

## INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

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Companions

Birčaninova 28b  
Belgrade, Yugoslavia  
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Mr. Richard H. Nolte  
Institute of Current World Affairs  
366 Madison Avenue, New York 17, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Nolte:

Somewhere in the background of this photo, you may see Soviet Premier Khrushchey and Yugoslav President Tito, during the welcoming ceremonies August 20 at Belgrade Airport. Most of the strong backs you see in the foreground of the picture belong to members of the Yugoslav security service -- a group of men



with whom the ordinary tourist or citizen has relatively little contact, but who appear in strength on state occasions of this type. Having recently been present at a number of such occasions in which President Tito -- and his companions -- took part, I have had a chance to see and hear a bit about how this least-publicized of Yugoslav institutions operates.

As almost everyone knows, when the Yugoslav Partisans took power in 1945, their political police -- strong, ruthless and feared -- was known as the OZNA (Yugoslav initials for Department for Protection of the People). The name was later changed to UDBA (State Security Administration), and until about 1953 it openly exercised its considerable powers with little discrimination, first against non-Communists, then against Cominformists. In the last decade, the trend has clearly been toward sharp reduction of the size and powers of the police, with an official emphasis on "socialist legality" and the "rights of the citizen." In line with decentralization and the commune system initiated in 1955, many police prerogatives (in such fields as traffic and crime) have been transferred from the Federal to republican and local authorities. In addition to the Federal Secretariat for Internal Affairs (lineal descendant of the former UDBA), the six republics each have their internal-affairs secretariats; and the symbol of the new regime is the uniformed militiaman, well known and easily recognizable -- as is his car with special blue license plates.

One may spend several months in Yugoslavia without realizing that there is something else besides the visible militia, who in most cases appear less fearsome than American traffic cops. Even when one has become aware of the plainclothes security men, and has begun to

recognize some of their faces, one sometimes cannot help rather admiring their discretion. For example, when Tito and Khrushchev recently addressed a mass meeting in the Slovenian model miners' town of Velenje, I recognized several of the "boys" from Belgrade; but, perhaps in deference to Slovenian local feeling, in the lapel of their business suits was sown the label "Informacije." On the press bus following the Tito-Khrushchev motorcade through Montenegro, one fair-haired, cheerful fellow made no attempt to hide his security affiliations -- it was he who cleared our way through various road-blocks and suspicious militiamen; but, purely through the ingenuity of Yugoslav colleagues, we discovered that still another member of our party was also a security man, though posing as correspondent of a provincial Yugoslav newspaper. (Journalists who followed Khrushchev through Rumania by train tell the tale of the Soviet plainclothesmen who arrived posing as photographers, their identical cameras sheathed in identical new cases.)

Police are a strange lot anywhere; and my own experience has been that, the higher up one moves in the Yugoslav security apparatus, the more intelligent, reasonable and even liberal are the men one meets. Just the other day, for example, at the official opening of the Zagreb trade fair, I arrived too late to set off with the Presidential party inspecting the various pavilions. While the inspection was going on, most of the fair ground was cordoned off and blocked by militia (even though admission on opening day was by special invitation). I found it difficult, almost impossible, to talk my way past these ordinary policemen, and had to try four or five of them before finding the one who would enable me to make a block's progress. Their officers, on the other hand, readily understood the matter and offered no obstacle. And, when I finally caught up with the Presidential party, the plainclothes specialists there not only raised no objection, but filled me in on what President Tito had already seen and which of my journalistic colleagues were elsewhere on the fairgrounds.

On the other hand, one never does know what to expect. If one becomes known to the Presidential security men in Belgrade (who normally work at Brioni as well), a strange consequence of decentralization is that one may run into sudden unpleasantness in the provinces. The worst scandal of this type took place just a week ago, when the Khrushchev group was taken to see the automated chemical plant now nearing completion in Zagreb under the name OKI (for organic chemical industry). This plant, as it happens, was financed by the U.S. Agency for International Development (\$23 million) and Britain's Imperial Chemical Industries, Ltd. (\$6.5 million). When Khrushchev, Tito and their party arrived, Yugoslav and Soviet journalists were permitted to accompany them -- but the dozens of Western newsmen who had accompanied the party on the grueling tour were not only barred from the premises, but manhandled.

