

Between Critic and Dissent
The Transnational Entanglement of the Fall of Milovan Djilas

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Abstract

In this thesis the author analyzed the downfall of the Yugoslav Communist politician Milovan Djilas, focusing on its causes and effects within the context of Yugoslavia's "new path to socialism" after the Tito-Stalin split. Special emphasis is given on the nature of Djilas's critique and its relation to Yugoslavia's changing diplomatic relations with the West, especially with the European Socialists. The author emphasizes that Djilas was still a communist by conviction in the first months following his downfall, and traces the evolution of his ideas during his transformation from a local dissenter to a world known "heretic". Through archival research, secondary literature, in depth reading of Djilas's texts and their intersection with important international events, the author emphasizes the different and shifting roles assumed by Djilas's ideas in the West and the East. Focusing on Djilas's most known work "The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System", the author traces out the reception of the work in the Soviet Bloc, mostly by identifying the temporality of its translations, print and distribution in Eastern Europe and among émigré communities in the West. Identifying the most important cases of reception of Djilas's ideas in Communist Europe, the author focuses on two paramount cases: Jacek Kuroń and Karol Modzelewski's "Open letter to the Party" in Poland, and the book "Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power" by the Hungarian authors George Konrád and Iván Szelényi.

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Although only my name is listed on the front page, this work could not have been possible had I not been able to count on the help from individuals to whom I would like to dedicate this page.

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1. Introduction

More than 20 years have passed since the death of Milovan Djilas¹ but not all questions concerning his life and work have been answered. However, a lot has been written about him. During the Cold war research interest about the life and work of Milovan Djilas came only from the western democratic part of the world. In Eastern Europe no particular interest in Djilas existed, until the communist system fell apart. This can be explained to some extent by the different ideological and political contexts of the Cold war period. Works by Milovan Djilas were of course prohibited in the East, since he was connected with his sharp criticism of the communist system and with possible opposition inside of the one-party state. Hence, anyone who would be interested in him would at the same time become suspicious to the socialist regime in his country. However, in the West Djilas was recognized first as a heretic, deviant, political prisoner, an excellent critic of socialism and undemocratic tendencies in Yugoslavia and then as a first class dissident. Nevertheless, in the early 1990s a shift of interest happened. Since then we have more and more Eastern European scholars who are dealing with Djilas.²

However, this does not mean that in the East he was not read at the time of socialism. Djilas had enormous influence on Marxist revisionists, who later became dissidents, as well as on those individuals who were in the opposition since the communists first took over power. Djilas

¹ In the text I am writing his last name in English (Djilas), while in the footnotes I will be also using the original Đilas, if a book or an article used the original spelling.

² Aleksandar Miletić, "Kratak pregled 'đilasologije': Prilog istraživanju biografije jedne istorijske ličnosti"[A short overview of Djilasology], in *Tematski zbornik radova sa 3. međunarodnog naučnog skupa NISUN* [Thematic edited volume from the third international scientific conference of NISUN], ed. Bojana Dimitrijević, (Niš: Scero Print, 2014), p. 232.

was used especially when younger generations wanted to described East and Central European regimes. They did not want to use the word socialism; hence they applied Djilas's theory of "the new class".³

Although we have a lot of works that dealt with Djilas, there are still some gaps that need to be filled. The current narrative about Djilas does not provide answers for all the important questions. Hence, we should not be satisfied with the classic explanation that Djilas started writing heretical articles in the main Party newspaper *Borba* (The Struggle). This made him a dissident, while he distanced himself from his comrades and as a consequence his political career ended.

Thus, the aim of my MA thesis is to look at the importance of Djilas for the West and East, and how his roles shifted. This MA thesis will show that Djilas's critique was connected with the Yugoslav de-Stalinization and with the new Yugoslav diplomatic relations with the West in order to establish that Djilas shifted from a Marxist revisionist to heretic, only after there was no other option and that his writings influenced East European dissidents when they were writing their own critique in which they used his concept of the new class.

I was interested in his personal ties inside of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) and their *modus operandi*, which changed due to the Tito-Stalin split. The de-Stalinization process was led by Djilas. Therefore, I was interested in the Yugoslavs path into socialism, which was

³ Michal Kopeček, "Socialist Democracy or Revolutionary Consciousness?, The Prospects and Limits of 'Revised' Marxism in Central Europe in the 1950s and 1960s", (Paper presented at The Contours of Legitimacy in Central Europe: new Approaches in Graduate Studies, European Studies Centre, St. Antony's College Oxford, 24-26 May 2002), http://users.ox.ac.uk/~oaces/conference/papers/Michal_Kopecek.pdf, (accessed on 29th of April 2016), p. 8.

supposed to be different to Stalin's. For Djilas it was also not clear when he is "just" a critic and a Marxist revisionist and when he crossed the Party line. Regarding his critique I was interested in where it comes from. Further, I wanted to look at Djilas's different roles that he played in Yugoslavia, in the international socialist movement, for the West and for the East. These roles were shifting and were not always clear.

Furthermore, I will include also the dichotomy between Marxist revisionism and heresy. In the Eastern European context some people, especially the emigres, looked at Djilas as a Marxist revisionist, while in the eyes of the opposition he was a heretic, but a useful theoretician. Hence, the Eastern intellectuals also read his texts and included his critique into their political language. Since moral critique and "the new class" theory were the best known Djilas's features I was especially interested in this criticism; where does it come from and how it was transferred into Eastern Europe. I was interested in how Djilas's concepts influenced East European intellectuals. Here I will focus mostly on the Polish (Jacek Kuroń and Karol Modzelewski) and Hungarian (George Konrád and Iván Szelényi) example, but also when and where his texts were published for the first time and by whom. I limited my research only to Djilas's book *The New Class*,⁴ since it is his best-known work and it was also widely used for western anti-communist propaganda. Also from a theoretical perspective, *The New Class* undoubtedly had the biggest impact on the international stage, especially in Eastern Europe. Nevertheless, I will not focus only on Eastern Europe but also on Djilas's relations with the West.

⁴ Milovan Djilas, *The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System*, (New York: Praeger, 1957).

I have concentrated on the texts written by Milovan Djilas in order to discover what he really wanted to achieve. Further I have mostly used archival records of three Archives. For the Yugoslav context I have used the Archive of Yugoslavia in Belgrade and the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia in Ljubljana. For the East European and Western point of view I have used archival material located in the Open Society Archives in Budapest. To get into the mindset of this specific period, the Yugoslavian newspaper *Borba* was also researched. However, this will not be sufficient. Hence, I will include also the relevant literature. For the East European context in the fourth chapter of my thesis I concentrated on the texts of East European dissidents and tried to establish how they included Djilas's writing in their own.

For the Yugoslav and the Western context I have limited the period to between the years 1948 and 1957. For the Eastern context I was focused on the years from 1957 onwards. The precise time scale is difficult to determine since dissidents grasped Djilas's ideas in different time periods. However, I will be mostly focusing on the 1950s and 1960s for the Polish example and on the 1970s for the Hungarian.

A Montenegrin librarian and publicist, Dobrilo Arnitović, published in 2008 Djilas's bibliography.⁵ Arnitović registered 5581 units (books, collections of scientific papers, articles etc.) of Djilas's texts, as well as those texts concerned with him, which were either written solely about Djilas or had him only indirectly mentioned. This is definitely too much for one person to examine. If I generalize shortly, the "Yugoslav" literature concerning Djilas can be divided in two parts and two periods. First are negative works about Djilas published in

⁵ Dobrilo Arnitović, *Milovan Đilas: Bibliografija za hronologijom života i rada* [Milovan Djilas: Bibliography with chronology of his life and works], (Belgrade: Službeni glasnik, 2008).

Yugoslavia from 1954 until the beginning of the 1990s.⁶ From the end of the 1980s, we have a lot of works published in Yugoslavia that were more objective and they were at the same time more positive about the life and work of Milovan Djilas.⁷ However, the line which is attacking and repeating lies about Djilas is still nowadays very active, since Djilas *per se* is strongly connected to every day politics on the ex-Yugoslav territory. In the West we have of course, since Djilas's fall, more or less positive works about Djilas.⁸ All of the mentioned literature is going to be considered, although most of them are not updated since many of them did not use any archival material. Nevertheless, they provide very useful insights into the life and work of Milovan Djilas. I have examined most of the literature already at the time of my undergraduate studies in Maribor, where I wrote a long final seminar on the fall of Milovan Djilas, which was never published. The latter text was mostly based on literature and memoirs. After that some archival works were conducted in Slovenian archive.⁹

⁶ For an example see: Dragan Marković and Savo Kržavac, *Liberalizam: od Dilasa do danas* [Liberalism: from Djilas to today], (Belgrade:Sloboda, 1978); Vladimir Dedijer, *Veliki buntovnik Milovan Đilas : prilozi za biografiju* [Big rebel Milovan Djilas: Contributions for biography], (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1991).

⁷ Vasilije Kalezić, *Đilas miljenik i otpadnik komunizma: kontraverze pisca i ideologa* [Djilas the favorite and renegade of communism: controversies of a writer and ideologue], (Belgrade: Zodne, 1988); Momčilo Đorgović, *Đilas: vernik i jeretik* [Djilas: believer and heretic],(Beograd: Akvarijus, 1989); Momčilo Cemović, *Đilasovi odgovori* [Djilas's Answers], (Beograd: Svetlostkomerc, 1997); Desimir Tošić, *Ko je Milovan Đilas?: Disidentstvo 1953-1995* [Who is Milovan Djilas: Dissidence 1953-1995],(Beograd: Otkrovenje, 2003); Branislav Kovačević, *Đilas, heroj – antiheroj: iskazi za istoriju* [Djilas, hero – antihero: statements for history], (Titograd: Pobjeda, 1991).

⁸ Dennis Reinhartz, *Milovan Djilas: A Revolutionary as a Writer* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981); Stephen Clissold, *Djilas: The Progress of a Revolutionary*, (Hounslow, Middlesex: Maurice Temple Smith, 1983); C. L. Sulzberger, *Paradise Regained: Memoir of a Rebel* (New York: Praeger, 1989).

⁹ After this, I attended a conference at the University of Michigan, where I presented my paper, which was also never published. However, it was available online for quite some time on my Academia.edu research profile. See: Tomaž Ivešić, "Yugoslavia between Soviet socialism and western democracy : the story of Milovan Djilas", (Paper presented at Beyond the Cold war: an interdisciplinary workshop in conjunction with Rackham Global Engagement Course History 796, University of Michigan, Department of History, 1st-2nd of November 2013), pp. 1-20.

I have continued with my research in the Archive of Yugoslavia in Belgrade and by a detailed reading of Yugoslav newspapers. In October 2015, a book of Djilas's articles was published in Slovene, which I edited and also wrote a long analysis of his downfall, based on all of the above mentioned researches.¹⁰ A shorter version of this analysis was also published in English.¹¹ Because of this, some explanations are needed. When using quotes from documents and literature I will be citing the original source. The same goes for books, which have good analysis that I included in my own research. When I am summarizing my own research I will quote myself.

However, this does not mean that I will use everything from my previous researches. I will use only the "grand narrative", since I have changed my main research objective from looking at the personal ties inside the CPY and how they contributed to the Djilas's downfall to researching Djilas's ideas and his role in the international socialist movement. For this particular reason I have included more recent literature that is dealing with exactly these topics.¹²

¹⁰ Tomaž Ivešić, "Padec Milovana Đilasa" [The Fall of Milovan Djilas], in Milovan Đilas, *Anatomija neke morale in 19 znamenitih člankov* (oktober 1953 - januar 1954) [Anatomy of a Moral and 19th famous articles (October 1953-January 1954)], ed. Tomaž Ivešić (Ljubljana: Inštitut Nove revije, 2015). pp. 131-185.

¹¹ Tomaž Ivešić, "'Compared to him the prisoners are innocent people': the fall of Milovan Djilas (1948-1954)", in *Studia Historica Slovenica* 15/3 (2015): pp. 709-750.

¹² Veljko Stanić, "Milovan Đilas 1953/54: između revolucije i slobode" [Milovan Djilas 1953/54: between revolution and freedom], in *Tokovi istorije* [Currents of History] 3-4 (2008): pp. 257-278; Veljko Stanić, "Unutrašnji emigrant: političke ideje Milovana Đilasa 1954-1989" [The Emigrant Within: The Political ideas of Milovan Djilas 1954-1989], in *Poznańskie Studia Slawistyczne* [Poznań's Slavistics' studies] 6 (2014): pp. 213-229; Nikola Mijatov, "Milovan Đilas i britanski laburisti 1950-1955" [Milovan Djilas and the British laborite 1950-1955], in *Istorija 20. veka* [History of the 20th century] 33/2 (2015): pp. 27-43; Vladimir Unkovski-Korica, "The Yugoslav Communists' Special Relationship with the British Labour party 1950-1956", in *Cold War History*, 14/1 (2014): pp. 23-46; Dejan Djokić, "Britain and Dissent in Tito's Yugoslavia: The Djilas Affair, ca. 1956", in *European History Quarterly* 36/3 (2006): pp. 371-395.

For this MA thesis I conducted research in the Open Society Archives, which gave me a lot of new material, before not known to me. I have also found some material in the online archive of the Woodrow Wilson Institute. I have also returned back to the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia in Ljubljana, where I found some archival material that I previously overlooked. The same goes for the Yugoslav newspapers. Since the edited volume of Djilas's articles was published I have been in contact with Djilas's son Aleksa, who has sent me a lot of additional literature, archive materials etc. regarding his father. For this material I am very grateful. Since none of my previous researches really focused on the western or eastern influence of Milovan Djilas this research was conducted from scratch. Hence, my previous researches are mainly used in the second chapter. The third chapter is mostly based on the Archival material from OSA.

For the fourth chapter, which deals with Eastern Europe I have focused mainly on literature that deals with dissidence and opposition.¹³ Since some of the literature was also in Polish I had to translate everything. Thus, all translations are mine and possible mistakes were made unintentionally due to my lack of knowledge of Polish.

My contribution to the academic debate concerning Djilas will be contesting the linear story of his transformation from critic to heretic and later to dissident. Furthermore, showing how the West used individuals and their works for their anti-communist propaganda and how Djilas's

¹³ Hubert Stys, "Milovan Đilas i Polska – Wzajemne inspiracje" [Milovan Djilas and Poland – mutual inspirations], in *Ličnost I djelo Milovana Đilasa: Zbornik radova s međunarodnoga naučnog simpozijuma* [Personality and work of Milovan Djilas: Edited volume of papers from the international scientific symposium], ed. Blagoje Cerović [et al.], (Nikšić: Filozofski fakultet Nikšić, 2014), pp. 57-83; Peter Raina, *Political opposition in Poland 1954-1977*, (London: Poets and Painters Press, 1978); Barbara J. Falk, *The dilemmas of dissidence in East-Central Europe: citizen intellectuals and philosopher kings* (Budapest/New York: CEU Press, 2003).

influence can be traced in the works of other intellectuals on the above mentioned examples and to indicate where there is still space for further research.

2. Djilas the critic

The aim of this chapter is to follow the process of transformation through which Milovan Djilas went; from Stalinist to anti-Stalinist. At the same time I will try to identify what could be Djilas's reasons for his criticism and how Yugoslavia's openness towards the West influenced his ideas and vice versa; How Djilas made contacts with European socialists, which, as will be seen in the third chapter, saw in his ideas similarities to theirs, which led them to read his articles as if they were written by a socialist liberal and not a communist. I would like to challenge the stereotypical story of how Djilas became a dissident. That he went consciously into criticizing the Party cannot be denied, however his behavior indicates that he did not intend to go too far and to become a heretic, since he wanted to reform the Party. Hence, it can be said that Djilas's case is a de-Stalinization, which went out of control.

2. 1. Cominform, de-Stalinization, democratization

The split with the Cominform (Communist Information Bureau) started with a letter from Joseph Stalin, who accused the CPY of bad policies. On 28th of June, an official resolution of Cominform followed, according to which CPY "ousted" itself from the Cominform, since they did not attend the Cominform's meeting in Bucharest. The Yugoslavs answered with the Fifth Congress, which was the first one after the war. According to Djilas, this Congress presented a shift from Stalinism towards Leninism, although the form was still very much Stalinist.¹⁴

¹⁴ Ivešić, Padec Milovana Đilasa, pp.135-136.

