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*A Model for "People's Democracy".
Some Backgrounds of the Tito–Šubašić
Provisional Yugoslav Government*

The assessments of the events in Yugoslavia between 1944–1945 are still very diverse even today, in historiography and especially in politics; the same holds for this phase as for other phenomena of critical importance (for example, the purges and trials in the Soviet Union, the Spanish Civil War and so on). It is history, according to the American historians Radosh and Habeck,¹ which still represents a subject for debate worth arguing about for those who write it and for those who take a romantic or political posture towards the events.

The subject of dispute, when it comes to the year 1945 in Yugoslavia, and especially when an anniversary is involved, is how to evaluate the circumstances in Yugoslavia at that time and in other countries since then known as Eastern Europe or the Eastern Bloc. Did the situation consist only of the victory of anti-fascist coalitions and a national struggle for liberation, or was it also a revolution in process and (or) the sovietisation of this region? Tito's dispute with Stalin, which took place three years later, caused widespread 'turning a blind eye' to the actual state of affairs in Yugoslavia in 1944–45 and the nature of its system as a whole.

The border line, which ran through the middle of Central Europe, was known and clear. Stalin had already shown his intentions of spreading his influence of to this line as early as 1941. This was also the line along which the model for provisional governments, which should have been based on political compromise, was formed. F. Fejtó indicates Poland as the first typical example of this, and Yugoslavia as the second one. It is our opinion that Yugoslavia was the first one, in terms of sequence as well as significance. Furthermore, it became a pattern for the other countries of the future Eastern Bloc to follow.² F. Fejtó puts forward an interesting theory about the events at the end of World War II, when he states that in theory, the Anglo-American-Soviet alliance should have corresponded to a similar alliance of all internal political forces in all of the European nations, meaning

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¹ Ronald Radosh, Mary. R. Habeck, Grigory Sevostianov: *Spain Betrayed*, Yale University Press, New Haven 2001, p. xxi.

² Francois Fejtó: *Histoire des démocraties populaires*, I, Editions du Seuil, 1979, p. 32–33.

an alliance ranging from the communist to the anti-Axis national right wing forces. Accordingly, the essence (*le but*) of the People's Front policy should have been to avoid the rivalry between political parties or classes as well as clashes between the pro-western and the pro-eastern forces, and to join forces against the common enemy. As the war neared its end the Soviet Union gave the impression that it still wished to preserve the spirit of the alliance and to cooperate with its capitalist allies in the post-war period, and it publicly discouraged communist parties all around from revolution and civil war. The same was supposed to be done by the West, which was to encourage its sympathisers to cooperate with the communists. According to Fejtő, this was actually carried out in the West and in the case of Czechoslovakia. But the situation was different in those countries which had a pre-war experience with prohibited communist parties; here the anti-German national movements were at the same time extremely anti-Soviet; the leaders of these movements saw the communists merely as agents of the Soviet Union and refused to cooperate with them. Under the pressure from the Big Three, these coalitions nevertheless came into existence towards the end of the war, but they were very fragile, unnatural, and lasted only due to the constant intervention of the great powers. All this resulted in an even greater division and each of these groups sought protection of one or the other of the great powers: subsequently, such politicians lost their independent character and gradually became mere agents of one of the sides of the barricade, Fejtő concludes. This deliberation from years ago, as well as methods used in the Spanish Civil War, lead us to the conclusion that it was important for Stalin to supervise the provisional governments, created at the end of the World War II in his area of interest.³ Therefore all that remains to be answered is what (and who) he could have used as a tool to achieve it. We have already explored in depth the policies put in place during the process of the formation of the provisional government in Yugoslavia and the course of events after it was instated.⁴ In this paper we will only reflect on some of the activities behind the scenes, in order to shed light on the methods of the communists and to give explanation for some of the shortages of the opposition in Yugoslavia or, better put the absence thereof.

After many years of research on the subject, we could claim that the process of take-over of power by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia came to pass not only in agreement and with full standing support from Moscow, but that Mos-

³ Historical documents, collected by historians in various recently opened Soviet archives, have already demystified the romantic image of the Spanish Civil War and proved right those who claimed it was all about the communist struggle for hegemony within the Spanish Republic. It remains to be seen whether these archives will shed more light on the manner in which the Yugoslav communists fought for hegemony between 1944/1945 and about the coordination with Stalin. For now we can only make indirect assumptions, since nobody explores this subject systematically in the Moscow archives.

⁴ Cf. Jerca Vodušek Starič: *Prevzem oblasti 1944–1946* [The Takeover of Power 1944–1946]. Ljubljana 1992; Jerca Vodušek Starič: *Kako su komunisti osvojili vlast 1944–1946* [How the Communists Rose to Power 1944–1946]. Zagreb 2006.

cow in many ways determined its proceedings, as it did later in the remaining Eastern European countries. The idea for such a model of take-over of power had its beginnings in the concept of the People's Front from the mid thirties; it was tested and complemented in Spain. The methods we are going to describe also originate from there. The newly opened archival collections of the intelligence and secret services confirm and clarify the details. Taking a closer look at the sequence of events and the methods applied, it becomes obvious that the historical interpretations such as the one claiming that the provisional governments based on the People's Front principle were governments of equal opportunity for all political parties, are in the least, naive. Why?

It is known that Stalin disbanded the Comintern early on, in 1943. But what is less known is that the main reason for it was to enable Moscow to directly supervise and steer events worldwide with the help of its residents and agents; working through local communist parties was much less efficient and more visible, making the agents vulnerable. This can be seen from the instructions Pavel Fitin sent in September 1943 to all of the more important Soviet NKVD residencies abroad (New York, San Francisco, Ottawa and others). He gave orders to separate the work of the agents and residencies from the local communist parties, implying that the Soviet Union did not want any suspicions to arise that Moscow's agents were directing the work of the communists around the world, and wrote: "2. Our workers, by continuing to meet the leaders of the FELLOWCOUNTRYMEN (i.e. Communists), are exposing themselves to danger and are giving cause (1 group unidentified) local authorities to suspect that the BIG HOUSE (BOL'SHOJ DOM, i.e. Comintern) is still in existence." Therefore, the residencies and agents were to be strictly separated in the future, i.e. they should work separately from the members of the local communist parties, as Fitin ordered: "a) that personal contact with leaders of the local FELLOWCOUNTRYMAN organizations should cease and that FELLOWCOUNTRYMAN material should not be accepted for forwarding to the BIG HOUSE; b) that meetings of our workers may take place only with special reliable undercover (ZAKONSPIROVANNYJ) contacts of the FELLOWCOUNTRYMAN (organizations), who are not suspected by the (1 group unidentified) local authorities, exclusively about specific matters of our intelligence work (acquiring (1 group unidentified) contacts, leads (NAVODKI), rechecking of those who are being cultivated, etc.). For each meeting it is necessary to obtain our consent."⁵ Thus it is a fact that by 1944 Stalin had achieved direct supervision of the surroundings and the political moves of

