

**Ending the Hungarian Revolution:
Imre Nagy and the Diplomatic Relations between
Yugoslavia, Hungary and the Soviet Union**

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Abstract

In this thesis, I analyze the diplomatic relations between Hungary, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union between 1945 and 1956, with a primary focus on the case of Imre Nagy's capture. I strive to give an answer on Yugoslav role in Nagy's arrest by arguing that Yugoslavs did not know that Nagy was going to be arrested by Soviet officials. This decade of relations was full of contradictions and risks in a foreign and domestic policy, in which socialist countries sought and struggled for a higher level of autonomy within the Eastern Bloc. While Yugoslavia succeeded in obtaining independence from the Soviet Union not long after the establishment of People's Democracies in Eastern Europe after the end of WWII during the Tito-Stalin split, other communist states, such as Hungary, obtained a higher level of autonomy much later, after Stalin's death during the liberalization processes in Eastern Bloc.

However, it was a question of how far that liberalization should be allowed. The Soviet leadership was unprepared to allow another Yugoslav example in the Eastern Bloc. For the Soviet allies, Yugoslav unique way of socialism was becoming more interesting, especially after the reconciliation processes between Moscow and Belgrade. Finally, the presence of old Stalinist elements in Eastern Bloc was still high. In this triangle, Nagy sought the chance to obtain higher autonomy status for Hungary, to develop reforms of communist system, and to implement eventual Yugoslav scenario of independence, which was unacceptable for the Soviets, their allies, as well as for Yugoslavia, who wanted to preserve communism in Europe and its status in international relations. The crisis that arose during Nagy's hiding in Yugoslav embassy reveals the background of these countries relations, in which Yugoslav role showed many struggles to maintain its achieved status on the one hand, and on the other, to keep good relations with the Soviet Union.

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This thesis is dedicated to my grandfathers and former officers of Yugoslav People's Army, Todor and Mile.

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Introduction

The period from 1945 to 1956 was filled with numerous contradictions and risks in Yugoslav and Hungarian foreign policy. Since the end of the World War II, Hungary and Yugoslavia were part of the Eastern Bloc and, therefore, under the influence of the Soviet Union. Communist regimes took power in both countries, in Yugoslavia immediately after the war and in Hungary two years later. Both countries remained under the strong influence of the Soviet regime, at least until the 1948 and the first division within the Cominform states, when Yugoslavia and the USSR broke their alliance. All agreements of mutual friendship and cooperation between Yugoslavia and all other countries of the Eastern Bloc, including the Soviet Union and Hungary, were canceled.

The death of Stalin in 1953 and visit of the new leader of the USSR, Nikita Khrushchev, to Belgrade in 1955 improved the Yugoslav-Soviet relations. Many other countries, including Hungary, again changed their behavior towards Yugoslavia, after which all Eastern European countries improved relations with official Belgrade, however, with different pace. In the case of Hungary, this path was twisted. Hungarian revolution against the communist regime and the Soviet Union occurred in 1956. This time, after much hesitation, Yugoslavia was with the Soviet Union by supporting intervention in Hungary. On the other hand, official Belgrade tried to help Imre Nagy, who was the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Hungary and the leader of Revolution 1956, to get the asylum and, eventually, to escape the country. That caused many implications and problems between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia as well as with the newly installed pro-soviet government in Hungary.

Many events occurred before and after the Soviet intervention. During these years the East tried to liberate itself from Stalin's legacy. Furthermore, liberalization of the East was omnipresent, yet limited. The main question among the leaders of the Eastern Bloc was how to limit this liberalization. Hungarian revolution was the real test for the Soviet regime and its role in Eastern Europe. The Soviets did not want to allow another Yugoslav scenario, hence, an intervention became reality. Before the intervention, Nikita Khrushchev visited all leaders of the Eastern Bloc, as well as the Yugoslav president Josip Broz Tito, to get advice and support for suppressing the Hungarian revolt. On the other hand, the Soviet leaders did not expect that Nagy would find a hideout in the Yugoslav embassy and that Yugoslavs were ready to give him a possible escape route. His capture was of vital importance for the new Hungarian government as well as for the Soviets since Nagy's presence endangered legitimacy of pro-Soviet regime. Therefore, Hungarian authorities guaranteed falsely safe passage to their homes to Nagy and his colleagues. Soviets acted quickly, and arrested Nagy. Yugoslavs officially protested against the Soviet action, stressing that Soviets made a mistake and that Yugoslavia was deceived.

Many questions arose from that day, and they are still without answer among contemporary historians. One of them is, did Yugoslavs know about Soviets plan to arrest Imre Nagy or alternatively, did Yugoslavia let him go intentionally to be captured by the Soviets? The contribution that I plan to achieve with my research and this master thesis is to give a possible answer to these questions mentioned above. The fact is that Nagy became the main problem for Yugoslav-Soviet relations, therefore, one could posit that Yugoslavia had reason to hand Nagy over to the Soviets. On the other hand, Yugoslavia was no longer a part of the Eastern Bloc, with numerous examples of good relations and many agreements with the West. Yugoslav officials wanted to help the former leader of Hungary to escape from his Homeland

and the Soviets. Furthermore, Yugoslav officials tried to help Nagy in reaching Yugoslavia, which would enable the continuation of the good relations between Yugoslavia and the Western powers. Hence, I would argue that Yugoslavs did not know that Nagy was going to be arrested by Soviet officials.

An analysis of diplomatic and political history is in the main focus of my thesis. I have worked with many official and unofficial documents from the period between 1945 and 1956, with particular reference to 1955/6. This decade is examined in order to get the complete picture of diplomatic relations among countries mentioned above. These documents are available in the Yugoslav Archive, as well as in some other Institutions, such as Open Society Archive in Budapest. Furthermore, in the book *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents*¹ more than 120 original documents are available, which give me an excellent basis for deep analysis of events that occurred before and after the Revolution. Memoirs are also consulted, such the writings of Tito's biographer Vladimir Dedijer,² and Khrushchev memoirs.³ The most significant memoirs come from the former Yugoslav ambassador in Moscow during the 1950s, Mr. Veljko Mićunović.⁴ His book covers the Hungarian revolution and all other events before and during this historical event.

The use of secondary literature from Hungarian, Soviet, and Yugoslav historiography gave me the full insight into different points of view about the main question of this master thesis and Nagy's capture. Literature that is directly connected to Hungarian Revolution could be found in the Journal of the Institute for Contemporary History, in which Đoko Tripković

¹ Csaba Békés, et.al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents*, (Budapest, New York: Central University Press, 2002)

² Vladimir Dedijer, *Izgubljena bitka Josifa Visarionoviča Staljina*, (Beograd: Rad, 1978)

³ Strobe Talbott, trans., ed., *Khrushchev Remembers*, (Boston, Toronto: Little Brown Company, 1974)

⁴ Veljko Mićunović, *Moskovske godine 1956-1958*, (Zagreb: SN Liber, 1977)

wrote an essay⁵ that deals with the question of the asylum of Nagy. Besides that, there are the writings of Victor Sebestyen in his book *Twelve days*.⁶ The book provides me with information about all important events during the Revolution, in which many new official and unofficial documents are incorporated, including his family diaries, and eye-witness testimony. Similar to that are the memoirs of Dobrica Ćosić, *Seven Days in Budapest*,⁷ in which Ćosić wrote about his personal experience and a description of the Budapest uprising of 1956. He was a witness of the Hungarian Revolution, and his writings could help me in a better understanding of the Yugoslav position during the whole crisis.

Indirect connection in the secondary literature can be found in the writings of Vladimir Petrović, who analyzes in his book⁸ the main and important events in Yugoslav diplomacy that occurred during Tito's rule in Yugoslavia. In this book, one could find not only personal comments and statements from the author, but as well as some of the primary sources and an excellent bibliography, which is useful for my research. Also, among the other secondary items literature, important are the writings of Laurien Crump,⁹ who provides me with valuable information about the 1956 and how Soviet leaders discuss the issue of Hungarian revolution with their allies within the Eastern Bloc.

This master thesis will be divided into several chapters. The first chapter will cover the interpretative framework of my research. I will try to explain how relations between the Soviet Union and its allies were not linear and simple, but rather complex, without which there would be no Hungarian Revolution or hesitation within Soviet leadership before intervention in

⁵ Đoko Tripković, "Jugoslavija i pitanje azila Imre Nađa", *Istorija 20. veka* 1 (1997)

⁶ Victor Sebestyen, *Twelve days*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2006)

⁷ Dobrica Ćosić, *7 dana u Budimpešti*, (Beograd: Nolit, 1957)

⁸ Vladimir Petrović, *Titova lična diplomatija*, (Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2010)

⁹ Laurien Crump, *The Warsaw Pact Reconsidered*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2015)

Hungary in 1956. Therefore, the nuanced understanding of the relations is required in order to better comprehend the Hungarian Revolution as well as Yugoslav role in Nagy's crisis. The second chapter examines the relations between 1945 and 1956, which represents the period that is filled with numerous contradictions and risks to Yugoslav, Soviet and Hungarian foreign policy, which left a mark on their relations before the most important event such as Hungarian Revolution 1956. The third chapter deals with 1956 in Eastern Europe including all events in Hungary before the Revolution that led to it later. This chapter will not only cover the events in Hungary but also how Soviet leaders responded to the changes in Hungary and how they thought and struggled with these changes before and during the Revolution. The fourth chapter closely exams the ending of the Hungarian Revolution as well as all events before Nagy's capture when he was hiding in the Yugoslav embassy including his arrest. His arrest will have the vital importance in my work since it deals mostly with my main hypothesis about Yugoslav role in his capture. The conclusion summarizes the master thesis and gives final remark on this interesting and turbulent period between East and the West.

Chapter 1: Interpretative Framework

The USSR had succeeded in turning various nations of Eastern Europe into one wider entity that was later called a "bloc", after which emerged the political, historical and non-geographical term of Eastern Europe.¹⁰ This part of Europe was also called a Soviet sphere of influence, in the aftermath of a famous 1946 speech of Winston Churchill, declaring the border between both blocs as an Iron Curtain, which emerged in Europe from Baltic to the Adriatic Sea.¹¹ The Soviet Union established different types of organizations, such as Cominform and Warsaw Pact, in order to strengthen the unity of communist bloc and its influence on communist leaders, as well as to counter US dominance in Western Europe including NATO threat since 1949. Intra-bloc relations depended on the level of autonomy of Eastern Bloc countries and the Soviet military presence in the region. Some leaders were highly popular within their own countries, such as Tito, who had a support of Yugoslav people after the war, mainly because the army that he led won the civil war and liberated the country from Nazi occupation. In all other countries, such as the case of Hungary, communist leaders sought the Soviet support in order to take and maintain power,¹² which decreased level of their autonomy and a chance for independent maneuvering possibilities in domestic or foreign policy.

1.1 Totalitarian Paradigm

Political constraints in Eastern Bloc, the ebbs and flows of autonomy for Soviet allies during the postwar, Cominform and Warsaw Pact eras, were differently highlighted and analyzed in historiography. The scope of this autonomy in old historiography approach was

¹⁰ Anne Applebaum, *Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe 1944-56*, (London: Penguin Books, 2012), xxvii.

¹¹ *ibid.*, xxi.

¹² *ibid.*, xxxiii.

rather seen as low and weak since political and military organizations on the Eastern side of the Iron Curtain were considered as a Soviet instrument of power "used to continue the total subordination of the smaller East European governments."¹³ This totalitarian school has one-sided treatment in historiography, by claiming that there were no restraints on Eastern European countries actions since there were no limits to Soviet power and its leaders in the Eastern Bloc. The Soviet Union was seen as a totalitarian state not only during the Stalin's era but also later, and as a country which exported totalitarian regimes, particularly in China's case during Mao's rule.¹⁴

Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski found five common patterns to all totalitarian states that suited Soviet Union case: a dominant ideology, a single ruling party, a secret police force prepared to use terror, a monopoly on information and planned economy.¹⁵ According to them, Soviet leadership focused on imposing a totalitarian regime on countries that they liberated from Nazi occupation. They maintained to "create societies where everything was within the state, nothing was outside the state, and nothing was against the state."¹⁶ Finally, Brzezinski claims that the Soviet Union strived to control exported totalitarian policy in Eastern Europe, by using several instruments. These were the Soviet ambassadors, army, secret police and direct and indirect consultations among leading party members or party apparatus.¹⁷ The goals of later established Cominform organization in 1947 were to control communist parties

¹³ Crump, *Warsaw Pact Reconsidered*, 1.

¹⁴ Applebaum, *Iron Curtain*, xxiv.

¹⁵ Carl J. Friedrich, Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy," (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1965), quoted in Applebaum, *Iron Curtain*, xxiv.

¹⁶ Applebaum, *Iron Curtain*, xxvi.

¹⁷ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict. Revised and Enlarged Edition*, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), 112-124.

and their leaders, and it presented "the beginnings of what is most satisfactorily identified as Stalinism - a period of total conformity in the relations among Communist states."¹⁸

Anne Applebaum mentions that the creation of Cominform was "an ambush, surprise assertion of Soviet power which sealed the fate of all present. Others have called it a turning point, the moment when the Soviet Union dropped its tolerance of Eastern Bloc pluralism."¹⁹ Later establishment of Warsaw Treaty Organization in 1955 was seen similar, since scholars such as Brzezinski claims that the political part of WTO was "useful forum for the articulation of unanimity, expressing ritualistically the Bloc's support of Soviet foreign policy initiatives versus the West."²⁰ Likewise, WTO gave a full army control to the Soviets, with one commander in chief, at least until 1961, after which some of the other non-Soviet generals took part in commanding military exercises.²¹ Although Brzezinski admits that Eastern European countries transformed themselves from satellites into junior allies after the creation of WTO,²² he does not recognize any of the significant changes in their level of autonomy from USSR.

1.2 Revisionist Paradigm

Quite opposite to totalitarian school is a reaction which gives a different view upon Eastern Europe after 1945 and particularly on Warsaw Treaty Organization. Reaction opposes totalitarian terms since political theorists claim that term "totalitarian" is useful only in theory as a negative concept against which West could define themselves.²³ The Soviet Union did succeed in shaping and establishing communist governments of the Eastern Bloc countries, yet

¹⁸ Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict*, 62.

¹⁹ Applebaum, *Iron Curtain*, 235.

²⁰ Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict*, 459.

²¹ *ibid.*

²² *ibid.*, 433-455.

²³ See more in Michael Halberstam, "Totalitarianism and the Modern Conception of Politics" *Political Theory* 26 (1998): 459-488.

it failed to maintain total control. In some cases, such as Yugoslav in 1948, or Hungarian in 1956, the Soviets had a decline of their power. Furthermore, the Soviet Union could not be analyzed the same before and after Stalin, since the Khrushchev era was named as a "thaw," or in other words "during which Khrushchev relaxed his grip on both Soviet society and Eastern Europe as a whole".²⁴ Finally, even if the Soviet Union tried to impose its direct control over its satellites, the Soviets were unable to make all decisions. For example, local police in Eastern European country could initiate terror on its citizens by orders of its supreme command or local government, without seeking consent from Moscow. Finally, revisionist historians argued that even Stalin's era had never been totalitarian at all and that the term "totalitarian" came to be overly ideological.²⁵

Warsaw Treaty Organization was reconsidered as well along similar lines. Lauren Crump claims that the WTO could be seen as more political than a military important alliance between Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union. Political part of WTO was institutionalized compared to military that was not. The political aspect of WTO represented a real multilateral forum that was unthinkable during the Stalin's era. Many countries such as Romania, Poland, and East Germany carefully used the opportunity in WTO for opening debates on various subjects in order to achieve their interests. In comparison to Cominform, "WTO served better its junior members than it did its Soviet hegemon."²⁶ Cominform was an organization of communist parties, and on the other hand, WTO served as an organization of states represented by their governments. WTO was not just an answer to NATO, but it represents the organization that fulfills the interests of all country members.²⁷ Intra-bloc

²⁴ Crump, *Warsaw Pact Reconsidered*, 18.

²⁵ Applebaum, *Iron Curtain*, xxiv-xxv.

²⁶ Crump, *Warsaw Pact Reconsidered*, XV.