At the congress they passed a resolution regarding the CPY-Cominform relations. In it they opposed Stalin and declared all the allegations “inaccurate, incorrect and unjustifiable.”¹⁵ They declared that everything that is in their power needs to be done, in order to eliminate disagreements with the Soviets, while Aleksandar Ranković, the Yugoslav minister of internal affairs, even praised Stalin.¹⁶ However, these contradictions make sense. Immediately after the dispute the Yugoslavs wanted to show their communist orthodoxy in becoming more Stalinist than Stalin.¹⁷

Nevertheless, soon after the Yugoslavs started a process of de-Stalinization. The leading figure of this process was Djilas. In his writings, he began cracking the illusions about the great Soviet Union. His writings touched the unequal and exploitative practice of the Soviet Union towards other socialist countries etc. Djilas saw this split as the continuation of the Yugoslav socialist revolution.¹⁸ Following the split with the Cominform, the Yugoslav leadership sought to seek on its own socialist way, which included the process of greater democratization. The starting point of the latter is Djilas’s report concerning education at the plenum of the Central Committee (CC) in December 1949.¹⁹

Between 1949 and 1950 there was a great change in Yugoslav ideology. They abandoned Stalin

¹⁵ *Peti kongres Komunistične partije Jugoslavije* [Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia], (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1948), p. 462.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 222 and 462-464.

¹⁷ Michal Jerzy Zacharias, “From Stalinism to ‘heresy’: The evolution of the political thought of Milovan Djilas, 1941-1949”, in *Studies into the History of Russia and Central Eastern Europe* 47/1 (2012): p. 38.

¹⁸ Milovan Đilas, *Vlast i pobuna* [Rise and Fall], (Belgrade: Književne novine, 1991) , p. 173.

¹⁹ *Sednice Centralnog komiteta KPJ: (1948-1952)* [Meetings of the Central Committee of CPY], ed. Branko Petranović, (Belgrade: Komunist, 1985), pp. 278- 374, 483-490 and 720-727.

and began moving towards Lenin and at the end to the original ideas of Karl Marx. This was especially seen in Djilas's ideas, as we will see later regarding his lecture in London in January 1951. Nonetheless, they abandoned Stalin only in theory, since "Stalinist practices were being abandoned reluctantly and inconsistently. As a result, there were insufficient conditions for the Stalinist system to find an appropriate alternative in Yugoslavia."²⁰ The primary objective was still of course the "death of the state", yet they soon came to realize that this goal cannot be achieved without the Party's transformed role. Although the authorship of the self-management idea, which Yugoslavs "invented" cannot be determined, it was developed in the circle of Djilas, Boris Kidrič (minister of economy) and Edvard Kardelj (the head theoretician of the CPY and the planner of the Yugoslav constitutions).²¹

Djilas intensely analyzed the Soviet communism while working on the idea of Yugoslav self-management. He also wanted to provide an explanation for the split with Cominform and developed a Marxist critique of the Stalinist system. An example *par excellence* is his booklet titled *Savremene teme* (Contemporary Themes), a series of articles written for the main Party's newspaper *Borba*.²² Djilas argued that the Soviet Union is an exploiting Empire. Additionally, there is no socialism under Stalin's rule, since their leaders became bureaucrats.²³

Thus, Yugoslavs started to look for alternative allies in the world. They were found in the

²⁰ Zacharias, *From Stalinism to heresy*, p. 42.

²¹ Ivešić, *Padec Milovana Đilasa*, pp 138-140.

²² Milovan Đilas, *Savremene teme*, (Belgrade: Borba, 1950), 50 pages.

²³ Đilas, *Vlast I pobuna*, p. 222; Vasilije Kalezić, *Đilas miljenik i otpadnik komunizma*, pp. 153-155; Mateja Režek, *Med resničnostjo in iluzijo: Slovenska in jugoslovanska politika v desetletju po sporu z Informbirojem (1948-1958)* [Between reality and illusion: The Slovene and Yugoslav politics in the decade after the dispute with the Cominform (1948-1958)], (Ljubljana: Modrijan, 2005), p. 39.

United Kingdom, where the Labour party was the biggest social-democratic party in Western Europe. However, the first steps were ambiguous, since Yugoslavs were still supporting the Soviet Union's geostrategic interests in the first month of the Tito-Stalin split. Only when Tito closed the border with Greece and hence, stopped supporting communists there, the road to Western friendship began.²⁴

Since no direct contacts were possible with the Labour party, Yugoslavs sent an invitation through semi-official channels and invited them to be guests of the Yugoslav Popular Front and not of the Yugoslav state. The recipient was Aneurin Bevan, Health secretary and a known left-winger.²⁵ At the head of the Labour delegation was their general secretary, Morgan Phillips. They visited high Party officials, including Yugoslav president Josip Broz Tito and visited several cities, factories and even the state prison in Sremska Mitrovica, since the Yugoslavs wanted to demonstrate "their humane treatment of political prisoners".²⁶

Milovan Djilas was of course present during the Labour visit. He and Vladimir Dedijer returned the visit in January 1951. This delegation had a special mission. Djilas was selected to ask Britain's PM, Clement Atlee, if they would be interested in arming the Yugoslav army. Dedijer worked as Djilas's interpreter. After the trio had their meeting they had dinner with many other guests. At this occasion Djilas met Bevan for the first time; a long and sincere friendship began. When they had a meeting with Philips, the latter asked the Yugoslavs if they would be

²⁴ Unkovski-Korica, *The Yugoslav Communists' Special Relationship*, pp. 24 and 28.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

²⁶ Dejan Djokić, *Britain and Dissent*, p. 375.

interested in joining the anti-Soviet COMISCO (Committee of the International Socialist Conference) and army alliances against the Soviet Union. Djilas refused these combinations, although they were using the Labour party in order to establish contacts with other European social-democratic parties through COMISCO.²⁷

Besides this, Djilas also had a lecture in the Royal institute for international relations, where, as the newspaper *Observer* noticed, his stand resembled more pre-Bolshevik Marxist than Leninist. Djilas and Dedijer also met Winston Churchill in his home. Later they both recalled his modest home as compared to the big villas for Party officials in Belgrade. After their departure they made a short stop in Paris, where Djilas had a conversation with Cyrus Sulzberger II, a *The New York Times* reporter. Dedijer surpassed his interpreter's role and confided to Sulzberger that Djilas was very impressed with the British labor unions, which were significantly less bureaucratized than the Yugoslavs.²⁸ Hence, he saw in the UK what can be achieved in Yugoslavia through reforms.

Meanwhile, Yugoslavia received its first United States loan of \$20 million in September 1949. It was just one of the many US economic aids to Yugoslavia. But not just money and later military equipment, the new relationship between Yugoslavia and the West also had an important impact on institutions and ideology, since they now had access to non-Marxist literature concerning the economy, market, fiscal instruments etc.²⁹

²⁷ Unkovski-Korica, *The Yugoslav Communists' Special Relationship*, pp. 24 and 33.

²⁸ Nikola Mijatov, *Milovan Đilas i britanski laburisti*, pp. 29-31.

²⁹ Dennison Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974*, (Berkley and LA: University of California Press,

CC CPY accepted Djilas's ideas of free discussions between Party members regardless of their position inside the Party's hierarchy in June 1951.³⁰ Djilas further theorized in his speeches throughout the country, how the Party would end their ideological monopoly and give space to the true inner party democracy. One of such speeches was in Priština in June 1952. He identified three stages of development. The first stage, which included the creation and carried out the revolution, the second, with the creation of state power and with liquidation of capitalist property, while only recently the Party started the third stage: social democracy. In the two stages the Party needed to work on organization and less on the education of the masses. However, in the third phase the Party does not have any needs to organize and can focus only upon "educating and raising the socialist consciousness of the masses."³¹

Edvard Kardelj also argued for "an open socialist critique" in March 1952, since this would bring a higher level of socialist democracy. However, the latter meant that this "democracy" was for socialists only and in Djilas's case not even for them.³² Djilas contested this in his articles in *Borba*, since he was convinced that democracy should be for all citizens.

Nevertheless, Djilas also contested the "withering away" thesis. He talked about the "withering away" of the Party and the state in his speeches prior to the Sixth congress (1952). He agreed with Kardelj and Tito that this would not happen quickly and that the Party and state were only tools in the hands of the working class. Nevertheless, he also said that it would be wrong, if the

1977), p. 47.

³⁰ Ivešić, Padec Milovana Đilasa, p. 142.

³¹ Carol S. Lilly, *Power and persuasion: ideology and rhetoric in communist Yugoslavia 1944-1953*, (Boulder : Westview Press, 2001), p. 209.

³² Režek, Med resničnostjo in iluzijo, pp. 36-37.

Party leadership thought that, since they are the avant-garde of the proletariat, that they knew more or better than the proletariat itself, since the latter is the only one who can decide what its tasks should be. Thus he called for a clear Party line that would be distinct from the practical struggle of the Party and the interests of the proletariat.³³ Hence he was urging the “withering away”.

A step closer to the realization of Yugoslav ideas was the Sixth Congress, when the Party renamed itself into the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY). At the Congress Kardelj represented the LCY as “the main political organization” in which the communists, until socialism got stronger, would represent the most “conscious core”, a “role model” to the people etc. Communists would be working now through persuasion. In his prepared paper Djilas again attacked the Soviet Union and emphasized the importance of democracy.³⁴ Nevertheless, his second speech was far more important. It was delivered as an ode to 35th anniversary of the October revolution.³⁵ The Congress also abolished the Agitprop section, which meant that Djilas lost his practical working position. Hence, he had formally less duties.

Nevertheless, the Congress was also known because of an incident which led the western reporters to rename the Sixth Congress, the Sex Congress. This happened, because Ljubodrag Đurić, Tito’s youngest general, in his speech reprimanded some Party members, since they lived a too luxurious life, while at the same time being also amoral. Hence, Đurić accused the

³³ Lilly, *Power and persuasion*, p. 210.

³⁴ Ivešić, *Padec Milovana Đilasa*, pp. 145 and 151.

³⁵ *Šesti kongres Komunističke partije Jugoslavije (Savez komunista Jugoslavije): 2-7. novembra 1952 (stenografske beleške)* [Sixth congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (League of Communists of Yugoslavia): 2nd -7th of November 1952 (stenographical records)], (Belgrade: Kultura, 1952), pp. 397-399.

Serbian Prime Minister, Petar Stambolić, of “stealing” his wife.³⁶

This story is extremely important for Djilas’s writings, which followed a year later. In his series of articles in *Borba*, Djilas wrote about the amorality of the communists, which he especially stressed in the article *Anatomija jednog morala*, as will be shown later. However, this was not the first “incident” that occurred concerning the amorality of the ruling class. In August 1950, *Heretical Stories* by Branko Ćopić were published. In this satire, he made fun of “high muckety-mucks and their privileged lifestyles”, which caused a big affair. Ćopić had a conversation with Djilas, as a person in charge of Agitprop. He was denounced in newspapers and also by Tito, and his text was banned for 30 years. However, he was not arrested and was not prosecuted. This was followed by other satire scandals, such as Zagreb’s literary journal *Krugovi*, which published the sentence: “in the time of socialist democracy freedom, ha-ha-ha...”³⁷ Hence, these problems of a-morality were present from the end of the war, when the new elite took power and probably had a big influence on Djilas.

In the period that followed after the Sixth congress some confusion was present inside the LCY. A lot of communists did not understand the meaning of “non-commanding”; and working through persuasion. As the Croatian historian, Slavko Goldstein, argued:

What did the 'shift towards ruling through persuasion' meant? What then, if you cannot 'persuade' stubborn and stupid people, since they believe 'the reaction' more than the Party? Is it possible then to rule the country without 'commanding'? Who needs to be 'persuaded' and

³⁶ Ivešić, *Padec Milovana Đilasa*, pp. 143-151.

³⁷ Lilly, *Power and persuasion*, pp. 217-218.

why, if 'our people' are anyhow loyal and disciplined Party cadres, who were taught to carry out directives without this 'persuasion'?³⁸

2. 2. Stalin's death and the end of democratization

After the death of Joseph Stalin in March 1953, the new Soviet leadership indicated that they were ready to reestablish diplomatic relations. Djilas and Kardelj did not expect a change in the relationship between Belgrade and Moscow, while Tito and Ranković were in favor of renewing friendly ties. Later Kardelj rallied behind this position, arguing that the weakening of the Soviet position, compared to the USA, weakens also the Yugoslav position.³⁹

Nevertheless, Tito was always a little bit suspicious towards democracy, since it could threaten Party's unity. The latter was his number one priority. Hence he stopped the process of democratization at the second plenum of the CC LCY. The CC was summoned in Tito's private residence on the island of Brioni, in June 1953. Djilas mentions in his memoirs that he disliked this decision, since it looked like that Tito wanted to compel the highest Party's organ.⁴⁰

Tito was convinced that communists do not understand what democracy is: "Some people think that now, when there is a bit more freedom, they can also do what a communist must not. I think that this came to be because many communists do not know what democracy is. This

³⁸ Slavko Goldstein, "Povratak Milovana Đilasa u Hrvatsku" [The return of Milovan Djilas to Croatia], in Milovan Đilas, *Vlast i pobuna* [Rise and Fall], (Zagreb: Liber, 2009), p. 12.

³⁹ Ivo Banac, *Sa Staljinom protiv Tita: Informbirojevski rascjepi u jugoslavenskom komunističkom pokretu* [With Stalin Against Tito: Cominformist Splits in Yugoslav Communism], (Zagreb: Globus, 1990), p. 141.

⁴⁰ Đilas, *Vlast i pobuna*, p. 262.

allowed the bourgeoisie to rise anew, together with the reaction, thinking they can handle us.”⁴¹

At the plenum on Brioni, Kardelj emphasized that the responsibility for the constant negative tendencies among the working class lay with the communists. He was also disturbed by the ideological battle for supposedly there were more and more people who were stating that there was no more Marxism.⁴²

At the plenum Djilas emphasized the conviction that many communists shared the thinking that democracy is the possibility to be against the CC LCY's politics and not the need to fight anti-socialist forces. His following words are especially meaningful:

I have now been to the West, I have been there before, and observed this western world. They have some [social] elements more progressive than ours; if we observe the essence of democracy they are far more progressive. But if we, the communists, will fight politically, we shall get ahead of them in the formal dealings in two to three years.⁴³

When he spoke again he contemplated the term chauvinism, where he and Tito held different positions, since Djilas was arguing that bureaucratic chauvinism was the next phase of bourgeois nationalism, which lost all national bases. Tito, however, argued that bourgeois chauvinism did not disappear.⁴⁴ After the Brioni's plenum Party went back to the point where it was before the Sixth congress. In accordance with the statute and the principles of democratic centralism Djilas had to accept this new direction. Nonetheless, he struggled.

⁴¹ Archive of Yugoslavia (AJ), fund 507 League of Communist of Yugoslavia, CC LCY, II/10, Stenographical records of the II. plenum of the CC LCY on the island of Brioni.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

However, in the West they wanted a multi-party system from the Yugoslav communists. In August 1953, Atlee stated that Yugoslavia, if they wanted to have full democracy, needed to allow opposition parties. This was therefore just three months before Djilas started writing his articles. In this short period 1951-1953 relations between the Yugoslavs and the Labour party dramatically changed. Yet still in the summer of 1952 Bevan and his wife Jennie Lee visited Yugoslavia as a private holiday, while Djilas took the role of their host. Conservatives took this visit to discredit Labour party in the new election campaign.⁴⁵

Conservatives won and Churchill became PM once more. Although Anthony Eden, the UK's foreign minister, visited Yugoslavia in September 1952 and Tito visited London in March 1952 and although Yugoslavs made new contacts with other democratic-socialist parties with the help of the Labour party, the ties between them began to loosen. At the turn of 1953, Yugoslavs realized that they had much more in common with Asian socialists. Djilas and Aleš Bebler, the Yugoslav Deputy Foreign Minister visited Rangoon in the beginning of 1953. When the UK sided with Italy during the Trieste crisis in the second half of 1953, the "friendship" was at stake.⁴⁶

However, Djilas's articles in *Borba* were no coincidence. Similar critique than in his articles in *Borba*, can be found in the cultural monthly magazine *Nova misao* (New Thought)⁴⁷, where he

⁴⁵ Mijatov, Milovan Đilas i britanski laburisti, pp. 32-33.

