

JOSIP BROZ TITO'S VISIT TO GREAT BRITAIN IN 1953

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I. The Historical Context of Relations Between Yugoslavia and the West

Tito's journey to Britain in 1953 became his first visit to a Western country since the establishment of Communist Yugoslavia in 1945. During the initial post-War years, Yugoslavia's political links with the world had been limited to the "People's Democracies," that is, with countries where Communist Parties held power. The West considered Yugoslavia to be one of "the most loyal" Soviet satellites because of its radical implementation of a system identical to that of the Soviet Union.¹ Its poor relations with the West had been mirrored in its stereotypical, anti-western, anti-imperialist propaganda and rhetoric which observers took to be a reflection of the "expansionistic strategy of the Soviet Union."² As Yugoslavia's international political, economic, military and cultural co-operation had been linked with the "People's Democracies" and the Soviet Union, the breaking of those ties in 1948 deeply affected Yugoslavia's entire system.

After Yugoslavia's conflict with the members of the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform) broke out, various explanations concerning the nature of the conflict began to be debated in Yugoslavia. After a year of attempting to reconcile with the Cominform, the conflict began to be portrayed as being ideological in nature. As a result, Yugoslav authorities presented the political reorganizations and innovations they launched in 1950 as an expression of long-standing differences in interpretations of doctrinal principles, though no bases existed to support such a contention.³ Most political, political science and historical interpretations - both in Yugoslavia and abroad - for a long time rested on the same thesis, but in the early 1980s, with new material available in Western countries, the focal point of research became redirected toward foreign policy disputes between the Soviet Union

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¹ Lorraine M. Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat: The United States, Yugoslavia, and the Cold War* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), p. 43.

² Beatrice Heuser, *Western 'Containment' Policies in the Cold War. The Yugoslav Case, 1948-1953* (London & New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 19.

³ Heuser, *Western 'Containment' Policies*, p. 57.

and Yugoslavia. The new interpretations of the conflict found that the fundamental reason for the differences between Yugoslavia and the USSR lied in Yugoslavia's ideological "avant-gardism" in its foreign policy.⁴

After initial surprise, Western policy, especially that of the United States, employing a certain amount of skepticism but much more pragmatism, accepted the conflict as fitting well into a strategy of suppressing the influence of the Soviet Union. The possibility of having a Communist country survive outside of the monolithic Eastern Bloc seemed to be an appropriate means of weakening the USSR. The West saw the conflict as possibly initiating and strengthening fractions within the Communist Bloc.⁵ Though in the first period of the conflict (1948-1950) Yugoslavia had been seen as an "ideological wedge" or as a sign of the beginning of the crumbling of the Communist monolith, in the second period (1950-1953) Yugoslav territory came to be seen as playing a role in the defensive "shield" of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).⁶

As recent research has shown, the basis of Western support for Yugoslavia had been founded on the West's (incorrect) perception that of the "Soviet threat." During the post-war years, American military and political analysts had developed the thesis that the USSR's aim had been to dominate the world. Any act of resistance to the Soviets had been welcome as part of a policy of "keeping the breakthrough back." Further, the economic and psychological strengthening of democratic forces, especially in Western Europe, prevented Soviet intentions to induce economic and social unrest. To that end, an efficient system of economic development supported by the Marshall Plan had been developed. But these assessments by secret services and analysts had not been well founded. In actuality, during the Cold War period after World War II, Stalin's aim had been to ensure balance and stability within "the Bloc" and to de-radicalise the foreign policy of the Soviet Union and its satellites.⁷ Tito's attempts to conduct his own policy only spoiled Stalin's intentions.

After the Soviet-Yugoslav conflict erupted, American policy makers took the position that Yugoslavia became the first country to stand up against Stalinism and the Soviet Union. As a result, Yugoslavia received more credit for fighting for its independence from the USSR than the country had actually intended.⁸ America analysts expected that other countries in Eastern

⁴ Darko Bekić, *Jugoslavija u hladnom ratu* (Zagreb: Globus, 1988), Heuser, cites, Ivo Banac, *Sa Staljinom protiv Tita* (Zagreb: Globus, 1990), David A. Dyker, *Yugoslavia. Socialism, Development and Debt* (London & New York: Routledge, 1990), Ann Lane, *Britain, the Cold War and the Yugoslav Unity, 1941-1949* (Sussex: Sussex Academic Press, 1996), Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat*.

⁵ Heuser, *Western 'Containment' Policies*, X.

⁶ Heuser, *Western 'Containment' Policies*, XI.

⁷ Heuser, *Western 'Containment' Policies*, pp. 28-35, Melvyn P. Leffler, "The Cold War: What Do 'We Now Know,'" *American Historical Review* 2 (April 1999), pp. 508-509.

⁸ Heuser, *Western 'Containment' Policies*, p. 40.

Europe would follow Yugoslavia's example. Assistance to Yugoslavia became geared to encourage the "turncoat."⁹ At the same time, military observers concluded that the Soviets would no longer have at their disposal the "thirty divisions" Yugoslavia supposedly had.¹⁰

The policy defined by British Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin in late 1948 as "keeping Tito on the surface" meant that assistance would be provided to Yugoslavia to the extent necessary to keep Yugoslavia from returning to the Communist Bloc, but nothing more.¹¹ The major Western countries - the United States, Great Britain and France - had different interests in this matter, but agreed on the fundamental political concepts underlying the Cold War. Though they functioned as a "tripartite committee" in assisting Yugoslavia, they did not equally share the financial burden. Moreover, while the United States had in mind mostly ideological and political objectives in dealing with Yugoslavia, the British saw a chance for economic gain through the improvement of relations with that country.¹² Bilateral, often secret, agreements between Yugoslavia and the members of this triple partnership reflected the means by which each of the three sought to achieve their own national interests,¹³ while Yugoslavia benefited most.¹⁴

Politically isolated and economically cut off, Yugoslavia's regime found itself in 1948 facing the possibility that it would not survive. The achievement of its many ambitious industrialisation goals within its Five-Year Economic Development Plan came under question, the country lacked raw materials and equipment, and its capacity to supply its population with bare necessities became threatened.

Faced with the real possibility of military aggression and potentially jeopardized by a possible ideological split within the ruling Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ), Yugoslavia's political leaders turned to Western countries to look for help. The geostrategic importance of the area in the Cold War context, as well as the security and political analyses of American policy planners, contributed to the speediness of the provision of assistance.¹⁵

⁹ Heuser, *Western 'Containment' Policies*, p. 42. According to Heuser, an incorrect assessment had been made concerning Eastern European regimes' willingness to detach themselves from the USSR; Heuser calls such judgements unrealistic since the USSR had been the one which placed existing elites into power in those countries.

¹⁰ Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat*, pp. 43-44.

¹¹ Lane, *Britain, the Cold War*, p. 132.

