

9 The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/122380 New York 29th October 1956 Sir P. Dixon to Foreign office.

10 The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/122380 New York 29th October 1956 Sir P. Dixon to Foreign office.

11 The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/122380 London 29th October 1956 Sir J. Ward, a statement of the Deputy Secretary of State.

12 The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/122380 London 30th October 1956 Thomas Brimelow, a statement of the Secretary of State.

13 Fresh reports that the British were getting not only from Budapest but also from Vienna were in favor of that. British representative from Vienna consulted the Foreign office that this was the great moment for joint action that will make Hungarians independent of Soviet influence. The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/122380 Vienna 2nd November 1956 sir G. Wallinger to Foreign Office.

14 The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/122380 New York 2nd November 1956 Sir P. Dixon to Foreign office.

situation in Suez, for that kind of actions would make ridiculous very strong position which the Soviet Government was taking regarding Suez.<sup>15</sup>

Imre Nagy's declaration of neutrality of Hungary came in the very turbulent time when the Soviet troops were pouring in Hungary. Although he addressed the Secretary General of the United Nations and asked for the protection of the Hungarian neutrality, not much could have been done as there was no will among great Western powers to confront the Soviets.

British ambassador to Moscow, Sir Hayter, concluded that Soviets might also use pretext of anarchy to step in Hungary and that they might be well tempted to set up a Communist Government and "accede to its request" for support in restoring order.<sup>16</sup> According to his reports Soviet leadership was already preparing for the offensive in Hungary. Khrushchev was "at home" for a few days during that period and no foreign diplomats could meet him.<sup>17</sup>

At the same time the situation in Budapest was calmer than at the end of the October, but still the Soviets were making moves that suggested the upcoming storm. The railway lines in the northeast of the Hungary were occupied by the Soviet troops, same as the railway station at Nyiregyhasa, at least two airfields in the southern cities of Szeged and Kecskemet, were also in Soviet hands.<sup>18</sup> Moves of the Soviet troops in Austria that were getting closer to the Hungarian borders were also additional proof of attack that would follow.<sup>19</sup>

On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, as Soviet troops were ready to pass into Hungary from the direction of Vienna, a minor accident happened when they opened fire on the column of the refugees that also included a Swedish Red Cross vehicle. That was quite a jittery reaction of the Soviet troops.<sup>20</sup>

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15 The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/122380 Moscow 2nd November 1956 Sir W. Hayter to Foreign office.

16 The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/122380 Moscow 2nd November 1956 Sir W. Hayter to Foreign office.

17 Sir Hayter reported to Foreign Office that his American colleague got very lame answer from the Bulgarian ambassador if the Soviets were planning the attack, he understood that the Soviets will strike soon. The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/122380 Moscow 2nd November 1956 Sir W. Hayter to Foreign office.

18 The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/122380 Budapest 2nd November 1956 Mr. Fry to Foreign office and Whitehall.

19 The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/122380 Budapest 2nd November 1956 Mr. Fry to Foreign office and Whitehall.

20 The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/122380 Budapest 3rd November 1956 Mr. Fry to Foreign office and Whitehall.

Hungarian Prime Minister Imre Nagy, who announced the new coalition government via radio on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, was trying to get the Secretary General of the United Nations to visit Hungary as soon as possible. One of the options was that he could even fly to New York to try to urge him to come.<sup>21</sup> British intelligence didn't have any other information about other reasons of his possible trip from Budapest and Hungary.

In the early morning of 4<sup>th</sup> November heavy fighting broke out. On that day the Soviet troops attacked Budapest. According to the British sources, Soviet troops progressed very swiftly after penetrating and occupying the most important city buildings including the Parliament, but still were not in the complete control of the city. Members of the freshly elected Hungarian government were not very optimistic about their destiny, but were strongly convinced that reestablishment of the Communism in Hungary will be very tough task for Khrushchev and his Hungarian aides.<sup>22</sup> By the end of day the Soviets were in control of all the bridges and various other points, although fighting continued in the city.<sup>23</sup>

The Foreign Office after receiving news of the Soviet invasion urged its representative at the East River to do all he could in order to obtain a condemnation of Soviet actions and recommendation of calling for immediate cease-fire and resumption of negotiations about withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary and recognition of Hungarian neutrality.<sup>24</sup> Sir Dixon got clear instructions to condemn evident Soviet plan to impose by force new puppet Government.

Soviet operation named "Whirlwind" was even more efficient as the leaders of the Revolution didn't have a clear position of how to react to Soviet invasions. Two opposing attitudes can be followed through reactions of the Prime Minister Imre Nagy and the Chairman of the Revolutionary Committee for Public Safety and commander of the National Guard Mayor General Bela Kiraly. While Imre

21 The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/122380 Budapest 3rd November 1956 Mr. Fry to Foreign office and Whitehall.

22 Those information British got in their embassy in Budapest though the Hungarian Minister of State Mr. Jozsef Fischer. The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/122380 Budapest 4th November 1956 Mr. Fry to Foreign office and Whitehall.

23 Through the Austrian Red Cross intelligence from the ground the British embassy staff heard that there are hundreds of Hungarian casualties lying in the streets. The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/122380 Budapest 5th November 1956 Mr. Fry to Foreign office and Whitehall.

24 The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/122380 London 4th November 1956 Mr. Fry to Foreign office to New York.

Nagy had taken refuge in the Yugoslav embassy, accepting the offer of asylum that proved to be insincere and that doomed him after the Soviets took over the country, Bela Kiraly continued with resistance. His actions frustrated the Soviets as they were aware that he was an excellent soldier and capable organizer. Still, he lost the battle at Nagykovacsi, but managed to escape on 10<sup>th</sup> November westward to the Bakony mountains and he crossed to Austria in late November (Horvath 2006, 458).

The grimmest expectations came true as the Soviet response was very effective and the crush of the Imre Nagy and his short-lived Government was complete. British and French got stuck in Suez where the defeated Egyptian managed to get the upper hand after the joint Anglo-French forces withdrew and left space for the United Nations force to come in. The British and French focus was away from Hungary in the weeks after the Soviets crushed Imre Nagy's side.