⁴⁶ Unkovski-Korica, The Yugoslav Communists' Special Relationship, pp. 26 and 38.

⁴⁷ In autumn of 1952 there came to the initiative to start a new monthly newspaper focused on culture. Thus New Thought came to be. The editorial board consisted of the heads of the communist intelligentsia and cultural workers: Miroslav Krleža, Dobrica Ćosić, Milan Bogdanović, Oskar Davičo, Mitra Mitrović, Milovan Đilas, Joža Vilfan etc. Skender Kulenović was the managing director. This monthly newspaper was financed solely through

published several articles. Two articles are especially meaningful. The first, from January 1953, is a review of a book written by the philosopher, Dušan Nedeljković, titled *Our philosophy in the struggle for socialism*. Djilas was very critical about the book. He stressed that a single nation or the whole class cannot have a unique world view and that therefore the struggle for ideas is in constant movement. Hence, also in the Serbian case there cannot be any discussions about the victory of the rational spirit in Serbian history. This is then leading to the constant testing of ideas and of contradictory arguments. But still, Djilas saw danger in bureaucracy, since they would like to have a monopoly on the interpretation and development of theoretical thinking.⁴⁸

The second was published after the Brioni plenum in August 1953 titled *The beginning of an end and the beginning*, in which he reflected on the Soviet Union after Stalin's death. He argued that the Russian people are a bureaucratized society without any traces of democratic characters etc. He left a possibility open for Soviet society to be changed from the bureaucratized society into a democratic, real socialist force in the future. Thus, he believed in the "specific emancipated character of the revolution". He also identified all negative consequences of the process when a bureaucratic caste is becoming more and more closed; intrigues, careerism, pushing "our people" and relatives forward on positions etc. They are opened only for some "special kind" of people, since the number of positions is limited. Djilas used this same

subscriptions and was, as Dilas had recounted, the only monthly newspaper for culture to not have a subvention. See: Dilas, *Vlast i pobuna*, p. 234 and 266; *Nova misao*, Vol. I, No. 7, July 1953, p. 1.

⁴⁸ Stanić, *Milovan Dilas*, p. 257.

criticism in *The New Class*, he just changed the cast with class.⁴⁹

As a part of an election campaign, Djilas came also to Maribor in Slovenia. There he held a meeting with high party officials and intellectuals on 31st of October, 1953. At this meeting he had a short lecture, which is very interesting since he already developed his critique regarding some questions, while for some other problems (one-party system) he was still on line.

In Maribor he stated that the Party's goal is democracy without any kind of party. Thus, they would end the political monopoly over the society. He admitted that this would happen only in the near future, although they were already at the beginning of the socialist democracy. He refused the "absurd critique" from the West regarding the one-party system. However, he did emphasize lawfulness and argued that Party members should be treated also equally by the law.⁵⁰ Regarding the "cultural workers", that is artists, writers etc. he argued for free choices in their themes. They should not be pushed to deal with a certain period or themes. They should be allowed just to write about their topics through the eyes of their epoch. Concerning freedom he went the farthest when he talked about the Yugoslav media. He stated that there should be almost no censorship (a bold statement by an ex-chief of Agitprop). They should ban only texts that were dealing with the king Petar Karađorđević, Chetniks, agitating for national hatred or violence etc.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Stanić, Milovan Đilas, pp. 259-260.

⁵⁰ Djilas gave an example of a Party member Vincenc Vapotnik, who apparently ran over two persons with his car in Belgrade. They both died. After the accident, the police was asking the Party if he should be arrested and trialed. Djilas claimed that it is absurd that they even had to ask these questions.

⁵¹ Archives of the Republic of Slovenia (ARS), AS 1532, fund Miha Marinko 1935-1983, Box 11, Conference of comrade Milovan Djilas with the educational workers in Maribor on 31st of October 1953, pp. 1-12.

Another written document from the same period is also very telling. On the 19th of November, 1953, Djilas had a conversation with Yugoslav journalists. He did not want to give an interview or an article, since his articles were published in *Borba* for the time being. He explicitly stressed that this conversation should not be published. Therefore, this record of the conversation was sent to the editorial boards as internal information. In this conversation Djilas criticized the work of the federal Assembly, since they were just passing decisions already made by the government. He also did not agree with the electoral system, since there should be an option for choosing between more candidates for one position. He also emphasized the written freedom of the press, but in practice, he argued, censorship was conducted over a telephone, or by pressuring workers not to work, that is not to print something.⁵² We will see an example of this a little bit later regarding the Croatian newspaper *Naprijed* (Forward). Hence, Djilas was already in November on the same critical level as he was a month later. The difference is, that in December his critique was public, while in November he stated to the reporters not to publish his thoughts.

2. 3. Djilas's articles in *Borba*

The first article was published in *Borba*⁵³ on the 11th of October 1953. They were published on Sundays until mid-December, when they were published three times per week, due to the large interest of the public. The last article was published on the 7th of January 1954, when Tito

⁵² ARS, AS 1532, fund Miha Marinko 1935-1983, Box 11, Copy of the conversation with Milovan Djilas on 19th of November 1953.

⁵³ In Slovene the articles were published by *Ljudska pravica – Borba* [Peoples' justice – The Struggle]

intervened.⁵⁴ Djilas published nineteen articles, while ten more ten more were planned.

Let us look at some examples of Djilas's writings, since only from them we can determine where Djilas went too far. In his first article he already wrote about the amoral actions of the Party's functionaries:

In the farmers' eyes the regime is again a blind force which is collecting little and big taxes. Living at the expense of society with undeservedly earned pensions, fraud, simulation of being ill and false certificates is even now normal to a petit bourgeois. Going after a higher salary and better sales are regular and normal phenomena of socialism. Old relationships and concepts from the time of the revolution and later are slowly but certainly disappearing, as well as the accompanying consciousness and morality from that period. The new one is yet to be established.⁵⁵

He also argued that it is important to follow the court's verdicts and therefore have a true legal state. In the article "Zakonitost" (Legality), he argued about a rightless case, in which the court delivered a verdict and the city committee of the LCY wanted to enforce something else, as if to say that they know the situation better. Therefore he felt that it was his duty to write down his counter arguments.

If the juridical judgment is not enforced, this shows the public that we have control over the laws and two types of citizens: those who have to obey the law and those who do not. All of this means that democracy and the fight for lawfulness, as well as laws themselves become fairy tales as soon as we do not enforce the judgments... Maybe my expressions concerning these people are too harsh, for they are good people and good fighters for socialism, who think that in **concrete cases** their will can be above the law – there is no doubt about that. /.../ Many courts and judges are bad. They can get better only if they will be assured rights which are formally given to them. However, if we bypass them and enforce another arbitrary will, then they will never be good or reputable. It is also bad that the courts are not enforcing their own decisions;

⁵⁴ Srđan Cvetković, *Između srpa i čekića II* [Between sickle and hammer II], (Belgrade: Institut za savremeno istoriju, 2009) p. 278; Kovačević, *Đilas: Heroj – antiheroj*, p. 331.

⁵⁵ Milovan Đilas, "Nove vsebine" [New contents], *Ljudska pravica - Borba*, 8. 10. 1953, No. 252, p. 1.

that they do not defend the lawfulness more decisively when it comes to political factors, but that they rather 'erase' the matter or remain 'silent'.⁵⁶

In the next article Djilas stood up for democracy for all, even for the bourgeoisie. He argued that the line between progressive and reactionary forces is not always clear. He was questioning himself e.g., whether it is the farmer or the kulak who complains when forced farmers' redemptions are collected. Regarding the bourgeoisie, he argued that they need to be equal before the law and that it is the task of a communist-democrat to fight for this.⁵⁷

Then he asked himself if there was a goal. Of course the final goal was communism, he said, however it was necessary to regularly create certain goals or tasks and fulfill them. According to Djilas, the next task was the democratization of society which was for him a reality and therefore an achievable goal.⁵⁸ Djilas therefore gave priority to temporary achievements. Because of this, as we will see later, Kardelj accused him of writing in the style of Eduard Bernstein.

In the next articles Djilas developed his thesis that the Party should give up the monopoly and power, which was necessary in the time of war but was now needless.

Now, there is not a single political party or a group, nor a class which could represent an exclusive expression of the society's objective necessities. They cannot take the exclusive right to 'manage' the movement of the production means. Because these means – the most important being the people – are going to be anesthetized and enslaved, because of the simple reason that in the conditions of the society's property any kind of building up the role of any kind of political movement, either one or more of them, will necessarily lead to this anesthesia and enslavement. The weakening of this role, weakening the monopolization of political movement

⁵⁶ Milovan Đilas, "Zakonitost", [Legality] *Ljudska pravica – Borba*, 15. 11. 1953, No. 286, p. 3.

⁵⁷ Milovan Đilas, "Za vse?" [For all?], *Ljudska pravica – Borba*, 22. 11. 1953, No. 292, p. 3.

⁵⁸ Milovan Đilas, "Ali so cilji?" [Is there a goal?], *Ljudska pravica - Borba*, 6. 12. 1953, No. 302, p. 3.

over society's life – this is a demand of our time, especially in our country, in socialism. /.../ Uniformity is needless, uniformity decelerates. It is actually necessary to provide free movement, so that one subjective force supplants the other and not that only one of them has a monopoly on a society's life.⁵⁹

The biggest stumbling block was his criticism of the LCY, especially the integration of bureaucracy into the Party's structures: "And also our bureaucracy, because it is 'socialistic', is necessary also somewhat Stalinist, a kind of a Yugoslav Stalinism. That is why it stinks with the same ideological stench and is gradually beginning to use the same 'civilized' and 'truthful' methods, although not directly against us 'at the top', but there is plenty of this at the 'lower levels'".⁶⁰

The committee's and basic organization's meetings were, so thought Djilas, lacking content, uninteresting and not serious. Despite his harsh criticism of the LCY, he only wanted to reform the Party. "Obviously no one even thinks about being against the League of Communists. But we are rightfully against the Stalinist remains in it, or to be more precise, against the Stalinist version of the Leninist party, since in every aspect, and especially on the question of democracy, this is what holds back progress."⁶¹ In the same article he argued the Party's withering away and the possibility of creating a Socialist Alliance as a second or surrogate political party, because the LCY would wither away and eventually die as a political party. With the new role, the LCY would also clean itself of all individuals, which were members only because of their careers. This idealized perception of politics is Djilas's greatest weakness as

⁵⁹ Milovan Đilas, "Splošno in posebno" [The general and the particular], *Ljudska pravica - Borba*, 20. 12. 1953, No. 314, p. 3.

⁶⁰ Milovan Đilas, "Odgovor" [Reply], *Ljudska pravica - Borba*, 24. 12. 1953, No. 318, p. 3

⁶¹ Milovan Đilas, "Zveza ali partija" [League or Party], *Ljudska pravica - Borba*, 4. 1. 1954, No. 2, p. 2-3.

was observed by Stanić:

He believed in the possibility of democratic changes and he believed that people are the bearers of these changes. The problem arises in Djilas's idealization of this people. For him these are "good", "normal" people who are just waiting to take responsibility and to insert the spirit of change. Here he is lacking a realistic estimate, which would be freed of a revolutionary enthusiasm. His understanding of democracy and freedom is very direct and their only condition is the change of "bureaucratic" forms with the "democratic", as if this could be done through the acceptance of different ideas. /.../ He convincingly demonstrated the "bureaucratic" forms in the society (privileges, hierarchy, containment, orthodoxy, party-ness and suitability etc.), but he underestimated their ideological and social bases; he noticed the abuse coming from the system, but he did not think this was his only and inevitable essence.⁶²

With his writing Djilas also broke the unwritten rule. He was criticizing his colleagues as if he was not a member of this elite group, with the same privileges as they had. This kind of critique was never tolerated.⁶³

Besides that, he also inspired *Borba's* editor, Veljko Vlahović. The latter wrote an article for *Borba* in which he criticized the juridical system and police work. He mentioned a case of two inmates that were released from prison after several years, when they found out that they were innocent although they had their signed confession. He also emphasized that newspapers were not fulfilling their role in the fight for lawfulness and democratization of society. Thus Slovenian sociologist, Bernard Nežmah, argues that this meant a revolution in the concept of media coverage. Now the journalist is not the one who is bringing to its readers only police statements but also covering the other side. By doing this, he could create an autonomous critical stand towards the police and court's trials.⁶⁴ Thus, questioning the integrity of the ruling

⁶² Stanić, Milovan Đilas, pp. 274-275.

⁶³ D. Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment*, p. 83.

⁶⁴ Bernard Nežmah, *Časopisna zgodovina novinarstva na Slovenskem v letih 1797-1989* [Newspaper's history of journalism in Slovenia in the years 1797-1989], (Ljubljana: Beletrina, 2012), pp. 211-212.

Party and the communist system as such. It is valuable to have in mind also the fact that Djilas established in 1952 a news agency *Jugopress*, which was intended as a counterbalance to the state central controlled Tanjug. *Jugopress* was of course abolished after Djilas's fall in late January 1954. The deputy Director of this Agency, Božidar Novak, escaped the dark fate, since Vladimir Bakarić, leader of the League of Communists of Croatia (LCC) and Djilas's silent supporter "suggested" that he should move to Zagreb.⁶⁵

At the first meeting of the National Assembly, on the 25th of December 1953, half a month before his sentencing, Djilas was nominated for the president of the Assembly by Vladimir Bakarić. This was also the highest position in the country, since the Yugoslav president and the government were elected by the federal assembly.⁶⁶ The proposal was met with great applause. However, as *Borba's* editorial suggested, the first Assembly meeting also meant "a new chapter" in the Yugoslav reality, since until then the decisions were made behind closed doors but from then they were going to be made in the Assembly. By doing this, the decision makers could be under the media's control. This was then an announcement of transparency in politics and not just of the freedom of speech, since the crucial decisions would not be made at secret Party meetings. *Borba*, thus, "announced a transparency of politics and emancipation of mass media"⁶⁷, something that would for sure endanger the Party's ruling monopoly. Nevertheless, this is what Djilas maybe had in mind, when he was talking with reporters in November 1953.

⁶⁵ Zdenko Radelić, "Dilasovci u Hrvatskoj i hrvatska historiografija" [Djilasists in Croatia and Croatian historiography], in *Disidentstvo u suvremenoj povijesti: Zbornik radova s međunarodnog znanstvenog skupa* [Dissidence in the contemporary history: Edited volume from the international scientific conference], ed. Zdenko Radelić [et al.], (Zagreb: Hrvatski institute za povijest, 2010), p. 65.

⁶⁶ Nežmah, *Časopisna zgodovina novinarstva*, p. 204.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

Djilas's articles received special attention in Croatia, especially in Zagreb, where they were read with great enthusiasm by the (old) prewar intellectual left. When Zagreb's newspaper *Vjesnik u srijedu* (Daily on Wednesday) did a survey about Djilas's articles, the results were positive with comments like: the articles were accepted in all levels of society or that they are expressing the thoughts of many ordinary citizens.⁶⁸ One of the survey's participants was also Gušte Šprljan, an old Croatian communist with almost thirty years of "communist" experience. He revealed some of the Party's meetings as boring. Thus he concluded in a joke, that the Party is old and tired, and that it should be put in the museum with all the other valuable things.⁶⁹ As we will see later, this joke was the reason why his comrades chicaned him after Djilas's fall, which resulted in his suicide.