¹² Heuser, *Western 'Containment' Policies*, p. 82., Lane, *Britain, the Cold War*, pp. 130-139.

¹³ Lane, for example, speaks of Britain's "classic" national interests: traditional interest for the Mediterranean and the surrounding areas, the wish to establish itself as a dominant political power in the post-war Europe, etc.- *Britain, the Cold War*, p. 1.

¹⁴ Heuser, *Western 'Containment' Policies*, p. 197.

¹⁵ The first sign of the new state of relations occurred as early as July 1948 with the "unfreezing" of the gold of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia held in American banks. In early 1949, with Anglo-American consent, Yugoslavia received permission to enter into trade arrangements, which gave it access to strategic raw materials. In later agreements, the scope of assistance

At first, it mainly consisted of humanitarian and economic aid but in time the assistance provided included military equipment for the Yugoslav Army which, due to the size of its active force and its significant reserve potential, represented a force which could be counted on in potential conflicts.

Aid from the West enabled Yugoslavia to continue its development plans for heavy industry and the loans it received helped it to lay the long-term foundations for its future growth. But, the country did not survive solely as a result of help from the West. The short-lived but intensive collectivization of agriculture also assured the internal accumulation of sources of capital.¹⁶

The question arises whether Yugoslavia, as a "socialist" country, made any concessions for the assistance it received from "capitalist" countries? Research has shown, for example, that the British Government's principle position had been not to ask for concessions, but the British attempted to obtain concessions of certain issues important to their country. The American side showed a greater willingness in pursuing a "carrot and stick" policy. In practical terms, America's relationship with Yugoslavia showed that, while abundant assistance had been provided to Yugoslavia and while America applied a rhetorical formula (especially as a result of American public opinion), such assistance did not mean American approval of any of Yugoslavia's internal policy measures.¹⁷

The West welcomed some of the changes in Yugoslavia's political and economic system, which occurred during the period when relations between Yugoslavia and Western countries had initially intensely developed. The slow pace in which Yugoslavia accepted its new partners' suggestions or requests (which led to dissatisfaction and, on occasions, denial of necessary aid) did not cause major problems as the West did not expect much from the country given the role they gave it in the context of Cold War relations.

At times, Yugoslavia made some foreign policy moves which coincided with the demands of both the United States and Great Britain. Thus, Yugoslavia's discontinuation of support for the Greek uprising occurred as a result of the predominance of pro-Cominform leaders among the leadership of the Greek partisans. Demands made by the West toward internal issues, such as freedom of worship and the relationship between the Government and the Catholic Church, had less effect. Some portions of Western public opinion accepted, with a certain amount of understanding, the justifications offered by the Yugoslav side (emphasising that such questions repre-

widened to include extensive support in terms of food provisions, industry, closing budget deficits and military equipment – through outright grants, selling on credit, and arrangements for loans from international monetary institutions.

¹⁶ See Marijan Matićka, "Hrvatsko seljaštvo i politika kolektivizacije", *Spomenica Ljube Bobana* (Zagreb: Zavod za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 1996), pp. 365-373., K. Spehnjak, "Seljački otpor politici obveznog otkupa u Hrvatskoj 1949. godine," *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 27 (1995), No. 2: 209-231.

¹⁷ Heuser, *Western 'Containment' Policies*, p. 91.

sented an “internal issue”) concerning the collaborationist activities of many ecclesiastical representatives.¹⁸ To some extent, this understanding arose as a result of differences and tensions among Christian denominations while a portion of the public, which did not have a fundamental anti-Communist orientation, also had some reservations with regard to the evaluation of the activities of Catholic hierarchies and clergy during the War.¹⁹

Analysis of the official British stand concerning this issue shows that both the Labour and Conservative Parties had much understanding for the Yugoslav Government’s actions. While on a public level they expressed criticism for the Government, based on the principal of freedom of worship and in response to pressure by some parts of the public, in direct talks with Yugoslav representatives they approached the issue in a pragmatic manner, connecting it with solutions of issues which they considered important for their policies. Letters from the British Foreign Office show that in its review of the Catholic Church’s position in Yugoslav it accepted some judgements close to those advocated by Yugoslavia. Further, its requests to ease pressure on the peasants coincided with findings of the KPJ leadership related to the failure of collectivization, which Yugoslavia abandoned in 1953.

Changes in Yugoslavia’s criminal legislation in the early 1950s partly alleviated the repressive system and limited the role of the state security agency UDBA (Uprava za državnu bezbjednost/sigurnost). Government decentralisation as well as the introduction of workers’ participation in the economy came to be seen as promising signs of the regime’s liberalisation. Yugoslavia’s abandonment of “war-time” Communism through the abolition of compulsory delivery quotas and the rationing supply system²⁰ and the introduction of some market elements into production as well as in other areas (e.g., the

¹⁸ For example, the “defense” of Yugoslavia by some Protestant congregations in America and Canada with respect to the country’s treatment of the Catholic Church had been expressed in their press in the 1950s. Yugoslav papers extensively wrote about the matter, especially on the eve of Tito’s visit to Britain. On 27 March 1953, p. 1, *Vjesnik* (Zagreb) published the opinion of the representative of the American board of the Lutheran World Federation (during the visit to the Red Cross of Yugoslavia), that “the church should not interfere with political issues, and the state with issues of religion, which is guaranteed in Yugoslavia according to the same principle as in America.” 23 January 1953 (pp. 1, 4) *Vjesnik* published extracts from *Time and Tide*, specifically the opinion of the Protestant Truth Society from London that the campaign against Tito could not be supported while at the same time “the Catholic Church is persecuting Protestants in Spain, Italy, and Colombia.”

¹⁹ *Vjesnik* published on 23 January 1953 quotes from *Inquirer*, *Glasgow Herald*, *Birmingham-Mail*, *New Statesman* and *Nation* criticising the Catholic Church in Britain for hypocritically supporting the Vatican’s campaign because the Catholic Church in Yugoslavia had frequently been “brutal towards those who thought differently.” The Vatican came under criticism for its earlier support of Mussolini and its recent support of General Franco, while the papers noted that Alojzije Stepinac did not oppose the rechristening of Orthodox believers. Newspapers also quoted from similar texts from French newspapers.

²⁰ See M. Matićka, “Opskrba stanovništva u Hrvatskoj od 1945. do 1953. godine,” *Zbornik Mirjane Gross* (Zagreb: Filozoski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, Zavod za hrvatsku povijest, 1999), pp. 387-400.

commercialisation of journalism) became positive indicators in balancing Western judgements in favor of Yugoslavia.

