

COUNTER INTELLIGENCE CORPS
Zone 3, Milan Detachment
APO 512

25 March, 1946

SUBJECT : Intercepted Letter From Belgrade.

TO : GSI(b), 2 District

1. Attached is an intercepted letter originating in Belgrade destined for an un-named person in Switzerland.

2. Writer is the ex-first secretary of the Royal Yugoslav Legation in Berne who was repatriated to Yugoslavia in the summer of 1945.

3. Writer is obviously pro-Royalist.

4. Letter is being relayed for your information without comments.

Nicholas A. Natsios
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Executive Officer
CIC, Milan Det., Zone 3

Approved:

M.A. Tonini
M.A. TONINI
Major, MI
Supervising Agent

I have to state, above all, that I have not been an opponent to the agreement Tito-Subasic, i.e. to the collaboration with the partisans. The best proof is the fact that two months I returned to Yugoslavia out of my own free will, leaving democratic and liberal Switzerland, where since one year and a half I was acting as first secretary of our Legation. Therein I distinguished myself from all my other colleagues, with the exception of one, who all refused to return to their country. During my stay in Switzerland, I have even collaborated with Tito's representatives. The agreement Tito-Subasic, concluding under the pressure of the great Powers, could be approved by every patriot and democrat. This agreement foresaw, as is known, the fusion of the Tito Government, formed in the Country, with the one of Subasic which was formed in exile. Afterwards, in conformity with the decisions taken at Yalta, a Provisional Parliament was formed which comprised Tito's representatives and those of several Yugoslav political parties. Finally, in August of this year, the "Popular Front" was formed, in which the "Partisans" as well as the above mentioned representatives of political parties entered.

But what disappointment and what surprise were awaiting me upon return to my country, which I had not seen since four and a half years! A few days were enough for me to find out:

1. that in the whole country a general discontent was reigning,
2. that there did not exist a real cooperation between Tito's party and the other political parties of the Popular Front. The collaboration existed only on paper, but in reality it was the political Communist Party which ruled supreme.

I. The discontent of the Yugoslav population is immense and general. During the two months I spent in Yugoslavia I did not meet one single man who could not have complained of the actual regime. At first I thought that the discontent existed only in the big cities, among the "sacred bourgeois", but it did not take me long to convince myself that in the country, among the peasants, the dissatisfaction was even more acute. For all those who are neither Montenegrins or Dalmates (governing elements), i.e. for all Serbo-Croates and for the great majority of Slovenes, the situation is untenable. For once, the Croates agree with the Serbes: they are today 90% against the regime.

For the Croats, Dr. Matchek is the only and uncontested leader. The more the present regime attacks him, the more his authority increases. It is interesting to note that all the Croats have become now even more monarchists than the Serbes themselves. "Give us even the Monarchy, provided that we shall be rid of Tito and his comrades!"

The situation is particularly difficult on the Serbian territory. Serbia has been freed first of the Germans, and for this reason all the rage and savagery of the men of the

woods, the partisans and the communists, has directed itself against the Serbs. Belgrade has suffered most. On the face of all the Belgradians one discovers traces of sufferings and privations. Men and women have grown older, their hair has become white, and they are pale and exhausted.

Immediately after the arrival of the "liberators", mass executions and arrests of the adversaries of the partisans have begun. Without any trial and without proof men have been killed or arrested, and this happens to tens of thousands of men! The famous secret police, the OZNA, the members of which are the pupils of the Gestapo and the GPU have introduced, particularly in Serbia, such a terror, keeping the people in such a fear, that everybody has the feeling of living in hell. When we read the declarations of your great President Roosevelt regarding the American war aims, many amongst us did not understand the last point of his declarations, namely: Freedom from fear. Now you can be sure that every Yugoslavian understands its significance. One can say without exaggerating: "Serbia has become the valley of tears."

Among the Yugoslavian population, there is unfortunately a certain percentage of illiterates. As such, they have not been able to read Dante's "Hell", but you may be assured that, thanks to the present regime in Yugoslavia they know quite well the contents of this book.