Nevertheless, the most "Djilas progressive" newspaper in Croatia was *Naprijed* (Forward). The authors of *Naprijed* had no contact with Djilas but were close to him regarding his ideas. Theoretical topics with similar ideas to Djilas were written by Rudi Supek and Predrag Vranicki (a decade later, members of the Marxist revisionist Praxis group), while some other authors, on various topics, included well known figures such as Milan Despot (director of Zagreb's newspaper *Narodni list*), Živko Vnuk (*Naprijed*'s editor), Dušan Diminić (former ambassador to Albania and a well-known communist from Istria) and Ljubo Bavcon (at that time a PhD student at the Faculty of Law in Ljubljana but today an emeritus professor at the mentioned faculty).⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Goldstein, *Povratak Milovana Đilasa u Hrvatsku*, p. 16.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁷⁰ Dino Mujadžević, *Vladimir Bakarić: politička biografija* [Vladimir Bakarić: political biography], (Zagreb:

On the other hand, his articles also echoed in Slovenia. Especially in the magazine *Naši razgledi* (Our views), where in the beginning of December 1953 and on 9th of January 1954, already mentioned Ljubo Bavcon, quoted Djilas's article and Vlado Vodopivec, secretary of the Slovenian council for education and culture, who referred to Djilas on the front page on 26th of December. Even, Stane Kavčič, the vice-president of the Slovenian government, wrote an article in the Djilas spirit and published it in the main Slovenian newspaper, *Slovenski poročevalec* [Slovenian reporter] on 27th of December 1953. Only a week later he wrote a totally different article, since he probably already knew that Tito disliked Djilas's articles.⁷¹

Djilas heard about Tito's dissatisfaction regarding his articles during the New Year's celebration. Hence, he already knew that he was in troubles. Although Tito stopped Djilas from publishing his articles in *Borba*, he could not have stopped him from publishing in other newspapers. So, Djilas published *Anatomija jednog morala*⁷² (Anatomy of a Morality), in the last issue of the New Thought (*Nova misao*). In *Anatomy* Djilas described Milena Dapčević's story. He was extremely critical towards the wives of high party officials, since they disliked Milena because she have not participated in the WW II, although she was a child in that period of time and because she worked as an actress in the theater. Djilas described the "immorality, vulgarity and the greed of the upper, ruling class".⁷³ *New Thought* was because of this never published again, since the editorial board disbanded on its own after Djilas's fall.

Hrvatski institut za povijest – Podružnica Slavonski Brod, 2011), p. 228-229; Radelić, Đilasovci u Hrvatskoj pp. 57, 59, 61 and 67.

⁷¹ Nežmah, *Časopisna zgodovina novinarstva*, pp. 200-205.

⁷² Milovan Đilas, "Antomija jednog morala", in: *Nova misao*, Volume II, No. 1., January 1954, p. 3-20.

⁷³ Ivešić, *Padec Milovana Đilasa*, p. 165.

In the beginning of January, 1954, Djilas got an official invitation to visit Sweden and Norway and their socialists.⁷⁴ Thus, Djilas was expanding his friendly socialist relationships towards Scandinavia. However, the confrontation followed and he was unable to do so. He regraded this opportunity also in his first text written after his downfall and which has a very telling title *Nordijski san* (Nordic dream).⁷⁵

2. 4. The Final Confrontation

On the 9th of January,⁷⁶ 1953, the LCY's executive committee (EC), former politburo, met in Belgrade for the first time after the Sixth congress. Present were: Josip Broz Tito, Edvard Kardelj – Bevc, Aleksandar Ranković – Marko, Svetozar Vukmanović – Tempo, Đuro Pucar, Đuro Salaj, Vladimir Bakarić, Moša Pijade, Ivan Gošnjak, Lazar Koliševski and Franc Leskošek – Luka.⁷⁷

Despite being a member of the executive committee, Djilas did not attend the meeting because he was not invited. At this meeting they planned the CC's plenum, what arguments were going to be used etc. They were convinced that Djilas planned the *Anatomy* and that he needed to be sentenced.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ “Milovan Đilas službeno pozvan da posjeti Švedsku i Norvešku” [Milovan Djilas officially invited to visit Sweden and Norway], *Borba*, 7. 1. 1954, No. 5, p. 1.

⁷⁵ The text was published in: Đorgović, *Đilas: vernik i jeretik*.

⁷⁶ Initially the date was not written, yet it was later added that it was the 12th of January. Since they came to the agreement that the third plenum of the CC LCY will take place on the 16th of January at this meeting, the meeting could not have happened before the 10th of January, because *Borba* published the article about the session on the 10th of January. Thus I conclude that it occurred on the 9th of January.

⁷⁷ AJ, fund 507 League of Communists of Yugoslavia, CC LCY, III/61a, Record of the meeting EC CC LCY on the 12th (9th) of January 1953.

⁷⁸ Ivešić, *Padec Milovana Đilasa*, pp. 166-171.

First public critique came from the Slovenian theoretician Boris Žiharel.⁷⁹ At the same time they have announced the third extraordinary plenum of the CC LCY, since some Party members confused Djilas's articles as the Party's line. They emphasized, that the articles were just Djilas's opinions.⁸⁰

Then Djilas wrote a letter to Tito. The latter then invited him to a meeting, where he had a private conversation with Kardelj, Ranković and Tito for the last time. Tito told him that he is a "different person" and that the bourgeoisie was still strong. Hence, any kind of critique was risky. He also emphasized the interest of the Western media in this plenum. Djilas went to the Yugoslav press agency Tanjug and checked this information that very day. He was encouraged by this. However, he was more worried than glad by the "capitalist support",⁸¹ which means that he did not intend to go to "the end" with his criticism; to make a public dispute and seek help from the West. In the end Tito demanded that he submit a resignation letter as the president of the assembly. Djilas wrote it when he returned home.⁸² Hence, the confrontation with Djilas could not be seen as a confrontation with the Assembly's president. In these hard conditions, when he was separating with basically all of his friends and co-workers, Djilas stepped a step back. He did not know, that everything was already decided.

Nonetheless, Djilas prepared a statement for the plenum and sent it to Tito for remarks.⁸³ At

⁷⁹ Boris Žiharel, "Naši društveni ciljevi i uloga komunista u borbi za njihovo ostvarivanje" [Our societal goals and the role of communists in the struggle for their realization], *Borba*, 10. 1. 1954, No. 7, p. 2.

⁸⁰ Režek, *Med resničnostjo in iluzijo*, p. 139-140; M. Đorgović, *Đilas*, p. 32.

⁸¹ Djilas, *Vlast i pobuna*, p. 283

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Kovačević, *Đilas*, p. 328-329.

first this looks like an i-logical decision. However, this proves that he was still a Yugoslav communist or better to say, he acted as one. He did exactly what a communist would do. Maybe he wanted to prove that he was right. He was also not alone, since he had some support amongst students, intellectuals, cultural workers, close co-workers⁸⁴ and in the army.⁸⁵ However, he “forgot” that the Party remained Stalinist, since they used the same methods as Stalin did when he tried to get rid of the opposition. This included a newspaper campaign slandering Djilas even before the plenum. Those individuals who were “suspicious” of giving support to Djilas were pressured and visited by the agents of secret police in order to change their mind. An example *par excellence* is Tempo, who apparently promised Djilas his support, but decided to side with Tito at the end.⁸⁶

The plenum then took place in Belgrade on the 16th and 17th of January 1954. Djilas was attacked first by Tito who accused him of revisionism, trying to liquidate the Party etc. He also argued that the “withering away” of the Party, is for now not possible, “since class enemies were still active.”⁸⁷ Then Djilas gave his prepared statement. He admitted that he broke the Party discipline and that he distanced himself from the LCY. He explained that his critique was not directed against any individual and that he is willing to apologize to everyone who was

⁸⁴ Dobrica Ćosić, *Piščevi zapisi (1951-1968)* [Writer’s notes (1951-1968)], (Belgrade: Filip Višnjić, 2001), p. 36-58.

⁸⁵ For details see: Milan Teržić, “‘Ništa nije radio već sedeo i pisao’: slučaj Milovana Đilasa u JNA 1954” [“He was doing nothing but seating and writing”: The case of Milovan Djilas in JNA 1954], in *Vojno-istorijski glasnik* [Military historical review] 2 (2010): pp. 40-59..

⁸⁶ Ivešić, *Padec Milovana Đilasa*, p. 174.

⁸⁷ Branko Petranović and Momčilo Zečević, *Jugoslavija 1918-1984: Zbirka dokumenata* [Yugoslavia 1918-1984: Collection of documents], (Belgrade: Rad, 1985), pp. 883-885.

offended by the *Anatomy*. He also admitted of being a revisionist regarding Lenin.⁸⁸

Next was Kardelj, who crushed Djilas's ideas by quoting his articles. He mentioned a conversation he had with Djilas stating that the latter mentioned a possibility of establishing another socialist party. He also mentioned Djilas's labeling of Tito as a bearer of bureaucratism.⁸⁹ Then Kardelj quoted Eduard Bernstein⁹⁰ and argued that they were the same. Djilas interrupted Kardelj and said that he agrees with Bernstein, who was a revisionist and although he never read anything from him.⁹¹ There were only two persons defending Djilas: Vladimir Dedijer and Mitra Mitrović, Djilas's ex-wife. However, they have left no impression on the delegates.⁹²

Things got complicated when Tempo started to have his speech. Since Djilas thought that Tempo would cover his back, he experienced a psychological breakdown. He started to argue with Tempo, so that the latter could not finish his speech. After that, all other speakers started with a harsh critique.⁹³ Djilas was labeled as an anarcholiberalist. They emphasized that he fell under the Bevan's influence etc.⁹⁴

The plenum's statistic is very interesting, since we can see that majority of members did not

⁸⁸ Kalezić, Đilas miljenik i otpadnik komunizma, pp. 185-186.

⁸⁹ Petranović and Zečević, Jugoslavija 1918-1984, pp. 891-896.

⁹⁰ About Bernstein see: Sheri Berman, *The primacy of politics: social democracy and the making of Europe's twentieth century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 14-15.

⁹¹ Ivešić, Padec Milovana Đilasa, p. 176-177.

⁹² Ibid., p. 178.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Režek, Med resničnostjo in iluzijo, p. 142; Cvetković, Između srpa i čekića II, p. 280.

want to participate. Only 30 out of 109 CC's members participated in the discussion. Of the 27 members, who criticized Djilas, only 5 of them stated that they analyzed and understood Djilas's articles. All others stated that they have not read them in deep or that they were too difficult to understand. As Kardelj advised him, Djilas repented at the second day of the plenum.⁹⁵

The plenum's resolution was written by a committee headed by Bakarić, since he needed to prove his loyalty.⁹⁶ Djilas was found guilty on all charges and stripped of all of his functions. However, he was not thrown out of the LCY, since that would look like a Stalin's method.⁹⁷ At the end even Djilas did not vote against the plenum's resolution. Tito ended the plenum stating: "No interior reasons in our country excuse such a mild punishment. This all relates to the question of our interests, the interests of our country, on the basis of our foreign policy plan."⁹⁸ His remaining a member of the LCY would supposedly be an even greater blow to those who thought they would destroy the party unity with his expulsion. Moša Pijade suggested this not to be entered in the stenographer's notebook.⁹⁹

As Slavko Goldstein concluded regarding the plenum, it was "obvious that even after the successful five years of opposing Stalin and his power, inside the LCY's committees and

⁹⁵ Ivešić, *Padec Milovana Đilasa*, p. 179.

⁹⁶ Mudjažević, Vladimir Bakarić, p. 229.

⁹⁷ Cvetković, *Između srpa i čekića II*, p. 282.

⁹⁸ AJ, fund 507 League of Communist of Yugoslavia, CC LCY, II/11, Explanation of comrade Tito about the Djilas's punishment (This is not in the stenographic record).

⁹⁹ Ibid.

leadership the spirit of Stalinism was still kindling, but as a tool for keeping the 'monolith' it could even become a vampire".¹⁰⁰

From the analysis of Djilas's transformation it is visible, that he wanted to reform the Party with more "liberal" ideas, although still inside the Marxist framework. His critique was sincere, since he really believed in his ideas and that the LCY needs to be cleaned from Stalinism, maybe even from Lenin, to get to the "clean" Marx. However, during this "cleaning" he went too far with his public critique, especially with the *Anatomy*. When he realized that he tried to ease the consequences. Thus, he did not want to become a heretic at that point, he was "only" a Marxist revisionist. This assumption is backed with his "unusual" behavior: resigning as the Assembly's president, being worried about the interest of Western media in his case, repenting at the plenum and not voting against the resolution. However, this is also understandable. In his memoirs, he stated that it was not easy for his comrades to deal with him, but it was also not easy for him. Decision to become an out-law Djilas accepted only in April 1954, when he realized that there is no other way. Thus, he left the LCY and started seeking support from the West,¹⁰¹ which will be presented in the next chapter. Only from April 1954 "new life" began for Djilas, since he solved his dilemma: "One period of life has ended – began a new one or die".¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Goldstein, *Povratak Milovana Đilasa u Hrvatsku*, p. 20.

¹⁰¹ Djilas asked Ernest Davies, a Labour politician, in 1954 if they would let him publish his views in the *Daily Herald*. Thus, he was the one seeking help. See: Đilas, *Vlast i pobuna*, p. 296.

¹⁰² Đilas, *Vlast i pobuna*, p. 289

3. Djilas on the global stage

In the previous chapter I was focused on Djilas's writing, his ideas and his role in Yugoslav international ambitions to avoid isolation and to connect more with European socialists. However, in this chapter the emphasis is on the period after the CC's plenum (January 1954) until 1957 when *The New Class* was published. Since this chapter deals more with the international scene I have limited myself to the archival material of Radio Free Europe (RFE). After January 1954, the RFE was especially interested in Djilas. They helped spread the word about Djilas and looked upon him as a *de facto* dissident,¹⁰³ although the term came into use only a decade later. In the fifties the terms used for describing Djilas are: deviant and heretic,¹⁰⁴ and a revolutionary who keeps on being revolutionary.¹⁰⁵ The aim of this chapter is, then, to challenge the linear story of Djilas becoming a heretic and trying to outline what Djilas meant for the West, before we can focus in the next chapter on what he meant for the East.

3. 1. Consequences of Djilas's fall

The Djilas affair rocked the Yugoslav reality all the way to its core. This is evident by the decision taken in the federal assembly by the end of January 1954 that they should elect Tito as a Yugoslav president although he was elected to this position only a year ago. This was

¹⁰³ The word dissident cannot be found in the archival material. However it can be found that Djilas had "dissenting opinions". See: Open Society Archives (OSA), HU OSA 300-8-3-8922, "Milovan Djilas [Đilas]", 20 November 1956, p. 4, [electronic source] <http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:763778b4-53d4-470d-ac97-90c9ba449184> (accessed on 1st of May 2016).

¹⁰⁴ OSA, HU OSA 300-10-4, box 20, Đilas Milovan 1948-1954 folder, Excerpt from Der Monat, volume 66, March 1954, Letter from Belgrade: The Djilas Affair by Ernst Halperin, p. 11-12.

¹⁰⁵ OSA, HU OSA 300-120-7, box 47, Djilas Milovan 1954-1971 folder, Special news analysis no. 24, Djilas: The New Class: (1st of 3 in Satellite Series), 19th of August 1957, p. 1.

recommended by an EC's member Djuro Pucar Stari, since this would represent a manifestation of the solidity of "our" masses since this was a basic condition for "our" revolutionary victories and for the building of communism.¹⁰⁶

The Yugoslav regime confronted Djilas's supporters instantly after the Belgrade plenum, when republican's CCs also held their plenums. In Croatia, the newspaper *Naprijed* was attacked as a pro-Djilas, petite-bourgeoisie and anarchistic group. The party used the well-tested practice of pressuring printing workers. Since they refused to print *Naprijed*, the newspaper stopped coming out.¹⁰⁷ In this way, they could claim that it was not abolished. At the Zagreb plenum, Zvonko Brkić, also attacked Gušte Šprljan, since the latter stated that the Party is old and that it should be transferred into a museum. Šprljan was very offended since none of his old comrades said anything "nice" to him. Thus, he was worth nothing. After the second day of the plenum, he returned to his office in the Party's school of Rade Končar, where he was a director. He rolled up his Persian rug, so that the blood would not ruin it and then shot himself in the head leaving a short note to his loved ones stating that he was sorry.¹⁰⁸ Nonetheless, he was buried with all honors and the reasons behind his death were covered up.¹⁰⁹

Djilas's contacts and friendships in the international community had paid off¹¹⁰, since they were

¹⁰⁶ Nežmah, *Časopisna zgodovina novinarstva*, pp. 208-209.

¹⁰⁷ Radelić, *Đilasovci u Hrvatskoj*, p. 63.

¹⁰⁸ Goldstein, *Povratak Milovana Đilasa u hrvatsku*, p. 40.

¹⁰⁹ "Jučer su svečano sahranjeni posmrtni ostaci druga Gušte Šprljana" [Yesterday the remains of comrade Gušte Šprljan were buried with all honors], *Borba*, 27th of January 1954, No. 22, p. 2.