⁵ A message from Moscow to Canberra, 12 September 1943, The Venona Documents, NSA (National Security Agency), (<http://www.nsa.gov/venona>), acquired on 27 March 2008. These instructions also demonstrate the nature of the contacts of secret coded telegraphs correspondence – it took place between individual agents abroad or at the headquarters INO or the Foreign Department, and later NKVD, which was managed before the war by the young student of the School for Special Purposes Pavel Mihailović Fitin, after INO was cleansed in an extensive purge.

his Anglo-American Allies by means of the NKVD or INO GUGB (from 1938 the GRU was part of the NKVD) agents. The on-going discussion today is mostly about what the actual status and influence of the individual residents, agents, collaborators or informants of the Soviet secret service was, namely who was a true agent, who was a so-called "agent of influence", tipping the scales in the favour of Soviet arguments and wishes, and who was a mere informant.

It appears that many high ranking politicians and officials worked to the advantage of Stalin's politics as sympathisers, informants, and agents. In the United States, for example, the following men were, according to expert opinion, agents: the second in line at the Ministry of Finance of the United States, Harry Dexter White, Donovan's assistant at the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Duncan Lee, and especially Alger Hiss, Director of the Office of Special Political Affairs at the State Department.⁶ Hiss took part in all major international events, at the Yalta Conference and as Secretary-general at the founding conference of the United Nations in May and June 1945; he had worked for GRU as early as 1935. Moreover, Alger Hiss, cover name 'Aleš', went to Moscow after the Yalta Conference, where he received a high Soviet decoration for his group and himself, covertly, of course.⁷ There is difference of opinion on the issue of Roosevelt's close adviser Harry Hopkins,⁸ who was of assistance to the Soviets in 1943, when they acquired large quantities of uranium from the Lend Lease programme, even though it was unclear why they needed it and despite the opposition of the US military circles.⁹ Kern places Hopkins in the circle of 'determined ignoramuses',

⁶ All authors – Gordievski and Vasili Mitrokhin in their works written in cooperation with Christopher Andrew, as well as all others (N. West, G. Kern, Herbert Rommerstein, Eric Breindel etc.) – agree that since the middle of 1930s Harry D. White (agent 'Jurist') and Alger Hiss were part of the network of the American communists led by W. Chambers (editor of the *Daily Worker* and *New Masses* newspapers) and Nathan Gregory Silvermaster. Chambers stopped working for Moscow in the autumn of 1939 due to his disappointment with the purges and the danger that the Soviets could pass the information coming from the United States to the Third Reich due to the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact; he then disclosed his activities and contacts to the U.S. Administration and the Congress. The authors also agree about Donovan's personal assistant Duncan C. Lee (with the cover name KOCH) and around twenty other agents. Andrew and Mitrokhin state the following: "During World War II, NKVD knew far more about OSS than OSS knew about NKVD." (Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin archive*, Allen Lane & The Penguin Press, 1999, p. 143.)

⁷ Nigel West: *Venona*, Harper-Collins, London 2000, p. 235, where N. West refers to the decoded telegram from Venona, sent by Anatolij V. Gorsky or 'A. Gromov' ('Vadim', the NKVD resident in Washington) from Washington to Moscow on 30 March 1945. Hiss and his group supposedly just collected military information; Hiss was an exception among agents, since he was not taken over by the NKVD after the purges, like most of the military intelligence network.

⁸ Some (Rommerstein and Breindel, op. cit.) claim that Hopkins was an agent; others claim that he was merely a tool of the agents around him (for ex. G. Kern, op. cit.).

⁹ Romerstein and Breindel, *The Venona Secrets*, Regnery Publ. Inc., Washington 2000, p. 468. More about Hopkins's contacts and the information he sent to Moscow is disclosed by Andrew and Mitrohin in the aforementioned work, p. 147, where they also state that KGB officers bragged about Hopkins being their agent.

together with the Vice President of the United States Henry A. Wallace and US ambassador Joseph E. Davies. The latter is generally known to have claimed that the show trials in Moscow in the years 1937 and 1938 were convincing and genuine. Kern comments: "Davies later would hold that the Bolshevik word of honour was as good as the Bible and that Stalin was the best man to get lost in the wilderness with, so trustworthy was he. Top advisors were so partial to the Stalin regime that they did not have to be recruited – Harry Hopkins, Henry Wallace, Joseph E. Davies. ... When the USA and the USSR became allies, widespread sympathy for 'the Russians' removed practically all security controls."¹⁰ This attitude went so far as to cause the dissolution of the division of Eastern European affairs at the US State Department. To complete the picture, we would have to give the account of many other parts of the Venona disclosures, especially those on the network of agents that sent heaps of intelligence from the USA and Great Britain to Moscow about the development of the atomic bomb. But let us just use the words of one of the experts: Roosevelt's wartime administration was "infested by Soviet spies". And all this came to pass in spite of the testimonies of Whittaker Chambers and all the other defectors from the Soviet secret service in the years 1938-39 (Krivitsky, Orlov, and later Guzenko).

It was a bit different in Great Britain, where the so-called agents of influence failed to convince Churchill. But here Stalin had some very high ranking spies in the British SIS, whom he reactivated in 1940/41. They intercepted and forwarded important information. The question which emerges in this case, and has not yet been well researched, is – how much have they influenced the state of affairs in Eastern Europe?¹¹ The agents are well known, the major ones being Antony Blunt, Kim Philby and Donald Maclean. In their case one could assert that it was less likely that they had a key influence on the policies of the SIS, the FO or the British Government, but they definitely relayed confidential and secret data, assessments and decisions to Moscow. Only one example from the recent studies: such an amount of intelligence was passed on to the Soviet Union through Lend Lease and other channels that in 1945 at Potsdam Stalin knew more about the first atom bomb explosion than the new president of the United States, Harry Truman.¹²

¹⁰ Garry Kern, *A Death in Washington*, Walter G. Krivitsky and the Stalin Terror, Enigma books, New York 2003, pp. 180, 230.