Criticism of the “bourgeois West” in the Yugoslav press did not stop even with better relations with those countries. As Nora Beloff has said, while the West sent help to Yugoslavia, the latter continued with its anti-Western campaign.²¹ Nevertheless, some of the sting had been taken away from direct ideological and political criticism (other than in the case of McCarthyism) while government corruption, crime and other matters became subject to fierce criticism in the press.²²

The press presented the relationship between Great Britain and other Western countries in an informative manner, but it used every opportunity to point out weaknesses. Thus, the Zagreb newspaper *Vjesnik* entitled one article “Cold Reception of Dulles in London” where it discussed differences in the positions of Britain and the United States in regard to the European Community and Taiwan, while an article entitled “Friendship Between London and Rome in Decline” quoted the British press to discuss Italy’s “blackmail policy.”²³

Even when the immediate threat to the country disappeared, Yugoslavia attempted to strengthen its position in the geostrategic and geopolitical plans for South Eastern Europe of Western planners by emphasising its importance as a “southern defense shield.”²⁴ With its skillful diplomacy, it succeeded in acquiring at the same time modern weaponry and loans from international financial institutions.

In that sense, the visit of J.B. Tito to Great Britain in 1953 represented yet another skillful move by which Yugoslavia freed itself from political isolation and returned to the international scene.²⁵ At a time of hostile relations with Italy and a total discontinuation of diplomatic relations with the Vatican (which intensified the criticism of Catholic circles all over the Western world with respect to the treatment of the Church and religion in Yugoslavia as a whole), a visit to a country with democratic traditions became more than welcome for both the Government and Tito.

The visit served Tito to reinforce his power and personal prestige²⁶ because the official Yugoslav view designed the visit as one taking place in a “sentimental” atmosphere with Tito, as a “war hero,” meeting one of the most prominent leaders of the anti-fascist coalition, Winston Churchill, as a

²¹ Beloff, *Tito's Flawed Legacy. Yugoslavia and The West: 1939-1984* (London: Victor Gollancz LTD, 1985), p. 21.

²² *Vjesnik* of 1st January 1953, p. 5 published the following articles: “Načelnik Newyorka - gangster” (Mayor of New York - a Gangster), “Crni oblak oko Kipa slobode. Lov na vještice - srednjovjekovna rabota” (Black Cloud Around the Statue of Freedom. Witch-hunt - Mediaeval Business).

²³ *Vjesnik*, 6 February 1953, 3 February 1953, 22 February 1953.

²⁴ Bekić, *Jugoslavija u hladnom ratu*, p. 298.

²⁵ Bekić, *Jugoslavija u hladnom ratu*, pp. 345- 427.

friend. Moreover, on a state level, the visit allowed the Government to show that one of the most influential world powers had received a leader of a small country. This spoke in favor of both the country and its President and it further emphasized the prime reason for the bond between Yugoslavia and the West - the conflict with the Soviet Union.²⁷

II. The Relationship of Yugoslavia and Britain on the Eve of the Visit

Tito received an invitation to visit the United Kingdom during the trip of British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden to Yugoslavia in September 1952.²⁸ Foreign Office reports note that Tito found the invitation to be an honour but a chance existed that the visit might not take place as a result of, among other things, the Soviet threat, the dissatisfaction of “the hard-line Communists who still opposed any relations with the West,” the fear of assassination (“while beyond the protection of the Yugoslav secret police”), and the difficulties in protocol after the Yugoslav Presidential election.²⁹

The Ambassador in Belgrade, Ivo Mallet, spoke in his annual report on Yugoslavia in 1952 of the improvement of relations with the West, which took place within the framework of “the markedly independent [Yugoslav] foreign policy,” as being based on common anti-Soviet interests. The deterioration of relations between Italy and the Vatican represented a negative characteristic of its foreign policy as a whole. The report discussed internal changes in the country, the measures taken with respect to government decentralisation, the introduction of workers’ self-management and the modification of the collectivisation policy as a change from previous practices. According to the Ambassador, special attention had been paid to small but significant changes in criminal legislation which reflected a concern for individual rights and contributed to the transformation of UDBA from a paramilitary into a civil agency. The position of the peasantry - the centre of dissatisfaction in the country - had improved to some extent as a result

²⁶ In February 1953, the English edition of book *Tito govori (Tito Speaks)* by Vladimir Dedijer had been published, and *Vjesnik* wrote that the reviews in the British press had been positive, except in the (conservative) *Daily Telegraph* “where Randolph Churchill again used the opportunity, on the occasion of the publication of the book, to present a number of distorted interpretations of the recent history of Yugoslavia.” *Vjesnik*, 10 February 1953, p. 3.

²⁷ *Vjesnik*, 10 March 1953, p. 1., on that occasion wrote that “Tito enjoys enormous popularity as a legendary warrior from the times of war and as a personification of the anti-Cominformist resistance of today.”

²⁸ John Young, “Talking to Tito: the Eden visit to Yugoslavia, September 1952,” *Review of International Studies* 12 (1986), pp. 31-41.

²⁹ The National Archives (TNA), London, Foreign Office: Political Correspondence (FO) 371/102180, WY 1052/26, and WY 1052/41. Post-War dispatches from Belgrade occasionally included reports of rumours of assassination attempts against Tito. In light of the lack of any further information concerning this matter, these reports can either be considered as an indication of the atmosphere in the country or the acceptance by British secret services of claims made by émigré groups opposed to the Yugoslav Government.

of the abolishment of compulsory delivery quotas. According to Mallet, the most significant changes related to the economy and promised a disengagement from the rigid Stalinist economic model through the abandonment of price controls and the introduction of some market elements. The report assessed that the Yugoslav Army had around 300,000 troops and approximately a million reservists at its disposal.³⁰

Mallet claimed that the attempt of the Yugoslav Government to ease tensions in its relations with the Catholic and Orthodox Churches through the establishment of clerical associations whose membership received significant material privileges, had been met with difficulties as a result of bans imposed by Church hierarchies.³¹ After worsening relations between Yugoslavia and the Vatican, Mallet writes, many allegations had been raised in Belgrade that the Vatican had decided to go “hand in hand with the Italian [G]overnment” in connection with the issue of Trieste³² and even against Yugoslavia itself. With respect to relations between the Government and the Church, the report stated that Government leaders faced a delicate problem in seeking to “abolish” religion in the predominately peasant country, though they actually sought to destroy “the power of the church as a dividing element in the country.”

Mallet wrote that Yugoslavia's development headed toward a Western orientation, in both foreign and internal policies. Although the regime had Communist features, its move away from Stalinism had been important and, in that sense, Yugoslavia remained “opposed to Moscow.” In conclusion, the Ambassador judged that Yugoslavia's system would develop but the pace and scope of same would depend on sustained peace and economic achievements, on abandoning some dogmas, on alleviating ethnic divisions in the country, and especially on the level and direction of Western influence. “If our behavior helps Tito to surmount the internal problems, and we avoid political pressure and help him face the laws of economy and international politics, the gap between us will be getting narrower.”³³

The notes made by Eden for the Prime Minister on 30 December 1952, in relation to remarks made by Catholic circles in Britain as well as Parliamentary issues concerning Tito's visit, state the opinion that “there were exaggerations concerning the persecution of the church” because only one bishop had been imprisoned and sentenced to eleven and one-half years in prison “because of collaboration” and 200 Catholic and 20 to 30 Orthodox priests for various reasons, ranging from “collaboration dur-

³⁰ TNA, FO 371/107814, WY 1011/1, Report from Belgrade 17th Jan. 1953, pp. 1-6.