In this country the prisons are extremely overcrowded. It is estimated that approximately 120,000 to 140,000 persons are imprisoned. By the recent amnesty a part of the prison sentences and forced labor sentences have been reduced. In a single town, of lesser importance, Novi Sad, 4,300 persons have been set free thanks to this amnesty, and in another small Serbian town, Kraljevo, more than 3,000 persons have been liberated. You can therefore imagine how enormous the number of persons presently arrested in whole Yugoslavia must be!

II. The regime of one single party. The collaboration between the communists and the other political parties of the popular front does not exist. The system of the Communist Party can be felt in the whole country on every step. Today in Yugoslavia there is no room, there is no bread for the man who does not belong to the Communist Party. Nobody asks you who you are, which are your moral or intellectual qualifications. The main question is whether you are a member of the party. If you are, you can even become Ambassador to Warsaw, even though you might have sold until only yesterday shoes of the brand "Astra" in Podgorica! If you are a member of the party you may become, why not? a first secretary of the Legation at Teheran in spite of the fact that until yesterday you have been bell-boy at the Compagnie des Wagons-Lits, a.s.c. If on the other hand you are not a member of the party, you are condemned to starve after having sold everything you possessed. That is why you have today in Belgrade a former judge at the Appellate Court (I shall give you his address if you wish it) who is working as a simple employee at a tailors. This is a man who since the creation of Yugoslavia has been

in the opposition against all the regimes in the ancient Yougoslavia. For this man there is no room in our tribunals. You have further a professor at the University, a hydrotechnical engineer and a great specialist, who is working today at a shoemaker's. No, there is no work for this technician in this devastated and ruined Yougoslavia. You can also see from time to time an old diplomatic official, a very cultivated man (he has even learned Greek) come to the market for the purpose of offering to the passers-by the last suits of his wardrobe. For this man there is no bread today in Yougoslavia. I have personally seen on the market my old and unfortunate colleague of whom I was told that he is literally dying of hunger, and that was a terrible sight for me.

When you talk to a Serbian or a Croat, you are not allowed to mention this word, "liberation". For the enormous majority of the people of Yougoslavia, the arrival of the present rulers at the head of the country means a new and still more severe occupation. It is regrettable, but it is unfortunately correct that today, six months after the downfall of Hitlerite Germany, there is a great number of persons in Yougoslavia who assure that "things went better under the Germans," not to speak of the previous regimes of ancient Yougoslavia, of the personal regime of King Alexander, of the dictatorship of Peter Givkovitch, for these regimes compared with the actual one are an ideal that cannot be reached.

Why is that so? Why does a people such as the Yougoslav people which in the last war has contributed to the downfall of two empires, the Turkish and the Hungarian, a people which on March 27th, 1941 has had the courage to throw the gauntlet to what was at that time the most formidable military power, the people which was the first one to organize on its occupied territory the scheme of the guerillas- why is it, we are led to ask ourselves, that this people considers the actual regime to be the worst and the most intolerable of all previous regimes?

It is because the actual regime in Yougoslavia is 100% communist, and one knows that the communist ideologists consider the Serbians as the greatest obstacle to the bolshhevization of the Balkans, on account of their traditions of the past and their love of national independence- as well as the Croats on account of their attachment to the Catholic Church. At all the important posts of the country there are communists. In the very few ministries where the minister is not a communist, the assistant-minister has to be one. The presidents of the regional Governments are the secretaries of the communist party of the respective federal units. The president of the Serbian Government, Dr. Nescovitch, is the secretary of the Communist Party of Serbia; the president of the Government of Bosnia is the secretary of the communist party of Bosnia-Hercegovina; his name is Rodoljub Colakovic; the president of the Government of Croatia, M. Bakaric is the secretary of the Communist Party of Croatia, a.s.c. Tito himself, president of the Federal Government of Yougoslavia, is the secretary of the Communist Party of Yougoslavia.