¹¹ S. Ritchie, *Our man in Yugoslavia*, pp. 174–177. He claims that the penetration of Kim Philby and the like did not influence SIS policy in Yugoslavia, at least there is no such evidence yet. Then, as he explains the double role of the British intelligence officers with the Yugoslav and Italian partisans (simultaneously collecting information about German military plans as well as the communist movement), he states that these fortunate circumstances did not last long, since: "SIS had of course been penetrated by Soviet agents, and it may well be that communist leaders like Tito were warned by Moscow that the SIS officers attached to their units held a dual brief." It was either such a warning or the Yugoslav partisans' own suspicion which gave rise to the rift between the British and Tito in the autumn of 1944. As we will see later on, the Moscow warning was the reason.

¹² G. Kern, *A Death in Washington*, p. 230.

If we now take a closer look at the contents of their reports and the subject of their interests at the end of the war, and at the same time follow the political developments in 1944/45, we can see that both diplomacy and the work of the agents and residencies was focused on the important political questions of the post-war settlement in Europe. Upon reading through the decoded messages of the Venona collection¹³ it becomes clear that the Soviet agents transmitted many telegrams and sent a large number of films, particularly about the issues pertaining to Eastern Europe, and disclosing the British-American differences,¹⁴ the details of the Lend Lease programme, the planning and the arrangements the Western Allies made at the conferences in Quebec, the UN conference in San Francisco in May 1945, the activities and structure of the OSS, the plans for the division of Germany, and so on.¹⁵ For example, on 7 September 1944 Donald Maclean sent a detailed report to Fitin in Moscow via the Soviet consulate in New York on the subject of the upcoming discussion between Roosevelt and Churchill at the conference in Quebec, such as the division of Germany, the difference in position between the British and the Americans in regard to the Morgenthau plan and the solution of the Greek question (where, he said, the British intended to set up a "government well disposed towards England" and "their tactics consist in supporting the King", yet the US government "regards the British intrigues in Greece suspicion"). Maclean suggested (it stands: he hoped) that the Soviet Union should take advantage of these circumstances to disrupt the plans of the British. In a similar spirit, in one day, on 17 October 1944 the Soviet consul in New York sent 56 films to Moscow. He received them from Silvermaster, and they contained the evaluations of the British Ministry of Economic Warfare on

¹³ Many historical analyses have been written about Venona in the last decade, but we only listed some of them; the first ones were written by C. Andrew, A. Weinstein and A. Vassiliev, who also examined the evidence in the KGB collections. (K.G. Robertson, ed., *War, Resistance and Intelligence*, Leo Cooper, 1999, p. 220.)

Venona was a top secret project, even more so than Ultra, of the US Army Signal Security Agency, later Signals Intelligence Service or NSA, with the aim of first decoding the codebooks and then also the collections of Soviet diplomatic, foreign trade, GRU, KGB and Comintern encrypted messages from abroad to Moscow and back. The various origins of these messages were very interesting. The decoding started as early as the 1 February 1943 and was completed in 1980. Around 2,900 decoded or partly decoded messages of KGB and GRU were then declassified in 1998 and are stored in the national archives in Washington and London; some selected messages are also published at the NSA (National Security Agency) and CIA websites. Later the FBI (in 1947), the CIA (1953) and British intelligence (1960) joined the project.

¹⁴ The roots of this problem of dissent on some of the policies go back at least to 1941 if not earlier – it involved the disagreement between the British and the Americans about the Soviet demand that the Allies should consent to the annexation of those territories that the Soviet Union acquired on the basis of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, which, just like the 'Polish question', lasted throughout the war and reached one of its culminations with the Katyń Massacre in the spring of 1943.

¹⁵ In the autumn of 1944, Silvermaster (and his group) sent detailed films of American documents to Moscow, as well as reports and evaluations on the circumstances involved.

the situation in Germany and on economic intelligence information from the Far East, the instructions on the disbandment of the National socialist Party in Germany, as well as a number of reports on the Lend Lease programme, and other matters.¹⁶ However, Poland and Yugoslavia, countries on the fringe of Stalin's future "defence zone", constantly remained a subject of interest in the telegrams concerning Eastern Europe that were transmitted to Moscow.

The proposals and procedures for the formation of joint provisional governments started quite early on during the war. These governments were to be assembled from representatives of the governments of the occupied countries in exile in London and the leaderships of the resistance movements at home, which were frequently led by the communists. Such a compromise, which was endorsed and supervised by the Big Three, was a lengthy and often unpromising procedure. The only one to avoid it was the Czechoslovak president Eduard Beneš, who obtained individual guarantees from Moscow for the course of action to be followed during the liberation of his homeland; he achieved them by signing the Agreement on Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union on 12 December 1943. On account of this exception, it is of no small interest that we find Beneš in the decoded Venona NKVD reports in a message as early as May 1943. Namely, on 2 May 1943 general Fitin received a coded telegram from New York which said that '19' is reporting on a meeting between Churchill, Roosevelt, and Vice-President Wallace, to which he was invited. '19' commented, among other things, that Roosevelt was not keeping Wallace up to date with important military decisions and that it was possible that Wallace lacked precise information about the opening of the second front in Europe.¹⁷ The rundown of the Venona decoders shows that '19' was the cover name of Beneš. And according to some interpretations he was no less than a recruited Soviet agent.¹⁸ The other possibility is that he was an instrument of the agents in his entourage, such as Captain Jan Fierlinger, the employee of the Czechoslovak Information Centre in New York Sukhomlin, and others who were recruited agents as Venona states most conclusively. Either way, we find it more interesting to uncover the motives behind such conduct. In order to do this, we must take into account the diplomatic controversies of the time, especially the severance of diplomatic relations between the Soviet government and the Polish government in exile (after the Katyń Affair) in May 1943 and the diplomatic pressures from all sides about the future Polish borders and representation. This was probably the root of Beneš's relatively early

¹⁶ Telegram from Moscow to Canberra, 12 September 1943, The Venona Documents, NSA (National Security Agency), (<http://www.nsa.gov/venona>), acquired on 27 March 2008.