In December and January 1957 Foreign office shared the same frustration as their French colleagues with indolence of the Secretary General of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld. French thought that he did very little to make any of General Assembly Resolutions concerning Hungary work. Their view was that Hungary, although Soviets were there in full power, should not be forgotten. French informed Foreign Office that the State Department was not in favor of French initiative and thought that any actions of Dag Hammarskjöld were bound to fail. Their attitude was that it would be more useful if individual Governments keep Hungary in the public eye by organizing a flow of resolutions and petitions from public organizations, trade unions etc.<sup>25</sup>

The French referred to four resolutions passed by the General Assembly from November 4<sup>th</sup> till December 12<sup>th</sup>.<sup>26</sup> The resolutions didn't prove to benefit

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25 The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/128676 London 6th April 1957 Thomas Brimelow to New York.

26 The resolutions referred to in the attached French telegram were: (a) November 4<sup>th</sup>: Called upon the Government of the USSR to desist from any intervention and to withdraw its forces; reaffirmed the right of the Hungarian people to its own Government; requested the Secretary General to investigate the situation caused by foreign intervention in Hungary, to observe this situation through representatives named by him and to report thereon to the General Assembly; and to suggest methods to bring to an end foreign intervention in Hungary; and call upon the Secretary General to inquire into and report to the General Assembly on the Hungarian need for food, medicine and other similar supplies; (b) November 9<sup>th</sup>: Reaffirmed the previous request to the Secretary General to investigate through representatives named by him and to report to the General Assembly; (c) November 21<sup>st</sup>: Requested the Secretary General and

Hungarians as the Soviets were firmly in control of the situation on the ground. Even though Secretary General set up ad hoc special committee for the Hungary on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1957, after the General Assembly passed the resolution on 10<sup>th</sup> January there were no doubts for French that the Soviets and the puppet Hungarian Government would prevent them from taking any effective action. French were still of the opinion that they could achieve most if they waited for the report of the Special committee, as that report could have proved the best basis for the publicity of the situation in Hungary. They were also afraid that the Soviets would veto any further actions in the Security Council. The Foreign Office agreed with French that the Secretary General should visit both Budapest and Moscow as soon as possible, it also agreed with other conclusions of their French colleagues and stressed that the North Atlantic Council should have a common position towards the situation in Hungary.<sup>27</sup>

Although initiatives in the United Nations actually didn't help much, they were still quite frustrating for the Soviets and Kadar's Government. The joint declaration of the two Governments published in *Pravda* on 29<sup>th</sup> March 1957 is a good example:

*The facts show that the ruling circles of the Western powers, who bear heavy responsibility for the bloody events in Hungary, do not at present wish to cease their activity, which is aimed at intervention in the internal affairs of Hungary and of the other countries of the Socialist camp. This is shown in particular, by the fact that the so-called Hungarian question was brought up for discussion in U.N.O. A shameful role at the session of the General Assembly of U.N.O. was played by the representatives of the imperialists powers who, in contravention of the Charter of the United Nations, tried to intervene in the internal affairs of Hungarian question, doing their best to keep it artificially on the ground. Both Governments declare that the rising and discussion of this question in the U.N.O. and the adoption of a resolution on this question by the General Assembly seriously undermine the prestige of that*

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the High Commissioner for Refugees to continue their efforts to meet the needs of Hungarian refugees; (d) December 12<sup>th</sup>: Requested the Secretary General to take any initiative that he deemed helpful in relation to the Hungarian problem in conformity with principles of the Charter and the resolutions of the General Assembly. The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/128676 London 6<sup>th</sup> April 1957 Thomas Brimelow to New York.

27 The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/128676 London 8<sup>th</sup> April 1957 Thomas Brimelow to New York.

*organization and constitute a gross intervention in the internal affairs of Hungary as well as in questions which are within the competence of the Government of the USSR, Hungary and the other states of the Warsaw Pact.*<sup>28</sup>

The Foreign Office was having detailed reports on repression in Hungary by the Kadar's regime that was using judicial and police machines for the campaign of the repression contrary to the human rights and when the Soviets were trying to consolidate the position of their troops in Hungary through the negotiations of a military agreement with the authorities which they themselves have put into power in that country. British diplomats had no special expectations of the Secretary General's visit to Hungary but were aware it was important not to allow attempts of forgetting the Hungarian affair, something that Moscow and Budapest wished.

Reports from the British embassy in Budapest from late winter and spring gave a clear picture of growing influences of "Rakosists" party members that started to take up influential posts. That trend started in 1957 after they started to get back to Hungary from their previous appointments in Soviet service.<sup>29</sup> British reports also gave a look of the everyday persecutions that were happening all over Hungary and to different social groups. Targets were in most of the cases heavily beaten and would have difficulties to have treatment in ambulances as they were marked as state enemies. If they wanted any help they had to lie and to state they injured themselves.<sup>30</sup>

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Thanks to the insight into material of the FO, a conclusion can be made what was position of Great Britain regarding revolution in Hungary, and what were conclusions apropos behavior of the Soviets. The Suez crisis was much more important not only to Great Britain, but also to France and USA, than revolution taking place in the center of Europe. Still, despite impossibility to oppose Soviet invasion, it is obvious that all three big Western powers tried to maximally use all possibilities that United Nations Organization offered in order to oppose Soviets

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28 The translation of the article from *Pravda* was part of the report. The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/128676 London 8<sup>th</sup> April 1957 Thomas Brimelow to New York.

29 The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/128676 Budapest 11<sup>th</sup> April 1957 to Foreign Office.

30 The National Archives, Foreign Office 371/128676 Budapest 12<sup>th</sup> April 1957 to Foreign Office.

and Kadar's regime that Soviets imposed in Budapest after the break of revolution. British reports are focused on humanitarian catastrophe they closely watched from the very beginning of turmoil in October 1956, while after the collapse of the Revolution they were watching the issue of Hungarian refugees as well (Kovacevic 2003, 99–101); also, they were very focused on permanent reprisal suffered by Hungarian citizens. The sources made it clear that the FO precisely analyzed Soviet wishes to impose 'limited sovereignty' on their allies in Warsaw pact. But yet, the correspondence used in this paper does not give impression that London developed strategy to oppose Soviet interfering in Eastern European any way. It might be that attention to problems in the Near East had certain impact, or maybe answer is to be found in other fonds of national archives. Still, events in Hungary in 1956 encouraged USSR for further reactions to challenges in the Eastern camp (Cvetkovic 2013, 377–379). The first war between two socialist states in Europe and victory of aggressor with no consequences was an indicator that showed how Soviets could react in future disputes with rebellious satellites. At that time, America was more occupied with the Suez crisis, and its attitude towards Eastern bloc countries could be summed up to: "we do not look upon these nations as potential military allies". Such attitudes at first surprised and afterwards encouraged bold and interventionist policy of the Soviets. One of consequences of 1956 Revolution was strengthening of the role of NATO among Western allies who increasingly wanted their joint position to be constructed within consensus frame of NATO pact, and decreasing influence of UNO, for despite several resolutions it didn't manage to provide efficient answer to challenges of Hungarian revolution of 1956.