²⁷ *ibid.*, 28.

relations among WTO states changed significantly in which the members of WTO gradually redefined the WTO by "asserting their own interests within the alliance and thus 'emancipating' themselves from the Soviet grip".²⁸

Totalitarian paradigm was useful and meaningful for the Western scholars in a time when it was created during the end of the 1940s and early 1950s, when the Cold War had started. On the other hand, the revisionism in literature is completely justified as it reflects the revision of the Stalinist legacy under Khrushchev regime. Although these models contradict one another, I plan to use both interpretations since my topic is on the intersection between the reforms and reactions in the Eastern Bloc. As it was mentioned earlier, the totalitarian school has a useful concept of Soviet instruments for taking control in Eastern Europe, which suits Hungarian case, and it can be shown on the rise of People's democracies after 1945. In Tito-Stalin split, both approaches are suitable since it demonstrated the lack of Soviet power to deal with Yugoslavia and, on the other hand, the strong Soviet influence in Hungary. Official Budapest was the most valuable Soviet ally against Yugoslavia, an ally that followed Soviet decisions and orders until Stalin's death. His death brings whole new perspective in analyzing Soviet influence in Eastern Europe. As it was written before, this period was called a "thaw," which brought new course for the Soviet Union as well as for other countries of the Eastern Bloc, after which many prominent leaders of the Eastern Bloc were able to return to the political scene, such as the case of Nagy.

By using interpretations of writings of revisionist historians, one should have a clearer image of how possible was for Eastern Bloc countries to change its autonomy and to become

²⁸ Crump, *Warsaw Pact Reconsidered*, 2-3.

junior allies instead of maintaining the status of satellite country. While satellite state would basically mean a low level of autonomy, with absolute dependence on senior ally and total obedience to its orders and decisions, junior ally in this sense should be marked as a country who is subordinate to senior ally, but with greater extent of autonomy, greater influence in bilateral relations as well as in organizations founded within an alliance and with a strong possibility to maintain its autonomous status. The relations between the Soviet Union and his allies after 1953 prove that change of autonomy status, which will be shown in my work through consequences of Yugoslav-Soviet reconciliation, in the case of Poland in 1956, and finally in Hungary in 1956, which almost led to Hungarian independence and complete failure of Soviet policy there. Moreover, during the Revolution, the Soviet Union did not make decisions without consulting with its allies, which shows different intra-bloc relations in comparison to Stalin's era. Likewise, the intervention in Hungary and Yugoslav involvement in ending the Hungarian Revolution could prove the reverse process, in which countries returned to more subordinate role in Eastern Bloc, even including Yugoslavia. In other words, the Soviet policy returned to old Stalinist approach in intra-bloc relations, which culminated in a Stalinist way of kidnapping and staged trial on Nagy's case.

Finally, Nagy's rise and fall should be better explained through the desire of Kremlin to change the course of Stalin's policy to more liberal one. However, it was a question of how far that liberalization should go and to what extent should be the autonomy of Soviet allies. In this thesis, Nagy's role should be observed from this point, mainly because he tried to use the liberalization and to copy Yugoslav case, which was unacceptable for Kremlin. Furthermore, Yugoslav role in this sense is also interesting. While Yugoslavia got an independent status through Tito-Stalin split, official Belgrade compromised it with its stance in Hungary and

during Nagy's crisis. Yugoslav role in Nagy's affair should be examined from this point, where maintaining a level of autonomy was of significant importance for Tito and his party colleagues, which predetermined the fate of Nagy. Yugoslav leadership strove to present its approach in Hungary as different from the Soviet one, by giving an asylum to Nagy and his group, which showed Yugoslav independence in making decisions in comparison to other socialist countries.

Chapter 2: The Relations between Yugoslavia, Hungary and the Soviet Union 1945 and 1956

2.1 The establishment of People's Democracies

As a result of the Second World War, and after the Yalta Peace Conference, Eastern European countries became part of the Soviet sphere of influence. The Soviet Union had the most significant role in defeating Nazi Germany and, therefore, it had a massive influence on ordinary people not only in the East but the West as well. A typical example of that is the strength of Communists parties in France and Italy after the war. However, the Soviets struggled to impose communist regime in Eastern Europe. This was the case of Communist Party in Hungary that was not heavily supported by its people compared to Yugoslav example. Yugoslav's partisans won the civil war, which resulted in much stronger support from the Yugoslav people after the war. In Hungary, communism depended on Soviet aid.

In the interwar period communist parties were abolished in many countries in the Eastern and Southeastern Europe, they had to work and act illegally, with the significant help of the USSR in the inter-war period. That was the case of Nagy, who lived in Moscow, where he was an editor and speaker of the *Kossuth radio*, a Soviet-sponsored Hungarian radio station.²⁹ After the German defeat, Hungarian communists finally returned to Hungary with the Soviets in order to take power in the country. However, Hungarian Communist Party had struggled to take power since they lost the first elections in 1945 to the Smallholders and Social Democrats.³⁰ The Soviet support was deemed as necessary and thanks to that support,

²⁹ Open Society Archives, HU OSA 300-40-5 Biographical Files, Archival Boxes # 131, *Speaker of Hungarian Parliament on Imre Nagy*

³⁰ Karl P. Benzinger, *Imre Nagy, Martyr of the Nation*, (New York: Lexington Books, 2008), 35.

communists took part in the post-war government and shared power with their opponents. The Soviets indeed used instruments mentioned by totalitarian historians for extending power in Hungary, since they helped Communist Party, and particularly Nagy, to make land reforms, and secondly, to eliminate the opponents of the Communist Party since Nagy was also a Minister of the Interior and the Police.³¹ However, Nagy was replaced soon from the latter position by Laszlo Rajk, who was more prepared for that position within the government.³² On the other hand, Nagy continued with his ideas for land reforms that were in favor of peasants, against the smallholders and largest landlords such as the Catholic Church.³³

Communist's plan was to overthrow Smallholders' and to reduce the influence of the Catholic Church. The plan was to accuse both of them of reactionary policy since many members of the government, as well as the Catholic Church, were associated with Miklós Horthy, a Hungarian leader during the war. Since Communists controlled the police apparatus from the beginning, they could order many attacks and arrests on those persons who were considered as reactionaries. Other tactics were practiced on the street. Communist Party tried to mobilize peasants and workers against the government, in which they had succeeded several times. For example, around 500.000 members from unions and worker's party marched against the "Reaction" during this period.³⁴

These actions resulted in the strengthening of the communists and dissolution of the Smallholders Party on the elections in 1947. The Communist Party was still in charge of the security forces while Nagy was elected as the Speaker of the National Assembly of Hungary.³⁵

³¹ Benzinger, *Imre Nagy*, 35.

³² Imre Nagy, *On Communism*, (New York, Frederick, A. Praeger, 1957), ix.

³³ Benzinger, *Imre Nagy*, 35.

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ *ibid.*, 39.

Furthermore, former Prime Minister Zoltán Tildy resigned from his position of President of Hungary and Árpád Szakasits from the Social Democratic party replaced him.³⁶ Since the new leader of the Social Democrats was for the unification with the communists, the last opponents of the Communist Party were removed. Hence, Hungary was ready for the one-party elections for the first time since 1945, which means that Communist took the full power in 1947.

When the national Communist parties took power, they presented a program of post-war reconstruction, agrarian reform, "democratization" of the political system and the transformation of the agricultural to the industrial social structure.³⁷ In other words, new communist countries established the Soviet concept of People's Democracies. That program followed the Soviet plans for mass collectivization and covered the national and rural questions since most of the Eastern European countries were more rural than urban societies. Low level of autonomy in Eastern Europe was not seen only in domestic, but also in foreign policy. The foreign policy of all Soviet allies in Eastern Bloc was similar. One of the first moves was the close cooperation between the Soviet Union and its political and military personnel that were sent from Moscow to Eastern European states. The next logical move was signing the agreements with the USSR. Yugoslavia signed many documents and contracts with the USSR in a very short time, and one of the most important was the "*Treaty of friendship, mutual assistance, and postwar cooperation between the USSR and Yugoslavia*". That agreement covered many aspects of the cultural, political and economical life of both countries in their cooperation.³⁸ The similar agreement was made between Hungary and the Soviet Union as well. However, there were differences between official Budapest and Belgrade, since Yugoslavia

³⁶ Benzinger, Imre Nagy, 39.

³⁷ Marija Obradović, "*Narodna demokratija*" u *Jugoslaviji: 1945-1952*, (Beograd: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 1995), 18.

³⁸ Ljubodrag Dimić, and Aleksandar Životić, *Napukli monolit: Jugoslavija i svet: 1942-1948*, (Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2012), 216.

unlike Hungary, was victorious in the Second World War. Furthermore, Yugoslavia had the revolution, modeling itself quickly along the Soviet lines, which was not yet the case in Hungary. Therefore, the level of autonomy between the countries was different even before Tito-Stalin split, and that would particularly be presented in Cominform during the split.

In order to control the communist parties, their leaders, as well as new emerged communist states, Stalin decided to found the coordination body Cominform in 1947 as the successor of the Comintern that was dissolved in 1943. Stalin's decision was followed by his desire to control other parties and its prominent members and to subordinate other more independent parties such as in Italy or France, by using loyal countries such as Yugoslavia. Moreover, his goal was to manage a foreign policy of his allies and to oversee their behavior in foreign relations.

Hence, Yugoslav and Hungarian foreign policy followed the Soviet one, which can be shown on another similar contract that was signed between Yugoslavia and Hungary - "*The Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance*" on the 8th of December 1947. This contract meant the joint development of economic, cultural and other aspects of cooperation between the two countries, which should be the basis for all other future contracts between Yugoslavia and Hungary.³⁹ Both countries signed this contract since it represented the highest level of cooperation between People's Democracies. This substantive agreement was followed by many other contracts, such as *Agreements on the Delivery of Industrial Goods to Yugoslavia* and the *Convention on Cultural Cooperation*. Also, there were two reciprocal visits of officials of two countries, which strengthen the cooperation. The first one was in Belgrade when Lajos Dinnyés arrived in 1947 to confirm two last agreements mentioned above and to invite the

³⁹ Murat Agović et. al., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije 1948 I tom*, (Beograd: Jugoslovenski pregled, 1989), 393-394.

Yugoslav Prime Minister Josip Broz Tito to visit Hungary. Tito's visit was a part of wider Yugoslav policy, which meant the strengthening of People's Democracies and cooperation within the Cominform.

One could conclude that Soviet policy of exporting communism by installing the concept of People's Democracies in the Eastern Europe had shown good results, since the foreign policy of the new communist states, such as the case of Yugoslavia and Hungary, followed it concept. Although, the control of Soviet allies was at high level, the first issue in the Eastern Bloc, such as Yugoslav-Soviet crisis, demonstrated the limits of Soviet power. However, it still did not show the ending of Stalinist policy in Eastern Europe, or the higher level of autonomy for Soviet allies, not until the death of Stalin in 1953.

2.2 Resolution of Cominform and potential invasion of Yugoslavia

The popularity of Yugoslav Communists, which they achieved in the first post-war years, created a certain fear for Soviet authorities that Belgrade could become to independent from Moscow. Moreover, the growth in popularity of Yugoslavia, because of the economic and military rapprochement of Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria, as well as the Yugoslav support for Greek Communists in the Greek civil war, resulted in a loss of the support of USSR and deterioration of relations between Belgrade and Moscow.⁴⁰ Also, one of the reasons for the split was Yugoslav differences with Joseph Stalin about the idea of the Balkan Federation between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria.⁴¹ Tito supported that unity, but later feared of it mainly because he concluded with his colleagues that the Bulgarian communists were under heavy influence of

⁴⁰ Marin-Žanin Čalić, *Istorija Jugoslavije u 20. veku*, (Beograd: Klio, 2013), 234-235

⁴¹ See in Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin*, (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962), 142-143, 174-183.

Moscow, which meant that Yugoslavia would be very dependent on Soviet policy.⁴² In the resolution that came on 28th of June 1948, Yugoslavia was accused of "hostile policy toward the Soviet Union, the discrediting of the Soviet Army, suppression of the class struggle in Yugoslav society, etc."⁴³ All members of Cominform on the meeting in Bucharest supported the document. From that moment, Yugoslavia stood alone against the East, without any ally on the other side of the Iron Curtain.

Almost immediately, the question of potential invasion of Yugoslavia appeared. Hungary even canceled the agreement on war reparations with Yugoslavia. Yugoslav elites tried to convince Hungary to continue with the contract, but without success. A good example how the USSR controlled and influenced Hungarian foreign policy comes from the words of Alfred Ofner, who was the President of the Hungarian Reparations Bureau. He said to the Yugoslav delegation that "payment in this situation does not depend on you or me, and neither on Rákosi. Hungarian further payments depend on the further development of relations between Yugoslavia and Hungary. Also, it is not just about the relationship between our countries..."⁴⁴ In other words, the USSR forced Hungary to cease agreements that existed with Yugoslavia, such as the case of war reparations.

Before the potential invasion, many Hungarian communists, as well as other Eastern Europeans,⁴⁵ were imprisoned and removed, since some of them did not approve the resolution against Yugoslavia. The most famous example of that is the case of László Rajk, who was the

⁴² Anatoly Anikeev, "The Idea for a Balkan Federation: The Civil War in Greece and Soviet-Yugoslav Conflict", in *The Balkans in the Cold War: Balkan federations, Cominform, Yugoslav-Soviet conflict* 2011, ed. Vojislav Pavlović, (Beograd: Institute for Balkan Studies of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 2011), 171-172.

⁴³ Branko Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije: 1918-1988. tom III*, (Beograd: Nolit, 1988), 212.

⁴⁴ Arhiv Jugoslavije, SKJ IX-75/III-32, *Obustava isporuka mađarskih reparacija*, 20. septembar 1948.

⁴⁵ Crump, *Warsaw Pact Reconsidered*, 24-29.

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Hungary.⁴⁶ He was one of the most popular politicians among the Hungarian communists and a direct threat to Rákosi's rule. He was accused for conspiracy with Yugoslavs against Rákosi and other prominent members of Hungarian communist elite.⁴⁷ He was sentenced to death alongside with Dr Tibor Szönyi and András Szalai. Some other party colleagues were silenced such as Nagy, who was criticized by the Party for his differences with Rákosi's policy of collectivization. Nagy had to self-criticize himself in order to retain his membership in the Party.⁴⁸ In the meantime, Soviet propaganda tried to turn the people of Hungary against Yugoslavia and to justify Rajk's and other murders and measures. The second resolution of Cominform against Yugoslavia was enacted in Budapest in 1949, in which Cominform called citizens of Yugoslavia to revolt against "Yugoslav's Communists murderers and spies" and to return Yugoslavia on to Lenin's path.⁴⁹ Since there was no positive response from Yugoslav people, the preparations for the eventual invasion were ready.

The plan to invade Yugoslavia did exist, and it was prepared between 1949 and 1951. Hungary had an excellent position for invasion since it had plain terrains and long border with Yugoslavia. General Béla Király, the commander of the Hungarian forces at that time, said that there were military plans that had predicted the invasion of the Hungarian army with other forces from the Soviet bloc.⁵⁰ However, Hungarian invasion of Yugoslavia, as a prequel for the Soviet invasion, was unrealistic. Hungary established their new army during the 1950s after they replaced some of the old army personnel. Therefore, Hungarian government tried to build

⁴⁶ Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict*, 113.

⁴⁷ Ivan Ivanji, *Mađarska revolucija 1956*, (Beograd: Samizdat B92, 2007), 55.

⁴⁸ Open Society Archives, HU OSA 300-40-2 Hungarian Unit, Subject Files in English, Archival boxes #85, *Imre Nagy and the 1956 Revolution*, Radio Free Europe

⁴⁹ Arhiv Jugoslavije, TANJUG, *Crveni bilten*, 112/53, 2. decembar 1949.

⁵⁰ See more in Bela Kiraly, "The Aborted Soviet Military Plans against Tito's Yugoslavia," in *At the Brink of War and Peace: The Tito-Stalin Split in Historic Perspective*, ed. Wayne S. Vucinich (New York: Brooklyn College Press, 1982), 273-288.

as many fortifications and defensive structures on its borders as it could, because they were not ready for the full-scale invasion of Yugoslavia.⁵¹

Yugoslav leadership expected invasion almost immediately after the first resolution of Cominform. In the beginning, there was no help from the West. Hence, official Belgrade made several plans and decisions for potential invasion, including the plan for escape routes for Yugoslav's elites, the secret decree of Federal People's Assembly on placing the country in a state of emergency, the rising of military industry in the central parts of Yugoslavia that should be still functional in the time of an attack,⁵² and the modernization of the army.⁵³ Meanwhile, the United States realized that Yugoslavia should be supported, by investing in Yugoslav military and economy since that would mean the military encirclement of the Soviet Bloc as well as a closure of the last European loophole.⁵⁴ In the first half of the 1950s, Yugoslavia received the help of 1.5 billion dollars.⁵⁵

The potential invasion did not happen because of many reasons, and the most important one was the Korean War and the United States intervention. The Soviet expectations of another US intervention were not just mere speculations, and they realized that the US would intervene if their interests were in danger. Therefore, the Soviets were discouraged from attacking Yugoslavia, since they expected from the US to react similarly as they did in the Korean War. Yugoslavia in 1951 was already under the United States' influence and got sympathies from the

⁵¹ See more in László Ritter, War on Tito's Yugoslavia? The Hungarian Army in Early Cold War Soviet Strategies, Parallel History Project on Cooperative Security, accessed April 15, 2016, http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/collections/coll_tito/intro.cfm?navinfo=15463

⁵² Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije*, 235.