³¹ “It was the decision by a conference of Roman Catholic bishops in September (acting on instructions from the Holy See) to forbid priests to join the Government-sponsored priest's association which led directly, if not immediately, to the break in Yugoslavia's relations with the Holy See (...).” Mallet's comment on the refusal of the Serbian Orthodox Church to recognise the associations: “This gave the authorities an unexpected shock (...).” *Ibid.*, p. 9.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

ing the war to avoiding taxation and unauthorised christening.” In his opinion, “the main pressure is of [an] economic and psychological nature.” The Minister suggested that the Prime Minister not discuss these issues at length and, if unavoidable, it should be done “tactfully.”³⁴ The Catholic Union Memorial on Marshal Tito’s visit, published on 2 March 1953 and addressed to the British Government, relied on the letter of Yugoslavia’s Catholic bishops addressed to Tito in September 1952 in which they protested against the teaching of atheism in schools.³⁵

As early as 27 January 1953, Minister Eden received a group of Catholic members of Parliament. They wanted to know why the Government ignored moral issues in Yugoslav policy. The Foreign Office’s theses made for Eden in preparation for this meeting started with the progress in Yugoslav foreign policy since 1948. With regard to internal policy, while admitting weaknesses, the theses emphasized the position that influence could be exercised through contacts rather than by refusing to meet. It stated that “in the middle-class sphere much was done in recent years.” As regards to religion and the Church, the theses considered that the suffering of the Church in Yugoslavia had been no worse than that in other Eastern European countries. The theses noted a tendency toward improvement as 23 priests had been released from prison for the New Year.³⁶ Tito had also received a delegation of Catholic Church bishops on 8 January 1953 with the aim to establish a joint body with the task to draft new legislation on religious congregations.³⁷ The theses further stated that “Yugoslav authorities are obviously willing to show that a *modus vivendi* with the Catholic Church is possible now, when the Vatican representatives are no longer present in Yugoslavia.” But, the text further noted, citing to a recent interview given by Cardinal Stepinac to an

³⁴ TNA, FO 371/107837, WY 1058/1. In the document ‘Marshal Tito’s Visit to London’ of 31st Dec. 1952, which explained the Government’s position and had been distributed to all British diplomatic representatives in the world, the same is repeated: “Anti-Yugoslav propaganda has tended to point a gloomier picture of physical persecution than is justified by the facts. Only one bishop (the Catholic Bishop of Mostar) is in prison, having been sentenced in 1948 to 11 1/2 year’s imprisonment on a charge of wartime collaboration. There are in addition estimated to be about 200 Catholic priests, monks and nuns in prison on charges varying from wartime collaboration to unlicensed baptism, as well as 20-30 orthodox priests. Cases of violence and intimidation exercised or inspired by the authorities have not been frequent, but ugly incidents do occur from time to time”. TNA, Prime Minister’s Office: Correspondence and Papers /PREM/ 11/578, letter of 31st Dec.1953, p. 2.

³⁵ TNA, FO 371/107837, WY 1058/15. “The Catholic Union,” in the name of all Catholic organisations in Britain, sent its statement to the media and state officials. It protested against the persecution of Christians in Yugoslavia, as a “generally known fact,” and says: “It is administrative, rather than legislative in character and the complaint of Catholics is not only against Yugoslav law but even more against the way in which the law is interpreted and applied – or not applied.” PREM 11/579, p.1.

³⁶ The report of 16th Jan. 1953 gives information concerning 43 Catholic priests from Slovenia released from prison on the eve of the bishops’ meeting with Tito, within the framework of the New Year’s pardons. TNA, FO 371/107815, WY 1013/2.

³⁷ TNA, FO 371/107837, WY 1058/3.



Josip Broz Tito with Members of the British Royal Family in London, March 1953.

American journalist, that “Cardinal Stepinac emphasised that no agreement can be enforced unless fully approved by the Holy See.”³⁸

A study entitled “Yugoslav Government’s Anti-religious Policy” attached to a 2 January 1953 report from Belgrade, analyses the ideological and political background of those relations. In theory, Yugoslavia’s Constitution guaranteed its citizens freedom of conscience and the churches had the right to organise, but, in practice, the document states that freedom had been limited by many factors. Tensions between church and state, common also in the West, had been subordinated in Yugoslavia to the conflict between Communist materialism and Christian (and Muslim) religion which had been made even more complex due to the political and religious conflict between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches and “intensified by the biasness of the Vatican during the war towards the Ustasha regime,”³⁹ and now towards Italian claims regarding Trieste. All this had been “made even harder by the stubbornness of the Yugoslav temperament.” The religious gap between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches had been accompanied by

³⁸ TNA, FO 371/107815, WY 1032/2, Report from Belgrade 16th Jan. 1953.

³⁹ “Tensions between Church and State are familiar even in Western society. But in Yugoslavia they are subordinated to the fundamental conflict between Communist materialism and Christian (and Moslem) faith, complicated by the cleavage, both political and religious, between Catholic Croatia and Orthodox Serbia, and exacerbated by the partiality shown by the Vatican during the war towards the Ustashi regime under the Quisling Pavelich and at the present time towards the Italian claims in the Free Territory of Trieste.” TNA, FO 371/10-7887, WY 1781/5, “The Anti-religious Policy of the Yugoslav Government,” p.1.

the political gap manifested in “Serbian centralism and Croatian separatism.” The document described relations between the Catholic Church and the Ustasha regime as follows: “The Roman Catholic Church’s attitude to the aims, if not the methods, of this anti-Partisan, anti-Orthodox, and anti-Moslem movement was in general one of sympathy.”⁴⁰ “Unfortunately, it is known,” it further says, that the Catholic clergy in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina had as a whole, engaged in “conniving at” and sometimes actively encouraging the Ustasha incidents. “The partisan movement will never forgive them that.”⁴¹ As regards Cardinal Stepinac, the study says that during the War he maintained “unnecessarily cordial relations with the German and Italian occupying authorities” and the Ustasha, without publicly taking a position against the massacre of Serbs and forced baptism, and after the War he became a “symbol of Croats and Catholics against Communism.”⁴²

When British public criticism of Yugoslavia’s attitude toward the Catholic Church became stronger, the Yugoslav Ambassador submitted a protest on 15 December 1952. This seemed to put the visit in question, but the British Government sent a calming message to the Yugoslav Government, though it also instructed its representative in Belgrade that the message had to remain secret and not be disclosed to the public.⁴³