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## *Britanski pogled na Mađarsku revoluciju 1956.*

Izbijanje Revolucije u Mađarskoj iznenadilo je Zapadne sile, kao i Sovjetski Savez. Razvoj događaja koji je tekao drugačije u odnosu na Poljsku doveo je do otvorene borbe protiv Sovjeta i napuštanja Varšavskog pakta nakon uspešnog početka revolucije i formiranja vlade Imre Nađa. Britanska i francuska pažnja, kao i američka bili su okupirani Sueckom krizom. Pored toga u izjavama zvaničnika tri najveće zapadne sile Sovjetima je stavljeno do znanja da se oni neće mešati u unutrašnja pitanja Mađarske. Izveštaji koji su korišćeni u ovom radu, iz fonda Foreign Office-a iz Nacionalnog arhiva u Londonu pružaju jasnu sliku o tome šta je britanskim diplomatama i državnici bilo najvažnije u vezi sa događajima od oktobra do početka 1957. Na osnovu neobjavljenih izvora i

korespondencije iz Budimpešte, Beča, Njujorka, Moskve i Londona zaključuje se da je pored humanitarne katastrofe koja je zadesila Mađarsku važno i pitanje progona političkih neistomišljenika i državnih neprijatelja nakon uspostavljanja Kadarove vlade. Uticaj NATO-a kao krovne organizacije za zapadne saveznike je porastao tokom i nakon Mađarske revolucije. U okviru te organizacije su od novembra donosili konsenzus o daljim koracima u vezi sa izazovima u Istočnoj Evropi. Suprotno tome, Organizacija Ujedinjenih nacija i pored nekoliko rezolucija koje su osuđivale sovjetsku agresiju, nisu uspele da izvrše bilo kakav značajniji uticaj ni na Sovjete, ni na Kadarovu vladu, što je veoma frustriralo britanske i francuske zvaničnike.

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*Ključne reči:* Mađarska revolucija, Britanci, 1956, Ujedinjene nacije, Foreign Office

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**NEW RESEARCH AND  
INTERPRETATIONS**



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

*Original Scientific Paper*

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*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.*

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**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, Dobrivoje 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.<sup>1</sup> 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-

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<sup>1</sup> 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.”<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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-

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<sup>3</sup> 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.

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## *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.

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

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# YUGOSLAVIA AND THE HUNGARIAN UPRISING OF 1956: Dilemmas and Controversies

*Original Scientific Paper*

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*The split-up of Yugoslavia with the Soviet Union from 1948 has encouraged centrifugal political forces in the Eastern Bloc. However, The Hungarian Uprising of 1956 was a serious temptation for The Yugoslav government. However, Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito although managed to seize the opportunity and redefine the status of Yugoslavia and his personal role in international relations. In the depths of the Yugoslav regime, there was enough understanding of the new approach to the Soviets dating from the previous year, and the cooperation in the suppression of the Hungarian Uprising. In one year, Tito met four times with Khrushchev. Apart from helping refugees and formal reactions, the West had no power to help Hungary to leave the Soviet orbit. The West remained inactive, and Yugoslavia silent, also during the suppression of the Prague Spring in 1968.*

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**Key words:** Hungarian Uprising, Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito, Imre Nagy, Nikita Khrushchev

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*T*HE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION OF 1956 (THE Hungarian Uprising) has triggered dramatic events that have shifted from day to day. The dynamics of international relations and the dynamics of change require considering the role of neighboring Yugoslavia by taking into account the complex changes in the relations of strategic forces, political attitudes and concrete decisions. In a rush of disorder that pervaded relations between the West, the East and even the looming Third World in 1956, one paradigm is almost apparent, one that is contained in the efforts of the regime of Josip Broz Tito to preserve the political order and the new social architecture of the post-war communist Yugoslavia, but not without a careful reflection on her international reputation.

Recent researches have confirmed that the split-up of Yugoslavia with the Soviet Union from 1948 has encouraged centrifugal political forces in the Eastern Bloc. The Eastern European states otherwise mostly lagged in their democratic growth, compared to the West, however long-term controversial points in the relations between the Soviet Union and its strategic partners were obvious: Soviet military occupation, political terror and economic exploitation, and the continuity of Russian territorial and strategic politics. Historical misunderstandings with Russia neither were helpful.<sup>1</sup> “In Hungary the period from July, 1953, to March, 1955, referred to as the New Course, constituted the first liberalization of the communist

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1 “While the Soviet Union was gradually recovering from the social and economic devastation of World War II, the populations of Eastern Europe were subjected, mostly unwillingly, to occupation by Soviet forces and the rigid imposition of the Soviet system in its Stalinist form – a system that was widely but mostly silently resented as an ill-suited framework for economic, social and cultural life in the societies of Eastern Europe. By the end of the 1940s opposition political parties in Eastern Europe had either been banned and their leaders arrested, or they had been co-opted into popular front movements under communist leadership, which effectively reduced them to mere puppet status. The East European communist governments proceeded to take most workplaces into public ownership, introduce a system of centralised state ‘planning’ of the economy, and collectivise agriculture. Strict censorship of the media was introduced and freedom of expression was severely limited. The ruling parties and secret police organizations took on similar roles to their Soviet counterparts. Furthermore, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, struggles within the national communist parties resulted in similar mass political arrests, show trials and expansion of labour camps as had been experienced in the Soviet Union since the 1930s. Mirroring events in Stalin’s Soviet Union, the East European communist leaderships turned on their own party comrades, accusing them on treason, and staging show trials of the most prominent ‘revisionists’ such as, in the case of Hungary, former underground resistance leader of the early 1940s, László Rajk” (Cox 2006, IV).

regime in that country. This period marked the rise and fall of the government of Imre Nagy. At the time of his accession to the premiership in 1953, Nagy criticized the bankruptcy of the economy which had adopted the Soviet pattern without making allowances for the capabilities and needs of Hungary. Furthermore, he stated that the people cannot be free if the nation is not independent and if it lacks complete sovereignty” (Gripp 1960, 942).