⁵³ See in Bojan Dimitrijević, *Jugoslovenska armija 1945-1954: nova ideologija, vojnik i oružje*, (Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2006), 355.

⁵⁴ Svetozar Rajak, The Cold War in the Balkans, 1945-1956, in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (London: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 215.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

Western World, after which the Western allies tried to "keep Tito afloat".⁵⁶ Finally, the question of Korea was far more important than Yugoslavia. Therefore, Stalin decided to react very quickly on the Korean peninsula, by canceling the plan for the invasion of Yugoslavia.

Yugoslavia saved not only its independence but also won sympathies around the world. Furthermore, Yugoslavia sought and won election to the Security Council in the United Nations in 1950 and 1951, despite a Soviet campaign against it.⁵⁷ Chief ideologist of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, Edvard Kardelj, claimed that "on the one hand, Yugoslavia had secured its borders and thwarted aggression from the East, and on the other hand, had extracted an implicit admission from the US that it was not Communism as such that was a danger to the world but what Kardelj chose to call 'Soviet' imperialism."⁵⁸ The death of Stalin in 1953 further helped Yugoslavia in keeping its position between the East and the West, which gave official Belgrade a great importance in the future events in Europe and rest of the world. Yugoslavia was no more satellite country, or junior ally, but rather an independent country with its road to socialism that destroyed ideological uniformity in Eastern Bloc. Yugoslavia chose self-management in the economy transformed the party's role, from its commanding position to one of 'leading by example' introduced 'workers councils' in factories and enterprises, as well as the market role in the economy, effectively dismantling the administrative-command system.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Vladimir Petrović, Josip Broz Tito and International Relations of Socialist Yugoslavia, *Annales: anali za istrske in mediteranske študije* 24 (2014): 581.

⁵⁷ Vladimir Unkovski-Korica, The Yugoslav Communists' Special Relationship with the British Labour Party 1950–1956, *Cold War History* 14, (2013): 29.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*

⁵⁹ Rajak, *The Cold War in the Balkans*, 215.

2.3 Post-Stalin Relations between Yugoslavia, Hungary and the Soviet Union until 1956

After Stalin's death, collective leadership took the power in the USSR. The Foreign policy of the Soviet Union started to show some reduction in world tensions, and the most obvious example of that is the end of the involvement in Korean War and reconciliation with Yugoslavia. Soviet allies started to get significant independence in their foreign policy after the new government came into power. The economic policy of the New Course imposed by Georgy Malenkov aimed to improve living standards and to promote small businesses in private sector as well as to reduced the economic tensions within the Bloc, allowing the local Communist leaders to have a certain level of independence in reconsidering former Stalinist development policy.⁶⁰ On the other hand, Khrushchev's conceptions of the Communist camp indicated that all regimes should follow the Soviet model of economy.

A higher level of autonomy in Communist Bloc was visible also in Hungarian case, but not immediately since old Stalinist elements were still holding power. Therefore, Mátyás Rákosi was criticized by Moscow for his repression policy. Hungary was considered as one of the most totalitarian states of the former Eastern Bloc, mainly because Rákosi had a Stalinist approach in dealing with his enemies. Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union Vyacheslav Molotov claimed that Rákosi ways of oppression were not against the individuals that were threatening the system, but against the population of Hungary as a whole.⁶¹ Charles Gati claimed that "Beria blamed Rákosi for doing everything by himself, deciding who would be arrested and who would be tortured, instead of leaving such matters to the investigative

⁶⁰ Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict*, 159.

⁶¹ *ibid.*

apparatus".⁶² Moreover, Rákosi was criticized by Moscow for his unsuccessful economic policy. The Soviets received information that real income of wage earners in 1953 had fallen by 20% since 1949.⁶³ Nikita Khrushchev accused Rákosi of his incapability to work collectively.⁶⁴

These critiques prove the revisionist paradigm that USSR could not maintain total control of its allies, even if the Soviet Union tried to impose it. The Soviets succeeded in creating communist regimes in the Easter Bloc by using earlier mentioned totalitarian instruments, but some leaders, such as Rákosi, used them for dealing with domestic "enemies," without consulting Moscow. Later, that led to a political and economic crisis, provoked by the agrarian policy that had no good outcome. Therefore, the Soviet leaders claimed that new course in the economy was necessary in order to stabilize the Hungarian situation and that Nagy should be the instrument of that new policy.⁶⁵

Yugoslavia was very interested in the new changes that could happen in Hungary since de-Stalinization could mean the end of Rákosi's rule. Yugoslavia signed a treaty with Hungary, not long after Nagy came into power, about border incidents and issues that concerned both countries during Tito-Stalin split. Both states signed the *Agreement on the methods of rebuilding and reviewing the incidents on the Yugoslav-Hungarian border* in August 1953 in Baja in Hungary.⁶⁶ The military provocations that occasionally happened before this agreement completely stopped, and there were no more incidents and threats towards Yugoslavia.

⁶² Charles Gati, *Failed illusions*, (Washington D.C., Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2006), 28.

⁶³ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 4.

⁶⁴ Open Society Archives, OSA 300-40-5 Biographical Files, Archival Boxes # 131, Imre Nagy, *My Beliefs*, Free Europe Committee

⁶⁵ Nagy, *On Communism*, xii.

⁶⁶ Arhiv Jugoslavije, KPR I-5-b/70-1, *Sporazum između Vlade FNRJ i Vlade NR Mađarske o načinu preduređenja i ispitivanja incidenata na jugoslovensko-mađarskoj granici*, 28. avgust 1953.

Furthermore, two more issues were settled. The first one was the unresolved question of those South Slavic people who were interned, arrested, charged and tortured during the Tito-Stalin split in Hungary. Hungarian authorities set free most of them and enabled them to return to their homes. On the other hand, much larger Hungarian minority in Yugoslavia was rather passive during the split, not causing much trouble to the Yugoslav authorities. The second important thing was anti-Yugoslav propaganda that came in huge numbers from Hungarian newspapers and Radio Budapest. The program that covered anti-Yugoslav content was heavily represented and in some cases that increased from one to four daily propaganda program.⁶⁷ All these activities were reduced significantly not long after the above-mentioned Agreement in 1953.

In the meantime, Nagy was ready to reduce the rate of development of the heavy industry and to relocate resources for the development of the light industry and food production. Nagy claimed that "our primary task is to support individual working peasant, to help them by any means in production, agricultural implements, fertilizers, high-quality seeds, and so on."⁶⁸ Also, he was against the unlimited authority of one man. Mainly, he believed that collective wisdom of the party leadership was essential in correcting mistakes from the Rákosi's government.⁶⁹ Finally, Nagy was one of the few communist leaders that pleaded for more religious tolerance and better treatment of the intellectuals. In other words, Nagy allowed

⁶⁷ *Bela knjiga o agresivnim postupcima vlada SSSR, Poljske, Čehoslovačke, Mađarske, Rumunije, Bugarske i Albanije prema Jugoslaviji*, (Beograd: MIP FNRJ, 1951), 436.

⁶⁸ Open Society Archives, OSA 300-40-5 Biographical Files, Archival Boxes # 131, Imre Nagy, Raising the Living Standard, in *For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy*, July 17th, 1953.

⁶⁹ Benzinger, *Imre Nagy*, 43.

greater freedom of expression by denouncing the cult of personality that flourished under Rákosi.⁷⁰

However, the New Course had many difficulties from its very beginnings. Nagy's plan was supported, but not helped by the Soviet Union. He was supported from official Moscow and especially by Prime Minister of the Soviet Union Georgy Malenkov. On the other hand, he was silently criticized by other Soviet prominent members of the Communist Party, as well as by Rákosi. Rákosi remained in charge of the Hungarian Worker's Party after the changes in 1953.⁷¹ Therefore, he was still able to damage Nagy's reform since party apparatus supported him more than Nagy.⁷² Even if Rákosi was not publically against Nagy's reform, he tried to weaken him by alarming Soviet authorities for his "rightist deviations".⁷³ Moreover, Nagy's plans for the economy were under critique by the Economic Policy Committee of the Party that was under the control of Rákosi's close collaborator Ernő Gerő. In fact, Nagy had no control of that Committee at all.⁷⁴

Rákosi's attempts were unsuccessful at the beginning, but only until Malenkov was replaced as a Prime Minister. Khrushchev came into power, who firmly believed in collectivization policy. Moreover, that meant the continuation of the Rákosi's economic policy and developing of heavy industry.⁷⁵ In other words, Nagy became an unwelcome person for the Soviet leadership. Khrushchev was afraid that Nagy was able to create another type of socialism like Tito did in Yugoslavia.⁷⁶ Nagy, on the other hand, courageously wanted to create

⁷⁰ Nagy, *On Communism*, xxi.

⁷¹ Gati, *Failed illusions*, 54.

⁷² *ibid.*

⁷³ Benzinger, *Imre Nagy*, 45.

⁷⁴ *ibid.*

⁷⁵ *ibid.*

⁷⁶ *ibid.*, 44.

an independent Hungarian foreign policy by implementing the Yugoslav example. In his writings, Nagy said that "we are members not only of the socialist camp but the great community of nations... and the ties that bind them together must be developed."⁷⁷ However, the path from satellite country to junior ally was still long since there was no readiness within the Kremlin and because of the strong influence of Stalinist elements in Hungary who wanted to regain the lost power. Therefore, Nagy was forced to step down in 1955. Hungarian Central Committee and Politburo expelled him from the Party because of his "anti-Marxist, anti-Leninist and anti-Party views"⁷⁸ and replaced him with Rákosi. However, Rákosi dealt with several problems. He had to deal with the legacy of the New Course and with many dissidents who were rehabilitated by the Party during Nagy's rule, such as János Kádár, the future prominent figure in the Revolution. They were now ready to oppose Rákosi's rule.⁷⁹

In the meantime, Stalin's death did not improve the relations between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union immediately. There were still many obstacles, and normalization between two countries proceeded slowly. This could be seen in the document that concerns Kardelj's visit to the United Kingdom in which he stated that between 1953 and 1955 Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union negotiated on several topics such as calming the situation on the borders between Yugoslavia and its Eastern neighbors, suspension of discrimination in Danube Commission, stopping the propaganda against Yugoslavia in Eastern Europe, etc.⁸⁰ The Soviets tried to force the normalization by putting the pressure on the Yugoslavs to solve only those issues that

⁷⁷ Benzinger, *Imre Nagy*, 41.

⁷⁸ Open Society Archives, OSA 300-40-5 Biographical Files, Archival Boxes # 131, SIN 55 IV/18, 1955.

⁷⁹ Benzinger, *Imre Nagy*, 46.

⁸⁰ Diplomatski arhiv Ministarstva spoljnih poslova Srbije, Politička Arhiva, *Poseta Kardelja Londonu*, 1955, 2.

concerned Moscow. Kardelj claimed that Yugoslav side was unsatisfied with Soviet behavior, hence, the negotiations went slowly during the first year after Stalin's death.⁸¹

On the other hand, Yugoslavia tried to further its integration with the West. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization was established in 1949, as an attempt to stop and prevent the potential Soviet invasion in the West. Since anti-communist forces won in Greece, after Tito had stopped to support Greek communists, and Turkey had a good geopolitical position towards the Soviet Union, both countries joined NATO in February 1952. The Yugoslav position was to find those temporal allies who would defend Yugoslavia against the Soviet invasion and who would deliver weapons for the Yugoslav army. Tito negotiated in that manner with Winston Churchill during his visit to Great Britain before Stalin's death.⁸² Therefore, signing the Treaty of Friendship with Greece and Turkey in 1953 represented "a milestone in Yugoslav relations with the West, insofar as indirectly putting Yugoslavia in close connection with the two NATO countries".⁸³

In other words, Yugoslavia became one of the three countries that were considered as a part of the NATO "south wing". One year later, on the 9th of August 1954, the alliance was signed between three parties,⁸⁴ in which one could find many similarities with the NATO founding act. The most important similarity was the article about the potential aggression against any state that is a member of NATO, which triggers all other NATO members to defend

⁸¹ Diplomatski arhiv Ministarstva spoljnih poslova Srbije, Politička arhiva, *Poseta Kardelja Londonu*, 1955, 2.

⁸² Petrović, Josip Broz Tito and International Relations of Socialist Yugoslavia, 581.

⁸³ *ibid.*

⁸⁴ The Avalon Project, *Treaty of Mutual Assistance Treaty of Alliance, Political Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance Between the Turkish Republic, the Kingdom of Greece, and the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia August 9, 1954*, Yale Law School, accessed April 10, 2016, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/eu002.asp

attacked member state.⁸⁵ The same section was copied in the Balkan Pact alliance,⁸⁶ which gave Yugoslavia the protection from the potential Soviet invasion.

These agreements slowed the negotiations with the USSR, and full normalization was not yet ready to be implemented. However, Soviet leaders, including Georgy Malenkov, as well as Nikita Khrushchev and Anastas Mikoyan, insisted on improving the relations with the Yugoslavia. They had a secret correspondence with the Yugoslavs, in which they requested a meeting from them in the upcoming years.⁸⁷ The first secret message was sent in June 1954, and the first meeting was announced publically in May 1955.⁸⁸ That was not only a signal for Yugoslav and Soviet people that normalization is approaching but, also, that was a sign for other Eastern European countries to stop with the anti-Yugoslav propaganda and to find a common language with Tito once again.

Hungary used this reconciliation to become the first country, after the Soviet Union, which sent the ambassador after renewed relations between Yugoslavia and the East. Even if real reconciliation with the East was only possible with the approval of official Moscow, Hungary showed the initiative, which was unthinkable during the Stalin's era. These moves were a sign of changes in intra-bloc relations and different Soviet approach with their allies in upcoming years. Hungarian action was not prevented by the Kremlin, but rather welcomed, which gave Hungarian government more freedom in resolving disputes with official Belgrade, without Soviet interference. In any case, Yugoslav ambassador Dalibor Soldatić, who had an

⁸⁵ *Agreement between the Parties to the North Atlantic Treaty regarding the Status of their Forces*, NATO accessed April 10, 2016, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17265.htm

⁸⁶ The Avalon Project, *Treaty of Mutual Assistance Treaty of Alliance, Political Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance Between the Turkish Republic, the Kingdom of Greece, and the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia August 9, 1954*, accessed April 10, 2016, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/eu002.asp

⁸⁷ Ljubodrag Dimić, *Jugoslavija i Hladni rat*, (Beograd: Arhipelag, 2014), 11.

⁸⁸ *ibid.*

important role during the Nagy hiding in Yugoslav embassy after the Revolution in 1956, was warmly welcomed by Hungarian people and authorities and for the first time since Tito-Stalin split, Yugoslav diplomats were not followed by Hungarian police.⁸⁹

Nevertheless, all these friendly bilateral gestures from the Hungarian and Yugoslav side were dependent on Soviet-Yugoslav relations. Khrushchev further insisted on improving these relations and he even personally admitted that he liked and sympathized Yugoslav leader Tito in his memoirs.⁹⁰ He tried to convince his Party colleagues to reestablish contacts with Yugoslavs and to negotiate personally with them.⁹¹ Reconciliation with Yugoslavia was also significant for Khrushchev since that would weaken Stalinist elements in the Soviet leadership, such as Molotov or Lazar Kaganovich, and strengthen Khrushchev's position.

The Soviets sent an invitation to the Yugoslavs to the Moscow Conference that was held in 1954, which was about security issues in Europe. Yugoslavs rejected because there were no conditions for real normalization of relations since the Soviets wanted the reconciliation under the Soviets conditions.⁹² However, Yugoslavia became more interested in warming the relations with the USSR after Western Powers supported Italy in the territorial dispute between Yugoslavia and Italy over the Trieste region. Yugoslavia was prepared for real reaproachment with the Kremlin "only after clumsy Anglo-American sponsorship of Italian claims to the contested Free Territory of Trieste in October 1953, which brought the sides to the brink of war."⁹³ Not until 1954 the dispute over Trieste was resolved, and eventual Soviet assistance in

⁸⁹ Vladimir Cvetković, Jugoslavija i Istočnoevropske zemlje u susedstvu 1953-1958: opservacija, akcija, rezultati, *Annales: anali za istrske in mediteranske študije* 24 (2014): 651.