¹⁷ Telegram from New York to Moscow, 29 May 1943, The Venona Documents, NSA (<http://www.nsa.gov/Venona>), acquired on 5 March 2008.

¹⁸ Nigel West: *Venona*, p. 122. West states: "Discreet inquiries at the White House quickly established that agent 19 was the Check leader Eduard Beneš, long suspected of having been a Soviet source. However, by the time the connection had been made, Beneš had returned to Czechoslovakia at the end of the war, and had subsequently been removed from power."

decision to try and negotiate with Stalin by himself. However, such a move was in discord with the policy of the Western Allies. Namely, soon after the signature of the agreement between the Soviet Union and Great Britain in 1942, Anthony Eden expressed to the Soviets a wish of his government that the great powers should work out the future of the small allied countries in unison, and still more, that they should attempt to reach an understanding on their post-war status in order to prevent any "undignified competition" between these small countries; the British retained this point of view in 1943. Furthermore, their discussions with Mayski gave them the impression that he agreed with such a method; Mayski even named this principle the 'Self-denying ordinance'. Then, in May 1943, Beneš informed the British Foreign Office that he had been negotiating with the Soviet government for a while in order to obtain some guarantee that the Soviets would respect the Czechoslovak territorial integrity and would not interfere in the internal affairs of the state; furthermore, he had discussed the possibility for a Soviet–Czechoslovak–Polish Agreement. It was obvious that the inclusion of Poland into such a negotiation was not possible after the severance of the Soviet Polish diplomatic relations. Subsequently, on 11 May Beneš travelled to the United States, where he stayed until 11 June and had several discussions with Roosevelt; reports of this came to Moscow, among others via 'Mars', an official of the Czechoslovak Information Centre in the USA.¹⁹ Beneš's intention was to leave for Moscow right away in June and conclude an agreement with the Soviet Union. It is well known that the Western Allies protested against such a plan at once. After that Beneš and the Soviet diplomats temporarily abandoned the idea, but Moscow expressed its official resentment on the issue.²⁰ We can only speculate what triggered such haste. Some claim that Beneš truly believed in a post-war rapprochement of the East and the West and that he held no ideological prejudice towards Stalin. Regardless of what his true convictions were, his wish for a compromise for post-war Czechoslovakia is clear and understandable, since he realistically assessed the future (pre)dominance of the Soviet Union in the Central European region. At least, that is how he explained his visit to Moscow later in December 1943 after he again met with a good deal of disapproval from the Western powers. Beneš's appraisal of his visit to Moscow did not remain secret for long either. When he came back to London, he told the British that he was happy with the attitude of the Soviet government towards the European question, that he was bringing Mikolajczyk a message that the Soviet Union was not opposed to a renewal of diplomatic relations between the two countries, that it did not strive for a communist Poland or demand that the borders should be the same as in 1941, that it only wished for the Curzon line with a few amendments as well

¹⁹ Nigel West claims that several Venona messages show that Jan Fierlinger (codename 'Officer'), at that time an employee at the Czechoslovak mission in New York also worked for the Soviets, more precisely, for Pravdin. (N. West, *Venona*, p. 219.)

²⁰ L. Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, Vol. II, HMSO, London 1971, p. 595–596.

as changes in the Polish government. After Beneš entrusted his interpretations of the Soviet position to the British, they forwarded them the American State Department. From there it did not take long, and in February 1944 the information was reported back to the 8th Department of the NKVD via New York.

In a similar manner, Stalin acquired information regarding the Yugoslav situation. It was delivered either consciously or not so by Yugoslav politicians in exile (or their entourage), who were paving the way towards a compromise with the partisan movement. The proper person for such a purpose had to come from the leading, governmental circles or from high representatives of the political parties in exile. The reason for this, as has been demonstrated earlier, was that Stalin needed to know about their connections in the West and their exchanges with Roosevelt and Churchill, their ministers and intelligence services. It must be stressed at this point that the information that came through NKVD channels, which we are speaking about, was as a rule collected at NKVD headquarters and forwarded to Stalin and that the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Soviet ambassadors did not receive it. Stalin was, therefore, the one who was interested in the plans and attitudes of the West about post-war Europe, its borders and the delivery of economic aid. Therefore, it is not much of a surprise that as early as 1943 we find Dr. Sava Kosanović and Dr. Ivan Šubašić among the collaborators – agents, informants or mere sources, whichever, – of Vladimir Pravdin (cover name 'Sergej'), a member of the NKVD, but formally a TASS correspondent in Washington. In June 1943, the decoded messages from New York to Moscow refer to them under the cover names 'Seres' (Šubašić) and 'Kolo' (Kosanović), both reporting several times on Alexander Halpern, the former secretary of Kerensky, who was at the time working for British intelligence.²¹ In relation to Yugoslavia, two more names often appear in the encrypted messages. One is 'Khazar', who has not been identified by the official decoders. The message of 9 September 1943 states that OSS directed him to travel to Yugoslavia, perhaps to see Tito himself, who is mentioned later in the text. The second collaborator is 'Croat' or 'Khorvat', for whom the NKVD was unable to cover all expenses in Stockholm, so they suggested to general Fitin that he should allow 'Croat' to get a job at the British Embassy.²²

Both of the politicians mentioned held key positions in Yugoslav politics; Šubašić was the ban of Croatia, which gained a fair amount of autonomy on the eve of the war and Kosanović represented the largest Serb party that was in favour of a federal Yugoslavia. He was the first one of the leaders of the KDK (Peasant Democratic Coalition), after that of the Independent Democratic Party. He was a member of parliament in the 1930s, one of its opposition leaders, and

²¹ Telegram from New York to Moscow, 21 June 1943, The Venona Documents, NSA (<http://www.nsa.gov/venona>), acquired on 6 April 2008, or Nigel West: *Venona*, p. 219.