On the other hand, the Soviet Union needed an important success in the international relations after a series of post-war failures. During the Greek Civil War from 1946 to 1949 the Greek government army, representing the clero-nationalist forces, backed by the United Kingdom and the United States has defeated the Democratic Army of Greece, the military branch of the Greek Communist Party, supported by Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria. The Austrian State Treaty re-established Austria as a sovereign state on 15 May 1955, after Soviet troops had been withdrawn a declaration of neutrality guaranteed that Austria would not join NATO. However, it was clear that Austria was joining the Western orbit after being liberated from the presence of the Soviet occupation forces. The Soviet Union established the Warsaw Pact in 1955 as a strategic answer seeking a balance of power or counterweight to NATO, but also to the obvious attractiveness of the Western World.

In the meanwhile, after a personal conflict between the Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito and Stalin, Yugoslavia was expelled from Communist International in 1948. Otherwise Yugoslavia ran the fastest collectivization process of all East European communist regimes. Communism was victorious in Yugoslavia as an achieved authentic political force, and as a war prey of the armed resistance movement. The West also accomplished the intention of the communist partisans to take over all the political power. The Soviet troops did not set their permanent presence, like in the rest of Eastern Europe, neither took important part in establishing a new political order. Yugoslavia has applied its authentic model of collectivization. Even after the regime brutally punished the pro-Stalinist quislings, from the depths of the political and security order, otherwise a narrow minded dogmatic pillar of Yugoslav totalitarianism, Yugoslavia continued to uphold the practice of Sovietization. It was only the collapse of the economy with human casualties characteristic of all the collectivist socialist experiments of the XX century that brought Tito’s regime to open cooperation with the West, at the beginning of the fifties. Thus, Tito implicitly and reluctantly acknowledged the Western aid from

the last war and early postwar days, usually covered up by his propaganda, then basically Stalinist mannered.

The subsequent Soviet failures in Southeastern Europe occurred in Greece and Albania. But there were also important gains for the Soviet Union. In 1949 they mastered their first atomic weapons and founded the Warsaw Pact in 1955. At the very beginnings of the Hungarian revolt, the Non-Aligned Movement was launched from the Brioni islands in Yugoslavia, on 19 July 1956. The Declaration was signed by Yugoslav president Tito, India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Egypt's second president, Gamal Abdel Nasser. From its beginnings, the organization was politically and ideologically closer to the Soviet communist bloc, as based on anti-colonial and anti-American rhetoric that has offered legitimacy to new nationalist movements, anti-democratic regimes and violent dictatorships in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Regardless of the political losses in Yugoslavia and Albania, the Soviets managed to curb the turmoil of dissatisfaction in Eastern Europe. They apparently had problems primarily with the majority Catholic and Protestant states: in occupied Baltic republics, German Democratic Republic (DDR), Poland, and later in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. More resistance was felt in Yugoslavia in its western republics, Slovenia and Croatia. East-orthodox peoples were more subdued, and less opposed. Only Romania exempted its foreign policy from the East-European pattern, while retaining Stalinist planning and practice. The „People's Uprising in East Germany“ that started with a strike by East Berlin construction workers on 16 June 1953 turned into a widespread uprising against the DDR government, and involved more than one million people in about 700 localities. The movement in East Berlin was violently suppressed the following day by Soviet tanks and the Volkspolizei, but the strikes and protests lasted even after the intervention. The Poznań uprising in Poland, with workers demonstrations on June 28, 1956, was also violently suppressed by the joined domestic and Soviet forces (Persak 2006, 1308).

The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 happened to become the first anti-Soviet uprising in Eastern Europe which implied important international involvement and chances to succeed. The Uprising lasted from 23 October until 11 November 1956.

A short overview:

110 Hungary became a communist state under the authoritarian leadership of Mátyás Rákosi, with radically nationalized economy and organized political op-

pression. The victims of the secret police (Államvédelmi Hatóság or ÁVH) were labeled as “Titoists,” “western agents,” “Trotskyites”. The thousands were arrested, tortured, tried, imprisoned in concentration camps, deported to the east, or executed, including ÁVH founder László Rajk. Russian language study and Communist propaganda became mandatory in schools and universities. In 1949 the leader of the Hungarian Catholic Church Cardinal József Mindszenty was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment for treason. The economy suffered from war reparations, state management, collectivization and centralization, and also by the participation in the Soviet-sponsored Council of Mutual Economic Assistance that prevented free trading with the West. Real industrial wages fell by 18% between 1949 and 1952. The collectivization of agriculture caused a fall in production and hunger. After the Stalin’s death in 1953, the reformist Imre Nagy replaced Rákosi as Prime Minister. However, Rákosi remained the General Secretary of the Party, and removed Nagy in 1955. After Khrushchev’s “Secret Speech”, Rákosi was deposed replaced by Ernő Gerő on 18 July 1956. The change encouraged political process with a series of public debates (forums). Massive protests, preceded by the movements of students and the formulations of their political demands, began on 23 October 1956. The protester’s manifesto called on the state’s independence from all foreign powers and a political system based on democratic socialism. The first Party secretary Ernő Gerő condemned the demands, and demonstrators answered with the removal of Stalin’s public statue. The ÁVH was defending Radio Budapest building, and the Hungarian soldiers sided with the crowd. During the night of 23 October, Ernő Gerő requested Soviet military intervention. On 24 October, Soviet tanks entered Budapest. Armed revolutionaries set up barricades to defend Budapest, and captured several Soviet tanks. The same day, Imre Nagy replaced András Hegedüs as Prime Minister, and called for an end to violence promising political reforms. The protesters focused on the ÁVH, as the Soviet units were not fully engaged. On 25 October, ÁVH began shooting at the mass of protesters in front of the Parliament, and some Soviet soldiers mistakenly returned fire on the ÁVH. The attacks at the Parliament led to the collapse of the government. The re-burial of László Rajk, on 6 October 1956 (minister of police falsely accused and executed in 1949), was considered a general rehearsal of the revolution. Imre Nagy took the power with János Kádár as the First Secretary of the Communist Party. Hungarian army led by Béla Király attacked the Party Central Committee. After a cease-fire, by 30 October the most of Soviet troops had withdrawn from Budapest, and many

