

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

WWU - 32
YUGOSLAVIA II: THE COMMENTATORS

Hotel Metropol,
Bulevar Revolucije, 69,
Beograd, Yugoslavia.
October 3, 1959.

Mr. Richard H. Nolte.
Institute of Current World Affairs.
366 Madison Ave., New York 17, N.Y.

Dear Dick:

I've written you about what some of Yugoslavia's foreign policy people have to say about their country's non-alignment. Now let's move from the official officialdom to the unofficial, Yugoslavia's Fourth Estate.

Joza Smolej, foreign editor of Borba (circulation 220,000), the official organ of the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Yugoslavia (of which the League of Communists is the leading force), is, at 32, a member of his Slovenia Republic's Communist Party Central Committee and one of the most quoted names in Yugoslav journalism. He was Borba correspondent at the UN for seven years and so speaks English and knows America. I was told that Smolej was terribly shy and needed great patience. On the contrary, he never stopped talking during our lunch and I kept wanting to push his fork into his rapidly cooling food. Nor did he buck when I brought out the lethal pen and notebook. Smolej explained that when he writes a signed commentary it "may or may not represent the official Yugoslavian position. Sometimes the Foreign Office has a different opinion."

Smolej made no attempt to gloss over the Russian rift: "There was a 'Bonapartistic' trend of Stalin: 'Everything in the interest of the Soviet Union is in the interest of socialism.' It ignores nationalist elements. We have seen that what has been the interests of the Soviet Union is not also Yugoslavia's interests. I think that today the Soviet leaders are beginning to realize the deficiencies of such a concept. It will take time before they are completely liberated from this misconception. As a socialist country, we are of course interested in the victory of socialism. But in our opinion the East-West conflict has nothing to do with socialism. It is a conflict between groups of



TRAFFIC SAFETY CAMPAIGN: Beograd, a village 20 years ago, now has so many cars, -things have come to this.



SMOLEJ

states, as there has been many times in history. In Eastern European countries, the socialist revolution has not been done in a normal way -- the Red Army. In Yugoslavia, the socialist revolution was a result of our own efforts. The problem for Yugoslavia has always been Soviet intentions. Nobody in Yugoslavia would say there is a danger of America to bring Yugoslavia into the Western orbit. This is complete illusion. It has nothing to do with reality. But for a country with a frontier with the Soviet camp, the tendency is much more serious." Smolej said the term "neutralist bloc" was "invented" by Russia: "They said we were trying to create a bloc against the Soviet Union."

How does Yugoslavia look upon the Khrushchev-Eisenhower meeting, to its detriment? "Yugoslavia was the first socialist country which opened the window to the non-socialist part of the world by saying it is not wrong to cooperate with Great Britain and the U.S. President Tito went to London in

1953 and then Khrushchev and Bulganin followed. If we are economically strong, a nation such as the U.S. can't do any wrong to our socialist development. It was an obsession to say you can only obtain socialism through revolution. The forms have changed today -- trade unions." Smolej continued: "We have never played the part of contradiction of conflicts between the two giants. There are countries who have. But we, from the beginning, have made our position toward bringing closer the two giants. We are convinced that such a rapprochement will not weaken our position. The very moment Khrushchev approached to visit the U.S., the very moment the directed attack against Yugoslavia in the Soviet press has stopped. American-Soviet cooperation can't risk an open hostile policy against Yugoslavia. Spheres of influence are not possible any more. Stalin and Churchill tried to divide Yugoslavia into spheres of influence in 1944 and it didn't work.

I asked Smolej about some specific issues. China? "China is criticizing the Soviet Union in a typical Chinese way, namely, criticizing Yugoslavia. Really China is against the rapprochement between the Soviet Union and the U.S. and wants to stop it." At the time the Soviet Union was trying to reduce international tension, China was making moves which are negative to international relations, in India and in Laos."



U.S. HOUSING EXHIBIT AT ZAGREB FAIR

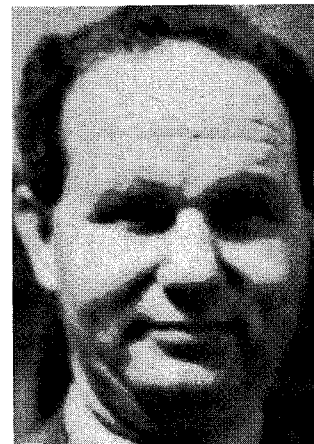
What about India? "If China starts military expansion toward India, I would consider it quite normal that India receive American assistance. The fact does not make India a member of a bloc, however, When Yugoslavia went to the UN on Soviet military aggression in 1951, India said, 'Why are you doing this?' Maybe now India will better realize our position." And Tibet? "Tibet was a collapse of Chinese policy on the nationalist question. We are not inter-

ested in whether the forces were progressive or reactionary. As we said in Hungary, 'The question is how can it happen in a socialist country that you have an uprising?' We say the policy of China has been wrong. But we also say it is an internal issue."