III. Yugoslavia in the British Press and Britain in the Yugoslav Press on the Eve of the Visit.

On the eve of Tito’s arrival, in February and March 1953, the British press published a number of positive articles concerning the situation in Yugoslavia in which most of the writers portrayed Tito as a great military strategist and emphasised that the country had been an important member of the anti-fascist coalition. The articles also placed emphasis on the efficiency of reconstruction in the country, though they also spoke of the hard life of a majority of the population which had been a consequence of the ravages of the War. The articles compared the situation in that period, using statistics and statements in some parts of the country, with social circumstances before the War, and noted improvements in some areas. Only some

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² “During the war he maintained unnecessarily cordial relations with the German and Italian occupying forces and with the German-sponsored Ustashi puppet government. In particular he appears to have taken no public stand against the massacre of Serbs by Ustashi, other than a belated warning against ‘forcible conversion’. After the war he became the symbol of the stand of Croats and Catholics against the Communist regime.” Ibid., p. 3.

⁴³ The message Mallet handed over to Tito was: “Her Majesty’s Government hope that the recent criticism in certain quarters in the United Kingdom of the proposed visit of Marshal Tito to this country in the spring will not in any way impair the development of close collaboration between themselves and the Yugoslav government based on common interests, which it is and remains their policy to promote.” The instruction for Mallet said: “In conveying this message, you should make it clear that it is strictly private and that it must not be allowed to leak to the press.” TNA, PREM 11/578, WY1053/80, telegram of 20th Dec. 1952.

reviews provided a more in-depth analysis of the political situation in the country. Some basic information had been included on, among other things, the functioning of the political system, the separation from the USSR, the plans of the leadership for the industrialisation of the country, great employment opportunities, and the Government's efforts to educate the population. The press also mentioned, though in a mild manner, the limitations stemming from the rule of a single party (such as the lack of any possibility of organising an opposition) and criticised the great role of the police and the restrictiveness of the activities of the churches.

Some newspapers stood out, such as the *Manchester Guardian*, in which Kathleen M. Stahl published a series of articles entitled "Report on Yugoslavia," and the *Sunday Observer*, both of them being liberally-oriented papers.⁴⁴ Stahl emphasised that the Communists reject religion and that their family members do not go to church because "people may talk," but that "churches and mosques are well maintained and frequented."⁴⁵ The independent *Sunday Express* showed more criticism, one of the sharper texts being written by Evelyn Waugh, a former "liaison officer" to the Partisans. In November and December a number of texts and statements of Catholic organisations and individuals had been published which pointed to religious persecutions in Yugoslavia.⁴⁶ Only after Cardinal Griffith stated in early December that the meeting with Yugoslav representatives should be taken as an opportunity to point to problems and influence Tito did criticism become less harsh.⁴⁷

On the eve of Tito's journey, the Yugoslav press published many stories about Britain. As Mallet reported, "[a]lthough not without criticism about some aspects of life in Britain, they were written in an uniform friendly tone."⁴⁸ For example, in January *Vjesnik* published "Notes From a Voyage to Britain," an article written after the visit of a delegation of the University of Zagreb and the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Youth Federation. The article had a social tone and analyzed daily life in Britain, the position of working women who received less pay than men for the same work, and other matters.⁴⁹ Other articles wrote about stereotypes about Britain, try-

⁴⁴ TNA, FO 371/107817.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Because of these articles and those commenting on a resolution adopted at a public protest organised by Cardinal Griffin on 6th Dec., the Yugoslav Ambassador Jože Brilej came to the Foreign Office on 15th Dec. to present a *demarche*. - TNA, FO 371/102184, letter of 16th Dec. 1952. - The FO telegram for Belgrade said that the Catholic Church had not been the only one participating in the 'anti-Yugoslav campaign,' as the Archbishop of Canterbury had also thought to issue a protest statement, and concluded: "I am impressed by the strength of feeling in this country." TNA, FO 371/102183, Telegram of 3rd Dec. 1952.

⁴⁷ TNA, FO 371/125048, "The Visit of President Tito - The Religious Situation in Yugoslavia."

⁴⁸ TNA, FO 371/107835, WY 1054/78.

⁴⁹ *Vjesnik*, 13 January 1953, p. 3.

ing to clarify some “typical” images of the life of the island (*Vjesnik*’s London correspondent Josip Kirigin and *Politika*’s Milan Radojčić). Political texts on, for example, “colonial” issues (such as the Sudan) presented a balanced picture⁵⁰ as did those concerning internal policy.⁵¹

IV. Organisational Issues of the Visit

1. *The Issue Concerning the Level of the Visit*

As the visit had been arranged while Tito had only been head of the Government at the invitation of the British Prime Minister, and given that since then Tito had also become the President of the Republic, an issue arose concerning the definition of the visit.

As the new British sovereign, Queen Elisabeth, would not have any official visits prior to her coronation, the visit of Tito as head of state of Yugoslavia could only be treated as a “private” one. Yugoslav authorities expressed their dissatisfaction with this and negotiations lasted from December 1952 till February 1953. A 30 January 1953 report from Belgrade stated that “the Yugoslav[s] have an idea on their importance and that the visit to the United Kingdom is part of that view.” Finally, in February, the British Ambassador explained to the chief of Tito’s protocol that the visit could not possibly be a “state visit” and that the visit could not be an “official” one either as such visits are made by prime ministers and Tito now had become head of state. The visit, therefore, in the “official sense” had to be a “private” and not “a state visit.” But, the event would receive the same importance as a state visit. Tito’s chief of protocol requested that if the visit could not be called an “official” one, that use of the term “private” be avoided.⁵² The basis of the visit came to be described as a “private visit” as a “guest of the Government,” but, as an official dispatch to the British Admiralty on 26 February to the command in the Mediterranean stated, the visit would “nevertheless be given major importance.”⁵³

The public in Yugoslavia learned about the issue in a tempered form only when Tito’s statement had been released following his official reception which stated that the visit had not been “of a markedly official character,” but could nevertheless contribute to a better development of cooperation.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ *Vjesnik*, 20 January 1953, p. 3. (“Opet oštro između Londona i Kaira” - Sharp again between London and Cairo).

⁵¹ *Vjesnik*, 5 January 1953, p. 3, “Mjere štednje u Velikoj Britaniji” (Economy Measures in Great Britain) and *Vjesnik*, 5 February 1953, p. 3, “Stalno osipanje u KP Britanije” (Constant Dropping out of the CP of Britain).

⁵² TNA, FO 371/107832, 1054/9.

⁵³ *Ibid.* *Daily Mail* of the 11th March wrote on the protocol vagueness, emphasising the aspect of military honours as if that had been an official visit – which was not the case.

⁵⁴ *Vjesnik*, 17 March 1953, p. 1.