²² Telegrams from New York to Moscow, 9 September, and from Stockholm to Moscow, 17 December 1943, The Venona Documents, NSA (<http://www.nsa.gov/venona>), acquired on 6 April 2008.

later became a minister in the government of Dušan Simović in exile.²³ Apresyan, the young Soviet vice-consul in New York, wrote to general Fitin in Moscow in July 1944 that Kosanović is a person who is devoted to us and understands that his country's welfare depends on us.²⁴ But Apresyan was less pleased with the attitude of Kosanović towards the Yugoslav compromise agreed upon on the island of Vis in June 1944 and was particularly unhappy because Kosanović was not observing the necessary secrecy; he had already reported about it in 1943, after Kosanović had revealed to Šubašić that he was working for Pravdin. When Kosanović moved from the USA to London in July 1944, Apresyan made it a point in his letter to Fitin that they should persistently make Kosanović understand that he had to keep his contacts with the NKVD completely secret and that he was not to make any important decisions without a prior consultation with the NKVD.²⁵

Earlier on, when Šubašić was leaving the USA for London, similar reports were sent to Moscow. One of them in May 1944 reported on his farewell meetings with Dunne, Cordell Hull's assistant, and Donovan, the head of OSS. Both of the high officials agreed with the argumentation, presented by Šubašić, that there should be an overall endeavour for the unification of all the parties in Yugoslavia with the partisans (the telegram uses the term *gruppirovka* for such unification), and that Draža Mihailović should no longer be part of the Yugoslav Royal Government. The messages also make quite clear that before he left, Šubašić recommended two other members of the HSS (Croatian Peasant Party), i.e. Tomo Baburić and Pavao Pocrnić, as possible future contacts with the NKVD. He even wrote excellent personal reports about both of them, saying that "... they deserve complete confidence" and advised the Soviets how to establish contact with them.²⁶

Yet, all these reports to Moscow give us no hint as to what both Yugoslav politicians expected to achieve from this kind of cooperation with the Soviets. One can only speculate that such a step, taken by Šubašić, who was not only one of the heads of the Croatian Peasant Party, but also a personal friend of its leader Dr. Vladko Maček, had to affect the position of the Croatian Peasant Party at home; perhaps it even had repercussions for the party in the aftermath of the war, during the preparations for the constitutional elections. It is also evident that Stalin needed Šubašić solely for the duration of the provisional government in Yugoslavia. That he really just took advantage of Šubašić, can be deduced from all that ensued, when Šubašić was ousted from politics and held in house arrest after the elections. And especially from the ironic question Stalin

²³ For more information see Sava Kosanović: Jugoslavija, bila je osuđena na smrt. Globus, Arhiv Jugoslavije, Beograd, Zagreb 1984.

²⁴ Telegram from New York to Moscow, 25 July 1944, Part II, Selected Venona Messages, CIA <http://www.cia.gov/csi>, acquired on 20 September 2005.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Telegram from New York to Moscow, 4 May 1944, The Venona Documents, NSA (<http://www.nsa.gov/venona>), acquired on 6 April 2008.

posed to Tito, during his visit to Moscow in May 1946: "How is my 'friend' Šubašić doing?"²⁷ Here it is possible to make a parallel with the attitude Stalin and the NKVD officers had towards Largo Caballero.

The spring of 1944 was not only the point in time when overtures were being made for the Yugoslav compromise, but also the time when Moscow sent its first official emissaries to Yugoslavia, and a Yugoslav partisan mission was sent to London. The NKVD did not control only some of the royal circles in London, but also had collaborators in the partisan circles. One of the members of the partisan mission, led by Vladimir Velebit, and the secretary to Dr. Drago Marušič, Gregor Ravnihar, worked for them. Soon after, the agents 'Karas' and 'Kolo' arrived to London from the United States. One of Apresyan's reports from New York, written on 17 May 1944, shows that 'Karas' was the president of the Yugoslav Merchant Navy Association. The report of 14 June states that they acquired a new contact for him – he was to meet a NKVD agent at a certain spot in London. The password for the new contact was: "Vlado says hello," and 'Karas' had to respond with: "Thank you very much! I haven't seen him for a while."²⁸ The same password for setting up contact in London was given to Kosanović a month later (but it is not known what Vlado, derived from Vladimir, represented or who he was). 'Karas' was Antun Ivančić, member of the Joint Committee of South Slavs in London, led by Dr. Boris Furlan, Mihailo Petrović and Dr. Rudolf Bičanić. All three gave their support to the partisan movement and, as did many of the members of their association, left for Yugoslavia soon after.

It is not very likely that Tito could have been oblivious to all these intelligence channels or at least about the contents of the messages reaching Moscow in this manner. Namely, when Bičanić participated at the session of the UN-RRA council in Montreal in the autumn of 1944 as Tito's representative, he simply reported to Tito through the very same Soviet channels.

Later on in London, Šubašić received a mandate from the King to form a new Yugoslav government in exile, which was to negotiate with Tito. In this new government two of the five ministers were Dr. Sava Kosanović²⁹ and Dr. Drago Marušič. The predominance of ministers, who were favourably disposed towards Tito, was, of course, a condition set by Tito, and therefore an exigency for the merger of forces with the communists. Furthermore, to incorporate different political parties in a future joint government greatly helped to keep up the appearance of political diversity in front of the international community. As has already been mentioned, the compromise formula for the representation of the

²⁷ Nešković's record on the conversation between Stalin and Tito, 27 – 28 May 1946.

²⁸ The National Archives of the UK (PRO), HW 15/58.

²⁹ Later on, from 1946 to 1949, Kosanović was the ambassador of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia to USA and Mexico, and then until his death in 1956, a member of the Federal Executive Council (i.e. the central government); among other things, he was a member of the Yugoslav delegations at the 1946 Paris Peace Conference and at the United Nations Assembly meeting in 1947.

Yugoslav Royal Government in London and the National Committee for the Liberation of Yugoslavia (NKOJ) in a joint provisional government was then contracted in the Tito–Šubašić Agreement at Vis in 16 June 1944. Another basic principle of the agreement was also that all military forces should gather under Tito's leadership. At that point already many claimed that Šubašić relinquished his position and gave too many concessions to Tito. Another of the elements or foundations for the compromise came from Moscow as well: it was the amnesty of 1944, which was to facilitate individual cross-over into the ranks of the National Liberation Forces. Furthermore, the telegrams clearly show that Stalin also bore in mind the so-called Chetniks or Serbian question, being well aware that the British were carefully monitoring the situation in Serbia.