This incident, reported by the newsmen to their papers, brought an official apology from the Yugoslav Foreign Office and the following explanation: It seems that the strong-arm men at the Zagreb plant were not state security officers, but factory police -- over-zealous in enforcing an apparent clause in the plant's contracts with Western firms which called for "protection of industrial secrets." The explanation failed, of course, to clear up the question of why TASS photo-

graphers (not to mention Khrushchev) were permitted to view the secrets, while not only the Western newsmen but eight American engineers actually supervising construction of the plant were kept out. However, there does seem to be some truth in the unofficial explanation that the incident never would have taken place had the more experienced Belgrade-Brioni security men -- rather than local officers -- been in charge. Those local officers, by the way, the supposed "factory police," turned up again the following week at the Zagreb fair, although the Belgrade-Brioni group was in command.

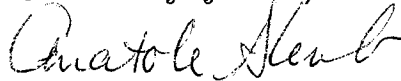
What is disturbing, or at least annoying, to the journalists who attempt to work here is the question of just who is boss. For frequently the security officers seem to operate a kind of private government, in which they do not even bother to inform the officially responsible agencies of the Yugoslav administration. When Tito and Egyptian President Nasser, for example, were preparing to leave Brioni Island and drive through mainland Slovenia to Brdo Castle, no one on the island would tell the Foreign Ministry spokesman and the press gathered at Pula (nearest mainland town) the precise hour of the party's departure -- although the next morning all the school-children of Pula were marched out at precisely 8:30 to line the party's route. When, more recently, Khrushchev's schedule was changed to permit a speech in the Split shipyards, the Foreign Ministry in Belgrade continued to maintain (in good faith, I am sure) that there would be no speech even while Khrushchev was actually delivering it.

A final example from the same tour: On August 23, Khrushchev, Tito, their retainers and the press were scheduled to fly in the morning to Titograd; then motor across the mountains of Montenegro to the old capital of Cetinje; then arrive in the afternoon at the village of Kotor, on the bay of the same name. The official party was there to board Tito's yacht Galeb (Sea-gull), while the press was to motor ahead and meet it at Dubrovnik. It was a very hot day, somewhere in the nineties, and most of the press had risen before 5 to make the morning plane. Despite the scorching sun, the arrangements held up moderately well until Cetinje, where at about noon Tito and Khrushchev emerged from a tour of the local historical museum and, together with their party, headed for a lovely shaded garden where the Montenegrins had prepared a sumptuous table. At this point, almost hysterical security men began herding the press into its busses. "You can't stop here, you can't wait a minute -- you must leave immediately if you are to get to Kotor before the official caravan." There was no doubt one had to go -- a French journalist who attempted to get a glass of water from a local woman was ordered into the bus, and the lady firmly told to go home. The unimportant result of this and later misarrangements was that the press had nothing substantial to eat for about sixteen hours. What was interesting, however, was what we learned later: namely, that the local officials at Cetinje had prepared for us, too, a more than adequate lunch, in the same garden, at a respectful distance from the official party. Someone in the security entourage, however, had at the last moment ordered otherwise, and that was that -- for the Foreign Office, the Information Ministry, the Republic of Montenegro and the Commune of Cetinje as well as the newsmen's stomachs.

All of this, I suppose, belongs under the heading of rather petty complaints; certainly it cannot be mentioned in the same breath as some of the activities of the "administrative organs" years ago. Yet such incidents do, I think, illustrate some of the difficulties, the surviving habits of mind, confronted by a Communist regime attempting to "legalize" and "liberalize" its ways. A Yugoslav friend tells the equally illustrative tale of being called in for lengthy questioning in connection with the property claim of a relative in emigration. The questioning was quite polite, the subject quite legitimate, and there was absolutely nothing to fear on any account; however, the interrogator was not a Foreign Ministry official, but the same fellow my friend had known in less pleasant days in the uniform of an UDBA colonel, still operating in the same office though now in business clothes.

One is soon aware that the Yugoslavs have made great efforts to cut down the security forces and transfer many of their personnel to other work. One reads in the newspapers of men appointed to leading posts in the government, party or economic administration -- and frequently comes across in their biographies periods of work in (unnamed) "responsible state organs" or, openly if recently, in the Secretariat for Internal Affairs. Now and then one meets men of this type in other agencies of the government. Often they are quite intelligent and able men, more comfortable in their more respectable posts while capable -- through their old connections -- of cutting through a lot of bureaucratic red tape and official hypocrisy to get to the heart of matters. Sometimes, however, one meets an official who is clearly incapable of ever being anything but a cop, no matter what titles he may bear or how specialized his "vocational re-training." What can one do with such people? It is obviously quite a problem, although I dare say the difficulties the Yugoslavs face in this connection pale by comparison with those encountered, for example, in the Soviet Union.

Cordially yours,



Anatole Shub

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