I am afraid I was unable to follow Smolej's doctrinaire wriggling on that one. But as I said at the beginning, he was anything but bashful and in this country I'm grateful to anybody who will talk.

Djuka Julius is foreign editor and columnist for Politika, whose daily circulation of 256,000 makes it Yugoslavia's biggest paper. Julius appears to be in his mid-'forties, speaks excellent English and has that breezy manner which often is used to indicate, "I've been to the States so I know how you want me to dish it out."

"Yugoslavia took the attitude that non-alignment doesn't mean a damn if we lose our independence," Julius began. "And as the West was ready, for its own reasons, to help us, we took from the West whatever we could. Yet we made it clear to the West that we would have nothing whatsoever which would weaken our independence. Yugoslavia is not a neutral in the sense of the passive, nor of Switzerland. We don't have the Arabs' 'Positive Neutralism' because that means to play on the antagonisms of one bloc against the other. It is certain that Yugoslavia has much more in common policy with India than with the USSR. This means that Yugoslavians are not tied by ideology, but are taking a line toward world affairs which is best serving peace. And peace is best serving socialism. Our non-alignment is an 'out-of-bloc' policy, a Yugoslavian word. We do believe in an active policy of a chain of states which are 'out-of-bloc' but still not in a Third Bloc, because blocs imply power in their formation. We lack that power. For the first time in the world we have a group of nations which have no material power. Yet by use of their moral power they have become a power."



JULIUS

I also asked Julius why it was that a non-aligned "out-of-bloc" Yugoslavia always seems to side with Russia in the UN. He said this simply wasn't so. I asked for examples. He, like Foreign Ministry spokesman Drago Kunc (WWU-31), also scratched his head and went into obvious discomfort. We were in Politika's second-floor staff clubroom (beer and leather sofas. U.S. publishers please take note). He called over to two colleagues for help. They frowned a bit and then yelled back the Yugoslav equivalent of "Forget it!" Julius decided to take the aggressive: "The great mistake the American public does is the simple attitude, 'Who isn't for us is against us.' This is stupid. 'The enemy of my enemy is my friend' just isn't true in the world today. We don't approach problems on the basis of East-West, but on issues. After all, the U.S. is in principle an anti-colonial power. Until many years, we didn't vote against you on Cyprus, Algeria, etc., because you abstained. Now we vote against the West on colonialism, trusteeship, disarmament; whenever you try to scoop a propaganda, when it doesn't help but makes the problem more difficult. And on disarmament and anti-colonialism we are close to the Russians. But so are the rest of the non-aligned countries.

Gavro Altmann, foreign editor and editorial writer for Kommunist,



ALTMANN

the party weekly (circulation: 212,000), had another explanation of Yugoslavia's UN voting record: "The Russians come with all the good proposals and initiative. You don't. But I'm not speaking of their practice." Altmann, at 36, said he has been a farmer, plant foreman, construction man, "everything." He has a friendly, unbristling manner, blond hair and a ruddy, healthy face. When I asked him how he came by such a German name in Yugoslavia, he explained it was "Jewish."

"From the point of view of military alliances, we are completely neutral," Altmann explained. "But we are not neutral in the conflict between the social systems. The main difference we have with the Soviet Union is that the Russians are convinced of a conflict between the two blocs. We think the Socialist-non-Socialist difference is only secondary to the main difference: The difference between the highly economic developed and the less highly developed...If we can consider that the social system of each country is an internal affair, then the problem (between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union) would be settled. I'm very much against that the French Communist Party, for example, should be obliged to agree with all the actions of the Soviet Communist Party, and to aid in these actions. We cannot agree with the theory that all that the Soviet Union is doing is in the interest of the socialist system. We feel as a part of the socialist movement, not of the communist movement. We consider that two parts, Social Democrats and Communists, are both representatives of the workers. And we don't feel part of the Socialist Bloc. We are not part of it."

Altmann added that Soviet Bloc attacks against Yugoslavia had dwindled during the past few months. He thought this due to the current Khrushchev rapprochement with the U.S. and the West, the easing of the tension whipped up by the Hungarian Revolution of 1955, and the fact that "the big campaign against revisionism and Yugoslavia has no audience in Eastern Europe." He said he didn't know whether this easing off of Soviet-Yugoslav friction would be temporary or permanent.