¹¹⁰ There is almost no European socialist party with whom Djilas did not have a contact in the beginning of 1950's. For details see: Nikola Mijatov, *Milovan Đilas i Evropski socijalisti (1950-1956)* [Milovan Djilas and European Socialists (1950-1956)], (Master thesis, University of Belgrade, 2015), pp. 50-88.

first to send private protest letters to Tito regarding Djilas. One of the first was Bevan, since he became good friends with Djilas during the last years. In his letter, he emphasized his concerns since he heard that some high party officials were claiming that it was his fault for Djilas's "turn" and that the latter was under his influence. He was concerned for the good sake of Djilas and Dedijer and their families. Tito wrote back that he knows that Djilas was not under his influence and that Djilas's personal freedom will not be endangered. Bevan's wife Jennie Lee also talked with the Yugoslav Secretary Knežević in London. She saw the Djilas affair as a confrontation with progressive forces to satisfy the Soviet Union. Ivo Mallet, UK's ambassador in Belgrade also reacted. He protested to Koča Popović, Yugoslav federal secretary of foreign affairs, since the newspapers were writing in a negative anti-British stand, especially *Pobjeda* (Victory) from Titograd (today Podgorica). Popović cynically congratulated Mallet for being well informed, since he never heard of this newspaper.¹¹¹

Since Tito wanted to keep good relations with the European socialists he reacted fast; Veljko Vlahović went to England, France and Belgium to calm the social democracy. Hence, Vlahović took over the role that Djilas had played from 1951 until 1953. However, this mission failed. Vlahović got into a dispute with Bevan, since the latter backed Djilas. Vlahović claimed that Bevan did not understand that the real reformist in Yugoslavia was Edvard Kardelj.¹¹² Bevan responded to Vlahović regarding the Yugoslav political freedom: "There is no freedom in a system which can liquidate a politician overnight and there is no reflection of democracy when

¹¹¹ Mijatov, Milovan Đilas i britanski laburisti, pp. 36-37.

¹¹² Unkovski-Korica, The Yugoslav Communists' Special Relationship, p. 41.

masses are agreeing with this liquidation.”¹¹³

Morgan Philips also turned down Vlahović’s explanations. Since Philips was at that time also the president of the Socialist International many socialists came under Labour influence. Apparently, the socialists believed more in Djilas, with whom they had a chance to meet and to get to know his de-Stalinization process than the official Belgrade. During the International’s meeting, a pre-war Yugoslav socialist politician, Živko Topalović, offered to delegates Djilas’s translated articles.¹¹⁴ Hence, they could have seen that his ideas were very similar to theirs regarding democracy (for all), equality before the laws etc. Because of the socialist’s interest in Djilas, the Yugoslav system monitored which of Djilas’s articles were translated and published, by which papers, who were the authors, what exactly was written; did they published Djilas’s articles with comments or were they just translating the whole texts, etc. In the Slovene archives one can find examples of the neighboring countries; for Italy the newspaper *Risorgimento Socialista* [Socialist Risorgimento] and for Austria, *Die Zukunft*¹¹⁵ [The Future].

Throughout Europe, socialists paid attention to Djilas. Newspapers were active especially in West Germany. They published Djilas’s articles and wrote extensive accounts of January’s plenum. One of the first was the German magazine *Ost-Probleme*¹¹⁶ [East-Problem] and *Der*

¹¹³ Mijatov, Milovan Đilas i britanski laburisti, p. 39.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ ARS, AS 1529 Kraigher Boris 1945-1967 (personal collection), Box 17, Tanjug: Supplement to the red bulletin 29. 8. 1954; ARS, AS 1529 Kraigher Boris 1945-1967 (personal collection), Box 17, Risorgimento Socialista about the Djilas affair.

¹¹⁶ Open Society Archives (OSA), HU OSA 300-10-4, box 20, Đilas Milovan 1948-1954 folder, article from Ost-Probleme, February 1955.

*Monat*¹¹⁷ [The Month]. In the latter, an article written by Ernst Halperin was published. Although there are some major mistakes in the text (such as Edvard Kardelj being a Slovak and not Slovene) there are some sharp observations that can help us established what Djilas was in their eyes.

Halperin looked upon Djilas as a Marxist revisionist. At the beginning he gave a detailed background story of Milovan Djilas. He claimed that the only person who really disliked the latter was Moša Pijade, which was true due to their dispute regarding the solution of the Yugoslav national question during the WW II.¹¹⁸ However, he emphasized more Djilas's ambiguity of his moral critique, since he also lived in a nice villa and had a nice car. He pointed out Djilas's "extremely rare" quality,

to see himself and those around him with the eyes of an outsider. This quality was to become his doom. Several months prior to the conflict, the Yugoslav communist organ published a sociological article by Djilas, wherein he wrote about the development of Soviet society since Stalin's death. In this article, he came to a conclusion, peculiar for a communist official, saying that the craving for power was a character trait, which from the moral point of view was "lower than waste, deceit and even theft, for these ruined only the individual, while the craving for power ruined society as such." Djilas continued that after the rise to power, every true socialist got into a tragic inner conflict and experienced a true "hamlet antagonism", for on one side he faced the necessity to resist pressure from the enemy of the people and had to fortify this resistance, while on the other hand he ought to forego this power "for the sake of further democratization, apart from which there is and can be no socialism."¹¹⁹

Then Halperin emphasized the importance of the Party to have a monolith unity. The deviating opinion must be declared by the Party as "completely wrong under all conditions, and it must

¹¹⁷ OSA, HU OSA 300-10-4, box 20, Đilas Milovan 1948-1954 folder, table of contents of Der Monat, March 1954.

¹¹⁸ Ivešić, Padec Milovana Đilasa, p. 182.

¹¹⁹ OSA, HU OSA 300-10-4, box 20, Đilas Milovan 1948-1954 folder, Excerpt from Der Monat, volume 66, March 1954, Letter from Belgrade: The Djilas Affair by Ernst Halperin, p. 6.

be recognized as a crime for the sake of unity. Otherwise, Party members could mistakenly think that it is normal to have different views from those at the top. A person having different opinions must be morally discredited, branded as a heretic and either be expelled from the party or forced to make a repeal and confess his repentance.”¹²⁰

However, the best analysis of moral issues written by Halperin is hidden in his article, but expressed here:

Their foremost moral principle is the party discipline, which leads to a peculiar reversal of all moral values. Whoever for the sake of party discipline contradicts his own opinion voiced only five minutes ago is considered loyal: whoever contrary to party discipline sticks to his own opinion is considered unreliable. Whoever for the sake of discipline betrays his best friend is faithful, and whoever tries to defend him as a traitor. Since these people lead such a secluded life far away from non-party members, they do not realize how far their own moral standards are contradictory to the feelings of others. They have no idea that the very thing which they cherish as virtuous self-denial injures their reputation and is seen as a weakness of character by their own people.¹²¹

From these short examples, we can conclude that Western observers were well averred of the “truth” regarding the Djilas’s affair. Halperin even emphasized that Djilas was more like Buharin, a deviation of Stalin and not Marx.¹²² Hence, Halperin looked on Djilas as a Marxist revisionist and not as a renegade. However, in April 1954, Tito said to the foreign media that Djilas was politically dead, which forced the latter to show him the opposite. He resigned from the LCY on the 19th of April 1954 and returned his LCY member card (number 0004). The Yugoslav officials stated for the western media, that Djilas returned his member card since he felt tired and was not able to carry on with his work. They even said that he was going to work

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 12.

¹²¹ Ibid., p 16.

¹²² Ibid., p. 20.

now only on translations from the Russian literature for a Belgrade publisher. Djilas denied this in his interview with *The New York Times* in December 1954 as will be shown shortly. For the end they said that Djilas attended only two meetings and that he did not say a word.¹²³

However, this “ideal picture” in which Djilas could still work was of course not true. After the sentence, Djilas went to the Belgrade party organization, since he thought that he would be able to work at the lower level. However, he was ignored at the meeting. He also sent his article fees (200,000 dinars) to the Nikšić library in Montenegro. Nevertheless, the money was returned with an explanation that they would not accept the enemy’s money.¹²⁴ From this and from his acts taken in January 1954 (sending a prepared plenum statement to Tito for remarks, repentance at the plenum) one can conclude that in these first months of 1954 Djilas still acted like a true communist. Thus, he had not yet decided what he wanted to be. Nevertheless, with the return of his membership card, he decided that he could no longer stay in the Party. At the same time, he also signaled with this act to the West, that he is shifting towards a public, but not organized opposition. Hence, Djilas started looking for options to publish his views outside Yugoslavia.

As a consequence of Djilas’s fall, Soviet Union tried to improve their diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia. Nikita Khrushchev sent a letter to Tito on 22nd of June 1954. Since he got rid of Lavrentiy Beria, he proposed that the latter and Milovan Djilas should be the scapegoats for the

¹²³ HU OSA 300-80-8, box 10, folder Milovan Djilas 1954-1963, Djilas quits party cell, 23th of April 1954, New York Herald Tribune.

¹²⁴ Ivešić, *Padec Milovana Đilasa*, p. 180.

split between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. By doing this, they could also begin to plan a summit of both governments in order to achieve reconciliation.¹²⁵ However, Tito refused to blame Djilas and proposed a steady and slow process of reconciliation.¹²⁶

Nevertheless, this process of reconciliation had an effect. A year later, on the 2nd of June 1955, Khrushchev and Tito signed the Belgrade Declaration, which officially ended the intense relationship. Already in September the same year, Yugoslavia got a big Soviet aid grant¹²⁷ and hence, began to slowly part from the western influence.

3. 2. A democratic socialist

In the meantime, still in 1954, Djilas had a meeting with Ernest Davies, a well-known Labour politician, who promised Djilas that their newspaper *Daily Herald* would publish three of his articles; yet this never happened. Djilas then gave an interview to Jack Reymound for *The New York Times* in which he criticized the Yugoslav leadership and their Party monopoly and declared: “I am a democratic socialist. The name of Communism is good, but it has been compromised. It is a synonym of totalitarianism, in this country (Yugoslavia) as well as in

¹²⁵ Letter from Nikita S. Khrushchev, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, to Josip Broz Tito and the Central Committee of the League of Communists Of Yugoslavia,” June 22, 1954, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Arhiv Jugoslavije [National Archives of Yugoslavia], Arhiv CK SKJ [Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia Collection], 507 / IX, 119/I–48. Obtained and translated for CWIHP by Svetozar Rajak. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112968> (accessed on 1st of May 2016).

¹²⁶ Letter from Tito and the Executive Committee [Politburo] of the CC LCY to Nikita Khrushchev and Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,” August 11, 1954, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Arhiv Jugoslavije [National Archives of Yugoslavia], Arhiv CK SKJ, 507 / IX, 119/I-50. Obtained and translated for CWIHP by Svetozar Rajak. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112970> (accessed on 1st of May 2016).

¹²⁷ *The New York Times Twentieth Century in Review: The Balkans*, Vol. 2, ed. Ana Siljak, (Chicago/London: FD Publishers, 2001), pp. 458-459.

Russia. What is the use of an ideal name? I handed in my Communist card for moral and political reasons. Why should I remain in the Party when I cannot say anything? Why pretend?”¹²⁸ Hence, he gave up communism for good.

Dedijer also gave some statements, since he was called to the “control commission” of LCY in order to explain his stand at the third plenum. Dedijer wondered why he had to go to the control commission for questioning. So Mitra Mitrović cynically said to him: “In what kind of Party did you grow up? We built it as such”.¹²⁹ Dedijer and Djilas were firstly slandered through the media¹³⁰ to be in January 1955 arrested and trialed¹³¹ for enemy activities. West German social democrats (Arno Behrisch, Lachstein and Dürkelbach) sent a telegram to Tito with a demand that Djilas and Dedijer should be defended by Wolfgang Abendroth, a law professor from Marburg. They also expressed their fear concerning the trial, since the whole thing resembled too much to the radical Eastern methods, which had nothing in common with democracy, since a constituent part of it is also freedom of speech. They also warned Tito that a result of this trial could be alienation between western socialists and the Yugoslavs.¹³²

The Yugoslav regime wanted to break Djilas on all fronts. Thus, very bizarre news was

¹²⁸ OSA, HU OSA 300-8-3-8922, "Milovan Djilas [Đilas]", 20 November 1956, p.1, [electronic source] <http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:763778b4-53d4-470d-ac97-90c9ba449184> (accessed on 1st of May 2016).

¹²⁹ M. Đorgović, Đilas, p. 225.

¹³⁰ OSA, HU OSA 300-10-4, box 20, Đilas Milovan 1948-1954 folder, article “Politička platforma Milovana Đilasa”, 30th of December 1954, Borba.

¹³¹ Stenographical record of the trial were published in Serbia. See: Kosta Nikolić and Srđan Cvetković, *Radanje jeretika: suđenje Milovanu Đilas i Vladimiru Dedijeru 1955* [Birth of a heretic: trial of Milovan Djilas and Vladimir Dedijer 1955], (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2011), pp. 80-287.

¹³² OSA, HU OSA 300-10-4, box 20, Đilas Milovan 1948-1954 folder, SPD-Abgeordnete setzen sich für Djilas and Dedijer ein, 22nd of January 1955.

published during the trial: Djilas was kicked out from the Sport fisherman society Danube.¹³³ Hence, now he could not go fishing, which was one of his favorite hobbies. Djilas got 18 months of prison with three years' probation.¹³⁴ This was the first of four trials that Djilas went through. Josip Hrnčević, at the time the president of the Yugoslav high court, described these four trials in his memoirs as political.¹³⁵ Thus, even those who participated in his trials knew that the accusations were absurd.

Although Djilas was not imprisoned, his life was complicated by the Yugoslav secret police. Since he declared himself a socialist democrat, Djilas wrote a letter to Morgan Philips, leading figure of the Socialist International, in April 1956 explaining his current status. It is important to emphasize that he wrote a letter to Philips and not to Bevan, although he was closer with the latter and as we saw Bevan was the first who wrote to Tito in January 1954 concerning the CC's plenum. Djilas informed Phillips that his pension was taken away from him and that his family was moved from the villa to a flat, which was according to Djilas "good". However, he was notified that the flat was too big for him since he was not obliged to have a separate workroom, since he was not an "intellectual". Members of his family lost their jobs as well as some friends who came to visit him. His flat was under constant surveillance since the secret police became his neighbor in the flat on the opposite side of the street to his. His mail was opened, while some letters, especially those from abroad never reached him. Djilas also described an incident that happened, when a young lady approached his wife Štefica on the street and introduced

¹³³ Katarina Kovačević, "Milovan Đilas i mađarska kriza 1956. godine" [Milovan Djilas and the 1956 Hungarian crisis], in *Historical Inscriptions* 1-2 (2012): p. 111.

¹³⁴ Mijatov, Milovan Đilas i britanski laburisti, p. 37; Djokić, Britain and Dissent, p. 374.

¹³⁵ Josip Hrnčević, *Svjedočanstva* (drugo izdanje) [Testimonials (second edition)] , (Zagreb: Globus, 1986), pp. 255-260.

herself as his mistress.¹³⁶ He also could not publish any of his texts. Thus, his treatment was far harsher than towards other non-conformists; in that particular time towards the Serbian literary critic, Borislav Mihajlović - Mihiz.¹³⁷

Since Djilas did not ask for intervention or financial support, he even stated that his family was living a standard higher than was the Yugoslav average:

It seems as if the purpose of the letter was to seek moral support from Philips, his personal friend, but also a leading figure in the Labour Party and international socialist movement. Djilas wished to convey his own version of events to his friends and supporters abroad, and the letter may have been written for the record, in case something happened to its author. Djilas was being increasingly isolated within Yugoslavia, and it must have been a hard blow when even Dedijer abandoned him. He reassured Philips that he had nothing to do with Dedijer's negotiations with the regime, which, he believed, had been ongoing. Any signs of support from abroad, however symbolic, must have been important to the Yugoslav dissident, who increasingly lived the life of an "internal émigré".¹³⁸

Phillips could not disregard Djilas's letter, so he reacted fast. Instead of writing to Djilas, he wrote directly to Tito a couple of days after he received Djilas's letter. He stressed almost everything Djilas wrote to him, however, he did not mention that he got the information from Djilas. He emphasized the removal of Djilas's pension and that some financial resources must be found for him. He also stressed his discontent with the turn towards the Soviet Union in foreign affairs since this was in his eyes connected with the treatment of Djilas.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Djokić, *Britain and Dissent*, p. 374.