⁹⁰ Talbott, Khrushchev Remembers, 375.

⁹¹ *ibid.*, 378-379.

⁹² Diplomatski arhiv Ministarstva spoljnih poslova Srbije, Politički arhiv, *Poseta Kardelja Londonu*, 1955, 3.

⁹³ Unkovski-Korica, The Yugoslav Communists' Special Relationship, 38.

this matter would be helpful. Hence, Yugoslavs more than welcomed the Soviets who decided to come to Yugoslavia, which happened one year after the Moscow conference.

The Soviets had their own goals in Yugoslavia. Firstly, they tried to minimize the political damage that was caused during the conflict.⁹⁴ They lost an important ally and a significant strategic position towards Italy and Southern Europe. Secondly, they hoped to maintain a leader role in the socialist world, both in ideological sense and as the highest authority among socialist states.⁹⁵ Furthermore, Nikita Khrushchev even tried to convince Yugoslavs to weaken the relations with the West and to make a "return" to the Eastern Bloc.⁹⁶ On the other hand, Yugoslavia firstly wanted to maintain equality with official Moscow,⁹⁷ to secure its independence and to continue with its own road to socialism. On this basis, the negotiations started in 1955 when the Soviet delegation, which was led by Nikita Khrushchev, came to Belgrade.

The outcome of these talks was the Belgrade Declaration that had de-Stalinization tone⁹⁸ with the clear message for all other leaders that were deeply in connection with Stalin's legacy, such as Rákosi. Furthermore, Yugoslavia maintained its position between two confronted sides. Finally, among the other things, in the Declaration was indicated a principle of no interference in the domestic policy of other countries, which was seen as a way for other Eastern European countries to have a more independent policy in comparison to previous Soviet dominance in the Eastern Bloc.⁹⁹ This outcome encouraged many leaders, such as Nagy, to follow Yugoslav example in building the unique road to socialism. Nevertheless, economy

⁹⁴ Dimić, *Jugoslavija i Hladni rat*, 11.

⁹⁵ *ibid.*

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

⁹⁷ *ibid.*

⁹⁸ Diplomatski arhiv Ministarstva spoljnih poslova Srbije, Politička arhiva, *Poseta Kardelja Londonu*, 1955, 5.

⁹⁹ *ibid.*

ties between two countries were strengthened, by new credits that arrived from the Soviet Union for steel mill factory.¹⁰⁰ Finally, both countries agreed to continue mutual visits in future, which happened one year later in Moscow.

2.4 Process of liberalization in the Eastern Europe

Before Belgrade Declaration, the Soviet Union established a new military and political organization the Warsaw Pact (WTO), or, formally, the Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance. Khrushchev and his allies formed this multilateral organization in May 1955 as a direct response to the NATO threat. As it was mentioned earlier, WTO had political and military significance, which enabled a higher level of autonomy for Eastern European countries. Totalitarian policy after Stalin's death showed many changes, after which Soviet alliance system reshaped itself to be more dissent and multilateral. Hence, Khrushchev's Warsaw Pact was a bit different from Stalin's Cominform, "which was an organization 'created by Stalin to secure the unquestioning obedience of European Communists.'"¹⁰¹ Cominform was an organization of communist parties, and on the other hand, WTO served as an organization of states represented by their governments. WTO was not just an answer to NATO, but it represents the organization that fulfills the interests of all country members, with special attention to the German question.¹⁰² Khrushchev policy was pragmatic, and his main goal was to reduce tensions inside the Bloc by giving more freedom to its junior allies, as well as with the West and particularly with the Yugoslavia.

Liberalization of the East indeed allowed the return of many politicians such as Władysław Gomułka and Nagy, but the liberalization had its limits. Throughout the

¹⁰⁰ Talbott, Khrushchev Remembers, 382.

¹⁰¹ Dimić, *Jugoslavija i Hladni rat*, 24.

¹⁰² *ibid.*, 28.

Khrushchev era, there were processes of de-Stalinization and de-satellitization. De-satellitization would mean the earlier mentioned change in intra-bloc relations, as well as the evolution of the status of satellite country to a junior ally. However, they were sometimes opposite to each other. For example, de-satellitization did not mean de-Stalinization as well.¹⁰³ Domestic policy of Eastern European countries was still controlled by the USSR and even restricted and not only by the Soviets but also from the local communist governments, which was shown on a Hungarian example. Nevertheless, this partial liberalization policy gave hope to Soviet allies that a new way of socialism can be built in domestic and foreign policy and that political liberalization should be implemented.¹⁰⁴

Yugoslavia continued to improve the relations with its neighbors and the Soviet Union. Yugoslavia fully supported every aspect of more independent policy of Soviet allies and the new ideas of socialism that were promoted in Hungary by Nagy. Yugoslavs visited the Soviet Union in 1956 several times. In June 1956 both Tito and Khrushchev spoke about different paths of socialism. Tito advocated for all forms of cooperation that lead to a single goal, but not for a Soviet policy that would deny different ideas and paths in socialism.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, Yugoslavia indirectly supported those movements inside the Eastern Bloc that would choose a different way of socialism as Yugoslavia did before. Both sides continued in a friendly manner by signing the Moscow Declaration, a declaration that ruled out any possibility of aspirations "for imposing opinions in determining the ways and forms of socialist development".¹⁰⁶ The next visit of the two leaders was held in late 1956 in September and October, provoked by a Hungarian issue that would later arise in pure Revolution against the Soviet dominance.

¹⁰³ Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict*, 438.

¹⁰⁴ Čalić, *Istorija Jugoslavije*, 247.

¹⁰⁵ Dimić, *Jugoslavija i Hladni rat*, 16.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*

This one decade of relations between Hungary, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union led to significant changes in intra-bloc relations and greater extent of autonomy of Soviet allies after Stalin's death. The outcomes of these relations were the lower pressure of the Soviet leadership on its allies, and as a consequence, Eastern Bloc countries strove to build their own path to socialism. This understanding of nuanced relations between above-mentioned countries will help us to understand better how the Revolution had begun and why Yugoslav and the Soviet leadership reacted negatively on Hungarian reforms.

Khrushchev policies, as well as declarations that were signed with Yugoslavia, encouraged leaders of the Eastern Bloc to develop their level of autonomy that led to decisions that reduced Soviet influence even further. However, the Hungarian example would show how new Yugoslavia in Eastern Europe was not acceptable for the Soviet leadership since it would lead to a domino effect in other socialist countries and a possible end of the Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe.

Chapter 3: The Hungarian Revolution in 1956

3.1 On the Eve of the Rebellion

Nikita Khrushchev continued with de-Stalinization process by holding a secret speech on the 20th plenum of Communist Party. In the closed session on February 24-25, 1956, Khrushchev clearly distanced himself from the cult of Stalin, which was welcomed by almost all political leaders in the Eastern Bloc and especially from Josip Broz Tito.¹⁰⁷ This speech provoked changes in Hungary since Rákosi was considered in Yugoslavia as "the Last Mohican of the Stalinist Era" and "Stalin's Best Disciple".¹⁰⁸ It was expected from Hungary to change its Party leadership, which would please both Tito and official Moscow that had been done with introducing Gerő as a new Party leader of Hungary.¹⁰⁹ However, as it was stated, de-Stalinization had its limits and the question was how far this liberalization should go since the Soviets were unwilling to have another Yugoslavia in Europe.

After Moscow declaration in June and final reconciliation, Hungary was in the center of attention for both Moscow and Belgrade in the last quarter of 1956. The Hungarian political crisis was one of the topics of mutual talks between Tito and Khrushchev in September and October 1956 on Crimea. After the changes in Hungary and removal of Rákosi from his position, USSR tried to foster strong connections between Yugoslavia and the newly established government in Budapest. Therefore, Gerő visited Crimea, without the knowledge of Tito, his Party members, and Yugoslav diplomats.¹¹⁰ As a result, Yugoslav and Hungarian

¹⁰⁷ Johanna Granville, *The Soviet-Yugoslav Detente, Belgrade-Budapest Relations, and the Hungarian Revolution (1955-56)*, *Hungarian Studies Review* 24 (1997): 16.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*, 17.

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Mićunović, *Moskovske godine*, 141.

leadership proposed a meeting in October that pleased the Soviets.¹¹¹ The Soviet Union was well aware that Hungary was the weakest spot in the Eastern Bloc, and they expected from Yugoslavia help in the final resolving of the Hungarian domestic issues.

However, the question of Suez and Tito's relations with the Middle East drew more attention for the Kremlin. The Soviets were interested in reacting quickly to the upcoming Suez crisis and Tito's experience was valuable since he held several gatherings with the leaders of Egypt and India Gamal Abdel Nasser and Jawaharlal Nehru during July 1956,¹¹² which strengthened Yugoslav relations with Third World¹¹³ countries and Yugoslav influence in those parts of the World. It was a chance for official Moscow to spread their influence on the important strategic positions in the Middle East. Furthermore, it was an opportunity for Soviet elites to criticize Social Democrats in France after French involvement in Suez in order to strengthen the communist fraction.¹¹⁴ Tito did not want to contradict Khrushchev. He tried to convince USSR with its secret letter that Yugoslavia was ready to support Soviet foreign policy and that Yugoslavia was prepared to cancel all military support from the United States.¹¹⁵

The Suez crisis, at that moment, presented a top issue in international relations both for the East as well as the West. The tensions rose during the second half of 1956. Official Belgrade was attempting to serve as a mediator between the two sides since Yugoslavia already had good and stable relations with Egypt. However, Egypt's nationalization of the Suez canal company fastened the crisis, after which the West criticized Yugoslavia for its involvement and

¹¹¹ Mićunović, *Moskovske godine*, 141.

¹¹² Petrović, *Titova lična diplomatija*, 134.

¹¹³ In 1956 was in use the term non-aligned bloc of countries, because non-alignment movement did not yet exist. These countries did not accept the term "neutral country". Therefore, the term Third World was more acceptable for them since that meant not belonging to First World (capitalist bloc) or Second World (socialist bloc).

¹¹⁴ Mićunović, *Moskovske godine*, 135.

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*, 129.

influence on Nasser's decisions. Yugoslavia did not know about Nasser's intentions, but the West did not accept these claims. Hence, Yugoslavia lost its position as a mediator and became an advocate of Nasser and his policy alongside with the Soviet Union.¹¹⁶ In other words, Yugoslavia strengthened its relations with the Soviet Union during 1955 and 1956 and aggravated its relations with the West, particularly with France and the United Kingdom.

The Yugoslav position was temporarily undermined. However, the United States' negative reaction to the invasion of Israel, followed by France and the United Kingdom in Suez would return lost influence of Yugoslavia. Furthermore, Yugoslavia regained a nonpermanent place in the Security Council of the United Nations, which strengthened Yugoslav position in international community.¹¹⁷ It was important for Yugoslavs to be involved in this matter since, for the first time, superpowers were playing a direct role in the Middle East and Yugoslavia could practice its position between the camps.¹¹⁸ Unexpectedly, during the Suez crisis, the Hungarian Revolution had begun, which put pressure on official Belgrade in several ways. Yugoslavia wanted to support Soviet policy in Europe, to criticize UK's and France's role in Egypt, but also to maintain good relations with the United States. Therefore, the Yugoslav role should be observed from this point of view during the whole Hungarian Revolution and particularly during Nagy's hiding and later arrest, because in that particular moment Yugoslav position was more significant in the international institutions, such as UN, as well as in the relations with two superpowers.

On the other hand, the Soviet position during October and November 1956 should be observed from one more point. Besides the Soviet interests in Yugoslavia and the Middle East,

¹¹⁶ Petrović, *Titova lična diplomatija*, 138.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹¹⁸ Biran McCauley, Hungary and Suez 1956: The Limits of Soviet and American Power, *Journal of Contemporary History* 16 (1981): 784.

the first problem with de-satelization policy that occurred in the Eastern Europe in 1956 took the Kremlin by surprise. On the eve of the Secret Speech, President of Poland Bolesław Bierut, had suddenly died on the 12th of March 1956.¹¹⁹ He was a promoter of the Malenkov's New Course and one of the supporters of de-Stalinization. Khrushchev's Secret Speech even further inspired Polish people in their demands for political freedom. These demands led to a riot in Poznan on 23 June 1956, after which many of the workers were killed by the army.¹²⁰ After these rigorous measures against the workers, Edward Ochab, who succeeded Bierut after his death, yielded his power to Władysław Gomułka, another politician that was rehabilitated after Stalin's death, on October 19 1956.¹²¹ These events in Poland and later in Hungary provoked fear in the Soviet leadership about the future of the Socialist camp.

The Soviets were so concerned that the situation would spin out of control. The Soviets were unwilling to make decisions in Eastern Bloc on their own since the process of liberalization strengthened the autonomy of its allies and their influence on USSR. However, if one junior ally would be able to become new Yugoslavia, the Eastern Bloc future would be undermined. Therefore, the Soviets "immediately sent a telegram to the Chinese leadership, asking advice about sending troops to Poland in order to prevent it from leaving the socialist camp."¹²² Chinese leadership dismissed such a solution, and since Sino-Soviet relations were of significant importance for Nikita Khrushchev, the idea of intervention was abandoned. The unilateral approach was more acceptable for Khrushchev, who talked with Gomułka few days before the Hungarian Revolution started. He surprisingly visited Warsaw in order to prevent the

¹¹⁹ Crump, *Warsaw Pact Reconsidered*, 31.

¹²⁰ *ibid.*, 32.

¹²¹ *ibid.*

¹²² *ibid.*

election of Gomulka as the first secretary of Polish Workers Party.¹²³ On the other side, Gomulka succeeded in convincing Khrushchev about Polish loyalty to Moscow since he told him that "Poland needs Russian friendship more than Russians need Polish friendship", since 'without you we won't be able to exist as an independent state'.¹²⁴ Therefore, Gomulka was accepted as the new leader of Poland.

In the meantime, Hungarian opposition forces began to gain strength. A new Five year plan that was proposed by the post-Nagy government was not supported by the citizens, who were already unsatisfied with the resignation of Nagy.¹²⁵ László Rajk's funeral presents a turning point in the chain of events that happened later. Speeches that were held in front of more than 200.000 people influenced the feelings of the common people and strengthened their desire for changes. For example, Antal Apró, the Vice President of the Hungarian Government, spoke about the responsibility of those who committed murders during Stalin and Rákosi's rule.¹²⁶ Furthermore, Béla Szász, a former co-defendant of Rajk's, declared: "as hundreds of thousands pass by the coffins, they are not simply paying their last respects to the victims; they have an ardent desire and an unswerving resolve to bury an era."¹²⁷

These speeches, as well as many other from the previous prominent members of the Party and the current leadership, provoked mass demonstrations against the government. Soviet ambassador Yuri Andropov noticed in his records of conversation between him and Gerő that reactionary forces had come forward again, by joining forces with the opposition within the

¹²³ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 187.

¹²⁴ Crump, *Warsaw Pact Reconsidered*, 33.

¹²⁵ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 12.

¹²⁶ Dedijer, *Izguhljena bitka*, 284.

¹²⁷ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 12.

Party.¹²⁸ Meanwhile, Gerő visited Yugoslavia on 15 October and did not return until October 23. His goals were true reconciliation with Yugoslavia and much needed support for his government. After several meetings, both sides were pleased with the outcome of the talks.¹²⁹ Gerő even gave an interview for Yugoslav newspapers, in which he indicated the importance of further democratization and the necessity for further involvement of all Hungarians and party members in state governance.¹³⁰ After success in Yugoslavia, Hungarian communist authorities were surprised and unprepared for the upcoming events and protests.

Students in Szeged were leading the way: On 16th of October, they formed a new organization MEFESZ that was not supervised by the Communist Party.¹³¹ They prepared their demands that were later known as the "Sixteen Points" on 22 October.¹³² They demanded, among other things, withdrawal of the Soviet troops, the government reshuffling under the leadership of Nagy and more political, economical and cultural freedom.¹³³ The demonstrations were held in Budapest the day after, in solidarity with the reform movement in Poland, where tens of thousands Hungarians wanted the end of Soviet presence and return of Nagy in power.¹³⁴ Some of the slogans were the following: "Imre Nagy as the new leader," "Long live our Polish brothers", "Down with the Stalinists", etc.¹³⁵ Since Gerő's government refused their basic demands, the crisis went deeper, and the Soviet involvement was deemed as necessary. The Revolution had begun.