In the aftermath of the Vis agreement Šubašić pressed for an immediate establishment of the joint government, yet Tito disregarded his pleas for several months to come; Tito had his well known tactical grounds for it. He was therefore inaccessible for Šubašić until the autumn of 1944, i.e. until after he had gained military control over Serbia and Belgrade and the famous percentage agreement of fifty/fifty between Churchill and Stalin had been reached in Moscow on 9 October.

Throughout this time and later on as well, Tito coordinated his actions with Moscow. The intensity of the coordination was described in September 1945 in the testimony of the Soviet cipher clerk Gouzenko: "According to Gouzenko, another NKVD man who is a close friend of Lieutenant Kulakov is Marshal Tito's personal cipher clerk in Yugoslavia. Gouzenko states that this cipher clerk is almost worked to death because Tito sends messages to Moscow asking for instructions and advice on the most minor matters."³⁰ Much the same is the testimony of the radio operator of the Russian mission with the Slovene partisan command, who said that his 'Duplex' station had the largest amount of traffic in Slovenia; he was forced to work from 6 am until midnight, without time to eat, and the radio overheated, with parts of it almost melting. On a busy day he received around 6000 number groups (each group had 5 digits), and he transmitted more than he received. The ciphering was carried out by Lieutenant Peter (Kornjenko?) and Captain Boris. Traffic was transmitted between Moscow, the Supreme Headquarters, the aviation base in Bari as well as locations in the Pohorje hills and northern Italy. After a month the written encrypted telegrams would be destroyed.³¹

From the autumn of 1944 on, we can witness an intertwinement of numerous military, strategic and political moves, outlooks and arrangements on the European and the Yugoslav stage; two problems were of importance here. The first one was an ever more evident and already well-known process of deterioration in the cooperation between the partisan movement and the Western Allies; this

³⁰ Venona detailed report, Hoover's letter to Frederick B. Lyon at the State Department, 24 September 1945, CIA (<http://www.cia.gov/csi>), acquired on 20 September 2005.

³¹ ARS, MFS.

was more or less on line with the broader political picture, i.e. the falling apart of the East-West relations, and the growing influence of politics in the course of the war. The encrypted intelligence messages contain some new revelations in this case as well. They show that Tito did not cool his relations with the Western Allies in September 1944 due to the Allied scheme to disembark in Istria, as Slovene (and ex-Yugoslav) historiography suggests. Namely, as early as on 9 May 1944 Moscow (and Tito) received a message from the Silvermaster group in the USA informing them that, on 22 April 1944 the British had abandoned the planned invasion in the Balkans.³² The extensive report that the British diplomat and NKVD agent Donald Maclean sent to Moscow in August 1944 informing them on future British actions, clearly states that the only thing that was suggested by the British military circles was that a suitable number of troops should be stationed in Trieste to supervise the Yugoslav Italian border and to keep peace there.³³ Therefore, Moscow and Tito knew of the intentions of the Allies very early on and the estrangement between Tito and the West should be attributed to something other than the classic ideological motives. It was another message Tito received from Moscow. The message in question revealed that the Allied liaison officers in Yugoslavia are in fact collaborators of SIS, or that many of them have a dual role – they represent SOE and at the same time work for SIS. For this reason the partisan secret police, the OZNA,³⁴ with the aid of the Soviet military mission, started the classical processing of data (drawing up of 'dossiers') on all of the Western liaison officers, members of their missions and contacts. This was carried out from summer of 1944 on and throughout Yugoslavia, down the hierarchical chain. For example, in Črnomelj, the centre of the Slovene liberated territory, such evaluations were prepared by the NKVD majors Zavaronkov and Sorokoumov in cooperation with the Slovene OZNA officer Boris Čižmek-Bor. Meanwhile, Ivan Maček-Matija, the head of the Slovene OZNA, sent members of the OZNA to the Russian mission for intelligence training. Furthermore, members of NKVD set up an extensive network of their own in such a manner that they "simply changed the party and SKOJ³⁵ into a spying organisation; they met with individual members of the Party and the SKOJ and gave them spying assignments on specific individuals."³⁶ In the spring of 1945, after the liberation of the capital Ljubljana, mem-

³² Telegram from New York to Moscow, 9 May 1944, Part II, Selected Venona Messages, CIA <http://www.cia.gov/csi>, acquired on 20 September 2005.

³³ Telegram from New York to Moscow, 2/3 August 1944, Part II, Selected Venona Messages, CIA <http://www.cia.gov/csi>, acquired on 20 September 2005. In this telegram Maclean also reports on the differences between the goals of both allies, namely that the British aimed to strengthen their influence in the Balkans, while the United States strove for minimum involvement in European affairs.

³⁴ OZNA is the Department for the Protection of the People.

³⁵ SKOJ is the Savez komunističke omladine Jugoslavije = The League of Young Communists of Yugoslavia.

³⁶ ARS, MFS.

bers of the Soviet NKVD and military intelligence missions were joined by the agents of SMERSH (Belajev, Petrov and Monsurov). They in turn, immediately started seeking out and interrogating Russian emigrants in Yugoslavia; in their search they also had access to the OZNA concentration camps, for example the one in Teharje.

Such collaboration between the Soviet and Yugoslav secret police and intelligence services that targeted 'all Westerners was not limited only to the war effort, but also had a long term objective. This was another of the revelations obtained by the defector Gouzenko. In 1945 he testified that, on the basis of the traffic he had read, he reached the conclusion that the Soviets intended to plant "many Soviet espionage agents in the diplomatic establishments" in the West. "These espionage agents are to be sent from Eastern, Central and Balkan European countries. These would number 50% to 100% of the employees below the rank of Ambassador and would actually be Soviet trained Military Intelligence, NKVD or Comintern men."³⁷

There are a large number of other interesting facts and details in the espionage traffic of 1944 that had implications on or directly influenced the progress of events in 1945; but let us return to the formation of the provisional government.