Hungarians believed that they were leaving Hungary. On 1 November Nagy declared Hungarian retirement from the Warsaw Pact and stance of neutrality. Many political prisoners were released, including Cardinal Mindszenty, and previously banned political parties revived. The state was mainly run by revolutionary councils, the communist and Soviet symbols removed from public life. The workers' councils took over the management over industrial enterprises. On 1 November, Imre Nagy was reported that Soviet forces had entered Hungary from the east and were moving towards Budapest, after false official assurances that the Soviet Union would not invade. The Soviets arrested a Hungarian delegation on 3 November invited to negotiate on Soviet withdrawal. In the meanwhile, Khrushchev informed his allies with the decision to intervene, and met with Yugoslav leader Tito on his resort island Brioni. Tito agreed to support the intervention, and persuaded Khrushchev to choose János Kádár as a new Hungarian leader. On 4 November the Soviet army again attacked Budapest. The second Soviet intervention "Operation Whirlwind" has split Budapest in half and established controls over main communication routes. Operation combined air strikes, artillery and tank-infantry actions. The Hungarian Army remained loyal to the revolution, however helpless to withstand more effective resistance. The fighting in Budapest lasted until 11 November. After the collapse of the uprising Nagy was given a refuge in the Yugoslav Embassy, however, despite of guarantees given by János Kádár, on 22 November, Nagy was thrown out of the embassy, arrested by the Soviet forces and abducted to Romania, where he was sentenced to death and executed.

The role of Yugoslavia was important for the events of 1956, including the failure of the Hungarian uprising and the fate of revolutionaries, and, in particular, of Hungarian refugees on Yugoslav territory. Using the position of Hungarian neighbor and the renegade from the hard-core pro-Soviet nucleus of the Eastern European states, Yugoslavia used the uprising to redefine the relations with the East, and thus with the West.

Simultaneously, Yugoslavia had to take care of its Hungarian minority, the state of the border and, finally, the Hungarian refugees.

Considering Yugoslavia important in the policy of de-Stalinization and revitalization of the Eastern Bloc, the new Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev used conciliatory approach also as a stronghold of a rapid suppression of the Hungarian uprising. In 1948, Yugoslavia started only with the path of de-Stalinization.

**112** Democratization of political system and social relations was not on the Yugoslav

regime's agenda yet. Democracy and tolerance were overwhelmed, and Tito remained their sworn enemy until their last days. While negotiating his personal treason of Hungarian rebels who had previously been given asylum, Tito complained that "the reaction raised his head, especially in Croatia". As he was taking a clear stand on Hungarian Uprising, Tito was ahead of the two options, equally sensitive and difficult: to support the anti-Stalinist course of Hungarian revolutionaries, or by supporting Soviet intervention protect his regime and the international communism from similar challenges.

Hungarian uprising was a dynamic and complex process, imbued with controversies. The revolution erupted under the shadow of the recent fascist heritage and participation of Hungary in the Second World War on the side of the Axis powers. Hungary was frustrated with the national borders plotted after the fall of Austro-Hungary after the First World War. Within the chaos of the 1956 uprising, anti-Semitism broke a decade after the Holocaust, as soon as being released from the clamps of the central state government. The uprising also reflected Hungarian attitudes towards Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav conflict with Stalin. Hungarian dictator Mátyás Rákosi was removed (on 18 July 1956) after the long-term anti-Titoist campaign led from 1948, in agreement with the official Moscow.<sup>2</sup>

Initially, from the Yugoslav perspective, Imre Nagy was acceptable alternative to Rákosi. (From 1955, the Yugoslav Embassy in Budapest held regular contacts with Imre Nagy and his associates.) But the uprising threatened the Yugoslav regime with both security and ideological challenges.

The particularity of Yugoslavia in the communist world and internal changes was an important challenge that sometimes escaped the immediate Soviet influence in Eastern Europe. "Many of the reforms in Poland and Hungary parallel so closely those which were worked out earlier in Yugoslavia as a simple explanation of coincidence, or nationalism. By Polish admission, Yugoslav obstinacy significantly influenced Polish Communists. As early as 1948 Gomulka demurred in

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<sup>2</sup> "... in the Hungarian case, it was necessary to replace Rákosi to improve Soviet-Yugoslav relations. The Soviet rapprochement with Yugoslavia in 1955 became a major plank in Khrushchev's policy of destalinization.

The Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito detested Rákosi with his 'blood-soaked hands' so much for having 'staged trials, given false information and sentenced innocent men to death' for being Titoist spies that he even refused train through Hungary on his way to Moscow for the summit in June 1956, travelling through Romania" (Granville 2006, 483–484).

siding with Stalin against the Yugoslavs and declined to brand Tito as deviationist. When Gomulka was removed from Secretary-General of the Polish Communist party, Polish sources conceded that the dismissal was connected with the 'disgraceful Yugoslav affair.' In October, 1956, Gomulka stated that the paths for attaining socialism in different countries may vary. The model for socialism, he said, may be that of the Soviet Union, of Yugoslavia, or something still different. In 1957 when Gomulka and premier Cyrankiewicz visited Yugoslavia, they supposedly discussed separate roads to socialism with Tito. In Hungary, Nagy (who earlier had been accused of 'new Titoism') referred to Titoism in Yugoslavia as the creative application of Marxism-Leninism in building socialism under the specific social and economic conditions of Yugoslavia. Just prior to the 1956 Revolt, a delegation of top Hungarian Communists visited Yugoslavia to study that country's workers' councils" (Gripp 1960, 948).

In the process of approaching the new Soviet Union, after 1955, Tito was in no hurry. Regardless of the visit to Moscow in 1955, he maintained tense relations with Khrushchev and other Eastern European leaders (Granville 2001, 1057). He needed Soviet support to maintain the communist regime and the counterweight to the Western liberal challenges, but did not intend to return to the Soviet sphere of influence. He founded his dictatorship on a multifaceted basis (army, police, social utopianism, etc.) learning how to balance between the East, the West, and manipulating the rising Third World and its global impacts. The Korean War has dislocated the stage for a potential new world conflict outside the European scope, but Tito had to be careful about the increased threat of Soviet intervention. It is assumed that China also supported Soviet intervention in Hungary, but its appearance in international communism and world politics did not make the steps simpler, on the contrary.<sup>3</sup> After the collapse of the Hungarian uprising, the Suez crisis confirmed the weaknesses of the West in the face of controversies that pervaded the process of decolonization: new independent states, new emancipated nations,

<sup>3</sup> Mao Tse-tung recalled that at the end of October of that year the Chinese Embassy in Budapest had reported that the counter-revolution was gaining more and more ground and had warned that if the Soviet Union should fail to liquidate the Imre Nagy Government, the restoration of in Hungary would be unavoidable. Mao said that, on the basis of this and other information received from the various East Communist Parties, he had sent an urgent message to the Kremlin asking Khrushchev to take quick military action against the revisionists. He claimed that he had discounted the danger of any foreign intervention, or an American nuclear threat, for America was after all a paper tiger" (Rádványi 1970, 126–127).

sometimes even recently invented, could not always imply the development of political and economic freedoms in postcolonial world (Litván 2001, 212–214).