2. *The Means of Transport*

The Yugoslav press did not discuss the question of transport “until the last moment,” i.e., even after the news of Tito’s departure had been released the means of transport had not been mentioned.⁵⁵ It only received mention the day after Tito left for Britain. Official arrangements remained secret until mid-February when, after some vague indications made by the Yugoslav representatives, the British received information that Tito would travel aboard the training ship *Galeb* to Malta from where a British naval escort would be requested.⁵⁶ An offer that a Royal Air Force plane come to Yugoslavia for Tito had been rejected for “security reasons.” While discussing the details with Yugoslav representatives, British authorities exchanged correspondence with authorities in Malta and Gibraltar and monitored reports from diplomats in Madrid. Spanish authorities rejected the possibility of Tito taking a plane from Gibraltar because it involved a military and not a civilian plane and because they had objections to some of the passengers.⁵⁷ The Maltese Governor would not allow *Galeb* to dock in Malta’s port, perhaps as a result of possible local Catholic protests.⁵⁸ On 2 March, the Command in the Mediterranean received final word from the Admiralty that Tito would travel the entire route aboard the *Galeb* without stops. Similar issues related to docking in Gibraltar occurred on the return journey.

3. *The Number of Persons in the Delegation.*

Initial reports stated that many people would accompany Tito on the trip. The Foreign Office informed Ambassador Mallet on 2 February that the number proposed by the Yugoslav side as a final one - thirty-five - needed to be reduced by ten. Several days later, the British said they would receive fourteen persons.⁵⁹ According to a 20 February report from Belgrade, the list had been extended from fourteen to twenty-nine, with only twelve accompanying Tito to the official residence, White Lodge, in Richmond Park,⁶⁰ while the Embassy would take care of accommodation for the rest. Members of the official suite consisted of Koča Popović, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Aleš Bebler, Assistant Minister, Dr. Slaven Smodlaka, Minister Plenipotentiary

⁵⁵ *Vjesnik*, 9 March 1953, on its front page wrote: “Marshal Tito went yesterday to Great Britain”, listing also the accompanying persons. The following day, it wrote: “As foreseen, Marshal Tito’s journey to Great Britain will last a bit more than a week.” It further said that he would travel on the Adriatic and Mediterranean Seas, via Malta, Gibraltar and on the Atlantic Ocean. Reports the next day mention the name of the ship -*Galeb*.

⁵⁶ TNA, FO 371/107833, WY 1054/27(A).

⁵⁷ TNA, FO 371/107832, WY 1054/4.

⁵⁸ TNA, FO 371/107833, WY 1054/27(B).

⁵⁹ TNA, FO 371/107832, WY 1054/4.

⁶⁰ Both sides, for security reasons, had supported accommodation in a separate house, rather than in a hotel. The Ministry of Labour and the Prime Minister’s Cabinet became involved in the search for an appropriate facility. TNA, FO 371/102184.

(Chief of Protocol) and Anton Vratuša, secretary of the suite.⁶¹ Tito's personal attendants consisted of two generals, a private secretary, a counsellor, a doctor, and as the technical staff, an interpreter, a secretary, three "regular" and four security service officers, a "press attaché," a photographer, a cameraman, and two technical assistants. The "servants" group consisted of a cook, a personal valet, a barber and a cleaning woman.

4. The Date and Programme of the Visit

At first, the visit had been scheduled to start on 21 March, but in early February the Yugoslav side suggested that it should take place a week or two earlier, that is 16-21 March. The British side accepted this change without objection.⁶² According to the Yugoslav press (quoting "unofficial sources"), the reason for the change had been caused by the busy schedule of the British Foreign Minister.⁶³ Mallet's 20 February report advised that Tito expressed his wish to spend several days sightseeing in London, emphasising that he did not ask for long talks with the Ministers of the Government.

V. J.B. Tito's Stay in Great Britain Between 16 and 21 March 1953

According to the schedule set by the Foreign Office on 6 March,⁶⁴ *Galeb* had been expected to arrive on Monday, 16 March at 13:00 at Greenwich, where it would be welcomed by the Yugoslav Ambassador aboard the British ship *Nora* which would, at 14:15 take Tito and eight attendants to Westminster Pier. Boarding on the *Nora* would be required as it had the ability to pass under London's bridges, the *Galeb's* size preventing her from making the trip. In the meantime, the Duke of Edinburgh, Queen Elisabeth's husband, Prime Minister Churchill and Foreign Minister Eden would arrive at Westminster Pier at 14:50.

⁶¹ TNA, FO 371/107833, WY 1054/31.

⁶² TNA, FO 371/107833, WY 1054/29.- The documents of Prime Minister Churchill also contain the minutes of the talks held at FO on 3rd February, when Ambassador Velebit requested an urgent change of date: "For security reasons, the Marshal now wished to advance the date of his visit by, say, a fortnight." He said that circles around Tito in Belgrade had known of the request two weeks earlier, but he had not been authorised to inform the British side, although he had meant to. PREM 11/578.

⁶³ *Vjesnik*, 10 March 1953, p. 1. *Vjesnik* did not write about the date until 10 March, when Tito's arrival to London had been announced for 16 March. The issue of 3 March says that the visit would take place "in this month," and in late January the same newspaper wrote on the visit in the article "Common People Welcome Tito's Arrival," without mentioning any dates. (*Vjesnik*, 23 January 1953, p.1).

⁶⁴ TNA, FO 371/107834, WY 1054/55. *Vjesnik* published the visit programme on 13th March, without dates, just listing the meetings in the course of the six days. The return had been announced to be on Saturday, "by sea." In the issue of 16th March, the paper said that "the exact programme of the visit is not known yet."

his visit.⁶⁸ After a short talk at Downing Street, the Yugoslav delegation laid a wreath at Cenotaph - a monument to the fallen in Whitehall. In the afternoon, Prime Minister Churchill came to the Yugoslav Embassy for an hour talk with Tito.

The second day of the visit included a reception at Buckingham Palace and a visit by Tito and several of his attendants to the seat of executive power in south London. The written plan of the visit to London City Hall and attendance at the local assembly session, made on 16 March, runs to eight pages and had been marked "confidential." It covers the programme of the visits and the security measures taken.⁶⁹ For security reasons, the time and date had to remain secret until the end of the event, and the information concerning the programme, the document states, would be accessible only to those who had been explicitly mentioned in it. A special addendum to the document contains security notes.⁷⁰ The schedule called for Tito to arrive with his suite to City Hall at 3 p.m. and to remain there until 4:30 p.m.