¹³⁷ Mihiz explained ambiguity of the Yugoslav repression: "I was thrown out of the Youth Working Action in 1946 and arrested as an enemy, but I was also able to become the literary commentator of NIN [the best-known Yugoslav weekly] and the director of a library, and get employment with *Avala Film* and *Atelje 212* [a leading film production company and avant-garde theatre] ... I did sometimes lose my job and there were years when I could not publish anything, but often I had more rights and opportunities than i deserved." See: Jasna Dragović-Soso, *Saviours of the Nation: Serbia's Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism*, (Montreal : McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), p. 14.

¹³⁸ Djokić, *Britain and Dissent*, p. 375.

¹³⁹ Mijatov, *Milovan Đilas i britanski laburisti*, p. 40.

This time, Tito did not respond like he did to Bevan's letter in 1954. Instead, Veljko Vlahović wrote an article in *Borba*. He accused Phillips of being "uninformed, irresponsible and an ill-intentioned person, whose understanding of the nature of Yugoslav socialism and international relations, in general, was poor." At the end, he also accused him of anti-Yugoslav propaganda, since he circulated his letter to other socialist parties through Europe. "The British imperialism was not spared either: Vlahović advised the leadership of the Labour Party to mind their government's business in Cyprus and Kenya, instead of interfering in Yugoslavia's internal affairs".¹⁴⁰

Thus, Phillips and the Brittain's Labour Party were the most significant "protectors" of Djilas. Since they had the biggest influence inside the European socialist movement, they could influence also other socialists. The latter "protected" Djilas with the constant pressure on the Yugoslav regime. Yugoslavs had to have in mind the socialists relations every time they wanted to harm Djilas. This protection was quite effective and it helped Djilas a lot. As Mihiz said to Djilas, where the difference between them lies: "You they write about in the Western press, but I can be liquidated over the telephone."¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Djokić, *Britain and Dissent*, p. 376.

¹⁴¹ Dragović-Soso, *Saviours of the nation*, p. 19.

3. 3. *Communism loses its soul*

The West also helped Djilas in publishing his articles. In September 1956, he wrote a short series of articles for *INS*,¹⁴² titled *Communism in Crisis*. He analyzed the motifs and effects of the de-Stalinization process in Eastern Europe. He identified three reasons for de-Stalinization: Economic dissatisfaction, political dissatisfaction with the effects of increased freedom and finally, foreign policy. He continued with his accounts of him playing chess with Władysław Gomułka in 1947 at the time the Cominform was formed. He stressed Gomułka's statements that were at that time heretical, but were only a year later heard from the Yugoslav mouth: "During the Conference to form the Cominform, Gomułka kept insisting that Poland must find her own way to socialism, independent of Moscow. It was Edvard Kardelj, now vice-president of Yugoslavia, and myself who scolded Gomułka for his views. Kardelj and I did not realize though that only one year later Yugoslavia would be saying the same thing – even more resolutely."¹⁴³

Since Gomułka was at the head of Poland in the autumn of 1956 and Tito was again an honored guest in Moscow, Djilas concluded that a change was made, due to the unsatisfied public pressure. The captive countries also had little bit more freedom. Although the changes were not visible, since they were made only under the surface, also on the surface new groups were formed which wanted real freedom (Poznań protests, intellectuals in Budapest, etc.). The Soviet

¹⁴² The United States Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) an agency of the United States Department of Justice in the period between 1933 and 2003.

¹⁴³ OSA, HU OSA 300-10-4, box 2, Đilas Milovan 1956-1958 folder, article by Milovan Djilas, *Communism in Crisis*, 28th of September 1956, INS, p. 3.

ideology is in crisis Djilas claimed since they have returned to Lenin “to the unreal world of dried dogma and a cult more mystical than that of Stalin. By doing so, the present day Soviet leaders have proved themselves incapable of creating new theories to meet new world conditions.”¹⁴⁴

At the end, he denied Yugoslavia and China as being potential centers of communism. He ended his article with a very strong statement:

Communism today has lost its soul. What holds it together now are less and fewer ideals and more and more power and the selfish interests of a new class which the Party bureaucracy has created in the course of Communism’s rise to power. The strength of modern Communism is more and more physical and not spiritual. The sun of the Lenin-Stalin Communism passed its zenith with the end of World War II and the death of Stalin. Its brilliance is less and less capable of warming world Communism of today.¹⁴⁵

Although Djilas gave a harsh critique in this article, he was not arrested in Yugoslavia. It is not a coincidence that Djilas always published his articles and statements when Tito was not in Yugoslavia.¹⁴⁶ In the last quote, one can also see that he used a term “new class” for the ruling elite for the first time. However, Djilas also stated something very important for his position in the international socialist community. Unity between socialists and communists is impossible, since the socialist would never join the closed Soviet system. “Socialists less than anyone would join such a system because to do so would be to renounce their ideal of freedom. The

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁴⁶ OSA, HU OSA 300-8-3-8922, "Milovan Djilas [Đilas]", 20 November 1956, p.1, [electronic source] <http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:763778b4-53d4-470d-ac97-90c9ba449184> (accessed on 1st of May 2016).

ideological gap between socialists and Communists is deeper than ever before.”¹⁴⁷

However, he was arrested couple of months later, when a big “storm” was coming in Eastern Europe as Djilas predicted. It started in Poland and ended in Hungary. The Hungarian revolution was crushed at the beginning of November 1956 when the second Soviet intervention happened, and the Yugoslavs agreed with it. Yugoslav representative at the United Nations did not vote on 28th of October to put the Hungarian events on the Security Council’s agenda. Djilas was asked by Belgrade’s *France Press* correspondent to comment on this decision. He said that this decision is in conflict with the Yugoslav stand of noninterference in state domestic affairs and that it is a contradiction to the documents that are signed by Yugoslavia on an everyday basis.¹⁴⁸ On 11th of November, Tito gave a speech in Pula (Croatia) where he stated that events in Hungary showed some enemy tendencies that can be found also in Yugoslavia. Although they were not strong, Tito argued, “they babble all sorts of things”.¹⁴⁹ Tito was of course referring to Djilas, since no one else commented publicly on the Yugoslav stand regarding the Hungarian revolution.

After the Hungarian revolution was crushed, Milovan Djilas published an article titled *The Storm in Eastern Europe* in *The New Leader* on 19th of November 1956, where he criticized the Yugoslav stand and emphasized the events in Poland and Hungary. For Djilas, with the victory

¹⁴⁷ OSA, HU OSA 300-10-4, box 2, Đilas Milovan 1956-1958 folder, article by Milovan Djilas, Communism in Crisis, 28th of September 1956, INS, p. 9.

¹⁴⁸ Kovačević, Milovan Đilas i mađarska kriza, pp. 103 and 116.

¹⁴⁹ OSA, HU OSA 300-8-3-8922, "Milovan Djilas [Đilas]", 20 November 1956, p. 1, [electronic source] <http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:763778b4-53d4-470d-ac97-90c9ba449184> (accessed on 1st of May 2016).

of national communism in Poland a new chapter in the history of communism and history of subjected East European countries began. However, with the Hungarian national revolution, a new chapter began in the history of mankind. He compared the Hungarian revolution with the French and Russian revolution. Nothing could stop the East European countries, he argued, in their fight for freedom and independence from Moscow. Gomulka will have to choose the same way Imre Nagy did.¹⁵⁰

“The Hungarian Revolution has blazed a trail which sooner or later other Communist countries must follow. The wound which the Hungarian Revolution has inflicted on Communism can never be healed” Djilas stressed, and added at the end, that the Hungarian revolution represented the end of the Communist system since national Communism was “a phase in the evolution and withering away of contemporary Communism”.¹⁵¹ This text was also published in the London *Tribune*, and in Indian and German socialist papers.¹⁵² Nevertheless, Tito was in Yugoslavia this time and the second trial of Djilas began.

Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty broadcasted a roundtable about Djilas’s articles, with his short biographic sketch and with the emphasis on his career in the Communist movement, his opinion about the Hungarian revolution as the beginning of an end of communism and his

¹⁵⁰ Kovačević, Milovan Đilas i mađarska kriza, pp. 116-118.

¹⁵¹ OSA, HU OSA 300-8-3-8922, "Milovan Djilas [Đilas]", 20 November 1956, p.1-2, [electronic source] <http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:763778b4-53d4-470d-ac97-90c9ba449184> (accessed on 1st of May 2016).

¹⁵² OSA, HU OSA 300-80-8, box 10, Milovan Djilas 1954-1963 folder, Jennie Lee's article from Tribune, London, 28th of December 1956.

arrest.¹⁵³ Hence, he was an established figure of the communist critique even before *The New Class* was published.

Djilas was sentenced to three years in prison on 12th of December 1956 since he “slandered” Yugoslavia in his article in *The New Leader*. The court argued that he accused “Yugoslavia and its government before world public opinion of betraying national interests, of saying one thing while doing something else, thus deceiving their peoples and world public opinion.”¹⁵⁴

Djilas tried to defend himself as if to say that he was only criticizing and that he was no longer a communist but “what could be called a social-democrat with certain specific characteristics for the Yugoslav conditions.” However, the judge was steadfast:

It can be seen from what I have stated that it is not a question of severe criticism, as the accused would like to present it, because it is not possible to criticize by means of slanders but only by means of truth, and, according to the entire finding, the accused Djilas did not resort to truth in his statements and in his article.¹⁵⁵

The Yugoslav regime (again) carefully observed foreign newspapers and their writings about the Djilas case, with a special emphasis on socialist newspapers.¹⁵⁶ Apparently they did not want to worsen their relations, which were already very bad. Again the international pressure began from well-known socialist intellectuals, by signing petitions and public letters: Indian

¹⁵³ OSA, HU OSA 300-80-8, box 10, Milovan Djilas 1954-1963 folder, Daily broadcast content report from 28th of November 1956.

¹⁵⁴ OSA, HU OSA 300-8-3-8943, Additional Information on Djilas [Đilas] Trial", 17 December 1956, p. 1, [electronic source] <http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:e0580c6e-1c47-4210-b3c3-7211d790d77e> (accessed on 1st of May 2016).

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁵⁶ Kovačević, Milovan Đilas i mađarska kriza, p. 123.

socialist Jayaprakash Narayan, Raymond Aron, T. S. Eliot, Karl Jaspers, etc.¹⁵⁷ An open letter by Vladimir Dedijer was published in western media, since this was rejected by the Yugoslav press. Dedijer in the meantime reconciled with Tito and parted with Djilas. However, he protested because of the trial and demanded that the Yugoslav public should be familiar with Djilas's opinions and hence, they should publish his views and comments.¹⁵⁸

Although the Yugoslavs tried to avoid a public dispute about Djilas with the socialists, this is exactly what happened. Jennie Lee, Bevan's wife, published a "first-hand information" article for the *Tribune* since she was in Belgrade during the trial.¹⁵⁹ Nevertheless, she was attacked by Belgrade's newspaper *Politika* [Politics].¹⁶⁰

After his imprisonment, Djilas became widely known in the West. However, the Yugoslav emigres disliked Djilas because of his revolutionary role. Ilija Šumenković, former politician in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and ambassador to Turkey (1939-1945), wrote an article for *Christian Democratic Review* on Djilas. He emphasized his shift from Stalinism towards democracy and his revolutionary role during World War II. He ended his article with a question:

Was it necessary to go through a Communist "revolution" which cost the Yugoslav people hundreds of thousands of victims; to suffer TITO's dictatorship, which has totally impoverished the country and crowded the prisons with hundreds of thousands of innocent people, - all this,

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ OSA, HU OSA 300-80-8, box 10, Milovan Djilas 1954-1963 folder, Jennie Lee's article, London, 28th of December 1956.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ OSA, HU OSA 300-8-3-8935, "Yugoslavia Blast British Labor Paper on Djilas" (background report), 29 December 1956, pp. 1-8, [electronic source] <http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:cd3b495c-f399-424a-9a61-3328decf2344> (accessed on 1st of May 2016).

only to arrive where, for instance, the British Laborites are – and to arrive there, as DJILAS has, without expressing any regret for all the evil he has committed?¹⁶¹

This is the first time that the emigres and the Yugoslav regime were singing the same song. They had a common interest in slandering Djilas; to discredit him. The only difference was that the Yugoslav regime did this systematically¹⁶², while the emigres could not forget the communist violence. They also started to realize that they were losing attention in the West. The media were asking Djilas for comments on Yugoslav events and not the emigres.¹⁶³

3. 4. The New Class

While Djilas was doing his time in prison his best known work, *The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System*, was published in the USA in 1957. However, the first big work written by Djilas was his memoir titled *Land Without Justice*, published in the USA in 1958. He tried to publish this book in Belgrade but was rejected by the *Srpska Književna Zadruga* in the summer of 1956. A few days after the rejection, he started writing *The New Class*, which he finished in November the same year.¹⁶⁴ The first half of the text was smuggled from Belgrade with the help of Catherine Clark, Ed Clark's¹⁶⁵ wife. The other half was sent by Štefica, when Djilas was already in prison.

¹⁶¹ OSA, HU OSA 300-10-4, box 21, Đilas Milovan, 1956-1958 folder, Iliya Shoumenkovich, Djilas's break with communism, Christian Democratic Review, p. 8-9.

¹⁶² An example par excellence is a document from the late 1970s in which a whole plan was written how to show the “the real picture” of Milovan Djilas to the world, since he published his memoirs. See: AJ, fund Archive of the President of the Republic, II-4a, box 168, “An action program for presenting the real moral face of Milovan Djilas (top secret)”, p. 1-7.

¹⁶³ Goldstein, Povratak Milovana Đilasa u Hrvatsku, p. 28.

¹⁶⁴ Đilas, Vlast i pobuna, p. 303.

¹⁶⁵ Clarke worked as a correspondent for magazines *Time* and *Life*. See: Djokić, Britain and Dissent, p. 376.

Some parts of the book were already published in July 1957 in *Life* magazine and apparently also Radio Free Europe had an issue in its hands even before the book was published. When it was finally published in August the same year, all above mentioned facts became evidence for the Yugoslavs, that the chief propaganda actors in the West were using Djilas's "pamphlet" to harm socialism all over the world. So again a big Yugoslav anti-Djilas campaign started.¹⁶⁶

In the book Djilas argued that communism is a type of totalitarianism, which includes monopoly of "the new class" in: political power, capital ownership, and ideology. He claimed that the heroic period of communism had ended and that the epoch without genuine ideology was present. He recognized authority as the foundation of every communist system and its basic aim. "The thirst for power was insatiable and irresistible...Careerism, extravagance, and love of power are inevitable, and so is corruption."¹⁶⁷ The New Class was translated into more than sixty languages in three million issues including samizdat, and was placed in 1995 "among the one hundred books which have influenced Western public discourse since the Second World War by a group of experts at St. Anthony's College, Oxford."¹⁶⁸

Djilas's theoretical work is, according to the famous sociologist Ralf Dahrendorf, much different than Marx's. In his opinion, Djilas rejected bureaucracy as a "transitional stratum", as intelligentsia. On the contrary, he recognized the new class on the basis of collective ownership, and not private as Marx. He had numerous "followers", political thinkers, who were close to

¹⁶⁶ OSA, HU OSA 300-8-3-9014, "Yugoslav Cp Weekly Attacks Djilas' Book", 20 August 1957, p. 1-4, [electronic source] <http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:292df837-f1dd-4ed7-8abc-81304a97b75c> (accessed on 1st of May 2016).

¹⁶⁷ Dragović-Soso, *Saviours of the nation*, p. 18.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

Djilas's concepts. In the West Cornelius Castoriadis, Claude Lefort, etc., and in the East, Jacek Kuroń, Karol Modzelewski, Ota Šik, Michael Voslenski, George Konrád, Iván Szelényi etc.¹⁶⁹

The New Class was officially prohibited in Yugoslavia by the end of August while Radio Liberty at the same time started to transmit the text of the book in Russian "at very slow dictation speed to the Soviet Union. The hope is that Soviet listeners will transcribe the text and thus have the volume available in handwritten or typed manuscript form."¹⁷⁰ In the Open Society Archives, one can see that they used similarly prepared transmitted texts also for Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese services.¹⁷¹

Hence, it was surely used also for East European countries. This method was quite effective as we can see from an article written by a Chinese journalist, where it is stated: "Shortly after the appearance of *The New Class*, the counter-revolutionary clique of Taiwan immediately had it translated (into Chinese), with a preposterous statement in the foreword that 'the theoretical guidance given in *The New Class* will arouse the followers of the Communist world... to rise against the exploitation and oppression of the 'new class'".¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ Veljko Stanić, *Unutrašnji emigrant*, p. 219.