The Hungarian rebellion further illuminated even the complex relations of Yugoslavia with the United States. These relations were not straightforward, similarly to those with the USSR. The Yugoslav Communist regime was one of the indicative fallacies of the Western allies. The closing military operations at the end of the Second World War did not allow the fine-tuning of Yugoslavia and its political future. At the Yalta peace conference in 1945 Yugoslavia was reluctantly left to the Soviets in order to concentrate the Western Allied forces on Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean. In the process of establishing the totalitarian rule, Tito relied on a police and military forces concentrated in Belgrade and the general Serbian national majority within the repressive apparatus. Dissatisfactions with such instrumentalization of power he compensated with the federalization of the state while manipulating the internal identities, similarities and differences. With the priorities related to the needs of absolute and personal rule, Tito did not allow Yugoslavia to integrate in the sense of a state and ideological unity that will assimilate its national and cultural differences. His opening to the West at the beginning of the fifties did not imply democratization of the system. His opening to the West at the beginning of the fifties did not imply democratization of the system. Neither the international relations were always exactly followed by ideological matrices. The US and USSR did not approve the Tito's support of Greek communists during the Civil War. The Yugoslav pretensions on Trieste, used by Tito in order to feed the Slovenian nationalism, have disrupted the peace settlement for Austria. The US economic support that followed the defeat of communists in the Greek civil war helped Tito endure against Stalin, but Tito was eagerly waiting for a new opportunity to reestablish a partnership with the Soviets. That opportunity was Stalin's death in 1953. In the general context, he could use the dissatisfactions with Sovietization and Stalinism in Eastern Europe, but not allowing such dissatisfactions to erupt in Yugoslavia itself. Eastern European leaders were disturbed by Tito's independence. Tito's initial support of Imre Nagy was wrongly interpreted as his call on the substantial change of Hungarian political system. Tito relied on the West only to preserve communism, and previously opposed to Stalin in attempt to preserve personal independent regime. And as if he waited for a moment to seemingly change the sides again.

Between 1948 and 1955, Tito understood the benefits of strategic neutrality. (Granville 1998, 504). In time he learned to behave according to the weaknesses of each strategic group. Gradually abandoning the brutal violence and collective utopianism, Tito was also placing his mechanisms of power in a global framework, by concluding the international partnerships beyond the dualism of the East and the West. The sovereignty of Yugoslav communism and neutrality in American-Soviet relations were unacceptable for the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union considered that the approach to Greece and Turkey in 1954 was a Yugoslav threat with the accession to the NATO from the back door. For the West, Yugoslavia was becoming a kind of dictatorship without tyranny, for the East democracy deprived of democracy. When John Foster Dulles met Tito in May 1955, Tito expressed the views on Yugoslav independence, denying the similarity with Eastern European national communism. Tito had negative attitude toward the Yugoslav unitarism. His career was already based on the antithesis of the previous order in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and its official integrative aspirations in attempts to overcome the national differences.

Tito welcomed the announcement of the possible “third way” of neighboring Hungary. Imre Nagy could become the support of Yugoslav independent policy. Tito could have settled his personal rule in a broader, more comfortable neighboring context. “The Third Way” was also Tito’s opportunity for international leadership that concealed the political essence of his regime, for the West undemocratic and for the East insufficiently loyal to the Communist international community, even too liberal. In this sense, Tito simultaneously worked on establishing the Non-Aligned Movement as the anti-colonialist and nationalist substitute for global democratization. As the idea of an integrated Yugoslavia was for Tito a symbol of monarchist and capitalist “dictatorship”, in the arising “Third World” democracy was a symbol of colonial governance.

Tito was gradually mastering the increasingly complex international relations. The initial power was given him by the unwritten Yalta agreement when Yugoslavia was considered as being “fifty-fifty” under Eastern and Western influences. The Hungarian Uprising and the Suez Crisis of 1956 confirmed that the world is rapidly changing. But the Yalta paradigm did not imply the permanence in international relations. Even Tito was surprised with the Hungarian Uprising. For Tito, however, the Soviet bloc was just a distant strategic shield against unwanted Western influence. While he considered the future of the Soviet bloc from the

Hungarian Uprising perspective, he primarily took care of his personal regime. Tito kept his power by any means necessary. After being pressed to collaborate also with the West, he raised the opportunity to reveal more openness and tolerance while preserving the order established by revolutionary violence.

But the Hungarian Uprising threatened to spill into Yugoslavia.<sup>4</sup> Anti-Soviet mood in Hungary grew into the anti-Communist anger.<sup>5</sup> This did not happen in Yugoslavia in 1948. The attitude towards Hungary Tito definitely changed in late October, when the Yugoslav officials began to make statements on violence and anarchy. By abandoning the rebel Hungarian government Tito sought to draw profit from Khrushchev. Anyway, Tito could easily agree to a Soviet military intervention in his immediate neighborhood and after the Soviet similar threats to Yugoslavia and himself in 1948. But Tito considered the Hungarian rebel government to be weak, and the revolutionary violence as a more serious threat than the announced Soviet intervention, most likely restricted to the restoration of the pro-Soviet regime.<sup>6</sup>

And although his behavior seemed volatile, Tito's attitudes were consistent with himself. When he betrayed the Hungarian Uprising he supported communism in the neighborhood. He acted identically during the Civil War in Greece. He kept the solidarity with Imre Nagy remembering the 1948. Tito was actually consistent with himself when he offered Nagy the asylum in the Yugoslav embassy,

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4 We can see that, although the Soviet leaders were the prime movers in 1956, they were not the only ones who feared the possible unravelling of the Warsaw Pact and 'spillover' of anti-communist ideas across their own borders. Leaders in Czechoslovakia and Romania, for example, reported popular unrest in their own countries during the Hungarian conflict. Even Josip Broz Tito's Yugoslavia ended up supporting the Soviet use of military force against Hungary. Yugoslavia was the only independent communist state since the 1948 Moscow-Belgrade rift, aloof from the Warsaw Pact or Soviet bloc, courted in the 1950s by both the United States and the Soviet Union, admired by the increasingly independent Asian and African countries, and vehemently critical of Soviet great power chauvinism" (Granville 1998, 493).