On 18 March, Tito attended exercises of the British Air Force at the Daxford military airport near Cambridge. During the air display, an accident occurred in which two pilots had been killed and, at Tito's request, the exercise had been discontinued. On the same day, he visited the University of Cambridge and in the evening he gave a short interview for British Broadcast Corporation (BBC) television. The Foreign Office took care that Tito's visit did not cause "unnecessary" complications, both for Downing Street and in relation to other Western countries, particularly Italy. This especially applied to the possibility of the question of the attitude of the Yugoslav authorities towards the Church being raised in the press and by the public. A Foreign Office note made during the visit provides evidence of this. The note discusses the BBC's intent to have a short "non-political" interview with Tito, but also its proposal to interview Bebler on political issues. In response to a BBC inquiry for the Foreign Office's opinion, the latter stated that the offer to Bebler should be withdrawn, if possible, because there would certainly be

⁶⁸ *Vjesnik's* reporter wrote: "Many newspapers ask themselves if sufficient measures have been taken in order to protect Marshal Tito" (quoting the *Sunday Express* as saying that, according to sources close to Scotland Yard, the best men had been engaged in the operation), and "automobiles with protective bodies [and] motorcyclists with radios, will be in his escort constantly." Tito shall be approached, it also said, only "with special clearance." *Vjesnik*, 16 March 1953, p.1.

⁶⁹ Documents show that detailed measures had been planned much earlier. During a meeting at FO, a representative of the Home Office said that: "The visit presented special security problems not least because of the variety of groups that 'had it in for' the Marshal. He was concerned to prevent not only any shooting but also unpleasant incidents such as demonstrations and leaflet throwing." TNA, FO 371/102184, Minutes of 11th December 1952.

⁷⁰ TNA, FO 371/107835, WY 1054/85.

⁷¹ On 20 March the Executive Board of the Labour Party offered a lunch to the guests at the House of Commons.

⁷² *Vjesnik*, 2 April 1953, p.1.

objections on what might be said about “controversial issues,” such as Trieste and religion.

During the visit, a number of official gala lunches and dinners took place with some prominent representatives of British political and social life.⁷¹ Apart from their importance at the protocol level, these events had symbolic and practical value. At one of the dinners, Churchill proposed a toast, which, for the Yugoslav party, became the focal point of the visit: “We are your allies, if our ally Yugoslavia is attacked, we shall perish together with you.”⁷² In interpretations made later in Yugoslavia and especially in Tito's statement after his return to Yugoslavia, Churchill's toast would be taken as a “promise” and a substitute for any written agreement. Further, the presence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Fisher, at the gala dinner to some extent soothed the accusations against Tito's regime of church persecution.⁷³

On 19 March, Koča Popović, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, addressed Parliament and official talks continued at the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defense in the presence of Tito and Churchill. The issue, expected to be the most frequently addressed during the talks - Trieste - had been at the time more important for the British. The need to satisfy the aspirations of an ally, Italy, on the eve of national elections there, seemed to be of more importance to the British than Yugoslavia's opinion. The second “burning” issue expected to be addressed, although with less certainty since Yugoslavia considered it to be an “internal” issue, concerned relations between church and state. In order to strengthen his position, Tito came to Britain with several arguments taking the bite out of accusations made against Yugoslavia. On New Year's Eve he had met Catholic Church representatives in Yugoslavia, led by Bishop Akšamović, in order to improve relations and to discuss the new bill on religious congregations. Further, a number of priests had been released from prison.⁷⁴ A short discussion on this issue occurred at Downing Street on 17 March. Prime Minister Churchill requested that Yugoslavia improve its policy toward churches as that would positively affect his Government's position to implement a more open policy toward Yugoslavia and at the same time facilitate the improvement of relations between Yugoslavia and Italy. Tito replied that religious persecutions did not take place, but that some problems existed with the Catholic Church which represented “a political, rather than a religious issue.” Churchill agreed with some of Tito's judgements about the behaviour of a part of the clergy during the War.⁷⁵ Talks at the Foreign Office on 19

⁷³ Beloff considered the publishing of the joint photograph to be inappropriate at a time when Sunday schools teaching at public schools in Yugoslavia had been abolished and “Christmas celebrations were prohibited.” *Tito's Flawed Legacy*, p.153.

⁷⁴ TNA, FO 371/107815, WY 1013/7, Report from Belgrade of 28th March 1953

⁷⁵ The Minutes say that Prime Minister Churchill “quite understood that many Roman Catholic priests in Yugoslavia had collaborated with the Germans and Italians during the war”. Upon Tito's statement that “the Vatican had done great wrong to Yugoslavia by making Stepinac a cardinal, a man condemned as a collaborator,” the minutes say that Churchill “agreed that this had been a mistake”. PREM 11/577, Minutes of 17th March 1953, pp. 4-5.

March had been attended by Popović, Velebit, Bebler, Vratuša, Šumonja and Tito (for a period of time), on the Yugoslav side, and, on the British side, by Eden, Defense Minister Alexander, Minister of State Loyd as well as Strang, Harrison and Cheetham from the Foreign Office and Ambassador Mallet.

The Joint Statement of 20 March emphasised that discussions concerning the international situation showed “a wide identity of views.” It further stated that “the two Governments stated that resistance to aggression and the preservation of national independence represented a common interest. They obligated themselves to co-operate closely, both between themselves and with other freedom-loving nations, in order to preserve peace. They fully agreed that conflict, which would come about in case of aggression in Europe, would hardly remain local in character.”⁷⁶

VI. Evaluation of the Visit in the British and Yugoslav

Press and Diplomatic Analyses

All newspapers in Yugoslavia gave extensive daily reports concerning Tito's journey and stay in Britain. Major newspapers included, apart from regular contributors, reports by *Tanjug* as well as “special” correspondents. For about ten days, the front pages of all newspapers had been devoted to reports from London, extending even to the third page, while photographs accompanying the texts had been followed by a set of photographs on the last page. They depicted scenes from ceremonies, protocol meetings with the highest British personalities, including Tito's photograph with the Royal Family, visits to Royal residencies, cultural and historical monuments, scientific and cultural institutions and military exercises, and his drive in the streets of London, showing people expressing their friendly feelings for the guests. The newspapers also released several critiques. *Borba* wrote about the “Cominform-Mosley-Chetnik” protests in Gloucester Road, London,⁷⁷ while *Vjesnik* criticized *Reuters* in connection with its coverage. According to *Vjesnik*, though other press agencies, e.g., *Associated Press*, *United Press*, *France Press* and others, wrote that Tito had been welcomed by more than 3,000 people in front of Buckingham Palace in an “exceptionally warm manner,” *Reuters* reported the presence of “a couple of thousand observers, among whom there could be heard hostile shouts.” The same agency had been further criticized for placing too much emphasis on security measures,⁷⁸ con-

⁷⁶ *Vjesnik*, 21 March 1953, p.1

⁷⁷ The Yugoslav Embassy was nearby, in Kensington Gore.