DAVICO: "...very correct deal"

Jasa Davico is editor of the weekly *Ekonomska Politika*, Yugoslavia's main economic publication, despite its circulation of only 12,000. Davico is 48, an old-time Communist and head of his Government's press bureau from 1945 until 1952. Just recently, he returned from a U.S. Government-sponsored tour of the States. Maybe that's why his nice words came first:

"Ninety-five per cent of our aid had come from the U.S. Your economic aid in Yugoslavia has been unconditional. It has been a very fair and very correct deal. But (here we go) the Russians, they are giving to other non-committed countries money without any political conditions. If you compare your credits and long-term aid to the underdeveloped countries with Russia's you will see that the Russians are going far ahead of you. Look at the UAR and the situation with the Aswan Dam. If you ask for better understanding, you must know that the sit-

uation in these countries which are now nationally independent -- these countries must have additional money and credits."

Davico said the one exception to Russian largesse is Yugoslavia. "They are thinking that Nasser is bourgeois but we are Communists, so they can just put political conditions on us. So we immediately rejected them. Until 1948, 50 per cent of our foreign trade was with the East. We had investment agreements for their giving us big projects and credits. After the break in 1948, they stopped importing our things, stopped exporting to our country. We've estimated it meant some \$600

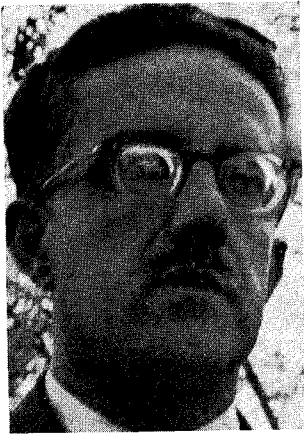
million in damages to our country. Then in 1955 (with the B&K visit), Khrushchev gave us favorable credits (\$250 million). They have always avoided the term, 'reparation,' but we are treating this as a reparation. Two big projects, an aluminum plant in the Southwest with East German and Russian creditors; and a string of electric power stations and chemical plants. Both were stopped when we refused to sign the Fortieth Anniversary declaration at the end of 1957. Not a single unit had been built, just \$200,000 was spent in plans. They gave a very superficial explanation: They had not enough money."



BEOGRAD SHOPPING ARCADE: YUGOSLAVIA ON ITS OWN

What about Yugoslavia's needs in the future? "Now we have enough food and have stopped the imports. We have no need for them. We now are a food exporting country. This year we shall export sugar; last year we imported sugar, corn and wheat. What we need and what we should ask for in the future is commercial credits. Six months ago the U.S. gave us a direct inducement credit for reconstructing a railroad and many million for constructing a hydroelectric station in Bosnia. The best way to avoid war is to give a decent standard of life for everybody. Your policy of economic aid has been a good one. But (here we go again) in your papers you sometimes say, 'If they are receiving and expecting some aid, they will change their policy.' We have not changed our policy one inch. If we received \$1 billion from the U.S., we would not change it. If we get \$1 billion from Russia, we will not change it. Even if we are starving and someone offers us aid with demands, we will refuse. For the first time in our history, we are independent."

You may have noticed that all the people I interviewed were in not only basic, but complete agreement with each other. More often than not, they used the same phrases and illustrations. I've often heard, "As President Tito said last week in Montenegro..." or, "As Borba had in an editorial on Wednesday..." The Yugoslavs don't seem to be conscious of catechism. Yet they certainly are all reciting from the same text. I had the same reaction from Najdan Pasic, editor of Stvarnost, a monthly high-brow magazine of 12,000



circulation which is devoted to political, social and economic questions. The only difference was that Pasic is a bit older than the average and goes through a bigger deliberation before coming out with the same words. I recall walking with Pasic from his office to the Hotel Moskva (its name preceded Yugoslavia's communism) for lunch and watching him stop to think out an answer at every street corner. I was tempted to supply the words I'd heard so often already, but held my tongue. The only slightly different shading I had from Pasic was on China: "China is our great disappointment in Yugoslavia. We thought at one time we might find an ally. But I always think part of the blame should be attached to the U.S. Their position of being cut off just pushes them further and further."