5 Hungarian communists did not have enough resources to incorporate enough middle class layers into a privileged regime structure, although the members of the middle class "found success both in education and the workplace despite being officially excluded from the Communist state" (Mark 2005, 500).

6 "No effort appears to have been made by the Soviet Union to justify its action on the grounds of necessary self-defense. The Soviet territory was not threatened by events in Hungary. Doubtless there was a Soviet desire to maintain the satellite status of Hungary, but under inter-national law and the United Nations Charter, Hungary was entitled to sovereign equality with all other Members" (Wright 1957, 275).

and when he ordered ambassador Soldatić expel Nagy out, on the street, when it was clear that this one is expected with certain death.

“On 2 November, Khrushchev and Malenkov flew to Yugoslavia, where they met with Tito at his villa on Brioni from 7.00 pm until 5.00 am the following day” (Kramer 1998, 204). A question is whether Tito decided to trade with the Soviets before or after the affirmed certainty that a definitive military intervention would take place. It may be also a matter of doubt if Imre Nagy was given the refuge in the Yugoslav embassy after the November 4 intervention began to take place, as Tito could charge more expensively his favors by doing so. Soviet officials have attacked Tito personally, as he dared to protect the counterrevolutionary leaders. But Tito was self-confidently regardless the pressure. He agreed to the Soviet intervention, and promised the Soviets that he would try to persuade Nagy to withdraw, in order to stop the violence. By giving the asylum, and by renouncing the asylum, Tito transferred the burden and responsibility to Khrushchev, and Khrushchev was imposed to pay the full political price. The later execution of Imre Nagy confirmed the character of the Soviet regime, and the justification of the Hungarian Uprising. The legitimacy of Soviet intervention was brought into question. Yugoslav support provided the assumed normalization of Hungary, and Tito succeeded in not paying a price for his actions. On the contrary, after manipulating with Nagy and the Hungarian Uprising, he strengthened his position both in the East and the West. The Soviets could be grateful to his support of the intervention, even though they had previously condemned the asylum to the rebels. The West could not condemn Tito after leaving Hungary to its destiny. As the West subsequently betrayed Israel during the Suez crisis.

The events were accelerating, becoming extremely serious and complex. The Soviet intervention began less than 24 hours after Khrushchev left Brioni. The Soviets assumed that Tito would not easily decide to betray Nagy, so a tank on November 5 shot the Yugoslav embassy when the cultural attaché was killed. Yugoslav foreign minister Koča Popović accused the Soviet authorities that they did so with purpose. Yugoslav Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Veljko Mićunović, similarly protested to the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs Dmitri Shepilov. Ambassador Dalibor Soldatić complained to the Soviet ambassador in Budapest, Yuri Andropov. Tito has decided to expel Nagy taking into account the credibility of Yugoslavia and his personal reputation. The meeting with Khrushchev on Brioni, although was a confirmation of his importance, Tito kept secret from the Yugo-

slav public for several days. The asylum in the Yugoslav embassy implied that the Nagy government ceased to exist. Thus Tito opened the way of cooperation with Kádár's government. By accepting the asylum Nagy was discredited, as he allegedly betrayed the revolution. By discrediting Nagy, Tito prevented the overflowing of anti-communism in Yugoslavia.

Tito decided to charge the Soviets costly for his services in order to conceal his dishonor, and to prevent the Soviets from considering Yugoslavia their satellite again.<sup>7</sup> The asylum could also be a Tito's message that he would preserve independence regardless of the previous normalization with the Soviet Union. The Soviets decided to arrest Nagy as soon as he leaves the Yugoslav embassy, and thus agreed to the Tito's game that would transfer the blame to their domain exclusively. Tito concealed his betrayal, and of his associates, with faked disappointment, as Kádár violated the promise that at Nagy will not be kidnapped. He recalled that during the meeting at Brioni he personally recommended Kádár to be appointed for the new president of the Hungarian government. Tito warned Kádár knew about the KGB plan of kidnapping, and the spinning was launched that Kádár opposed the Nagy future presence in Hungary, as he would encourage the "reactionaries". The "Nagy Affair" caused the deterioration in Yugoslav-Hungarian relations which helped Tito to seize a pleasant distance from the event. Yugoslavia also refused to participate in the celebration of the forty-year anniversary of the October Bolshevik Revolution. Imre Nagy was hanged on June 16, 1958.<sup>8</sup> The Hungarian

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7 "Even though Khrushchev suspected that the Warsaw Pact countries would remain vulnerable to recurrent crises unless the indigenous regimes became more 'viable' and the Soviet Union forged a more equitable relationship, he was determined to proceed far more cautiously in the future. Repressive leaders in Eastern Europe, such as Walter Ulbricht in East Germany, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej in Romania, Todor Zhivkov in Bulgaria and Antonin Novotny in Czechoslovakia, were able to win even stronger backing from Khrushchev because they convinced him that their presence was the only safeguard against 'unexpected developments' of the sort that occurred in Hungary and Poland. When faced with a trade-off between the 'viability' of the East European regimes and the 'cohesion' of the Eastern bloc after 1956, Khrushchev consistently chose to emphasize cohesion, thus forestalling any real movement toward a more durable political order" (Kramer 1998, 213).

8 "On 16 June 1958 Imre Nagy, who had been the prime minister of Hungary during the ill-fated Revolution of 1956, was put to death by the Soviet-backed regime of János Kádár and buried in an unmarked grave. Thirty-three years later, in a spectacular reversal of fortune, the communist regime was delegitimized by the funeral and reburial of Imre Nagy. Well over 300,000 Hungarians attended the ceremony, a very sizable portion of the population for a country with less than ten million citizens. In a force-

authorities have demanded from Yugoslavia to keep restrained, warning that he will reveal important disclosed details on Yugoslav engagement. However, the new Yugoslav ambassador Jovo Kapičić stated that the Nagy trial is “another link in the chain of the new anti-Yugoslav campaign, being conducted by the USSR and other bloc countries” (Granville 1998, 710–702).