⁷⁸ The minutes of the meeting of the police representatives and FO officials on 11th Dec. 1952 emphasize the exceptional but necessary nature of the security measures: “Although it was exceptional, he proposed to detail a strong motor-cycle escort to accompany the Marshal wherever he went. This might attract some attention but it was better to be safe than sorry.” TNA, FO 371/102184, WY 1053/64.

sidering them “unusual” and such that they “drew the attention of passers-by.” *Vjesnik* wrote that “Cominform members, and Mosley’s British fascists and criminals, and Chetnik emigrants (dealt with by the English criminal police) would like to spoil, even if only on a small scale (because they cannot do anything more), this visit of democratic cooperation. The measures that may be taken during the visit against such elements can only do credit to the visit.”⁷⁹

In Britain, the press gave much attention to the visit,⁸⁰ with only part of media commenting on Tito’s visit from the point of view of religious freedom and his relations with the Catholic Church.

Mallet wrote in his reports that Yugoslav newspapers wrote about the enthusiasm with which Tito had been welcomed and treated in Britain by both official representatives and the “common” people. He also wrote about the criticism directed toward the BBC’s “Serbo-Croatian” service whose programme had emphasized the security measures during Tito’s stay, the motorcycles in the escort, the “armed” (that, is armored) car, that people watched “in silence” the “unusual parade,” and that it described Tito’s arrival to Buckingham Palace in a similar manner. The media also criticized those journalists who questioned the role of Yugoslav security services in the organisation of security. In Mallet’s opinion, *Borba* and *Politika* emphasised that such measures had been undertaken by the British Government and its police, Scotland Yard, which took seriously “the secret wishes of the Cominform and Mosley sympathizers and the Yugoslav emigration.”⁸¹ *Borba* published a letter from a reader saying that those who worked in the BBC’s Yugoslav Section consisted of former followers of Ljotić and listed their names and activities during the War.⁸² The British Ambassador reported on 11 April 1953 that one of the main points raised in Tito’s speech in Split on 30 March had been his treatment in Britain - Yugoslavia had been approached as an “equal,” specifically as “an equal” partner, and he under-

⁷⁹ *Vjesnik*, 21 March 1953, p. 3 (“On Whose Side is Reuter”). *Daily Mail* of 12th March also criticized the security measures, writing on the interruption of traffic in the centre of London, on additional security of the Yugoslav Embassy, that Tito would be guarded, day and night, by eight police officers of the ‘Special Branch’ unit, that he would be spending a very short time in the open, etc. PREM 11/578.

⁸⁰ Beloff considered that to be “euphoria.” *Tito’s Flawed Legacy*, p. 151.

⁸¹ This issue would require comprehensive research which could show whether Yugoslav or British security services had any information on the possibility of an attack. Cold War International History Project of the International Science Centre Woodrow Wilson published in *Bulletin* No. 10 a copy of the document “Stalin’s Plan to Assassinate Tito” (first published in *Izvestiia* on 11th June 1993), found at the Russian Federation President’s Archive in Moscow. One of the plans, created at the Ministry of State Security, called for the murder of Tito during his visit to Britain, by an agent who had access to Yugoslav circles. - Cold War International History Project, “Stalin’s Plan to Assassinate Tito” ([Http://cwihip.si.edu/cwihiplib.nsf/e](http://cwihip.si.edu/cwihiplib.nsf/e)).

⁸² TNA, FO 371/107835, WY 1054/106, Report of 21st March 1953.

lined in his statement that Yugoslavia did not need to join NATO as a precondition of its cooperation with the West.⁸³

Conclusion

Yugoslavia's approach to the West, after its political conflict with the USSR in 1948, helped the country to get over its economic problems after the imposition of a full blockade by its former allies, but it also reinforced its defense capabilities. "The marriage of convenience," as many called this bonding, which at the time represented a rather unusual form of cooperation between politically and socially different systems, had advantages for both sides. In the Cold War context, Yugoslavia received the role of a leader of possible "turncoats" from the monolithic Communist Bloc. In order to keep this role, Yugoslavia obtained economic, financial and military assistance from the West, rarely subject to any conditions, and its influence in international political relations grew. But that did not cause Yugoslavia to make larger political concessions, especially not in internal policy. A skillful foreign policy led by the personality of Tito, a Communist but also a prominent person in the anti-fascist coalition which Yugoslavia's new-old allies had not forgotten, gave Yugoslavia in the 1950s the chance to surmount its political and economic troubles and to lay the foundations for further development in cooperation with the world's greatest economic and financial institutions. A warm welcome prepared for Tito by the British Conservative Government and by a majority of Britain's public (in opposition to the protests of Catholic circles), evidenced the controversial quality of Cold War policy but also Tito's skill of getting along in that environment.

Translated by Ida Jurković

⁸³ TNA, FO 371/107836, WY 1013/8. "In London, they considered us equal. We spoke on a totally equal basis, without the arrogance we had sometimes seen in the East, and which we had found had been very hard on us." *Vjesnik*, 31 March 1953, p. 2.

Josip Broz Titos Besuch in Großbritannien 1953

Zusammenfassung

Die guten Beziehungen zwischen Jugoslawien und Großbritannien sollten, ungeachtet ideologischer und politischer Unterschiede, im Zusammenhang der damals vorherrschenden Politik des Kalten Krieges betrachtet werden. Die Abweichung Jugoslawiens von der Sowjetunion wurde in westlichen politischen Kreisen als Möglichkeit eingeschätzt, die auch die restlichen Satellitenstaaten zum ähnlichen Vorgang verleiten könnte. Für Jugoslawien war diese Position sowohl kurz- als auch langfristig vorteilhaft: Es erhielt wirtschaftliche und militärische Unterstützung, die nach der Abtrennung von den Staaten der "Volksdemokratie" nötig war und versetzte es in die Lage, wirtschaftliche Pläne zu realisieren. Auch die politischen Vorteile waren erheblich: Obwohl Jugoslawien weiterhin als kommunistischer Staat betrachtet wurde, sicherten einige Wirtschaftsreformen und die als neues ideologisches Experiment gestaltete Regierungsorganisation das Interesse der westlichen Länder, welche erwarteten, dass sich Jugoslawien in Richtung von Modellen westlicher Demokratie entwickeln werde.

Vor diesem Hintergrund sollte auch der Besuch Titos in Großbritannien anfang 1953 betrachtet werden. Obwohl es zu keinen bedeutenden Vereinbarungen kam, hatten beide Seiten Nutzen: Für Jugoslawien, vor allem dessen Präsidenten, war es eine Prestigefrage von besonderer Bedeutung, während es für Großbritannien um eine Bestätigung dessen Rolle in dieser Region ging. Ein Thema, welches diesen Besuch hätte belasten können – die Frage der Glaubensgemeinschaften in Jugoslawien – wurde im beiderseitigen Verständnis absloviert, da die Einstellung gegenüber dem Konflikt zwischen der Regierung und der katholischen Kirche in den meisten Gesichtspunkten auf beiden Seiten übereinstimmte.