The circumstances and the contents of the October 1944 percentage agreement between Stalin and Churchill are known. At that stage Churchill exerted increasing pressure on Tito to carry out the Tito–Šubašič Agreement and finally grant the appointment of a joint government. However, since October 1944, as we have already extensively described in the book on the communist take-over of power in Yugoslavia,³⁸ Tito's primary concern was to establish himself in the capital of Yugoslavia Belgrade, and to take control of the major state institutions, staffing them with trustworthy members of his movement. Only at the Yalta conference did a step forward occur. At the conference the Allies signed the Declaration of Liberated Europe and the Western Allies expected that the democratic principles would be observed and that the situation would revert to the Atlantic Charter. Namely, the Declaration was, among other things, an agreement on the principle of establishing provisional governments in Europe and their competences and tasks in order to resurrect democratic institutions. "The establishment of order in Europe and the rebuilding of national economic life must be achieved by processes which will enable the liberated peoples to destroy the last vestiges of nazism and fascism and to create democratic institutions of their own choice. This is a principle of the Atlantic Charter – the right of all people to choose the form of government under which they will live – the restoration of sovereign rights and self-government to those peoples who have been forcibly deprived to them by the aggressor nations." In order to stipulate

³⁷ Venona detailed report, Hoover's letter to Frederick B. Lyon at the State Department, 24 September 1945, CIA (<http://www.cia.gov/csi>), acquired on 20 September 2005.

³⁸ As in fn. 4.

these processes all three signatories were to help ensure peaceful internal conditions in the individual countries, provide relief, and assist them: "(c) to form interim governmental authorities broadly representative of all democratic elements in the population and pledged to the earliest possible establishment through free elections of Governments responsive to the will of the people; and (d) to facilitate where necessary the holding of such elections."³⁹ The intent was, therefore, that the provisional governments should prepare general elections and were as such meant to be of a temporary nature and with a limited mandate. In the case of Yugoslavia, all these standards, even more explicitly, had been endorsed by Tito and Šubašić earlier on, in the amendments to the Vis Agreement already in November and December 1944.

The Tito-Šubašić government that finally came into existence on 7 March 1945 was formally a provisional government. But Tito never used the term "provisional". He always referred to it as the joint government. It had 28 Ministers (including Ministers for federal units, an utterly artificial office). 18 of them came from the NKOJ, four of which represented different political parties at home, but all that supported Tito, and six Ministers joined them from the London government in exile. Among these were Šubašić as the new Minister of Foreign Affairs and Dr. Sava Kosanović as the Minister of Information. Only Dr. Milan Grol was new and he was so angry at Šubašić because of the latter's stance on the subject of the formation of the provisional parliament in Yugoslavia and on other issues that he refused to travel to Belgrade on the same plane, fearing that somebody in Yugoslavia would think Šubašić "owned him".⁴⁰

Kosanović as the Minister of Information not only had access to key information from the other Ministries, but he also had control over propaganda, press and censorship. At the same time he, being a Serb, provided a better supervision of the Serbian newspapers, which were not favourably disposed towards the communists ("Narodni list" and others). Propaganda was of key importance in the process in which the Communist Party got rid of its key political competitors under the pretext of collaboration and treason, and many were publicly denounced as 'enemies of the people'. Foreign observers were quick to notice that the new administration in Yugoslavia was monopolising the public opinion and dialogue, allowing only the promotion of its own point of view.

In addition to all these well-positioned individuals in the new government, further support to their undertaking came from the West as well. The first UNRRA representative sent to Yugoslavia first made contact with the Soviet espionage agents and agreed to collect information for them. It is unnecessary to even dwell on the second representative, James Klugman, a Comintern agent and a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain, whose files are now declassified in the archives.

³⁹ The Avalon Project at Yale Law School, 20th Century Documents, The Yalta Conference; 1945, (<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/20th.htm>).

⁴⁰ The National Archives of the UK (PRO), FO 371/48863/177.

In the summer and autumn of 1945, a number of government and Front politicians ensured, in the context of the so-called People's Front policy, the accomplishment of what later became known as Rakosy's 'salami cutting policy'. At once two versions of the HSS, the Democratic Party and the Peasant's Party appeared in Yugoslavia – one within the People's Front and the other, the original remained outside of it. Of course, the first one would publicly challenge the legitimacy of the second one. This technique of public disqualification of political parties (regardless of whether they were officially permitted or not) and the hidden pressure of the OZNA applied individually on politicians like Grol, Šubašić and others, was used in the same way in Poland and Bulgaria, where they resorted to threats in order to get rid of Georgij Dimitrov - Gemeto prior to 1945, whereas they simply executed Petkov judicially two years later. This strategy was honed to perfection by Matjos Rakosy in Hungary after the general elections of November 1945, where the majority of votes went to the anti-communist small holders' party (57%), while social democrats and communists received 17% each. In Hungary, as in many similar cases, the communists led and controlled the Ministry of Internal Affairs from the very beginning, while the Security Service obtained documentation from NKVD agents; they made use of it for the disqualification of political parties or parts of these as well as the Catholic Church. In the next step the communists transformed the electoral legislation (which happened in Yugoslavia in summer 1945 in the Provisional parliament); they introduced disfranchisement and won the August 1947 elections in Hungary. With similar tactics as in Yugoslavia, the communists controlled other ministries, which were just formally led by members of other parties or famous personalities. The situation in Romania was analogous – communists in the provisional government controlled the Ministries of Economic Affairs (with control over oil wells), Justice and Internal Affairs, and at the same time they made certain that the remaining ministries were in the hands of "loyal" politicians, although members of other parties. However, in 1947, after the elections in autumn 1946, they simply imprisoned the leader of the Peasant Party, Julius Maniu. The situation in Albania was similar to the one in Yugoslavia, whereas the fate of Mikolajczyk is widely known, as the Polish government in London obtained only 3 members in the provisional government. Therefore, modus operandi in Yugoslavia in the years 1944 and 1945 reappeared in other areas, where the Red Army first came into control. The details are known about the events of the summer of 1945 in Yugoslavia, as well as the circumstances of the resignation of the Šubašić and his fellow ministers, as well as the opposition's obstruction shortly before the elections for the Constitutional Assembly. Viewd from this perspective, the objectives followed by Moscow become clear, along with the reason why Šubašić remained completely resigned and silent after the elections.