PASIC

Since I found my interviews here in Yugoslavia so one-dimensional, I tried to fatten out my impressions by hitting the diplomatic circuit. I talked with the Ambassadors of one aligned country and three neutrals -- Belgium, Austria, India and Indonesia. They are considered the cream of the corps. (If there is an obvious omission, I was told not to bother with that Excellency because he apparently devotes his attention to holding unannounced latrine inspections of the Embassy and ordering towel and toilet paper racks to be switched from one wall to the next, and everybody to smile sharp.) I also talked with a very well informed British press attache. Diplomats naturally don't want to comment publicly on their host countries so I will pool their remarks and give you my digested version.

+ The Neutralist Bloc. I've been intrigued with seeing how interested the non-aligned are in building up their own pressure group. Each neutral country I've visited has pointed the finger at the next fellow, and usually cited Tito and Yugoslavia. Here I've gotten the usual, "Who me?", and been directed to Nasser and the UAR. Well, I now gather that the term is used more by the East, and particularly against Yugoslavia. I also gather that President Tito does like to write letters and throw out ideas, many of which are looked upon by their recipients as quite constructive. Nehru, Soekarno and Nasser are on this regular mailing list. And periodically, Tito has sought exchanges of views with Haile Selassie, U Nu, and even Swedish Foreign Minister Östen Undén. But as for calling conferences of the non-aligned, there Tito apparently is a willing seconder, but never the proposer. For instance, it was Soekarno who wanted a gathering to discuss his West Irian problem with the Dutch in 1957. But the others didn't go for it. And it was Nehru who wanted to meet with Tito, Soekarno and Nasser during last year's Lebanon crisis. The others were willing, but then Nehru squelched his own proposal. And it was Nasser who initiated the proposal for a Little Summit talk this Spring in the event that the Geneva Disarmament and Berlin discussions should fail and precipitate a crisis. Nehru again squelched this one.

As for Tito's three-month South Asia cruise this past winter, I am told this was not so much a selling job for a firming up of neutrals as it was Tito's desire to tell hostile China and Russia, "See, I've got six million friends!"

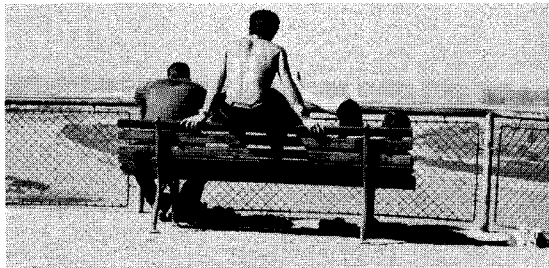
+ How neutral is neutral Yugoslavia? Here the diplomats are far more skeptical than the Yugoslavs themselves. I was cited a piece in the London Daily Express: "The independence of Moscow which the Yugoslavs always

claim, probably possess and rarely use." I was given comparisons with the Catholic apostate who still thinks Rome is a rather nice city. And then there was the psychological explanation: The proud Yugoslavians, finding themselves unwanted by Moscow, have had to find a rationale for remaining free and so have hit upon fine interpretations of Marx and Engels. And then I was told that Yugoslavia makes no pretense at being neutral between East and West (my quotations to the contrary), merely to be independent of Russia. Some think Yugoslavia never makes a move without first thinking: "What will Moscow say?" It was pointed out to me that Tito never attacks first; but he always counter-attacks after Moscow and Peking have publicly humiliated him.

+ The record. I was told that Kunc's and Julius' silence over instances when Yugoslavia votes with the West at the UN was inevitable. There are those who say Yugoslavia goes out of its way to vote against the West, or to speak out against it. The list apparently includes not only Tibet and Laos, but even Peron, who was looked upon as a champion against U.S. hegemony in South America. As for Yugoslavia curtailing her military aid, some interpret this as a purely practical matter: The conventional arms Yugoslavia was getting will not protect her against tomorrow's rockets. Yugoslav military strategy is now considering another retreat to the mountains in case of attack, the successful maneuver made by the Partisans during World War II. And I was told that in 1953 at the Sixth Yugoslav Communist Party Congress, Stalin was branded as the "creator" of NATO and NATO explained as the "obvious" defense against Stalinism. While at the Seventh Congress, this year, NATO was called the creator of the Warsaw Pact.

But whatever the critics say, they all agree that Yugoslavia's apostasy has done more damage to the Soviet control of its satellites than all the energetic sallies from the West. The Yugoslav example, after all, preceded Hungary, Poland and Khrushchev's castigation of Stalinism.

With such weighty deliberations here in Yugoslavia, I did run across a trio of youths who find that there is sufficient easing of tension in their country these days to permit a thoroughly unproductive loaf in the sun.



Cordially,

Warren W. Unna

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