¹²⁸ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 178.

¹²⁹ Mićunović, *Moskovske godine*, 151.

¹³⁰ *ibid.*

¹³¹ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 13.

¹³² *ibid.*, 188.

¹³³ *ibid.*, 188-189.

¹³⁴ Benzinger, *Imre Nagy*, 62.

¹³⁵ Dobrica Ćosić, *7 dana u Budimpešti*, 10.

3.2 The Revolution

The Hungarian government tried to react very quickly after the leaders returned from Belgrade. Since protests continued with the same intensity, authorities had to choose between two options: to cancel demonstration and use the force on those who tried to defy the ban or to accept some of the demands such as the return of Nagy into the government.¹³⁶ Similar to the Poland case in Poznan, authorities decided to use force in order to bring peace. However, the government lost the legitimacy very soon not only among the people, but also among the party members who lost the confidence in Hungarian leadership.¹³⁷ Furthermore, military cadets, officers and even police refused to use force against protesters. Therefore, the government turned to help from Nagy, who was called by authorities to speak in front of the masses. Nagy promised that reform from 1953 would continue, and he urged them to go home. These words were a disappointment for people and most of them continued to protest, and some of them even took guns.¹³⁸ On the evening on October 23rd the demonstration escalated into an armed uprising.¹³⁹ The military conflict started near Radio Station, which was an important place for both the government and protesters, because of its propaganda purpose.¹⁴⁰ The government was losing time and power and felt compelled to ask for help. They asked the Soviets to intervene.

Primarily, Moscow tried to avoid military intervention, hoping that Hungarian issue could be resolved in the same way as they did in Poland's case. Secondly, the Soviet leadership did not want to intervene since the policy of detente, or in other words, normalization of relations with the United States, was still in process and Khrushchev wanted to maintain and to

¹³⁶ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 191.

¹³⁷ *ibid.*, 192.

¹³⁸ *ibid.*, 193.

¹³⁹ Crump, *Warsaw Pact Reconsidered*, 34.

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*

promote it further.¹⁴¹ However, Soviet media believed that events in Hungary were orchestrated from outside of the Eastern Bloc.¹⁴² Hungarians, who were loyal to the Soviet Union, accused the reactionary forces while Gerő claimed that the people on the street are nothing more than a mob, which only contributed to his resignation. Gerő made an aggressive speech and condemned those "who seek to instill in our youth the poison of chauvinism and to exploit them to organize a national demonstration".¹⁴³

Khrushchev almost lost his patience, even if he was at the beginning for a political solution to the crisis. Other prominent party members, such as Molotov or Kaganovich put a pressure on him for a harsher response in Hungary. Khrushchev summoned a gathering in the evening. Marshal Zhukov told him about the differences between Poland and Hungary and that in Hungary firing and clashes already occurred on the Radio Station in Budapest.¹⁴⁴ He succeeded in convincing Khrushchev for the necessity of military intervention. On the other hand, Anastas Mikoyan, First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union, was for a political solution to the crisis and strictly against military involvement. Therefore, Khrushchev decided to send troops but only to maintain order and agreed that Nagy should be brought back.¹⁴⁵ Moments before Soviet arrival in Budapest, Nagy was elected as a new-old Prime Minister of Hungary on 24 October.,¹⁴⁶ and Gerő was confirmed as the First Secretary of the Party.¹⁴⁷ The first speech after his re-appointment Nagy held against those who violate peace and order, in which was indicated the importance of democratization

¹⁴¹ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 194.

¹⁴² Mićunović, *Moskovske godine*, 152.

¹⁴³ Sebestyen, *Twelve days*, 117.

¹⁴⁴ *ibid.*, 120.

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 121.

¹⁴⁶ Mićunović, *Moskovske godine*, 154.

¹⁴⁷ Arhiv Jugoslavije, Tanjug, *Crveni Bilten*, 112/215, 24.10.1956,

processes of Hungarian society and Hungarian unique type of socialism.¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, the government urged citizens to help the authorities and the Soviet troops in their attempts in imposing order and stability.¹⁴⁹

However, these changes and appeals did not stop further escalation of the conflicts. People on the street formed militia units, and some of them tried to stop the Soviet advance to Budapest.¹⁵⁰ The rebels already seized some of the buildings and important locations in the city. However, most of the militias were defeated or at least they escaped from the clashes with the Red Army in Budapest. Local military leaders outside of Budapest were still under the control of the Party, and most citizens in other towns were temporarily silent since the Party promised huge changes and the propaganda machinery was mostly under the Party's control.

Gerő was replaced as the First Secretary of the Party by Kádár on 25 October since fighting continued.¹⁵¹ The rebels succeeded to enroll more fighters among their ranks, which gave them a chance to go on the new offensive.¹⁵² The mutual killings continued next day, and many Soviet soldiers were injured, and some of them were even killed. Since the clashes continued in Budapest, the government was no more available to stop the Revolution to spread outside of the capital. The city of Miskolc was one of the places where the new massacre happened after protesters seized the building of local police.¹⁵³ People started even to hunt Russians on the street. One of the famous Yugoslav and Serbian writers Dobrica Ćosić, who was in Budapest during the Revolution because of the meeting of the editors of literary magazines in socialist countries, wrote about his experience in Budapest when one man

¹⁴⁸ Arhiv Jugoslavije, *Politika*, oktobar 25., 1956.

¹⁴⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 195.

¹⁵¹ Mićunović, *Moskovske godine*, 154.

¹⁵² Sebastyen, *Twelve days*, 147.

¹⁵³ *ibid.*, 199.

grabbed him and asked him if he is a Russian. When he said that he is from Yugoslavia, the man released Čosić and spat in front of him.¹⁵⁴

In order to stop further killings, Nagy proposed a national unity government on 27 October.¹⁵⁵ This new government should lead the country until the end of crisis. From this point, Hungary should have start negotiations with the Soviet regime, especially about the Soviet military involvement in Budapest, as well as in the rest of the country. Nagy was angry at the Soviets for sending more troops to Hungary. The Yugoslav ambassador in Moscow stated that Soviet plans at that moment could be the new encirclement of Budapest.¹⁵⁶ Nagy and Kádár, in the name of national unity, tried to find a solution with the Soviets on the evening of October 27th. Mikoyan, as one of the Soviet emissaries during the Revolution, carefully listen to Kádár. He made a good impression not only to Mikoyan but to Nagy as well.¹⁵⁷ That was his first big role after the start of the Revolution. What he proposed was the necessity for talks about the future role of Soviet soldiers in Hungary, as well as the amnesty for the rebels. Mikoyan promised that the answer would get to them early in the morning.¹⁵⁸

However, the national unity was not backed up by all members of Nagy's government and not even by Kádár, who "shook his head as a sign of disagreement", after Nagy had suggested disbanding the security forces."¹⁵⁹ On the other hand, Nagy tried to use Kádár as "a sensible and credible voice, from a senior position in the Hungarian Party,"¹⁶⁰ who would be more acceptable for the Soviets in negotiations. In any case, Nagy's position was under extreme

¹⁵⁴ Dobrica Čosić, *7 dana u Budimpešti*, 30.

¹⁵⁵ Arhiv Jugoslavije, *Politika*, oktobar 28., 1956.

¹⁵⁶ Mićunović, *Moskovske godine*, 154.

¹⁵⁷ Sebestyen, *Twelve days*, 171-172.

¹⁵⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ Crump, *Warsaw Pact Reconsidered*, 35.

¹⁶⁰ Sebestyen, *Twelve days*, 172.

pressure since the old regime apparatus was still omnipresent and his views on reforms and the way that Hungarian crisis should be solved was always under question by his colleagues and Party members. How weak the national unity was became apparent in the case of Kádár who introduced a new party, the Hungarian Socialist Worker's Party and who left Budapest with Interior Minister in Nagy's government Ferenc Münnich, and Soviet ambassador at the beginning of November.¹⁶¹ Finally, there was no support for Nagy even among some parts of rebel forces, who were openly against the communist regime.

The Soviet response on October 28th included military maneuvers and determination to defeat the rebels. Nagy and Kádár were shocked when they heard of the Soviet decision and once again went for negotiations with Mikoyan and the Soviet Ambassador Andropov. Luckily, the tanks and the Soviet guns were silent during the negotiations.¹⁶² Nagy was threatening that he would resign if bloodshed would happen. The Soviets did not want to lose Nagy at that moment. Therefore, they decided to withdraw outside of Budapest and to return to the bases in the countryside. Nagy formed a new national unity government on October 28th. He tried to convince the Kremlin to agree to a new regime program, "which entailed the dissolution of the security forces and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary altogether."¹⁶³ The Soviet leaders approved the program presented by Nagy that would be announced to the people on the same day.¹⁶⁴ It was a chance for Hungary to find its road to socialism. As it was stated by György Lukács, who was a Minister for Education in Nagy's regime, "the Hungarian youth

¹⁶¹ Open Society Archives, HU OSA 300-8-3, *A Chronology of the Hungarian Revolution*, Radio Free Europe

¹⁶² Sebestyen, *Twelve days*, 174.

¹⁶³ Crump, *Warsaw Pact Reconsidered*, 34.

¹⁶⁴ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 204.

should be praised for their fight and struggle against Stalinism and for recognizing the need of the Hungarian people to find their own way of socialism."¹⁶⁵

The ceasefire was respected, and the Soviets slowly and safely started their withdrawal. It was important for the new government that both sides respect what had been agreed. The people and most of the institutions supported the new plan of the government.¹⁶⁶ Some of the opposition leaders were released from prison, such as Béla Kovács, who spent nine years in custody.¹⁶⁷ Also, one of the most prominent figures of Catholic Church in Hungary, József Mindszenty, was freed after seven years in prison. However, the most radical measure was the proclamation of a Multi-Party system in Hungary and return of the former political parties that were banned.¹⁶⁸ This was one of the most important decisions that frightened Moscow, as well as old regime supporters since they were afraid of losing power in the upcoming elections.

In the meantime, Nikita Khrushchev held a meeting in Moscow about the role of the Warsaw Pact. He prepared a declaration "in which it he unprecedentedly claimed to be 'prepared to review with the other socialist countries which are members of the Warsaw Treaty, the question of Soviet troops stationed on the territory of the Hungarian, Romanian, and Polish Republics'."¹⁶⁹ One of the outcomes was the withdrawal of the troops, because of the principles of non-interference, which was exercised only in Poland but not in Hungary, as an attempt to keep all options open.¹⁷⁰ The Kremlin was aware that creation of another neutral country in the Eastern Europe would only lead towards the end of the Soviet influence in Eastern Europe. It was also a domestic issue for Khrushchev. If he would lose Hungary in a similar way as Stalin

¹⁶⁵ Dobrica Ćosić, *7 dana u Budimpešti*, 51.

¹⁶⁶ Arhiv Jugoslavije, *Borba*, oktobar 30, 1956.

¹⁶⁷ Arhiv Jugoslavije, Tanjug, *Crveni Bilten*, 112/216, 28.10.1956.

¹⁶⁸ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 290-291.

¹⁶⁹ Crump, *Warsaw Pact Reconsidered*, 35.

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*

lost Yugoslavia that could lead to a possible end of his power and his reign, since Stalinist elements in USSR were still strong and present in Soviet leadership.¹⁷¹ Therefore, the question of intervention was still opened. On the other side, the second intervention was not a unilateral decision made by Kremlin. Khrushchev decided to intervene only after the negotiations were held with all members of the Eastern Bloc, as well as the communist states outside of it such as Yugoslavia.

¹⁷¹ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 211.

Chapter 4: The Ending of the Revolution and Capture of Imre Nagy

4.1 The Second Intervention

Yugoslavia carefully measured every event and decision that was made in official Budapest. Yugoslavia became aware that not only leftist were trying to take the power, but also that many elements of the reactionary forces were becoming more influential. There was a possibility that communism could be overthrown in Hungary and Yugoslavia wanted to prevent this potential scenario. Official Belgrade was afraid that counterrevolution could weaken Tito's regime. On the other hand, Tito supported changes in Hungary, rehabilitation processes, as well as Nagy's regime since that meant a victory of Yugoslav ideas of socialism, or in other words, Titoism. However, when Tito realized that Titoism in Hungary could provoke a harsh reaction from USSR and when reactionary forces took the initiative in the Revolution, he decided to save communism in Hungary at all cost.¹⁷²

Khrushchev realized the same. As he stated in his memoirs: "This was a historic moment.. if the counterrevolution did succeed and NATO took root in the midst of Socialist countries, it would pose a threat to Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Romania, not to mention the Soviet Union itself."¹⁷³ Khrushchev believed that Nagy deluded the Hungarian people and that his decisions were only his own doings and not from Hungarian Party. He stated that Nagy was a communist, but that he spoke in the name of a small circle of people who were for counterrevolution.¹⁷⁴ Nagy's demands for Soviet withdrawal was not valid from the Soviet point of view since Warsaw Pact treaty supposed that withdrawal could only happen if the legal

¹⁷² Open Society Archives, HU OSA 300-10-4, Yugoslav Biographical Files I, Archival Boxes #21, *Djilas Break With Communism*, Christian Democratic Review, 1957

¹⁷³ Talbott, *Khrushchev Remembers*, 417.

¹⁷⁴ *ibid.*, 416.

government was asking for that act. Since Nagy was not respected and treated in that way, the Soviets did pull back, but from Budapest to the airfield until the final decision for a new intervention. The second possibility for the Soviets was to wait for eventual victory of the old regime forces, which was hardly possible and too risky.¹⁷⁵

Another problem arose for the Soviets. There was an unfounded belief that the United Kingdom, alongside with France, tried to use the situation in the Eastern Bloc and to act quickly against Nasser in Egypt.¹⁷⁶ These countries could use the situation in which the Soviets would be too busy in their attempts to save the Eastern Bloc and in which they were unable to help Nasser in Suez. Hence, resolving of the Hungarian crisis was of great importance for the Soviets, which could enable them to draw attention to the key problems outside of the Eastern Bloc. Yugoslavia too was interested in a fast solution in Hungary since the Yugoslav role in the upcoming Suez crisis became significant.

The Soviet leader talked with his allies about a second intervention, which showed how far intra-bloc relations had been changed after the process of de-satelization. Khrushchev was particularly interested in Chinese opinion. The Chinese delegation, led by Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress Liu Shao-chi, was not only influenced by Khrushchev, but also by Nagy's decision to reestablish the Multi-Party system on October 31st. Thereafter, they believed that "the Kremlin should 'prevent the imperialist attack on the big socialist family'".¹⁷⁷ Liu Shao-chi even "accused the Soviet leaders of becoming 'historical criminals' if they did not defend socialism in Hungary."¹⁷⁸ The next consultations went with

¹⁷⁵ Talbott, *Khrushchev Remembers*, 417.

¹⁷⁶ Mićunović, *Moskovske godine*, 155.

¹⁷⁷ Crump, *Warsaw Pact Reconsidered*, 35.

¹⁷⁸ *ibid.*

Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia. In a very short period of time, all countries agreed that intervention seems like the only option.¹⁷⁹

Final talks were held on Brioni in Yugoslavia moments before the second intervention. Khrushchev and Malenkov visited Tito on November 2nd and sought final consultations. These discussions were secret, without recording secretaries, translators, and technicians. Therefore, one of the rare testimonies from this meeting are the memoirs of Yugoslav ambassador in Moscow Veljko Mićunović. On one side of the table were Khrushchev and Malenkov, on the other Mićunović, Aleksandar Ranković, who was the second most powerful man in Yugoslavia, Kardelj, and Tito.¹⁸⁰ The Soviet leaders informed the Yugoslav side about the negotiations that were held in the Eastern Bloc. Basically, they only inform the Yugoslavs that the intervention was already planned and prepared. Malenkov was trying to show how Nagy's government had no right to rule Hungary by the law and the Hungarian constitution, and that the Soviet intervention was in accordance with the treaties such as the Warsaw Pact. Khrushchev was interested to hear the Yugoslav opinion on the future government of Hungary, as well as to discuss the fate of Nagy. The most important outcome of these talks, which lasted for almost 10 hours, were the Tito's support for this intervention and future government of Kádár or Ferenc Münnich, close Party colleague of Kádár. Both of them escaped from Budapest on November 2nd. Finally, Yugoslavs succeeded in influencing Khrushchev about Nagy's fate, as Yugoslav side hoped that Nagy could be influenced to support the future government. If compelled to admit his mistakes, he could help the new government against the counterrevolutionaries.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ Crump, *Warsaw Pact Reconsidered*, 36.

