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Background Report

(General Desk)

CONSIDERATIONS BEHIND TITO'S SPEECH

TITO's strongly anti-Soviet speech to the opening session to the First Workers' Councils Congress in BELGRADE on 25 June 1957, need occasion no surprise; it is quite compatible with the last month's developments in Yugoslav-Soviet relations.

Only ten days ago there were reports that a verbal "enlightenment campaign" on the subject of the Yugoslav-Soviet relations was under way in Yugoslavia. This campaign, reliable sources said, was aimed at explaining to Party members that the anti-Yugoslav attitude of certain Soviet and satellite leaders and newspapers "will not be tolerated for much longer".

The same sources also said that great importance was being attributed in Yugoslavia to the visit to MOSCOW by Yugoslavia's Defense Minister, General Ivan GOSNJAK. The fact that Marshal TITO's speech before the Workers' Councils Congress took place prior to General GOSNJAK's return from the Soviet Union must not necessarily mean that his mission was a complete failure. General GOSNJAK's task is to be looked upon in the light of the Kremlin's latest tactic toward TITO, which is in fact a two-sided operation aimed, on the one hand, at preventing a complete breach with Yugoslavia à la Stalin but on the other hand at withholding any real concession to TITO.

This Janus tactic by the Kremlin was best characterized by Marshal TITO when he said in his June 25 speech that the Soviet bloc paying only "lip service" when talking about "good relations" with Yugoslavia, "while on the other hand internal directives are given to Party members... stating that Yugoslavia is seething with revisionism..."

Both TITO and the Kremlin have, of course, indubitable desire for the best possible mutual relations. But the sincerest desire is in this automatically vitiated by the fact that the two parties have laid down mutually incompatible conditions. It is quite understandable that a man like TITO who is going his "own road to socialism" should also have his own conditions for reconciliation. TITO cannot accede to MOSCOW's desire for his complete surrender since this could be a complete renunciation of a nine-years' fight -- successful so far -- to maintain Yugoslavia's independence.

On the other hand, it is highly improbable that KHRUSHCHEV and BULGANIN would be now willing to repeat their performance of May/June 1955 and come once more to BELGRADE to appease TITO. At the press conference in HELSINKI on June 13 Nikita KHRUSHCHEV, answering a question on the possibility of his visiting the United States, said that "we have our pride and we shall never force ourselves upon other people as their guests; we have never done so before." Yet according to the Yugoslav reports immediately after the announcement of the 1955 visit by KHRUSHCHEV and BULGANIN, it was KHRUSHCHEV himself who "forced himself upon" TITO in coming to BELGRADE.

As far as TITO's June 25 speech is concerned it can be shown that its main thesis is familiar to all and is being repeated by all Party spokesmen. Thus at least two high Yugoslav Communist functionaries had in their own statements quoted sentences from TITO's speech three days before it was made at the Workers' Councils Congress.

The Secretary of the Socialist Alliance of Serbia, Dusan PETROVIC, spoke before the miners in BOR on June 21 and, according to "Politika" of June 21, stressed the very points Marshal TITO mentioned in his speech. Just like TITO, PETROVIC spoke first about the "enormous positive results" achieved by the workers' councils and then sharply criticized "certain countries and parties who are trying to deny our road to socialism, to cast doubt on our workers' councils, communes and other things. However, our practice has proved them completely wrong."

Another Communist functionary, President of the BELGRADE People's Committee, Dhurica JOJKIC, spoke at a meeting in BELGRADE (also on June 21) using almost the same words as PETROVIC. JOJKIC said:

"There are people both in the West and the East who have criticized our workers' self-management. I think it would be hard to find anyone today who could successfully argue against this post-war achievement of ours... We do not intend to compel anybody to accept the forms and methods of our work and life, but it is obvious that the idea of increasing even further the influence of the workers in managing production and other fields of life is becoming irresistible throughout the world..."

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There are two important anniversaries in Yugoslavia this year. One of them is just now being celebrated in BELGRADE for the first time -- the seventh anniversary of Yugoslavia's "own road to socialism" -- the creation of workers' councils. The other does not come round till October -- the 40th anniversary of the Great October Revolution in Russia. It is logical but quite significant, that the First Workers' Councils Congress

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in Yugoslavia has been timed to coincide with the first of these two events, and so to manifest Yugoslavia's independence from the Soviet Union.

For the workers' councils system has everywhere become the hallmark of greater or less independence vis-a-vis Kremlin. Wherever such independence is formed, workers' councils exist or are to be created (Yugoslavia, Poland and perhaps in Red China). But wherever the Soviets have been able to maintain complete control, the workers' councils are not only theoretically opposed but even physically destroyed, as in Hungary.

One of the first measures taken by the liberated Hungarian workers was to create workers' councils. One of the first measures of the Soviets after crushing the Hungarian uprising was to abolish the workers' councils. The real meaning of this fact is well known to TITO, and he intends to exploit it to the utmost.

S.S.

End.