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News Background

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80 EURO - TITO CLAIMS HE STOPPED OBEYING RUSSIANS FROM 1941 ON

Munich, March 28 (Stankovic) -- In his recollections of what happened 20 years ago when the Yugoslav Communists organized the anti-Axis uprising in Yugoslavia, Tito stressed that his anti-German actions were "in a certain sense against the line maintained by the Comintern headed by Stalin."

The March 23 issue of the Yugoslav Party weekly "Komunist" published the first instalment of a series of articles by Tito dealing with Yugoslav Communist Party resistance not only against the Axis powers, but even against Moscow. The Yugoslav press started publishing recollections of the "Activists of the Yugoslav Revolutionary Movement".

As in the past Tito obviously wanted to create the impression that his struggle against "Soviet monopoly" had not started only in 1948 (i.e. when the Yugoslav Communists were expelled from the Cominform) but rather in 1941.

Tito's descriptions of the days before and after Hitler had attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941 are characteristic for their strong anti-Soviet undertones. True these can be found also in Dedijer's book "Tito Speaks" in the chapter dealing with the same historical period, but nevertheless there are now some new points. While, for instance, Tito now claims that the anti-German proclamation issued by the Yugoslav CP in Zagreb in April 1941 was in contrast to the policy of Moscow "which at the time still had a non-aggression and friendship pact with Berlin" -- in other words the Yugoslav Communists were against the Hitler-Stalin Pact of August 1939 -- in Dedijer's book written in 1952 Tito claimed the following:

"We accepted the (Hitler-Stalin) Pact like disciplined Communists, considering it necessary for the security of the Soviet Union, at that time the only socialist state in the world. We were ignorant at the time of its secret clauses, countenancing Soviet interference in the rights of other nations, especially small ones."

Tito now boasts that "no Communist Party in the world had at the time violated its obligations toward the Soviet Union" except the Yugoslav Communist Party. Moreover, the Yugoslav Communists "were first to warn against further Fascist expansion in Europe" at the time of the annexation of Austria in 1938. Tito added: "We were the first to demand within the Comintern that all forces be mobilized for the fight that was inevitably to come."

(P.F.O.)

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X But while the Yugoslav Communists headed by Tito were always "the first" in all actions, the other Communist Parties headed by Moscow were always late and wrong. Here is what Tito says in this connection:

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"The reason why no other Party in Europe, not even in the whole world, raised its voice at the time as we had done, lies in the fact that all these Parties maintained the inflexible subjection to the Comintern. They did not do anything until directives arrived from Moscow. The Soviet leaders for their part took great care to avoid doing anything which would have angered the Germans, for they still believed the Germans would not attack them after the concessions the Soviet Union agreed to give them. I know this very well because I met several days before (the Germans attacked the Soviet Union) with a Soviet military attache (in Belgrade) -- I do not remember now the exact date -- whom I told that in my opinion the German troops leaving Serbia in the direction of Hungary were moving against the Soviet Union. He said he could not believe it. For nearly 14 days before the German attack upon the Soviet Union, the Soviet leaders did not believe that attack was coming."

Hitler Complained to Stalin About Tito

In his further explanation of the April 1941 decision to start an armed action against the Axis powers (as is known Yugoslavia was attacked by the Axis Powers on 6 April 1941 and destroyed in 10 days) Tito claims that in Moscow the Yugoslav CP proclamation "was received with mistrust" because the Soviet leaders did not believe "that the Yugoslav Communist Party had strong influence with the Yugoslav people." On the other hand Tito claims that --

"Moscow did not believe that our proclamation would much harm its relations with Berlin, although it seems that the Germans complained to Moscow about the disobedience of the Yugoslavs. The Germans quoted a paragraph from our proclamation -- I am not quite sure whether it was the quotation from this proclamation or from some other. Moscow had not reacted at all..."

As to the German-Russian war in 1941 Tito now claims that the Yugoslav Communists "did not cherish any illusion -- as did many people in Yugoslavia, who believed that German attack against the Soviet Union would collapse in a month, that the Russians would destroy all the Germans. We did not cherish such illusions..." The facts, however, prove that immediately after the German attack against the Soviet Union in June 1941 the Yugoslav Communists spread the propaganda that the Russian troops were nearing the Yugoslav borders to

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free the people! Here is, for instance, what another Yugoslav Communist publicist, Milutin Vujovic, claimed in his recollections published in "Borba" of 27 February 1941:

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"A winter (1941/1942) passed. Our somewhat naive belief that the war would end very soon disappeared... We persuade people that the war would soon end... Every day we read to the peasants reports from the Eastern Front but very few people believe in them. Sometimes while reading we supplement our own information... The peasants, however, request our written news reports. I was convinced that political interests rose and quickly informed our Party leadership... Only later I understood that the peasants wanted to have our mimeographed news reports because the paper we used was very thin so that it could be used as cigarette-paper..."

Another Yugoslav Communist leader, Vlado Zecevic, said in his recollections published in "Borba" of 14 March 1961, the following:

"Now, in 1961, I can state that we all believed that the war would end with a victory of the Allies in 1941/1942..."

In the conclusion of the first instalment Tito described how the Party line was to use peasants as the chief force capable "of carrying on a long struggle" rather than concentrating itself on the struggle in towns which, was, in Tito's opinion, wrongly done in France.

End

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