¹⁸⁰ Mićunović, *Moskovske godine*, 157.

¹⁸¹ *ibid.*, 156-165.

Khrushchev hoped that Nagy would be able to help Kádár and the Soviets in restoring order and "to prove his name as a communist."¹⁸²

USSR was well aware of the international situation at that moment. In these talks, they said how important was the invasion on Suez and that the Soviet Union could intervene without fear of harsh reaction from the West. Khrushchev stated that "the West is stuck in Egypt, we are in Hungary."¹⁸³ Therefore, with the blessings of all important socialist countries, and with the good international situation, the USSR was ready to deal with the Hungarian Revolution. The attack was ordered on November 4th in the morning, and it was expected that the rebels should be defeated in three days.¹⁸⁴ The Soviets would encounter stubborn defense only in Budapest.¹⁸⁵

During the talks between the Soviet leaders and the rest of the Eastern Bloc, Nagy tried to appeal for help. He was well aware that most of the Soviet troops were not backed up, and that new fresh units were entering the country. Therefore, he declared neutrality of Hungary on November 1st and its withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact Treaty.¹⁸⁶ Nagy was determined to keep the status of the neutral country and even pleaded to the UN. He proposed to the General Secretary of UN Dag Hammarskjöld that the next regular meeting of the General Assembly should be about the Hungarian issue.¹⁸⁷ Also, Nagy asked him to help Hungary in persuading the four great powers to assist Hungary in their struggle for neutrality and independence.¹⁸⁸ After Nagy received the information about the upcoming intervention, he read a proclamation at 5:20 am on November 4th on Radio Free Kosuth. He refused the advice of General Béla

¹⁸² Mićunović, *Moskovske godine*, 163.

¹⁸³ *ibid.*, 158.

¹⁸⁴ Sebestyen, *Twelve days*, 264.

¹⁸⁵ Talbott, *Khrushchev Remembers*, 422.

¹⁸⁶ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 332.

¹⁸⁷ *ibid.*, 333.

¹⁸⁸ The National Security Agency Archive, Document no. 7, *Minutes of the Nagy Government's Fourth Cabinet Meeting*, November 1, 1956

Király, who proposed the announcement of the state of war.¹⁸⁹ Nagy told the people that the Soviets were not invited to come, without giving orders about resistance, but also without the forbiddance to resist against the invaders.¹⁹⁰

The intervention was mostly successful, with some of the resistance pockets that would last only a couple of days. Kádár announced the proclamation of the new Hungarian Revolutionary and Worker's and Peasants' Government.¹⁹¹ Meanwhile, Nagy came to the Yugoslav embassy to accept the asylum that was offered by the Yugoslavs.

4.2 Growing Tensions between Yugoslavia, Hungary and the Soviet Union

Before the 1956 Revolution, Yugoslavia opted for the rehabilitation of Nagy and all other politicians that were victims of Rákosi's regime. Yugoslavia indicated in several meetings with Khrushchev how important was the role of Nagy and his ideas that were presented in New Course. Tito believed that many opponents of Rákosi had a similar conception of socialism as he did in Yugoslavia.¹⁹² However, Tito realized that events in Hungary could go too far, which could endanger the socialist system itself.¹⁹³ The talks in Brioni have shown that Yugoslavia still valued Nagy, at least as a person who was able to help the future government in Hungary. Therefore, the Yugoslav move to grant asylum to him and his colleagues was not unexpected. Even Khrushchev himself agreed in the Brioni meeting with a possible important role of Nagy in upcoming weeks, at least until the end of disorders in Hungary, and that Yugoslavs should influence him to support Kádár.

¹⁸⁹ Open Society Archives, HU OSA 336-0-4, Personal Papers of General Béla Király, Box#2, *Encounter of Yuri V. Andropov in Budapest*

¹⁹⁰ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 216.

¹⁹¹ *ibid.*

¹⁹² Tripković, *Jugoslavija i pitanje azila Imre Nađa*, 61.

¹⁹³ *ibid.*, 62.

Moreover, Yugoslav delegation mentioned in Brioni meeting that some communists already sought asylum such as Zoltan Santo, a member of the Hungarian Politburo.¹⁹⁴ He did that before the intervention, because he was afraid of political persecution from reactionary forces. Santo did not ask only for himself, but also for Nagy with a similar reason. Yugoslavs received that appeal a day before the Brioni meeting, and the Soviets were given notice in Santo's request. Finally, Yugoslavs gave a proposal to Nagy to support Kádár's government, which would delegitimize his reign as well as the members of the national unity government. However, that was not a condition for his asylum, which suited Nagy since he did not want to give such statement for moral and political reasons.¹⁹⁵ In any case, Yugoslavs issued the asylum for 48 persons, including family members.¹⁹⁶

Despite the decision to grant asylum, there were big differences between Tito and Nagy. We could see in the previous paragraphs that Tito himself was concerned about the future of communism as well as a possible consequence of the Revolution in Yugoslavia. Also, Tito did not want to support Nagy's decisions after the proclamation of national unity government, including the multi-party system. The Yugoslav leader did not accept this type of democratization and liberalization in a socialist world, similar like Khrushchev, since he had a suspicion that same demands for liberalization, which had already appeared in 1954 with Djilas' criticism of the regime, would soon arise again in Yugoslavia.¹⁹⁷ Finally, Tito was against his demands of Soviet withdrawal and Hungarian neutrality, mainly because he believed that this decision would bring unbalance in the Cold War relations,¹⁹⁸ and that Hungary would take Yugoslav international position. Therefore, in the case of Nagy, Yugoslavia respected the

¹⁹⁴ Mićunović, *Moskovske godine*, 160-161.

¹⁹⁵ Tripković, *Jugoslavija i pitanje azila Imre Nađa*, 64.

¹⁹⁶ Mićunović, *Moskovske godine*, 167.

¹⁹⁷ Tripković, *Jugoslavija i pitanje azila Imre Nađa*, 63.

¹⁹⁸ *ibid.*

previous deal in Brioni, which meant to influence Nagy and to support the Soviet intervention. The letter that was sent by Tito to Khrushchev confirms that "Tito had promised that he would try to 'work on Nagy.'"¹⁹⁹ Kardelj informed the Soviet ambassador in Belgrade about the Yugoslav talks with Nagy on 4th of November when the invasion started, but it was unclear for the Soviets if that happened before Nagy's last speech on Kosuth Radio or after it.²⁰⁰ In any case, the asylum was a tool for the Yugoslavs in influencing Nagy as a part of the deal in Brioni.

Veljko Mićunović wrote that the Soviets altered their behavior after the Brioni agreement. Soon after the asylum was granted to the Hungarians, Soviet vehicles including tanks surrounded the Yugoslav embassy. Furthermore, the Soviets imposed a blockade, and only Yugoslav citizens could enter the building. That was a huge problem for Hungarian refugees who got the asylum since some of them were sick and Hungarian doctors could not get in.²⁰¹ Mićunović was surprised how the Soviets changed their attitude towards Yugoslavia in just 24 hours. All of them, including Malenkov, were more than friendly during the Brioni talks and welcomed Yugoslav ideas for the solution of the Hungarian Revolution. Mićunović was afraid that the Kremlin was going to use the situation to blame Yugoslavia for Nagy's hiding.²⁰² The Soviet Union demanded from Yugoslavs to surrender Nagy and his colleagues to the Soviet or Hungarian authorities since he was an enemy of the Communist world. Yugoslavia was now in danger to ruin its relations, on the one hand, with the Soviet Union and, on the other

¹⁹⁹ Johanna Granville, Tito and the Nagy Affair, *Eastern European Quarterly* 32 (1998): 29.

²⁰⁰ *ibid.*, 33-34.

²⁰¹ Mićunović, *Moskovske godine*, 168.

²⁰² *ibid.*, 168-169.

hand, to damage its prestige in the International Relations, since it would be seen as a country who surrendered people who were supposed to be protected by Yugoslavia.²⁰³

There are several assumptions on the changed Soviet behavior after the intervention. Firstly, Khrushchev did not complain at the Brioni meeting when Tito mentioned a possibility that Santo would receive an asylum in the Yugoslav embassy. Nagy was mentioned several times during the talks, but the Yugoslavs did not mention directly that Nagy, among others, also asked for the asylum with Santo.²⁰⁴ Therefore, Khrushchev did not argue too much, and he trusted that Yugoslavs were able to persuade Nagy to support the new government. Secondly, Yugoslavs failed to influence Nagy to support Kádár, which caused Soviet and Hungarian discontent. Khrushchev probably lost patience very quickly. He was surprised, as well as Yugoslavs, with the content of Nagy's speech moments before the intervention, which was an appeal for help and message for the Western World. Finally, the Soviet leadership was afraid that Nagy could escape to Yugoslavia or further to the West and from there he could be much more dangerous and without direct Soviet control. In the beginning, they thought that Yugoslavs would very soon deliver Nagy to the Soviet command since Tito supported the invasion. However, when Soviets realized that Nagy was going to stay in the embassy for an indefinite period, they tried to press Yugoslavs by all means necessary.

Also, Yugoslavia had a little time to react since the invasion had begun in less than 24 hours after the Brioni meeting. No one from the Yugoslavs knew the exact time of the planned attack and Tito and the rest of his colleague certainly did not expect an intervention in a very short time. Although, Yugoslavs could presume that the invasion would start soon since the

²⁰³ Mićunović, *Moskovske godine*, 169.

²⁰⁴ Granville, *Tito and the Nagy Affair*, 32.

Soviets were in a hurry.²⁰⁵ However, the intervention was a surprise for the Yugoslavs. Therefore, as a consequence, Tito did not have enough time to talk to Nagy and to influence his decisions.²⁰⁶

Since the Yugoslavs were unwilling to give up on Nagy, the Soviets alongside with Hungarians started to provoke Tito. The latter, on the other hand, did not want to yield to the Soviets since he considered that Yugoslav support for intervention and the Yugoslav role in influencing Nagy was enough.²⁰⁷ Every further step towards Yugoslavs concurring to the Soviet demands would be considered negative in the West, and it would present Yugoslavia as a Soviet satellite. Hence, Yugoslav officials wrote a letter on 5th of November in which they requested the protection of Nagy and his group and eventual transport to Yugoslavia as well as for instructions that were given to Yugoslav ambassador in Budapest Dalibor Soldatić to protest any Soviet attempt that could compromise Nagy's freedom and asylum in the embassy.²⁰⁸

The Soviets were serious in their decision to capture Nagy and to show that they used force. On 5 November at 3:30 pm a Soviet tank opened fire at the Yugoslav embassy.²⁰⁹ Milenko Milanov, a cultural attaché, died in the gunfire, and several windows were damaged. The Soviet authorities claimed that the tank fire was an accident, but the Yugoslavs claimed the opposite by accusing the Soviet side of intentional fire since they knew the location of Nagy and his group within the Yugoslav embassy.²¹⁰ The tensions started to grow, and Khrushchev decided to send a letter to Tito, which was, in fact, a response to Tito's proposal to move Nagy

²⁰⁵ Mićunović, *Moskovske godine*, 167.

²⁰⁶ Granville, *Tito and the Nagy Affair*, 34.

²⁰⁷ Tripković, *Jugoslavija i pitanje azila Imre Nađa*, 64.

²⁰⁸ Arhiv Jugoslavije, CK SKJ, IX-75/I-37, *Instrukcija Soldatiću*, 5. XI 1956.

²⁰⁹ Granville, *Tito and the Nagy Affair*, 35.

²¹⁰ *ibid.*

to Yugoslavia.²¹¹ The Soviet leadership rejected his proposal by stating that Nagy should not move to Yugoslavia since they believed that he openly opposed to the Soviet intervention by calling the Hungarian army to resist. The Soviets insisted on that since Nagy did not forbid the use of force. However, the Soviets were silenced on a fact that Nagy did not give orders about the resistance. Besides that, it was dangerous for Soviet-Yugoslav-Hungarian relations to move Nagy to Yugoslavia since this could lead to assumptions that Yugoslavia was involved in a counterrevolution.²¹² Finally, it was stated that Nagy could pose a dangerous threat if he would be outside of the country. He did not resign from his position as a Prime Minister and could be in front of the opposition in the upcoming future, which would make the situation more difficult since his presence outside of Hungary would become a force for pulling together counterrevolutionary elements.²¹³ Therefore, the Soviet Presidium implied that his transfer to Hungarian authorities was the only right option in this matter.

Tito immediately sent his response on the 8th November.²¹⁴ In this letter, one could read an interesting point of view, in which Tito was trying to explain how Nagy and other communists were under pressure and influence of the old regime forces and that those forces tried to turn true communists including Nagy himself. These forces were capable of taking power and driving away Nagy and his colleagues, which were later unable to stop the forces of reaction.²¹⁵ Tito reminded the Soviet leadership of the Brioni talks and the Yugoslav role in resolving the Hungarian issue. He indicated that both the Soviets and Yugoslavs could not know if Nagy really spoke those words about the resistance on the Radio when the intervention began. Tito wrote Khrushchev to settle this matter in a peaceful manner in a friendly tone and

²¹¹ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 395-397.

²¹² Petrović, *Titova lična diplomatija*, 152.

²¹³ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 396.

²¹⁴ *ibid.*, 398-400.

²¹⁵ *ibid.*, 397.

to understand the Yugoslav international prestige and position within International Relations. He did not propose anything new in this letter and in the end he sent an appeal for stopping all false assumptions that Yugoslavia had anything to do with the counterrevolution since Yugoslavia was supporting Kádár's regime.²¹⁶

Khrushchev ordered Kádár to be more involved in this matter, which happened very soon after Tito's response. Yugoslav ambassador Soldatić received new instructions that meant negotiations with Kádár about this issue. The Yugoslav proposal suggested two options: guarantees for freedom of all persons who received an asylum and their safe return home, or alternatively, their safe transport to Yugoslavia. Official Belgrade even proposed material help for Kádár and Hungary in the sum of 150 millions of dinars.²¹⁷ Unfortunately, the Soviets were faster with a new proposal - the transport of Nagy and Géza Losonczy to Romania, while the rest of the group should be free.²¹⁸

It was unacceptable not only for Yugoslavia but also for Nagy himself to leave Hungary to a country that was a Soviet ally. Furthermore, Yugoslavia realized that the plan for transporting Nagy and his group to Yugoslavia was unrealistic. Also, the Soviets, as well as Hungarian government, did not want to let that happen. That could be seen from a letter of Andrei Gromyko, the member of CPSU Presidium, to Kádár on 9 November²¹⁹ in which he indicated that Nagy should stay in Hungary at all cost and that Yugoslavia would be convinced very soon to deliver Nagy to Hungarian authorities. He emphasized the importance of Hungarian intern affairs and law that was violated by official Belgrade and that Kádár should

²¹⁶ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 400.

²¹⁷ Tripković, *Jugoslavija i pitanje azila Imre Nađa*, 66.

²¹⁸ *ibid.*

²¹⁹ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 404-405.

insist on that.²²⁰ Hence, Yugoslavia had to work hard to find a proper solution, which caused several meetings between Ambassador Soldatić and Kádár on the 15th and 18th November. The first talks were satisfying for Yugoslavs since Kádár accepted the proposal for freedom of Nagy and his group and safe transport to their homes.²²¹ Kádár promised even guarantees on the next morning, and official Belgrade thought that the crisis was over. However, the Soviets were not satisfied with the agreement, because Nagy would still pose a threat to new established government in Budapest.

The day after, Kádár had a secret meeting with Georgii Malenkov, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Mikhail Suslov, member of Soviet Presidium and Soviet envoy in Hungary, Soviet diplomat Averki Aristov and Ivan Serov, head of KGB, after which they decided to capture and deport Nagy and his group to Romania.²²² Kádár agreed, without informing his Party members as well as the members of Presidium. The plan for Nagy's capture was top secret and that both for the Soviets and for Kádár it was important that no one found out what was planned, including Kádár's men. They could be afraid that the Yugoslavs would realize about the plans or that Hungarian people would be enraged and rise against the newly installed government if the plan was not treated as top secret. In any case, Yugoslavs were not informed about the new deal between Hungary and the USSR.

The new talks were held between Soldatić and Kádár on November 17. In the report of Malenkov, Suslov and Aristov, one could read that Kádár announced to the Yugoslav representative that Nagy should be handed to Hungarian authorities; that this group had to leave Hungary; previously they had to make a statement of support to Kádár's government; that there

²²⁰ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 405.

²²¹ Tripković, *Jugoslavija i pitanje azila Imre Nađa*, 67.