The Hungarian Uprising raised the tensions between the East and the West. The success of the intervention confirmed the rise of the Soviet prestige in the Middle East and Asia. The United States have planned to encourage the East European states to leave the Soviet bloc, but the success was prevented by the unwillingness of any global confrontation on this matter.<sup>9</sup> The United States containment policy was therefore reduced to less immediate actions in the domains of economic and psychological influence and intelligence network. Hungary was obviously left to its destiny.<sup>10</sup>

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ful assertion of the collective will, the Hungarian people demonstrated their power to resist the tyranny of foreign occupation and made plain their desire for an autonomous state. The funeral dramatically symbolized how Hungarian memory culture reasserted its demand for sovereignty and was powerful enough to sweep aside the thin veneer of legitimacy of the Soviet-backed regime” (Benziger 2000, 142).

9 “The irony was that the Soviets, by their abandonment of Egypt until 5 November, and the Americans, by their policy of ‘active non-involvement’ in Hungary and Poland, aided each other’s attempts to quell the crises in their own sphere of influence. In areas of the world where they were relatively powerless, both the Soviet Union and the United States felt that in times of crisis, the status quo was preferable to a complete breakdown in the existing power balance. Neither was prepared to risk a major war over an area it had little prospect of controlling. Geography, then, played a central role in determining the responses of the Soviet Union to the Suez Crisis and the United States to the Hungarian revolt” (McCauley 1981, 795).

10 “At the October 26, 1956, meeting of the National Security Council, Eisenhower asked worriedly whether the Soviet Union might not ‘be tempted to resort to extreme measures, even global war,’ and advised that ‘this possibility [be watched] with the greatest care.’ And several years after the invasion of Hungary, Eisenhower, though nothing that Hungary was shielded from the reach of US forces by neutral Austria and Warsaw Pact member Czechoslovakia, admitted that fear of major conflict with the Soviet Union was the main reason for US inaction. Dulles subsequently added that US military intervention in Hungary would have been ‘madness’ because of the danger of nuclear war and the faint likelihood of success. ‘The only way we can save Hungary at this time would be through all-out nuclear war. Does anyone in his senses want us to start a nuclear war over Hungary? As for simply sending American divisions into Hungary, they would be wiped out by the superior Soviet ground forces.’ Similar considerations encouraged Moscow to cut short what is called the Prague Spring of 1968” (Valenta 1983, 88).

Postwar dissatisfactions in Eastern Europe were driven by misery and the lack of freedom, by the consequences of war destruction and socialist collectivization, the Soviet political domination and economic exploitation. Hungary ruled by the Stalinists (Rákosi, Farkas, Gerö) became a repressive police state reminiscent of the pre-war fascist dictatorship. The resistance to communism revealed, however, the nationalist conservative attitudes. The nationalist utopianism opposed the official social utopianism. From the margins of the Hungarian Uprising also appeared the anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism was a crawling global trending within the context of decolonization and the Middle East Crisis. The official Yugoslav policy was becoming anti-Israel orientated. In the later period Yugoslavia has provided systematic support to Palestinian separatists and terrorists. The totalitarian realities of Hungary and Yugoslavia contributed to the relativization of antifascism. The Janos Kadar restoration of the “real communism” retained the anti-fascist rhetoric, considering the 1956 Uprising as counterrevolutionary. Initially opposed, fascism and communism eventually gained the similarities: totalitarian dictatorship and alien (Soviet) occupation. The nationalist resistances to communism warned that anti-fascism is limited by complex realities. Antifascism was an important political conviction in Hungary, after the Horti era, the coalition with Nazi Germany and the “Arrow Cross” regime.<sup>11</sup> But already since the end of the 1940-s the anti-fascist sentiments started to fade while facing the horrors and despair under the communism. The break-up of Tito with Stalin in 1948, and the concentration of the Soviet troops on the Hungarian border with Yugoslavia were sufficiently overwhelming. The Red Army was no longer considered as liberating, but rather as the occupation force. The renunciation of anti-fascism remained the basis of Hungarian resistance to the Soviet domination both before and after 1956. Conservative nationalism became a dominant alternative to the Stalinist state and Soviet imperialism. The political conservatives and the radical right enabled Janos Kadar to characterize the Uprising as an attempt by fascists to confront the communist rule (Mark 2006, 2013).

The Hungarian Uprising was a serious temptation for the Yugoslav government. However, Tito managed to seize the opportunity and redefine the status

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<sup>11</sup> “Hungarian communists conferred legitimacy on their regime by referring to (and in most cases, exaggerating) their role in the antifascist struggle – as partisans and in alliance with the Red Army – and bolstered their authority by claiming to be the best protectors of Hungary from the return of Fascism” (Mark 2006, 2012).

of Yugoslavia and his personal role in international relations. He already had a certain experience in that. In the depths of the Yugoslav regime, there was enough understanding of the new approach to the Soviets, and the concrete cooperation in the suppression of the Hungarian Uprising. In one year, Tito met four times with Khrushchev. Apart from helping refugees and formal reactions, the West had no power to help Hungary to leave the Soviet orbit. The West remained inactive, and Yugoslavia silent, also during the suppression of the Prague Spring in 1968.

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### *Jugoslavija i mađarska pobuna 1956: dileme i kontroverze*

Sukob Jugoslavije sa Sovjetskim Savezom 1948. ohrabrio je centrifugalne političke snage u Istočnom bloku. Mađarska pobuna iz 1956. bila je, ipak, ozbiljno iskušenje za jugoslovensku vladu, mada je jugoslovenski lider Josip Broz Tito uspeo da iskoristi priliku kako bi redefinisao status Jugoslavije, i sopstvenu ulogu, u međunarodnim odnosima. U dubinama jugoslovenskog režima bilo je dovoljno razumevanja za novo približavanje Sovjetima iz prethodne godine, i saradnju u sovjetskom gušenju mađarske pobune. Tito se u jednoj godini četiri puta sastao s Hruščovim. Osim pomoći izbeglicama i zvaničnih reakcija, Zapad je bio nemoćan, i Mađarska je prepuštena sovjetskoj orbiti. Zapad je ostao neaktivan, a Jugoslavija začutila, i to se ponovilo tokom gušenja Praškog proleća 1968.

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**Ključne reči:** Mađarska revolucija, Jugoslavija, Josip Broz Tito, Imre Nađ, Nikita Hruščov

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