¹⁷⁰ OSA, HU OSA 300-80-8, box 10, Milovan Djilas 1954-1963 folder, "New book by Djilas banned by Belgrade", *The New York Times*, 6th of September 1957.

¹⁷¹ OSA, HU OSA 300-120-7, box 47, Djilas Milovan 1954-1971 folder, Special news analysis no. 32, Djilas: *The New Class* – Introduction (part one of seven), 26th of August 1957.

¹⁷² OSA, HU OSA 300-8-3-14214, "No Difference between Tito and Djilas [Dilas] Say Chinese", 27 November 1958, [electronic source] <http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:881eb4d3-7e07-41ea-afac-8496bf9b2e01> (accessed 1st of May 2016).

In Moscow, according to a Swedish correspondent, the big fuss regarding Djilas came by the end of September. They declared Djilas to be Trotsky's successor¹⁷³, although Djilas's *The New Class* opposed orthodox Trotskyism on the point of calling the Stalinist system state capitalist.¹⁷⁴ However, the situation was much more complicated in other East European countries.

¹⁷³ OSA, HU OSA 300-80-8, box 10, Milovan Djilas 1954-1963 folder, Djilas theories tested, September 1957, p. 1-2.

¹⁷⁴ Robert H. McNeal, "Trotskyist Interpretations of Stalinism", in *Stalinism: Essays in Historical Interpretation*, ed. Robert C. Trucker, (New York: Princeton University, 1977), p. 42.

4. Djilas and his influence in Eastern Europe

From the previous chapter it was visible what Djilas meant for the West. Hence, this chapter focuses on Djilas's role in Eastern Europe. The aim of this chapter is to determine how Djilas's ideas (especially *The New Class*) came to Eastern Europe and what kind of an influence he had on East European dissidents. I have limited myself to two particular examples. In Poland on Jacek Kuroń and Karol Modzelewski's *An Open Letter to the Party*¹⁷⁵ and in Hungary on George (György) Konrád and Iván Szelényi's *Intellectuals on the road to class power*.¹⁷⁶

I have limited myself to these two examples because of two reasons. Firstly, I have rejected some other examples where Djilas's influence is clear; the Russian example, since Djilas wrote a preface to Michael Voslensky's *Nomenklatura*.¹⁷⁷ Finally, I wanted to research those cases that were written in the Eastern part of the Iron Curtain. For an example: Voslensky lived in West Germany already for more than a decade before he published *Nomenklatura* in 1984. I have chosen two examples that are related in content but are very different regarding Djilas's influence. Kuroń and Modzelewski denied Djilas's influence in their text, while Konrád and Szelényi have never denied it. This chapter will prove that Djilas's concept of the new class had enormous influence on Eastern European intellectuals, when the latter wanted to research the main problems of their society and the communist system in which they were living with Djilas's concepts and critique.

¹⁷⁵ OSA, HU OSA 300-8-3-4590, "An Open Letter to the Party", 18 October 1966, [electronic source] <http://catalog.osaarchivum.org/catalog/osa:e45294d5-fa43-45b1-8640-ac35945e0dce>, (last accessed on 17th of May 2016).

¹⁷⁶ George Konrád and Iván Szelényi, *Intellectuals on the Road to Class power*, (New York/London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979).

¹⁷⁷ Michael Voslensky, *Nomenklatura: the Soviet ruling class*, (Garden City, N.Y. : Doubleday, 1984).

4. 1. *Translating Djilas into East European languages*

Bayard Rustin, famous American human rights activist, stated in 1968, when Djilas received the Freedom Award from the Freedom House in USA:

Now, I do not suggest that Mr. Djilas alone “caused” the East German General Strike in 1953, or the Hungarian and Polish October of 1956. He is not the only reason why Czechoslovakia made its great lunge for freedom in 1968. But if Mr. Djilas was not the sole cause of these movements, he was that movement’s first brave voice. And more than that, there are these moments in history when masses wait until the first man is courageous and then the few follow, and finally the many. In Eastern Europe the revolution for freedom happened first with Milovan Djilas.¹⁷⁸

Although I am convinced that Djilas did not have an influence on Berlin’s events in 1953, or Hungarian and Poland 1956, his influence started with a CIA funded secret book exchange program. The latter started operating in summer 1956 until 1991. Although the precise number of books delivered to the East cannot be given, scholars estimate that we can talk about ten million.¹⁷⁹

In the first three months of the program they delivered, mainly to Poland, around 42 titles and 21,488 messages,¹⁸⁰ which included 300 copies of George Orwell’s *1984*, a hundred copies of *Opium of the Intellectuals* by Raymond Aron, but also Djilas’s article *Communism in Crisis*, which was mentioned in the previous chapter. Interestingly, one of the articles sent was also by

¹⁷⁸ Freedom House Archives, MC#187, Box 118, Folder 3, 29th Anniversary/Freedom Award: Djilas, Milovan, 1968 Oct-Nov, Remarks by Bayard Rustin (Speech at the Freedom House Dinner on 9th of December 1968), p. 3.

¹⁷⁹ Mark Kramer, “Introduction: Book Distribution as Political Warfare”, in Alfred A. Reisch, *Hot books in the Cold War: the West's CIA-funded secret book distribution program behind the Iron Curtain*, (Budapest/New York: CEU Press, 2013), p. XI.

¹⁸⁰ From the literature it is not clearly understandable what these messages represent, but probably the author meant articles, pamphlets, short texts etc.

Edvard Kardelj.¹⁸¹ Hence, they were sending any kind of material that would have had an influence on the destabilization of the communist regime. The translation was financed from the Free Europe Press. In the case of *The New Class*, they translated it into Bulgarian, Czech, Hungarian, Polish, and Romanian already in 1957, when it was also officially published in English. They printed 11,000 copies.¹⁸²

In the first three years of the book program, the strictest censorship was introduced in the Czechoslovak Republic, where the program also got a wide counter attack media coverage unlike in other socialist countries. Approximately only 10% of books were reported to be successfully delivered in Czechoslovakia. In their media Djilas's book was attacked as well as by some of the high Party officials. Books, including *The New Class*, could get more freely into the country later in the mid-sixties and even after the Prague spring in 1968.¹⁸³ *The New Class* was translated into Czech and published in Lund (Sweden) in cooperation of the RFE and Czech emigration, especially Robert Vlach, who was working as a lector at Lund University and was editing a collection of Czech literature editions named *Sklizeň svobodné tvorby* (Harvest of the Free Creating).¹⁸⁴

For Hungary the first confirmation on receiving Djilas's translated book came only in April 1959. In the early 1960s the Hungarian regime authorized the National Széchényi Library to

¹⁸¹ Alfred A. Reisch, *Hot books in the Cold War: the West's CIA-funded secret book distribution program behind the Iron Curtain*, (Budapest/New York: CEU Press, 2013), p. 27.

¹⁸² Ibid., p. 96; Friederike Kind-Kovacs, "Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty", in *Samizdat, tamizdat and beyond: transnational media during and after socialism*, ed. Friederike Kind-Kovacs and Jessie Labov, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), p. 74.

¹⁸³ Reisch, *Hot books*, pp. 46, 135, 181, 212.

¹⁸⁴ Michal Příbáň, "SKLIZEŇ SVOBODNÉ TVORBY", *Slovník české literatury po roce 1945* [Dictionary of the Czech literature after 1945], <http://www.slovníkeskeliteratury.cz/showContent.jsp?docId=1707>, (last accessed on 17th of May 2016).

deposit some books from the West in the “restricted section”, for “closed circulation”. On the list one can find also 310 copies of *The New Class*.¹⁸⁵ Under specific conditions, one could read the book in the library. Other socialist countries followed the Hungarian example as we will see later in the case of Adam Michnik in Poland.

4. 2. Djilas and Poland

The Polish example is the most interesting, since it is very different from other cases. Polish emigration in Paris and London had a distinct interest in Milovan Djilas already from the early 1950s since they thought that the Yugoslav criticism of Stalinism was reliable. Once *The New Class* was published the circle gathered around the Paris magazine *Kultura* [Culture], wished to translate the book. However, they wanted to avoid any financial connections with the “ideological” RFE. Hence, they bought copyrights directly from the publisher *Praeger* (ironically the latter was also connected to the CIA) and added a preface to the book which had a title: *New Class of exploiters (an analysis of the communist system)* and which was printed in 1000 copies.¹⁸⁶

Although people at *Kultura* thought that they had exclusive copyrights to the book, this was not the case, since *Praeger* also sold copyrights to the Journalist Association of the Republic of Poland in the USA. *Kultura* accused the syndicate in one of their editions that the Journalist Association does not know what to do with the money from RFE, since the copyrights were with *Kultura*. Nevertheless, the syndicate’s translation was better and it also had an original

¹⁸⁵ Reisch, *Hot books*, pp. 135 and 211.

¹⁸⁶ Stys, *Milovan Đilas i Polska*, pp. 63-65.

title. Thus, this edition was used by the RFE, although the *Kultura* edition was more widely known in Poland. However, none of the publishers earned significant amounts of money from the book.¹⁸⁷

Djilas's concept of the new class was very interesting for Polish intellectuals. Marxist revisionism¹⁸⁸ that started after Stalin's death had the most significant impact exactly in Poland, where the leading figure was a young philosopher from the University of Warsaw, Leszek Kołakowski. This revisionism achieved some changes; Gomułka became the general secretary in 1956. However, already in May 1957 Gomułka attacked revisionists as "bourgeois democrats" etc. at the CC's plenum. The confrontation and pressures followed with journalists and intellectuals. Nonetheless, people like Kołakowski still believed that "the achievement of democracy ought to be the chief goal of the Party".¹⁸⁹ Nevertheless, the pressures escalated in 1958-1959 into the first political trial for spreading "hostile information", since the accused Anna Sarzyńska-Rewska hawked the *Kultura* from Paris. This was a shock for intellectuals since *Kultura* could be read also in public libraries.¹⁹⁰ Rewska was also distributing Djilas's *The New Class*. Thus, when she was arrested in January 1958 State Security agents also confiscated these copies.¹⁹¹

Nonetheless, the new class concept has deeper history in Poland and it dates to 1953, when Stanisław Manturzewski and Jan Józef Lipski developed their new class concept in a secret

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., pp. 65-66.

¹⁸⁸ More about Marxist revisionism in East-Central Europe see: Kopeček, *Socialist Democracy or Revolutionary Consciousness?*, p. 3-6.

¹⁸⁹ Peter Raina, *Political opposition in Poland*, pp. 58-59.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 64-65.

¹⁹¹ Stys, *Milovan Đilas i Polska*, p. 75.

intellectual club.¹⁹² They were under great influence from Czesław Czapów, who in June 1956 re-popularized their concept inside an intellectual club called the Crooked Circle (named after a small street near the Old City Market Square in Warsaw). Members of the Crooked Circle were also active in the weekly *Po prostu*.¹⁹³ The latter published very “fascinating and lively” readings, since the editor-in-chief, Eligiusz Lasota, believed that Marxism should be subjected “to the same methods of scientific scrutiny and verification as any other intellectual discipline. One must continually check it against the facts, be prepared for revisions and further corrections.”¹⁹⁴ Hence, the publication was abolished in June 1957 although *Po prostu* became the most popular magazine in the country. It had a circulation of 150,000 and after the banning the price on the black-market reached 150 zloty per copy (equal to 20kg of sugar).¹⁹⁵

To these new class ideas, we can also add a Polish socialist, Zygmunt Zaremba, an important politician during the interwar period, who published *The birth of the ruling class in ZRRR* in 1958 in Paris. However, already a year earlier Stanisław Ossowski published a book that had, according to communist newspapers, new theory about the new class. The book was titled *The class structure and the public consciousness*.¹⁹⁶

Nevertheless, the greatest impact on Polish intellectuals happened with the “arrival” of Djilas’s book. The latter arrived via post, on a person-person basis when someone visited western countries or it was smuggled by Polish sailors. Although there were also individuals who did

¹⁹² Ibid., 74.

¹⁹³ Jan Jozef Lipski, *KOR: Komitet Obrony Robotników, Komitet Samoobrony Społecznej* [KOR: The Workers' Defense Committee, the Social Self-Defense Committee], (London: Aneks, 1983), p. 16.

¹⁹⁴ Raina, Political opposition, p. 58.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁹⁶ Stys, Milovan Đilas i Polska, p. 75.

not want to take Djilas's book to Poland, since it was "too political".¹⁹⁷ These books were accessible in Poland in so-called "mobile libraries". Such libraries were located in Warsaw, Cracow and Lodz. However, as one individual recalled: "the most popular sources are the antique and second-hand book stores and 'bric-a-brac' shops where copies of Djilas, Anders, Miłosz... can be obtained...- Dr. Zhivago was the title of the most sought after book in these shops a month ago. Of course the transactions are made illegally 'under the counter'".¹⁹⁸

These books were read with passion. Alfred Reisch collected some accounts from April 1959:

A student from Łódź, who received books by Djilas, Miłosz, and Orwell, wrote: 'I have brought the books home without difficulty. We are swallowing them passionately – strictly speaking they are being passed from hand to hand. They are treated as greatest rarities – in other words the best of bestsellers!' A student from Szczecin, who received works by Djilas, Miłosz, and Anders, said: 'Once again many thanks for all [the] books. I had no trouble bringing them home. They are moving around with cosmic speed [...]' /.../ A student from Wieliczka near Krakow, who got books by Djilas, Korboński, and Bór-Komorowski, wrote: '[...] all books which you have given me were safely brought into the country without any trouble. I must say – they are real smashers! All my friends are killing themselves to borrow and read. And those who read them are damn pleased [...]'.¹⁹⁹

Another option to read these books was the National library. In the beginning of the 1960s Adam Michnik, from the end of 1960s onwards one of the most visible individuals of the opposition, read the "prohibited" literature including the one from the Polish emigration, of course also *The New Class*, in the National library as a high schooler. The literature was

¹⁹⁷ Reisch, Hot books, p. 245.

¹⁹⁸ Kind-Kovacs, Radio Free Europe, p. 76.

¹⁹⁹ Reisch, Hot books, p. 250.

allowed to be read on the spot only. However, as Michnik recalled years later, through these readings he got a pretty good picture of the Soviet communism.²⁰⁰

4. 3. Kuroń and Modzelewski's Open letter to the Party

Around the same time, when Michnik read these books in the library, young intellectuals such as Jacek Kuroń, Karol Modzelewski, Stanisław Gomulka etc., read “prohibited books” and discussed them in a debate club, which they organized at the University of Warsaw. The books that were discussed included classics such as Lenin and Marx, but also Trotsky and Djilas. From the secret police documents it is also visible that Modzelewski and Stanisław Gomulka were selling copies of prohibited books to students, including *The New Class*. Although Kuroń and Modzelewski admitted (Modzelewski at the trial in 1965 and Kuroń years later) that they had read Djilas's book, they denied any connections to Djilas's ideas.²⁰¹

Nonetheless, this is far from the truth, since their text included similar if not even identical critiques as Djilas's. During the summer of 1964, Kuroń and Modzelewski wrote a draft of their dissertation, which analyzed the economic, political and social structure of the Polish system. They shared the draft with other scholars from the University of Warsaw (Departments of History, Economics, Philosophy etc.), since they also worked at the mentioned institution.²⁰² Hence, the document was circulated at the University. One of the copies got into the hands of the police, which led to their arrest on 14th of November 1964. Although they were released 48 hours later, they were expelled from the Party by the end of the month. Since the decision of

²⁰⁰ Stys, *Milovan Đilas i Polska*, p. 76.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 75-55.

