

1958

News Background

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TITO -- AFTER A DECADE, THE POINT OF NO RETURN

MUNICH, June 2 -- (STANKOVIC) -- The June 1 attacks on the Soviet Union by "Borba" and "Politika", occasioned by the third anniversary of the (2 June 1955) Belgrade Declaration and by the Soviet (27 May, 1958) cutting of credits to Yugoslavia, reflect the embarrassment of the Yugoslav leaders at this most recent round of the anti-Yugoslav campaign by the Soviet bloc countries. Behind recent strongly worded articles in the Yugoslav newspapers defying the bitter onslaught against TITO by individual Communist countries, one can note the barely concealed anxiety of the Yugoslav leaders who are realists enough to cherish no illusions about what the Kremlin's anger might hold in store for them, but who still are hoping against hope that some "deus ex machina," some real miracle, may yet appear to comfort them.

Commenting on the most recent anti-Yugoslav turn in Soviet foreign policy, yesterday's "Politika" said that "since the signing of the Belgrade Declaration nothing has objectively changed in the relations between our country and the USSR and countries of the socialist camp". It wonders "what might have now caused the sudden shift in the Soviet attitude."

This question is not too difficult to answer. It is precisely the fact that "nothing has objectively changed" in the relations between Yugoslavia and the Soviet bloc "since the signing of the Belgrade Declaration" that has caused "the sudden shift in the Soviet attitude". In 1955 KHRUSHCHEV hoped through opportunistic manipulations of the flexible ideological formulations to bring about a permanent "objective change in Yugoslavia's geo-political position, i.e. Yugoslavia's return into the Communist family "headed by the Soviet Union", the "most powerful socialist country" etc. This has not been realized.

Soviet 1948 Conditions...

Had Stalin's conditions, submitted to TITO in 1948 for Yugoslavia's readmission into the Soviet bloc family, been similar to those proposed in 1955 by KHRUSHCHEV, it is probable that the Yugoslav leaders would at the time have accepted them readily.

In contrast with KHRUSHCHEV in 1955, Stalin directly interfered in Yugoslav domestic affairs, fiercely attacking the Yugoslav government "for preventing Soviet civilian specialists (in Yugoslavia) from getting economic information from quarters other than the Yugoslav government" (DEDIJER, "Tito speaks", p.342). DEDIJER wrote in 1952 that "MOLOTOV and Stalin wanted their specialists to have the right to go to any Yugoslav ministry and ask for any information

they liked from any official". They were angered at this Yugoslav restriction on the Soviet representative in Yugoslavia and demanded TITO's full submission to the Soviet N.K.V.D. agents in his own country.

On page 333 of his book DEDIJER describes the 11 February 1948, meeting between KARDELJ, Stalin and MOLOTOV in MOSCOW when TITO's deputy was put under pressure to sign a document "agreeing" on "mutual consultation with the Soviet government on questions of foreign policy." KARDELJ personally told the story of this fateful meeting, describing how he was looking "at two sheets of paper inserted in a blue folder" and listening "to the harsh voice of MOLOTOV ordering 'sign this'..." KARDELJ signed and the following night left MOSCOW with his comrades.

...And Those From 1955-1958

After having been attacked by the Soviet Union, whose leaders demanded almost full control over Yugoslavia, TITO summoned the Yugoslav CP Central Committee on 12 April 1948. On page 346 of DEDIJER's book we read that TITO gave a short introduction to the ensuing debate, saying that "it must be conceded that the Soviet Union has its most faithful ally in the present-day Yugoslavia which, under the present leadership, is ready to share every good and every evil with the peoples of the Soviet Union." What TITO, however, demanded as a pre-condition for his recognition of the Soviet leading role was that "small people's democracies like Yugoslavia and others, which are treading new paths to socialism, must in every case, both for internal and external reasons, remain completely independent and sovereign at the present stage, though firmly bound to each other and to the Soviet Union by treaties..." "The role of the Soviet Union," TITO said, should consist in extending the full and comprehensive support of her authority to the new democracies, making special use in propaganda of the successes achieved in these new democracies in the realization of socialism".

And at the 5th Congress held in BELGRADE in July 1948 TITO, in spite of all his criticism of the Soviet leaders, ended his speech with the words "Long live the Soviet Union, long live Stalin."

From 1955 to the present KHRUSHCHEV has not attempted to interfere directly in the domestic affairs of Yugoslavia, to impose this or that type of agriculture, industrial management or the like. He was willing to recognize the "equality" of Yugoslavia, to allow her to have her workers' councils, her communal system and other specific characteristics identifying the "Yugoslav system". In return he "merely" requested what TITO in 1948 had been prepared to give: a firm show of unity between Yugoslavia and the Soviet bloc countries, with the "various roads to socialism", like tributaries, flowing into the big river of socialism.

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However, in the decade since 1948 much has changed and what TITO would have been willing to do then, now, after ten years, evidently appears to him to be as unacceptable a submission to the Soviet Union as Stalin and MOLOTOV tried to foist on him in their 1948 ultimatum. For in June 1955, when the Belgrade Declaration was signed by KHRUSHCHEV and TITO, there was no bloody revolution in Hungary or bloodless revolution in Poland. It seemed at the time that TITO's star was just starting to rise.

For entirely different reasons the Hungarian revolution posed as serious problem for BELGRADE and "Titoism" as for MOSCOW. But even before October 1956 TITO and his chief aides had evolved a series of new theories on "State capitalism", "workers' self-management", "the communal system", "decentralization" etc. All this was not apparent in 1948. By expelling TITO from the Soviet bloc, it was Stalin himself who directly compelled the Yugoslav leaders to purge themselves of the heavy burden of blind idolatry toward the Soviet Union and its demigod Stalin. Had they been allowed to stay within the Soviet bloc, they would unquestionably not have been evolved the new heresies which in 1958 precipitated the new break between BELGRADE and MOSCOW.

KHRUSHCHEV's attempts to inveigle TITO into the Soviet orbit by employing the slogans which TITO himself had preached ten years ago failed. This was inevitable for the very reason that, whereas the "Titoist disease" had been in 1948 a mere "cold" needing only the application of an ideological "aspirin", ten years later the disease had become a heavy "pneumonia" for which a much stronger medicine was needed than that which KHRUSHCHEV recommended. Thus the break came as a result of complete lack of understanding between the two sides which once were united but which, thanks to Stalin's policy, were torn asunder so deeply that only the full victory of one over the other could establish a new unity.

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