²²² Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 435.

would be no hostility towards the new communist regime; finally, the most interesting point was Kádár's assurance that no impediments would be raised if Nagy and his group wanted to go to Yugoslavia.²²³ The last point was a surprise since it contradicted Kádár-Soviet proposal. In my opinion, the Hungarians were formally ready to allow Nagy's departure to Yugoslavia or that they would simply say anything to drag him out of the embassy. Kádár proposed during this meeting that Nagy's groups should leave Hungary to a socialist country because of their own safety. In any case, even if the transport to Yugoslavia had been granted, the scenario would be the same, mainly because a capture was already planned and Kádár was silent about that.

Soldatić responded that Yugoslavia could probably do the following: produce an open declaration on this question; to eventually terminate asylum to Nagy and his colleagues and to bear no responsibility for any further consequences; Yugoslav ambassador would leave Hungary due to a lack of normal working conditions.²²⁴ The Soviets after this realized that Yugoslavia wanted to find a solution and that Nagy became a burden for official Belgrade. They believed that Yugoslavia would probably try to save its reputation and that the Yugoslav declaration was expected to be tendentious. Finally, they proposed the following: preparation for the arrest of Nagy after he exits the building; demanding the statement of support and that there would be no hostility against Kádár; transfer to Romania; preparing the text of declaration by the Hungarian government for the purpose of Nagy capture and transport.²²⁵

²²³ Archive Alexander N. Yakovlev, 1956 Hungarian uprising Document №20, *Telephone Message GM Malenkov, MA Suslov, AB Aristova from Budapest to the Central Committee of the J. Kadar talks with the Yugoslav ambassador to Hungary on a group of Nagy and his proposals on the organization of his arrest*, accessed April 19, 2016, <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/almanah/inside/almanah-doc/108>

²²⁴ *ibid.*

²²⁵ *ibid.*

Yugoslavia rejected the proposal of Kádár in a letter sent to him on the 18th of November. Kádár's demands were unacceptable, not until Yugoslavia receives Kádár's guarantees for Nagy and his group. On the other hand, Yugoslavia was eager to find a solution. Hence, Tito sent the Yugoslav Deputy for Foreign Affairs Dobrivoje Vidić to negotiate with Kádár. He did not only speak to him, but also to Nagy to inform him that he could leave the embassy after receiving guarantees from Kádár and that he should decide if he wanted to resign or not.²²⁶ Nagy, however, did not want to accept any kind of resignation. Therefore, Vidić had to find a solution with Kádár, which would please both sides. They had three meetings: one on the 19th of November and two on the 21st November, in which they talked not only about Nagy, but also on the general situation in Hungary, the presence of the Soviet troops, about the policy of Nagy and his colleagues, etc.²²⁷

Vidić claimed that Nagy still believed that the people would follow him and his friends. Nagy believed that Hungarians still trusted in socialist progress. These were the reasons why he did not want to leave Hungary at all.²²⁸ Kádár, on the other hand, insisted on Nagy's transfer to Hungarian authorities. He mentioned how Yugoslavia did not respect Hungarian sovereignty when they decided to grant the asylum. Kádár pointed out that asylum was given on the day when the intervention started, when there was no danger from counterrevolutionaries anymore.²²⁹ Furthermore, Kádár stated how Nagy presented a threat to his legitimacy since he did not resign. The West could question the legitimacy of Kádár's government.²³⁰ Vidić calmly

²²⁶ Tripković, *Jugoslavija i pitanje azila Imre Nađa*, 67.

²²⁷ *ibid.*, 67.

²²⁸ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 444.

²²⁹ Tripković, *Jugoslavija i pitanje azila Imre Nađa*, 68.

²³⁰ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 446.

said that the only important thing in this matter was the recognition of Kádár's regime by all friendly nations.²³¹

After long talks the agreement was reached on the 21st November. Hungarian government accepted demands from Belgrade in which guarantees were given to Nagy and his group, which meant that Hungarians in the Yugoslav embassy should freely go home.²³² After negotiations with Nagy, he thanked the Yugoslavs, and decided to leave the embassy. The Yugoslavs were finally pleased, since they had no more obstacles for good Soviet-Hungarian-Yugoslav relations, and, on the other hand, they saved its reputation in International Relations. However, this satisfaction did not last long since the Soviet plan for capture was still in progress. Soldatić mentioned in an interview in 1977 that he was not pleased with the atmosphere after the agreement, and that he felt, with other Yugoslav diplomats, that something was wrong. The reason for that was the presence of Soviet vehicles and soldiers around the embassy. But, he added: "When the agreement was made, I believed that Kádár was acting fairly. I had no feeling that there was any plot."²³³

The Soviets were also informed about the agreement and that the Hungarian government had sent a letter to Yugoslavia, in which they were informed about the guarantees.²³⁴ Malenkov, Suslov, and Aristov had already prepared everything with Serov and Münnich. Nagy and his group were captured in the evening of the 22nd November, after which they left in an unknown direction. The Soviet plan was accomplished.

²³¹ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 446.

²³² *ibid.*

²³³ Dalibor Soldatic, *Čim je gužva, Čif je tu*, Vjesnik, 28, 29, 30. 11. 1977, 7.

²³⁴ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 449.

4.3 The Reconstruction of Nagy's arrest

It was an unpleasant surprise for Yugoslavia. The deal that was seen as the final compromise between Yugoslavia and Hungary fell apart. What actually happened was known only after some time. Yugoslavia firstly even did not know where the bus with Nagy and his group went. The Hungarian government informed Yugoslav side that Nagy and his friends, including family members, were transported to Romania. Ambassador Soldatić unsuccessfully tried to contact Kádár in order to get information about the event. According to sources, the following happened:

The group was ready to enter the bus that was in front of the embassy for them at 6:30 pm on 22 November.²³⁵ It was a bus prepared by Hungarian authorities. Nagy did realize that something was wrong since the Soviet officer was nearby, eager to enter the bus with the Hungarians and Yugoslav representatives. When Nagy firstly entered the bus, the driver warned him: "Be careful, Comrade Nagy, you will not be taken to the place they have promised".²³⁶ Nagy was confused, stepped out of the vehicle quickly returned to Yugoslav diplomats. He refused to enter the bus as long as the Soviet officer was in there. Yugoslav diplomats insisted that the Soviet officer should leave the bus. That was done, but temporarily. In the meantime, the ambassador ordered two of his diplomats, first secretary of the Yugoslav embassy Milan Georgievich and military attaché Milan Dropc, to monitor the fulfillment of agreement with the Hungarian government and to be in the vehicle with Nagy and his friends.²³⁷ The ambassador personally came to talk with the KGB officer, who assured him that he was there only to ensure

²³⁵ Albert Camus, *The Truth About Nagy Affair*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1959), 13.

²³⁶ Sebestyen, *Twelve days*, 284.

²³⁷ Arhiv Jugoslavije, Tanjug, *Crveni Bilten*, 112/220, 25.11.1956.

the safety of all passengers.²³⁸ Nagy finally sat in the vehicle. However, while the driver started his engine, the Soviet officer jumped back in the vehicle.²³⁹

Two Soviet police cars came from nowhere, with the instructions to follow the bus. In the beginning, the Yugoslav diplomats thought that the bus was going in the right direction. However, that did not last for too long since the bus drove to the Soviet command post.²⁴⁰ Georgievich later told that that the bus "hardly travelled 200 meters when it stopped, and the Russians physically pulled us from the bus."²⁴¹ That happened in the Boulevard Maksim Gorky since the permanent Soviet headquarters was there. Yugoslav diplomats realized that something was very wrong after which they started to protest. The Soviet officer, who was with them on the bus, informed them that he had the orders to take the passengers in charge.²⁴² He had no concerns about Yugoslav protests since he only followed the orders of the Soviet supreme command. The last desperate attempt was to protest to the Soviet officials in the headquarters that entered the bus when it stopped in front of them. The Yugoslavs emphasized the importance of the deal between two countries, which did not allow the interference of a third party.

The Soviet officers lost their patience. Firstly they requested that both diplomats leave the bus. After the Yugoslavs rejected, the officer threatened with a gun, which forced the diplomats to leave. Two police cars were replaced by Soviet armored vehicles and the bus set off for "unrevealed destination".²⁴³ Later it was found out that the Soviets transported the group to the Rakoczi Military School on the outskirts of the city. Guards threatened that they would

²³⁸ Sebestyen, *Twelve days*, 285.

²³⁹ *ibid.*

²⁴⁰ Camus, *The Truth About Nagy Affair*, 13.

²⁴¹ Sebestyen, *Twelve days*, 285.

²⁴² *ibid.*

²⁴³ Camus, *The Truth About Nagy Affair*, 13.

shoot if anyone tried to escape.²⁴⁴ Two soldiers entered the bus and hustled Nagy out of the bus since he refused to do so, when it was requested.²⁴⁵ Münnich met Nagy and the group at 7:40 pm, in order to see if Nagy was frightened enough to support Kádár and his regime.²⁴⁶ Münnich tried four days in a row to convince Nagy to do as was requested, but without success. Finally, after four days, Nagy was transferred to the airport, and the plane flew to Romania, where he was held in Snagov castle near Bucharest. It was a prison for him, but on the other hand, he was treated decently, until his transfer to Budapest in 1957 for his trial.²⁴⁷

The Yugoslavian government was able only to protest, which was done several times. Firstly not long after the capture of Nagy and later during his trial and execution. Hungarian government claimed at the beginning that they transferred Nagy to Romania because of his own safety until Hungary become stable.²⁴⁸ The Soviets were unsatisfied all along with the Yugoslav moves and their harsh reaction. They once again accused Yugoslavs of spreading the wrong ideas of socialism that was later used by counterrevolutionaries.²⁴⁹ Finally, Yugoslavia was further seen as an instigator of counterrevolution, which was written in the verdict of Nagy and his close coworkers.²⁵⁰ Yugoslavia saw that as a moral attack, which caused further implications to mutual relations. In any case, Nagy was hanged on 18 June 1958.²⁵¹ His former party colleagues, Pál Maléter, Miklós Gimes, and Jozsef Szilágy had the same fate, while five others were sentenced to several years of hard labor in prison.²⁵²

²⁴⁴ Sebestyen, *Twelve days*, 285.

²⁴⁵ *ibid.*

²⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 285-286.

²⁴⁷ Sebestyen, *Twelve days*, 289-290.

²⁴⁸ Tripković, *Jugoslavija i pitanje azila Imre Nađa*, 69.

²⁴⁹ *ibid.*, 70.

²⁵⁰ *ibid.*, 72.

²⁵¹ Sebestyen, *Twelve days*, 292.

²⁵² Tripković, *Jugoslavija i pitanje azila Imre Nađa*, 71.

Yugoslavs did not know what the Soviet plans were. However, there are still opposing views which claim that Yugoslavia was involved in Nagy capture that led to his execution. In order to further prove the thesis of this work, the following subchapter will analyze more documents, letters and testimonies, which will oppose conspiracy theories and confirm that Yugoslavia did not surrender Nagy intentionally to the Soviets on the 22nd of November.

4.4 Yugoslav Role

Among the proponents of theory that Yugoslavia was involved in Nagy capture the most voiceful is Victor Sebestyen. He used literature in relation with Yugoslavia such as *Moscow Diary* from Mićunović and the *Documents on Hungarian Revolution* in which one could find that Yugoslavia had no idea of the Soviet plan. However, he claims the opposite. He states that Yugoslav role was, at first, to neutralize Nagy,²⁵³ which was true, since Tito supported the Soviet invasion and at Brioni he made a deal to influence him to give a statement of support for the new regime. We saw that Tito was not in favor of Nagy since he disliked his policy during the Revolution that could have had an effect on Tito's reign as well. However, the author also emphasizes that Tito vetoed the asylum decision²⁵⁴ which was not true. If we look the testimonies at the Brioni talks in Mićunović memoirs, Yugoslav side talked about asylum, without directly mentioning Nagy. Khrushchev had agreed that Yugoslavia should influence on Nagy.

Sebastyen also gives us information about Nagy discomfort in Yugoslav embassy.²⁵⁵ He writes that Nagy was uncomfortable mainly because Tito held a speech in Pula on the 11th of

²⁵³ Sebestyen, *Twelve days*, 282.

²⁵⁴ *ibid.*, 284.

²⁵⁵ *ibid.*

November, in which was "highly critical of Nagy and his handling of Hungarian crisis".²⁵⁶ This could be the expected reaction of Tito since he supported the intervention. What Sebestyen emphasizes from Tito's speech in Pula is the following: "If Imre Nagy's government had been more energetic, if it had not always hesitated to take strong actions against the chaos and against the fact that Communists were killed by reactionaries... if it had actively opposed the reaction, then perhaps things could have been straightened out and perhaps the intervention of the Soviet army could have been avoided. But what did Imre Nagy do? He asked people to take weapons against the Soviet army, and he asked the Western countries for help. This intervention was exploited enormously by the West. We have to protect the Kádár government and help them... I can tell you that I know the men who are now the members of the new government and, in my opinion, they represent the most honest forces of Hungary...".²⁵⁷

On the other hand, Tito's speech in Pula was not only against Nagy's lack of firmness against the counterrevolution. His speech was also criticism of Stalinism, the current Soviet leadership, as well as Soviet decisions in the Eastern Bloc. Tito claimed that the first Soviet intervention was unnecessary and that the call for intervention came from Gerő, who was similar to Rákosi, a true enemy of Yugoslav socialism.²⁵⁸ He did support Kádár, even if there were disagreements between them on Nagy's case. Tito ultimately believed that socialism should be preserved without Nagy since he allowed the strengthening of counterrevolutionaries. Tito stressed that Kádár was in a difficult situation and called for an action against those elements that endangered perspectives of socialism.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁶ Sebestyen, *Twelve days*, 284.

²⁵⁷ *ibid.*

²⁵⁸ Arhiv Jugoslavije, Borba, 16. 11. 1956.

²⁵⁹ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 418-431.

In his speech, Tito reminded the world how important was the Moscow Declaration since it gives the opportunity for other socialist countries to develop their type of socialism as it was already done in Yugoslavia. Tito accused the Soviets of not respecting this declaration.²⁶⁰ The case of Poland and Hungary proved this claims. However, in Hungary, Tito saw the differences since the reaction could take the power unlike in Poland. He emphasized the importance of Poland's case. This model, Tito believed, should be the one to follow in future reforms of socialist countries.²⁶¹ Finally, Tito condemned the Soviet intervention in general and Soviet behavior that expressed the use of force.²⁶² Therefore, Tito supported Kádár in this speech but also the new type of socialism, and most importantly, condemned the Stalinist elements and Stalinist approach in intra-bloc relations. Tito did criticize Nagy but mostly because of his decisions and weak approach against the enemies of communism.

Tito's speech provoked the Soviet Union. All newspapers, including Pravda, wrote a response. Khrushchev took Tito's remarks as a personal insult, rejected all connections with Stalin's regime and warned him that his actions led towards the rupture of Soviet-Yugoslav relations.²⁶³ The writings of Soviet newspapers reminded Yugoslavs on the period after Tito-Stalin split.²⁶⁴ There were even claims that the Soviet Union intentionally made the arrest in order to show the Yugoslavs who was in charge in the socialist world as a response to the Pula speech.²⁶⁵ The Soviets became concerned on many issues with Yugoslavia, and after the Pula speech, they did not want to speak about Nagy. For example, whenever the Yugoslav ambassador started a talk about Nagy's capture, Khrushchev would get agitated about Tito and

²⁶⁰ Arhiv Jugoslavije, Borba, 16. 11. 1956.

²⁶¹ Arhiv Jugoslavije, Tanjug, *Crveni Bilten*, 112/220, 26.11.1956.

²⁶² Arhiv Jugoslavije, *Politika*, 16.11.1956.

²⁶³ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 418.

²⁶⁴ Mićunović, *Moskovske godine*, 211.

²⁶⁵ Arhiv Jugoslavije, Tanjug, *Crveni Bilten*, 112/221, 06.12.1956,

the Yugoslavs and also would disagree with Mićunović's opinion that Nagy should have stayed in Hungary.²⁶⁶

Finally, Sebestyen states that Yugoslavs knew about the Soviet plans.²⁶⁷ He underlined Kádár's claims in which he had a verbal understanding with the Yugoslavs that Nagy would never reach home.²⁶⁸ It is possible that Kádár threatened Yugoslavs on several occasions during the meetings with the Yugoslav representatives. However, Sebestyen did not mention the written guarantees that were given to Yugoslavs. Mićunović mentioned in his memoirs a letter from Kádár in the name of his government on the 21st of November: "...in the interest of the end of the issue, the Hungarian government... in written form repeats the verbal statement, which was repeated several times, that Hungarian government will not take any measures against Nagy and his group for their previous deeds. We are acknowledging that from this moment granted asylum to this group is not valid anymore and that this group will leave the Yugoslav embassy free to go to their homes..".²⁶⁹ Therefore, all such claims that Kádár informed Yugoslavs that Nagy would not return to his home could be true, but the final letter that came gave the Yugoslavs assurance that Hungary decided to respect the deal.