The regime is proceeding systematically towards a bolshevization of Yugoslavia; i.e. of the Balkans. Individual and public liberties are suppressed. The OZNA is all-powerful. There is nothing in the country, no authority capable of protecting the citizens against the arbitration of the OZNA agents. Laws proclaimed lately establish in principle the liberty of press, of association and of reunion, but the exceptions are of such a nature and so numerous that in fact this liberty does not exist. The suppression of the public liberties is particularly hard to bear for the Serbs, who, by their education and their temperament, are used to express publicly their opinion.

Private property is suppressed systematically and according to a pre-determined plan. The totality of the fortune of rich persons is confiscated after they have been condemned to death or forced labor "for collaboration with the enemy" or as "enemies of the people". On the other hand, the others are not allowed to acquire property, since for all practical purposes; all commerce and the economy of the country are obstructed. Everybody sells everything he has at home. In one word, the proletarianization of the population is effected. The equality of all social classes, but in misery and poverty.

Private initiative is also authorized only on paper. As a matter of fact, for every authorization to work or to open an enterprise, the previous consent of the union of that enterprise is necessary. A former diplomatist who came back from London last April out of his free will, and who was no longer admitted to the diplomatic career, has requested the authorization to open a Cafe-Restaurant. This, however, was refused with the explanation "that he had not been, before the war, a member of the association of restaurant-owners"!

If the laws which the present regime proclaims are considered in general, it must be underlined that in the majority of cases they are simply translations of the Soviet laws.

The "Democracy" of the present regime. What is particularly revolting for the most part of the Yugoslav population is the fact that the present rulers affirm in an insolent manner that there exists today a "democracy" and a real "democratic regime". According to Mr. Djilas, chief of the Montenegrin communists and speaker for the regime, democracy means "popular committees". These popular committees which are provided with an almost unlimited power and are located in every quarter-in the case of towns- are groups of men designated and named by the Communist Party itself!

"Comrade" Djilas and his friends designate with the name of a democratic regime a reign of the utmost tyranny, of the most totalitarian administration and the most cruel terror. It means either one thing or the other: either the men who offer ordinary water to the people affirming that it is the best wine imagine that the whole people of Yugoslavia are stupid and blind, or they lack sufficient political honesty and civic courage to recognize openly the purpose which they have proposed to achieve.

Marshal Tito. Of late it has been said of the Marshal that during the war he has revealed himself to be a genius, but that during peace he has proved incapable as a politician. As proof, a change in the disposition of the people towards the regime is given. Whereas in the beginning 90% were for the partisans, today that same percentage, if not a larger one, is resolutely dissatisfied with the regime.

However one might discuss Tito's genius itself, of which he is said to have given proof during the war. I personally believe that the genius of Tito is simply the result of the illimited support of Bolchevist Russia and the errors of his adversaries. Furthermore, one should not lose sight of the fact that it is the lack of continuity in the attitude of the Allies towards the adversary of Tito, General Mihajlovic, which has greatly contributed to his success. But beyond all this we must know that Tito would never have been able to conquer Serbia and continue there Hitler's work; that is the Application of a totalitarian regime, if the Russians had not entered Serbia, if they had not disarmed the troops of General Mihajlovic, and remitted the power into the hands of the partisans.

The feeling of the Population towards the Russians. What has impressed me most after my arrival in Belgrade was the change which had taken place in the sentiments of the Yougoslav population towards the Russians. Before, and even during the war, the Serbian, for instance, whether he was an intellectual or a simple peasant or worker, would never have permitted to anybody to say in his presence a word against Russia. The love of this people for the Russians was deep and illimited. Today however, this love in the hearts of the Yougoslavs has been replaced by resentment and despair. The disillusion of the Serbian people in regard to the Russians is almost equal to the love which this people always felt for the Russians. The cause of this change is not only to be found in the excesses committed by the Russian soldiers who set foot as liberators on Serbian soil. The Serbs would have easily forgotten and forgiven the plundering, the rape of their wives, daughters, sisters, mothers, and even grandmothers! But what they can under no circumstances forgive to the Russians is that they have not only brought with them the Tito regime, but still support and maintain it today. Without the help of the Russians, the regime could not be maintained for as much as 24 hours. It is very probable that because of this experience with Tito, the Russians will lose forever the attachment and love of the Yougoslav people that could have become their most reliable support in the Balkans.