In conclusion it must be said that it is inconsequential whether some of the above mentioned politicians were consciously involved or not in informing

Moscow in the decisive moments at the end of World War II and its immediate aftermath and whether they were agents, informants, or they just served Moscow with the intention to benefit, gain favours or guarantees for their own political agenda. What is more important is that the new archive documents of the Western as well as the Eastern intelligence services prove that Stalin systematically controlled the political development, the formation and performance of the provisional governments, each time in pursuit of his interests. The fact that he permitted, at least formally until about 1947, certain pre-war political parties to take part in such provisional governments, by no means changes the nature of the process and of the objective, pursued jointly by Moscow and the communists in the provisional governments, including the Yugoslav one. Once again it was all just tactics (as to the correct tactics there was sometimes disagreement even among the communists themselves), which in no way changed the strategic goal. The events behind the scenes just serve to prove once again that it was all a coordinated effort after all, and that Yugoslavia was no exception in 1945; it was perhaps even a model of how to take-over power. The process was carried out tactically in such a way that the new people's democracies preserved a favourable disposition with the West by giving small, often trivial political concessions. In return they gained material assistance and support, as well as, finally, political recognition. With all that said, we could conclude that, as far as the methods of the communists were concerned, the year 1945 was in fact not a turning point, just "Spain revisited", to quote Evelyn Waugh.

Povzetek

Vzorec za 'ljudsko demokracijo'. Nekatera ozadja začasne jugoslovanske vlade Tito-Šubašić

Zadnji meseci vojne so v političnih odnosih v zavezniškem taboru bili namenjeni predvsem implementaciji načina prehoda iz vojnega v povojno stanje. Seveda sta si oba pola, zahodni zavezniki na eni in Sovjetska zveza na drugi strani, po svoje predstavljala bodoči politični zemljevid Evrope, zlasti ko je šlo za vmesni teritorij med njima in to sta bila srednja Evropa in Balkan. Zadnji poskus doseči dogovor na podlagi demokratičnih standardov je bila konferenca na Jalti. Toda že takoj po njej se je pokazala globoka vrzel med obema stranema in opaziti je že duh hladne vojne, čeprav do ostre konfrontacije zaradi pacifiške fronte še ni prišlo.

Jaltska Deklaracija o osvobodjeni Evropi je bila med drugim dogovor o postopku formiranja, o pristojnostih in nalogah začasnih vlad po Evropi. Roosevelt si je z zagotovitvijo Stalinovega podpisa predstavljal, da bo slednji spoštoval demokratična načela; toda kmalu se je razočaral. Zelo podobna načela so za Jugoslavijo bila zapisana že prej, v sporazumih Tito-Šubašić, ki naj bi zagotav-

ljali demokratični okvir za izvedbo volitev v Jugoslaviji. V vseh deželah srednje Evrope je v načelu veljalo, da bodo takšne volitve tudi izpeljane. Toda v postopku njihovih priprav so komunisti v različnih deželah s podporo Moskve dobili dejanski vpliv z zasedbo ključnih ministerstev v začasnih vladah in paraliziranjem političnih strank z organizacijo ljudske fronte in dupliranjem nekaterih strank v fronti. Na Češkoslovaškem so imeli podpredsednika vlade (Gottwald) in Klementisa v zunanjem ministrstvu ter ministre za notranje zadeve, kmetijstvo, informiraje, izobraževanje in za socialo. Na Poljskem so komunisti zasedli ministrstvo za notranje zadeve in za obrambo, šef KP Gomulka pa resor za reorganizacijo novopriključenih ozemelj na zahodu in izgon Nemcev; poljska londonska vlada je dobila le 7 od 21 sedežev v vladi, itd. Tam kjer je bilo notranje ministrstvo v rokah komunistov je steklo tudi neposredno sodelovanje z NKVD v postopkih čiščenja, sicer pa posredno s pomočjo lokalne KP.

Toda to ni bilo vse, ali vsaj ne odraža vseh podrobnosti, obsega in načinov Stalinovega nadzora nad političnim dogajanjem v ključnem letu 1945. Novejša zgodovinska dognanja danes kažejo, da je bila okolica Roosevelta prestreljena z agenti obeh sovjetskih obveščevalnih služb (NKVD in GRU). To velja tako za zvezno upravo (administracijo), kot za ameriško obveščevalno službo (OSS) in jedrski program (project Manhattan). Ko pogledamo podrobneje jugoslovansko prizorišče, lahko ugotovimo, da so te lovke segale tudi sem, s pomočjo posameznikov, ki so med vojno pristali na delo za sovjetske službe. Torej so komunisti, poleg lastnih, ključnih ministrstev nadzorovali še druga, ki so le navidez bila v rokah drugih strank ali znanih osebnosti. Eden takih ministrov v vladi Tito-Šubašić je bil Sava Kosanović, formalno član Samostojne demokratske stranke, dejansko pa agent NKVD, kar je postal za časa svojega bivanja v izgnanstvu med vojno. Kot minister za informiranje je imel ne samo dostop do ključnih informacij iz ostalih ministerstev, temveč tudi nadzor nad propagando, tiskom in cenzuro. Obenem je kot Srb zagotavljal boljši nadzor na srbskimi časniki, ki komunistom niso bili naklonjeni. Propaganda je bila ključnega pomena, saj se je pod obtožbo za kolaboracijo in izdajstvo, partija znebila svojih ključnih političnih tekmecev. Zunanji opazovalci so hitro ugotovili, da nova uprava v Jugoslaviji monopolizira javno mnenje oziroma izražanje in dovoljuje le promocijo lastnih stališč. Sava Kosanović je bil eden od agentov na zvezi znanega sovjetskega obveščevalca Sergeja Pravdina, dopisnika TASS-a v New Yorku, ki je bil leta 1945 vpleten v obveščanje Moskve o stališčih zaveznikov do implementacije jaltskih sklepov in formiranja začasnih vlad v bodočih državah ljudske demokracije. Tako je bila Moskva vnaprej obveščena in opozorjena na stališča zaveznikov do implementacije Jalske deklaracije, naprimer do formiranja začasne poljske vlade, o pogledu zahoda na razmere v Romuniji in drugje. Obenem pa je vplivala na formiranje teh stališč. Najhitreje in najpopolneje je stekel postopek prevzema oblasti v Jugoslaviji, kot ene najzahodnejših točk, ki ga bomo obdelali podrobneje. Ta je potem bil vzor in vzorec za ostale dežele ljudske demokracije.