One more author had a similar opinion like Sebestyen. Charles Gati is a political scientist who fled from Hungary during the 1956 revolt and is now a Senior Adjunct Professor of European Studies at Johns Hopkins University. In his book, he used a similar literature like Sebestyen that is in relation with Yugoslavia, including the above-mentioned documents on the Hungarian Revolution and Mićunović' diary, without using Khrushchev memoirs or visiting the Yugoslav Archive. In any case, he indicates that Yugoslavia has a role to trap and neutralize

²⁶⁶ Mićunović, *Moskovske godine*, 202.

²⁶⁷ Sebestyen, *Twelve days*, 285.

²⁶⁸ *ibid.*

²⁶⁹ Mićunović, *Moskovske godine*, 193.

Nagy.²⁷⁰ These claims were similar like Sebestyen. However, Gati goes further by indicating Tito's role in it. He sees Tito as a man of *realpolitik*. On the one hand, Gati believes that Tito would have liked to witness the rise of a Titoism in Hungary. On the other hand, Tito expected a good outcome from the intervention of the Soviet Union.²⁷¹ Tito wanted to stay the only player in town, according to Gati. Further, he claims that he favored the Soviet decision to intervene mainly because he would maintain his position in the eyes of the West and the Third World as the only independent communist state. Therefore, Gati accuses Tito of luring Nagy inside the embassy in order to later be captured by the Soviets and finally neutralized in Romania.²⁷²

These claims are interesting since Tito certainly was a reasonable player in international relations. Tito could benefit even if Nagy had won, but there was a problem with counterrevolution and Nagy's decision for returning Hungary to a multi-party system. Tito was still not a leader of the future Non-Alignment Movement that would begin to exist only after the Hungarian Revolution. It was a problem for Tito to counter Soviet decisions inside the Bloc, but on the other hand, he tried to use the situation and to strengthen his influence in the Eastern Bloc. Nagy could have been the test for Tito and his capabilities to influence inside the Soviet sphere. If Tito only lured Nagy, why did he not just let him be captured earlier? Finally, what image of himself could Tito show if he did like the Soviet Union demanded? Basically, it could only do the opposite of Gati's claims since it would present Tito as a big disappointment and a Soviet satellite. Through the eyes of the West and the Third World Yugoslavia would not be seen as an independent country anymore.

²⁷⁰ Gati, *Failed Illusions*, 17.

²⁷¹ *ibid.*, 192.

²⁷² *ibid.*

Finally, to further strengthen the position that Yugoslavia was not involved in Nagy's capture, I will present two more documents. The first one is a letter that Tito has sent to Khrushchev. It was a secret letter, unknown until the end of the communist rule in Europe. In this letter, sent on December 3rd, Tito defended his speech in Pula and dismissed all attacks that came from the Soviet side. Most importantly, he did not write against Nagy or he did not congratulate the Soviet leadership on their moves on the Nagy case, but quite opposite. He wrote that Nagy's capture was a mistake and that he should have been allowed to return home unharmed.²⁷³ Tito emphasized that Nagy and his group should choose in which country to go and not to transport them to Romania against their will.²⁷⁴ Tito also stated: "We believed that it would be most beneficial if Nagy were allowed to return to, and to continue to live, in Hungary".²⁷⁵ Finally, the most interesting part was the mentioning of Nehru in this letter. Tito informed him about the situation in Hungary, which deeply concerned and disappointed Indian Prime Minister. Nehru asked Tito to mediate with Khrushchev in order to stop the deportation of Nagy, what was mentioned to Khrushchev in the letter.²⁷⁶

The second document is the Memorandum of Yurii Andropov on 29 August 1957. The Soviet Ambassador was well aware that Yugoslavia would raise its voice against the trial of Nagy's group. Therefore, he made an agreement with the Hungarian side to inform official Belgrade that the trial would begin soon since new facts had been found on Nagy's betrayal and his criminal activities.²⁷⁷ The White Book, issued by Hungarian authorities about counterrevolution, was printed in order to "prove" his treachery.²⁷⁸ As it was mentioned earlier,

²⁷³ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 456.

²⁷⁴ *ibid.*, 457.

²⁷⁵ *ibid.*, 458.

²⁷⁶ *ibid.*

²⁷⁷ *ibid.*, 541.

²⁷⁸ Open Society Archives, HU OSA 398-0-1, *White Book Shows Imre Nagy's Treachery*

Yugoslavia was aware that trial as was a chance to compromise the Yugoslav role and to further strengthen the story of Yugoslav conspiracy with counterrevolutionaries. In fact, Andropov tried to avoid all of that, because he expected that Yugoslav would change their mind when they hear "new" facts about Nagy. He wanted to prevent new deterioration of relations.²⁷⁹ Even Khrushchev admitted the importance of good relations between Kremlin and Belgrade: "We had already liquated one conflict with Yugoslavia after Stalin's death, and we had no reason to want to start another".²⁸⁰

Yugoslav authorities were interested constantly in the Nagy's case, which proved the Yugoslav determination to influence Hungary to set Nagy free in order to fulfill the agreement that was made on the 21st of November 1956. Because of this trial, Yugoslavia and Hungary had worsened the relations for a long period. Moreover, both sides sent two notes in 1958 and 1959 (Hungarian notes were sent on 21 July 1958 and 5 January 1959 and Yugoslav on the 8th of October 1958 and the 27th of January 1959)²⁸¹ with old arguments and without success to influence each other. Both sides at one point realized that the dispute would last for an infinite time and, thus, they decided to improve relations and omit mentioning Nagy until the end of their reign.²⁸²

²⁷⁹ Békés et al., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 542.

²⁸⁰ Talbott, *Khrushchev Remembers*, 424.

²⁸¹ Tripković, *Jugoslavija i pitanje azila Imre Nađa*, 72.

²⁸² *ibid.*

Conclusion

After presenting the documents, primary and secondary sources, reconstructing and interpreting of the events that happened before and after Nagy's capture and, after giving a broader image of relations between Hungary, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union in one decade, as well as pointing out the key issues in international relations in that period, I can conclude the following:

1) Yugoslavia had its own interests in Hungary. Tito promoted the policy of non-interference in domestic affairs, which defended his way of socialism as well as Yugoslav independence from the Soviet Union. Another country in the region that was close to Titoism was definitely Hungary. This country that would follow the Yugoslav model would additionally strengthen the Yugoslav position and mostly its independence from Kremlin. However, Tito decided to support the intervention in Hungary firstly because liberalization policy in Budapest went too far. Non-interference and the right for every nation to choose its own path, as it was stated in the Moscow Declaration, were respected until communism was safe. In Hungary, the multi-party system, as well as the reaction, endangered the communist regime and raised a question of system stability, not only in Hungary but also in Yugoslavia since the consequences could provoke similar events. Secondly, Tito was afraid of broader consequences that could provoke neutral Hungary since Hungarian independence could create instability in the Cold War. Therefore, the defense of communism in Hungary was a defense of Yugoslav position between two confronted sides in Cold War, as well as the security of Tito's regime in the future.

2) Totalitarian paradigm was highly visible in the moments when People's Democracies were established, particularly in those cases when communist parties were struggling in taking

power in a country. However, this paradigm fails to see the changes in intra-bloc relations that were pointed by revisionist which had as a consequence a higher level of autonomy for Soviet allies after Stalin's death. Eastern European countries transform itself from a satellite country to junior ally. However, the Soviets were against any potential scenario that would lead to another Yugoslav example. Therefore, de-satelization had its limits, which was shown in Poland and Hungarian case. Likewise, good relations with Yugoslavia had a greater cause for the Soviet Union, which was used, among other things, for the stability of the Eastern Bloc. Moscow Declaration was a concession to the Yugoslav side, in order to improve friendly relations with official Belgrade. However, this concession, as well as full normalization of relations with Yugoslavia, had an unexpected impact on Hungary and Poland, which forced the Soviet leadership to temporarily cease de-satelization processes and to react in an old Stalinist way in order to save the unity of Communist bloc. However, even after the intervention, totalitarian paradigm has no use since the processes of de-satelization continued within the WTO, which was visible in later events such as varying interests from the building of the Berlin Wall, the potential nuclearization of West Germany and European security, to nonproliferation, the Vietnam War, ways to reform the Warsaw Pact and finally the Prague Spring.²⁸³

3) Yugoslav task in the Hungarian Revolution was giving a support not only for the intervention but for the future government. However, the main assignment was to neutralize Nagy in order to force him to resign by giving a statement of support for Kádár and his new regime. What was unexpected for all countries were Nagy's speech broadcasted on the Radio that was multiplied in several languages and his stubbornness not to give support to Kádár and not to resign as a Prime Minister. Unexpectedly, Nagy became a problem for Hungary and the

²⁸³ Crump, *Warsaw Pact Reconsidered*, 3.

Soviet Union since his presence in Budapest could provoke a danger for the newly established government because of his popularity among the people. Yugoslavia was at risk to undermine good relations with the Soviet Union after the Belgrade and Moscow Declaration. Therefore, all three parties sought the solution that would please all, unfortunately without a good outcome.

4) Yugoslavia wanted to keep its sovereignty and independence from the Soviet Union. Besides the fact that Yugoslavia was secured with a Balkan Pact that was almost forgotten during 1956, official Belgrade realized that Yugoslavia relented too much in mutual relations to the Soviet Union. Hence, one should not be surprised with the Yugoslav decision to grant asylum for Nagy and his colleagues during the Soviet intervention. Tito realized that Nagy could be used in showing the West and the Third World that Yugoslavia made decisions independently.²⁸⁴ Therefore, Yugoslavia sought to defend its freedom, rights, but also Yugoslav prestige in the non-socialist part of the World.²⁸⁵ Tito's speech in Pula could be interpreted in that way since the main point of the attack was Stalinism and Stalinist elements in Eastern Europe.

5) International context exacerbated the crisis. Yugoslavia wanted to find new allies in the Third World and to raise a chance for an even greater role in international relations. The Suez crisis started during the Hungarian Revolution, which provoked the Soviets to deal quicker with Hungary, to secure the communist regime, which also meant neutralizing Nagy and his transportation away from Hungary. Therefore, the Soviets decided to solve the crisis quickly, but the Yugoslav asylum jeopardized their attempts. On the other hand, Yugoslavia was important in the Soviet plans in Suez and Nagy could only provoke worsening the relations, which would harden Soviet positions in the Third World. Finally, Yugoslavia became

²⁸⁴ Granville, Tito and the Nagy Affair, 38-39.

²⁸⁵ *ibid.*, 38.

an important UN mediator in Suez, which strengthened its prestige. Therefore, official Belgrade was unready to release Nagy intentionally without guarantees for his safety in order to maintain the Yugoslav reputation.

6) The Soviet leadership, as well as Kádár, started to lose patience, and since there was no option that Nagy could reach Yugoslavia or any other country except Romania, they decided to kidnap Nagy after he left the Yugoslav embassy. It was a top secret KGB decision,²⁸⁶ known only to a few people including Münnich and Kádár. Kádár never mentioned to Yugoslav representative Dobrivoje Vidić that Nagy would not reach its home destination. He mentioned it earlier in the time when negotiations were still under way with Ambassador Soldatić, and that could be interpreted as a threat during the negotiations. Later, he tried to neglect this, by stating that he did not give any guarantees at all.²⁸⁷ Luckily, the document²⁸⁸ proves that Kádár signed the agreement with Vidić and gave false written guarantees on Nagy's freedom and non-persecution. Therefore, Yugoslavia was not aware of a potential kidnapping scenario, although it could assume it.²⁸⁹

7) Several documents and actions indicated the Yugoslav negative reaction on the Soviet decision to capture Nagy. Among others, the most important one was Tito's letter to Khrushchev, a memorandum of Andropov, Yugoslav threat to provoke a reaction in the United Nations,²⁹⁰ personal talks between Khrushchev and Mićunović as well as Yugoslav notes to Hungary concerning Nagy's trial. Yugoslavia was well aware how that trial could provoke a negative image of Yugoslavia in socialist countries. Likewise, the Soviets sent a message to

²⁸⁶ Alexander S. Stykalin, *Soviet–Yugoslav Relations and the Case of Imre Nagy*, *Cold War History* 5 (2005): 11.

²⁸⁷ Open Society Archives, HU OSA 398-0-1, *János Kádár Denies that Safe Conduct Was Promised to Imre Nagy*

²⁸⁸ *Bela knjiga o politici Jugoslavije prema Mađarskoj i slučaj Imre Nadja*, (Beograd: SIV, 1959), 155-158.

²⁸⁹ Stykalin, *Soviet–Yugoslav Relations and the Case of Imre Nagy*, 13.

²⁹⁰ Mićunović, *Moskovske godine*, 202.

official Belgrade how new "Tito" would end in the Eastern Bloc. After that Tito has temporarily reawakened the Balkan Pact,²⁹¹ but he permanently realized that his third path should be found outside of the Eastern Bloc, as well as outside of the West - in the Third World and that his policy should be institutionalized.²⁹² One could conclude that one of the outcomes of the Nagy's capture, trial and execution was Tito's focus on building the Non-alignment Movement, which officially started in 1961.

Therefore, after presenting all evidence, I can conclude that Yugoslavia did not know about Soviets plan to arrest Nagy and that Yugoslavia did not let him go intentionally to be captured by the Soviets. On the other hand, Yugoslavs could have presumed that something bad would happen to Nagy, but under the conditions when 48 persons were in embassy, including small children, surrounded by the Soviets, with food shortening and when one of the Yugoslav diplomats was killed by the Soviets tanks, the Yugoslavs were not able or willing to do anything more for him or other asylum seekers.

One decade of relations between Hungary, USSR, and Yugoslavia had many ups and downs. The Soviet Union took a massive part and involvement in the foreign and domestic policy of all former countries in the Eastern Bloc. On the example of Yugoslavia and Hungary, one could see how their relations shifted just in a couple of months because of the crude policy of the Soviet elites and especially from Joseph Stalin. Things were changed on better after Stalin's death since new Soviet establishment wanted to correct the mistakes that were made not only in Yugoslavia but also in whole Eastern Bloc. The Soviet allies got higher level of

²⁹¹ Arhiv Jugoslavije, Tanjug, *Crveni Bilten*, 112/221, 3.12.1956.

²⁹² Petrović, *Titova lična diplomatija*, 165.

autonomy in their affairs, transforming themselves into junior allies instead of being satellite countries. Many dissidents, such as Imre Nagy and Władysław Gomułka could be released from house prison or political absence. It was a time of liberalization of the East, a time of detente in International Relations, and a period of reducing tensions between two Global Superpowers.

Nagy tried to reform the country, the system, and he even declared neutrality, which would enable Hungary a similar Yugoslav position in international relations. However, USSR realized that consequences of that would be catastrophic for Soviet influence in Europe. The Soviets decided to intervene, but with the support from all allies and Yugoslavia. What influenced the Soviet decision was also international context since Suez crisis culminated during Hungarian Revolution, and intervention in Hungary and resolving the crisis would enable them to be more involved in the Middle East.

It was widely accepted that Yugoslavia had a significant role in intervention against the Revolution. Tito supported it mainly because of his interests that were the defense of communism as well as of his reign. However, Yugoslavs wanted to show their independence in Nagy case and to prove that they were not Soviet junior ally or satellite. Tito had its famous speech in Pula that criticized Stalinism and remnants of Stalinist's elements in Eastern Europe.

Many documents, letters and memoirs confirm the Yugoslav surprise in Nagy's capture. Yugoslavs were not informed of that plan. It caused many negative reactions in Belgrade that damaged relations, especially between Yugoslavia and Hungary, for next two years until Nagy's execution.

Imre Nagy will be remembered as a man who tried to change and reform the system. He unwillingly became a symbol of the biggest resistance against the Soviet Union in Eastern

Europe, until the collapse of the communism in Europe. Instead of becoming a new "Tito", he turned into an example how the Soviets would deal with any of such attempts. After Hungarian case, it was realized that emulation of Yugoslav example in any other socialist country in Europe was unrealistic until the fall of communism. As soon as that happened, it became apparent that the legacy of Nagy remained strong among the Hungarian people, who rehabilitated and reburied Nagy in his hometown Budapest in 1989.

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