The elections of the 11th of November. I do not believe that the opposition will present itself at these elections. The result of elections carried through under the present conditions would not have expressed the exact will and opinion of the people.

It is true that the actual law concerning the election of deputies, foresees the general and secret ballot, but it stipulates at the same time that the all-powerful "popular committee" can cancel voting list and reject all adversaries. If I tell you that this law has established various categories of citizens who cannot vote, you will have an exact picture of th

the way in which these elections are to take place.

If one wants to know the exact will of the Yugoslav people and one wants to create a real democratic regime in Yugoslavia, the following measures have to be taken beforehand:

1. Take steps to demobilize the Army. The war is over for a long time, and Yugoslavia has still 700,000 men under the colours. For what reason such an army, and against whom it is directed? Why are these young people not sent home and utilized for the reconstruction of the country? Does not the best proof lie here that the regime is not feeling sure of itself?

2. Change the existing political system. To begin with, abolish the resuscitated Gestapo, i.e. the OZNA.

3. Modify the laws regarding the press, the associations and reunions, as well as the election of deputies.

How much would the opposition obtain in free elections? I dare to assert that between 85% and 90% of the Serbs and Croats would vote against the Government, plus the majority of Slovenes. I am prepared to commit hara-kiri, since this seems to be the fashion of today, if my forecast concerning the results of the vote are not accurate.

The Opposition and the Communist Party. The adversaries of the present regime do not exclude cooperation with the Communist Party. The leaders of the opposition in the country declare themselves ready to collaborate with the communists because in the course of this war, through their attitude and their fight, they have gained an indisputable right to participate in the Government of the country. The opposition wants therefore to share the Government with the Communists, but it concedes them only the power commensurate with their numbers and their influence in the country. In this respect, the opposition distinguishes itself from the communists who actually are prepared only to share responsibility with the other political parties in the Popular Front. The other parties are meant to serve merely as a camouflage of the Bolshevist Party in the eyes of foreign observers. This has, by the way, been the main reason why the leader of their Serbian democratic Party, Mr. Milan Grol, has recently left the Government. Let us not forget that this is the man who had furnished unquestionable proof of his sincere desire to cooperate with the partisans! Differing from the agrarian chief, Dr. Dragoljub Yovanovic, Mr. Grol did not accept to be a simple dressing in the communist platter.

Message of the Yugoslavs to their Anglo-Saxon Friends.

I fled from the "paradise" of Marshal Tito, taking upon me great risks, for the expressed purpose of transmitting this message to our Anglo-Saxon friends!

A great son of a great people, Mr. Churchill has declared in the House of Commons, referring to the Coup d'Etat accomplished at Belgrade on March 27th, 1941, that "the Yougoslavs had finally found again their soul", Truly, the Yougoslavs have responded to the call of the great President Roosevelt and have on that day rejected the tripartite pact. Today, these same Yougoslavs, particularly the Serbs, decimated, massacred and martyred during the war, terrorized, assassinated and persecuted now, turn towards their friends in America and in England and declare to them:

"Yes, we have found our soul on March 27, 1941, but since then we have lost our peace. Today, we suffer unjustly; we are in a worse situation than the peoples who have declared war on you, peoples who have fought against you, namely the Bulgarians, the Hungarians, the Roumanians, Italians and Albanians. We are crucified on the cross. Help us! We ask nothing else of you than that you fulfill the promise which you have solemnly made to the peoples oppressed during this war, in the Atlantic Charta, the Declaration of San Francisco, etc., namely that you fight against tyranny and for the victory of democracy and the return of liberty in the world. The whole Yougoslav people asks you with devotion not to forget that point of Mr. Roosevelt's declaration: "Freedom from fear". Yes, deliver us from fear! This is the message, it is the appeal which address to you today from the heart of Europe 15 million men, 15 million souls without peace, without rest, without happiness!"