²⁰² Falk, *The dilemmas of dissidence*, p. 186.

their expulsion was taken at the University, they wanted to inform their members about the content. “We consider”, they stated, “it necessary to inform the members of the Party and of the ZMS [Union of Socialist Youth] at the University of Warsaw about our real views and about the political attitude deriving from them by the only method accessible to us, i. e., in an open letter.”²⁰³

They were again arrested in March 1965 but now also trialed. The *Open letter* was then published abroad in Paris titled *List otwarty do Partii* (Open letter to the Party) in 1966. The text was also translated and published in various languages (English, German, French, Italian), since it was taken as a credo by the International Socialists.²⁰⁴ In the meantime, by the end of 1964, Kuroń declared himself a Trotskyist; he called for economic self-management and argued for the need of a genuine social movement. He praised how Trotsky’s predictions came to be true and how Djilas’s book is only a “poor reflection”.²⁰⁵

This is why Falk describes the *Open letter* as

a classically Trotskyist critique of authoritarian communism – as statist, anti-democratic, hierarchical, bureaucratic, and responsible for generating contradictions in production and social relations. All political decisions were made undemocratically by a narrow elite possessing monolithic and monopolistic control; counter-organization or opinion and the creation of political alternative were strictly prohibited.²⁰⁶

²⁰³ Raina, Political opposition in Poland, p. 83.

²⁰⁴ Falk, The dilemmas of dissidence, p. 184.

²⁰⁵ Stys, Milovan Đilas i Polska, p. 77.

²⁰⁶ Falk, The dilemmas of dissidence, p. 184-185.

However, the situation is more complicated, since others, like Zuzowski, claim that the critique comes in fact from Djilas and not from Trotsky:

The analysis [in the Open letter] was done from a leftist, essentially Marxist, perspective. Although Milovan Djilas, the Yugoslavian politician turned dissident, was not mentioned even once, the discussion of the communist regime's performance and the author's conclusion concerning who, in fact, ruled the state did not substantially differ from the conclusion arrived at in Djilas's well-known book, *The New Class*.²⁰⁷

One can hardly tell who inspired Kuroń and Modzelewski more. However, it can be claimed that they were using Djilas's concept of the new class. Although they were calling the ruling elite a "central political bureaucracy", they clearly stated that it is a "ruling class" and a "bureaucratic class".²⁰⁸ Hence, they have taken Djilas's theory that bureaucracy has turned into a class for granted, not using Trotsky's term "caste". This was also noticed by Ross Johnson, an analyst at the Radio Free Europe.²⁰⁹

There are also other arguments that are leaning the scale towards Djilas. In December 1964, Michnik asked Modzelewski at the plenum of the Union of Socialist Youth where the difference was between their text and Djilas's book. Modzelewski answered that Djilas wrote in a purely theoretical manner, while they were backing up their analysis with data and specific cases. He added that Djilas was criticizing from the right, while they were coming from the left.

²⁰⁷ Robert Zuzowski, *Political dissent and opposition in Poland: the Worker's Defense Committee "KOR"*, (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1992), p. 35.

²⁰⁸ OSA, HU OSA 300-8-3-4590, "An Open Letter to the Party", 18 October 1966, [electronic source] <http://catalog.osaarchivum.org/catalog/osa:e45294d5-fa43-45b1-8640-ac35945e0dce>, (last accessed on 17th of May 2016), p. 19-20.

²⁰⁹ OSA, HU OSA 300-8-3-4593, Ross Johnson, "Kuroń and Modzelewski's 'Open Letter to the Party'", 16 November 1966, [electronic source], <http://catalog.osaarchivum.org/catalog/osa:67e411f1-4d4a-482d-bca8-7a5e7b1f3001>, (last accessed on 20th of May 2016), p. 7.

Nevertheless, the Polish communist party and the state prosecutor both used associations to Djilas when they were accusing Kuroń and Modzelewski of anti-Party tendencies.²¹⁰

Additionally, during the trial the State attorney tried to link both of the defendants with Djilas, who was a “widely known anti-communist” and “a traitor financed by the West”. Because of this, they both tried to distance themselves from Djilas as much as they could. Kuroń stated that he was not inspired by Djilas, since the latter rejected Marxism, while he did not. However, from an interrogation of Jozef Snieciński, a member of a Maoist group, we know that Djilas indirectly influenced Kuroń. Modzelewski was less convincing than Kuroń, since he stated at first that he was offended, when he heard slanders during his arrest that the *Open letter* was a mixture of Djilas’s theses and Radio Free Europe. At the end, as already mentioned, he admitted reading *The New Class* but could not remember any details.²¹¹

From this point of view it is understandable why they wanted to distance themselves away from any relations with Djilas. In the eyes of the Polish Party Djilas was a heretic. Even Gomułka himself, said to Jennie Lee and Bevan during their visit in September 1957, that Djilas is a troublemaker, not an honest man and that he had joined the ranks of an “extreme reaction”.²¹²

However, the biggest stumbling block for the Polish Party was Kuroń and Modzelewski’s call towards anti-bureaucratic revolution. The revolution is inevitable and the working class should take over the power from the bureaucracy they stated in the *Open letter*. Thus, they were advocating for a true proletarian revolution. This, nonetheless, did not mean that the revolution

²¹⁰ Stys, *Milovan Đilas i Polska*, p. 77-78.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 79.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 60.

had to be made with arms: “Revolution is the act of an enormous majority of society directed against the rule of the minority. It is accompanied by a crisis of political power and by a weakening of the apparatus of coercion. That is why it does not have to be carried out by force of arms.”²¹³ Nonetheless, they were sentenced; Modzelewski to three years and six months in prison, while Kuroń received three.²¹⁴ The importance of the Open letter was recognized also by Adam Michnik during his trial²¹⁵ in January 1969:

...I have always valued the open letter very highly, that I view it as an important historical document – since this declaration of faith by Modzelewski and Kuroń is the first attempt in the Polish language to formulate the most basic problems concerning those societies which we call societies building socialism. As a document, the Open letter, like Djilas’s book, may offer a starting point for new research in the field of the social sciences.²¹⁶

4. 4. Intellectuals on the road to class power

Hungarian communism was after 1956 quite different in comparison to other Eastern European countries due to the pragmatism of Hungary’s leader, János Kádár, whose ruling period is known as “soft” or so called goulash communism. He “legitimized his rule not through a new political approach but by the absence of one – by removing politics and the obtrusive nature of the party from people’s daily lives, the perception of liberal and open society could be cultivated.”²¹⁷ Kádár’s regime had also a peculiar attitude towards intellectuals. One could first

²¹³ Raina, *Political opposition in Poland*, p. 86.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

²¹⁵ Michnik was trialed since he helped organized protests in 1968 against the prohibition of a play *Forefathers Eve* written by famous Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz. The play was anti-Russian. He was sentenced to three years in prison, since he, according to the prosecutor, was a part of an organization that wanted to overthrow the state. See: Jonathan Schell, “Introduction”, in: Adam Michnik, *Letters from prison and other essays*, (LA: University of California Press, 1985), p. xx.

²¹⁶ Raina, *Political opposition in Poland*, p. 188.

²¹⁷ Falk, *The dilemmas of dissidence*, p. 113.

suffer to be then promoted; something similar to what Mihiz described in his own example about his strange career in Yugoslavia after WW II. The Hungarian regime, hence, according to János Kis, allowed “people to discover the cracks and side doors in the wall of official regulation, since it did not have to fear that those who circumvented them would attempt to secure their position with demands of rights.”²¹⁸

In order to explain what has happened in Hungary after 1956, two intellectuals, writer, George Konrád, and sociologist, Iván Szelényi, decided to write an “Eastern European sociological essay” titled *Intellectuals on the Road to class power*. They wrote the essay between December 1973 and September 1974 in a small village called Csobánka near Budapest, where they had their “hidden place” in a cottage, since they were afraid that they were being watched by the secret police. The aim of the text was to “set down our own theoretical explanation of the class structure of state socialism.”²¹⁹ However, they also wanted to draw a special distinction between intellectuals and bureaucratic elite – the new class. They were convinced that differences between intellectuals and bureaucrats were disappearing.

Nevertheless, we contested that these conflicts are dying down and are, increasingly, secondary to conflicts between the working class and a new class of intellectuals, of which the bureaucracy form a part. In other words, if there is a new dominant class in Eastern Europe it has been composed, since the sixties at least, of the intelligentsia as a whole rather than just the bureaucracy narrowly defined. Djilas’s theory of the “new class” served in its time to give many valuable insights into the social structure of Stalinism. We hope that our study will prove thought-provoking for those who are concerned with post-Stalinist Eastern Europe. Thus, without rejecting earlier theories, we have tried to place them in the historical context from which they sprang and to go on from there, building on them in the course of developing our own analysis.²²⁰

²¹⁸ Ibid., p. 112.

²¹⁹ Konrád and Szelényi, *Intellectuals*, p. XIV.

²²⁰ Ibid., pp. XIV-XV.

Thus, one can see already from their preface that Djilas influenced their text. However, it is not really clear which parts they took from him while they wrote the *Intellectuals*. Hence we must look at Szelényi's texts²²¹ from the 1980s to determine where the main differences between two texts are. Only three years after the book *Intellectuals* was published in English, Szelényi argued in his article that he cannot agree with Djilas about calling the party and state apparatus "new class". Although he liked Djilas's concept, because it was tied to the "historical realities of Eastern Europe" and not to a general theory, he argued that the intelligentsia had a more clear class structure than the wide Djilas's new class.²²²

By the end of the 1980s Szelényi even more elaborated Djilas's role in their writings:

We liked the Djilas book and believed that he had done an outstanding job in offering a critical theory of the social structure of Stalinist society. Our relatively minor disagreements with him mainly concerned terminological issues. It was a debate between professional sociologists – us – who wanted to use sociological concepts, particularly the concept of class, with precision, and a philosopher-ideologue – Djilas – who may have cared less about terminological traditions. We did accept Djilas's central substantive claim that the bureaucracy dominated Soviet-type societies under Stalinism. But we were reluctant to use the term class to describe the structural position of this bureaucracy; in our view, it was "archaic", too "Asiatic", to deserve that label. /.../ We also believed that Djilas's analysis deserved a major revision. He wrote the book on the Stalinist epoch; our ambition was to write the book on the post-Stalinist form of state socialism. Djilas was right during the 1940s and early 1950s, East European societies were dominated by a bureaucratic order.²²³

²²¹ Szelényi left Hungary after the affair with the *Intellectuals*, since the essay became known to the Hungarian regime. He worked in academia in Australia, USA etc. Because of this, one can focus on his published articles. Konrád, however, decided to stay in Hungary, where he continued writing.

²²² Iván Szelényi, "The Intelligentsia in the Class Structure of State-Socialist Societies". in *American journal of Sociology* (Supplement: Marxist Inquiries: Studies of Labor, Class, and States) 88 (1982): pp. 288, 296, 324.

²²³ Iván Szelényi, "The Prospects and Limits of the East European New Class Project: An Auto-critical Reflection on The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power", in *Politics & Society* 15/2 (1987): pp. 105-106.

Thus, they were agreeing with Djilas's theory accept that they did not want to call the ruling elite a class and that they thought that it is applicable only for the period of communism during the last two decades of Stalin's rule. Nonetheless, the development of communism in East European states in the 1980s drove Szelényi to the conclusion that the intellectuals were even further away in 1986 to becoming a dominant class than they were when he and Konrád wrote the book. As he stated: "The intelligentsia did not merge with the bureaucracy. The theory of Djilas still has a lot to offer, even in 1986 to analysts of East European social structure."²²⁴ However, only a year later Szelényi concluded that Djilas was in fact right, when he called the bureaucracy a new class: "It might be that Djilas after all, in the whole of new Class literature, may have had the most convincing case. The Soviet-type bureaucracy undoubtedly succeeded in creating a new "structural position" in the system of bureaucratic planning upon which a new class formation appears to be quite plausible."²²⁵

Nevertheless, returning to the *Intellectuals*, the above mentioned concepts were not the only ones which Hungarians "borrowed" from Djilas. The critique of the Party's monopoly, Party's *modus operandi*, Party's hierarchy etc. was very similar to Djilas's criticism. Furthermore, Konrád and Szelényi included also a moral critique, which could be inspired by Djilas. They were describing "buying women" for the ruling elite through the allocation of an apartment, giving themselves gifts, accepting bribes,²²⁶ driving around in black limousines²²⁷ and how the Politburo is a closed circle that is working and "hanging out" only with its members.²²⁸

²²⁴ Ibid., p. 116.

²²⁵ Iván Szelényi, "The Three Waves of New Class theories", in *Theory and Society* (Special Issue on Breaking Boundaries: Social Theory and the Sixties) 17/5 (1988): p. 659.

²²⁶ Konrád and Szelényi, *Intellectuals*, p. 172.

At the end of this chapter one can conclude that Djilas had a huge influence on East European dissidents. If one was an intellectual he had to read his book. The latter was translated and transported to East European countries with the financial support of the CIA through institutions like Radio Free Europe and Free Europe Press, although as we saw in the Polish example this was not always the case. Djilas's theory of the new class inspired East European intellectuals to make their own research in which they would rely on his concepts. Since Djilas was labeled by the communist regimes a heretic, they tried to avoid any kind of connections with him and even denied his influence as we saw in the example of Kuroń and Modzelewski. On the other hand, there were also scholars like Konrád and Szelényi who openly mentioned Djilas's influence and were not afraid to admit it.

²²⁷ Ibid., p. 205.

²²⁸ Ibid., p. 208.

5. Conclusions

Undoubtedly the Tito-Stalin split was a turning point in the Yugoslav ideology. The Yugoslav de-Stalinization process led by Milovan Djilas ended with Stalin's death, something Djilas could not accept. From the thesis it is obvious that he really believed in the new democratic path, which led also to closer ties with European Socialists. With the latter Djilas, as a special Yugoslav (even Tito's) representative, made close ties which came in handy after his downfall, since they created pressure on the Yugoslav regime regarding Djilas's fate. Furthermore it is visible that Djilas was a Marxist revisionist, who was not against the Party *per se*, since he only wanted to reform it along with the Yugoslav country. However, he was against everything Stalinist in the Party. He was sincerely naïve in his political theories that this process of democratization could be done relatively quickly if only the working masses would accept democracy as their goal.

With his series of articles in *Borba* Djilas pushed the boundaries of public socialist critique. For the first time, probably in all communist history, a high ranking communist was advocating equality under the rule of law; that the laws should be equal for all citizens, also for the bourgeoisie. With Djilas, as the president of the federal Assembly, new working methods would probably be imposed. No more secret decision making behind the closed doors of the Party meetings but in public inside of the People's Assembly. The media would have more space for writing freely. He was also advocating for the withering away process, which would lead towards the abolishment of the Party; no more political monopoly. Because of his critique and of the published *Anatomy* his fate was sealed.

After his downfall a couple of ambiguous months came. Djilas was until April 1954 acting still as a communist. Only when he saw no other options did he decide to leave the LCY and started looking for support from the West. His critiques led him in prison. However, this could not stop him, since his most famous book *The New Class* was published in August 1957, when he was still in prison. In *The New Class*, Djilas included his early critique, which was upgraded into the new class concept. With the help of Radio Free Europe and the CIA's secret book program his texts (first the article *Communism in Crisis* and later *The New Class*) became widely known to intellectuals in the Eastern Europe. They accepted his new class theory and included it in their own research or socialist critique as we saw on the Polish and Hungarian example.

Nevertheless, the research is still open for Djilas's influence regarding other books. For an example, his book *Conversations with Stalin*²²⁹ also got huge interest. On the one hand personal requests for this book are known,²³⁰ while on the other, 130 copies of *Conversations* were sent to East Germany as a part of the secret book program.²³¹ The influence of the latter has not yet been researched. Furthermore, as can be seen from the OSA's digital repository, the excerpts of *Conversations* were published in the Polish trade union Solidarity's newspaper in the 1980s. Hence, there are still a lot of research possibilities left, also for other Djilas's works like *The Unperfect Society*.²³² Nevertheless, the focus should not be only on Eastern Europe, but also on Asia and their communist movements, especially on China.²³³

²²⁹ Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962).

²³⁰ Reisch, *hot books*, p. 431.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

²³² Milovan Djilas, *The Unperfect Society: Beyond the New Class*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1969).

²³³ Aleksa Djilas claims in his latest interview that Chinese historians, his colleagues, told him, that Djilas was read in China by the opposition, intellectuals, high party officials and even Mao Zedong. See: Radmila Stanković,

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