

Relations between the Yugoslav and Romanian Communists in the Cold War. The Review of Archival Records

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The history of the Balkan countries during the Cold War (1945-1991) is a very important segment of the European Cold War historiography on the whole. The relations among the Balkan countries, a comparative history of those same countries, their societies and the Cold War systems give a special dimension to the Balkan history. Some of the central issues are the relations between Romania and Yugoslavia. Romania and Yugoslavia were considered to be two influential Balkan countries. Their relations during the Cold War give rise to many questions of modern European historiography and the historiographies of the single Balkan countries.

The political relations between Romania and Yugoslavia during the Cold War, in the Yugoslav and Serbian historiography alike, represent, almost completely, an unexplored and scientifically unexamined area. These relations mentioned, either generally or superficially, are only mentioned as segments of some other themes which are dealt with in some other papers and monographies – as a part of a broader historical context: within the history of some particular events or some general syntheses of the Yugoslav and Serbian histories.

The period of the existence of the Socialist Yugoslavia lasted from 1945 to 1991¹. Its existence coincides with the Cold War period. The end of the Cold War, i.e. the end of the American-Soviet rivalry, also meant the end of the Socialist Yugoslavia. The Socialist Yugoslavia, also known as Tito's Yugoslavia, was formed in a specific way and within the boundaries of the Yugoslav partisans' warfare led by the Yugoslav Communist Party whose leader was Josip Broz Tito; the warfare was guerilla-like, liberating and revolutionary². After a short interval of its existence as the Democratic Federative Yugoslavia (until the end of 1945) Tito's communists formally divided the rule with the representatives of Yugoslavia (Yugoslavia as a monarchy). After the elections of 1945, there followed the formation of the

¹ About Yugoslav history from 1945 to 1991: Branko Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918-1988*, 2-3, Belgrade, 1988; Idem & Čedomir Štrbac, *Istorija socijalističke Jugoslavije*, 1-3, Belgrade, 1977; Dennison Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment, 1948-1978*, London, 1977; John R. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as history: twice there was a country*, Cambridge, 1996; Darko Bekić, *Jugoslavija u Hladnom ratu, Odnosi sa velikim silama 1949-1955*, Zagreb, 1988; etc.

² More on this topic: Br. Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije* cit., 2; Idem, *Srbija u Drugom svetskom ratu 1939-1945*, Belgrade, 1992.

Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia in 1946 – Yugoslavia became a Socialist country and her unquestionable leader became Josip Broz Tito (the leader of the Yugoslav communists and the leader of the revolution)³. During the first years after the Second World War Yugoslavia relied on the politics of the USSR and the country and its people were modelled upon the USSR⁴. However, there was a political break-up and conflict with the USSR in 1948 and Yugoslavia found itself in a difficult position⁵. Since the threat of invasion was coming from the Soviet forces, the western countries led by the USA helped Yugoslavia at this crucial moment and supported it politically. But, Yugoslavia tried not to side with the west completely. It led to the creation of the very specific Yugoslav politics of neutrality towards the Eastern and Western blocs alike, and Yugoslavia itself started to build up its own socialist system in order to differentiate itself from the Soviet model⁶. The crisis lasted until the death of Stalin in 1953. Since then the relations between Yugoslavia and the USSR began to improve. Relatively good relations between Yugoslavia and the USSR, though their intensity varied, lasted throughout the rule of Nikita Khrushchev i. e. until 1965. However, Yugoslavia would never again be a part of the Eastern Bloc of the socialist countries i.e. it would never fall under the dominion of the USSR. Yugoslavia built up a special type of the politics of neutrality within the Non-Aligned Movement, which came into being in the mid 1950s and was mostly made up of the ex-colonies of Africa, Latin America and Asia, which themselves did not want to take part in the Cold War politics and the ideological clashes between the USSR and the USA. The most important countries in that association were Yugoslavia, India, Egypt and The Republic of South Africa. Yugoslavia was the only European country⁷.

The Socialist Yugoslavia changed its name twice. From 1946 to 1963 it was called The Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia. With the 1963 Constitution it changed its name into The Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia and that name remained until the break-up of the country in 1991. Yugoslavia changed its Constitution once again in 1974 when it grew into a special kind of confederacy. The death of Josip Broz Tito in 1980 meant the onset of the political crisis in Yugoslavia. But, Yugoslavia persisted as an integral country for ten more years. There were some conflicts among its multinational population and they would reach their climax in the late 80s; in fact, they would be the most immediate cause of the break-up of the country. The international changes, the break-up of the USSR, the disappearance of the bloc politics, the Cold War and Socialism in Europe would all affect the process of the disintegration of Yugoslavia as a country.

³ Br. Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije* cit., 3, p. 29-67.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ More about Soviet-Yugoslav conflict: Vladimir Dedijer, *Dokumenti 1948*, Belgrade, 1980; Darko Bekić, *Jugoslavija u Hladnom ratu, Odnosi sa velikim silama 1949-1955*, Zagreb, 1988; Vl. Dedijer, *Izgnubljena bitka J. V. Staljina*, Belgrade, 1969; Č. Štrbac, *Svedočanstva o 1948, Fragmenti za istoriju*, Belgrade, 1989; Br. Petranović, *op. cit.*, 3, p. 195-263; etc.

⁶ Br. Petranović, *op. cit.*, 3, p. 263-357.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 357-380.

After the Second World War, under the influence of the USSR, Petru Groza and its left-wing government came to power in Romania. However, in 1947, after the abdication of King Michael I, Romania became a Socialist country called The People's Republic of Romania. The society began to look upon the USSR as a model. Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej was its leader from 1948 to 1965, Secretary General of the Romanian Labour Party. After Stalin's death in 1953, Romania, under the leadership of Dej, began to gain an increasing independence from the USSR. Romania continued its politics of independence under its new leader Nicolae Ceausescu, Secretary General of the Romanian Communist Party from 1965 to 1989. It was the time when a new constitution was established and the country changed its name into The Socialist Republic of Romania. Romania continued to prosper; however, its economics largely depended on its foreign policy. Romania had close partnership with Israel and some western countries, West Germany and the USA. Ceausescu tried to be on friendly terms with both China and the USSR, whereas he encouraged further development of Romania's relations with the West and the USA. Its politics of independence in relation to the USSR manifested itself in Romania's withdrawal from being an active participant in the Warsaw Pact, even though it formally remained its member and opposed the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Also, it became a neutral party in the Non-Aligned Movement. Romania itself was visited by the American president Nixon and the Soviet leader Brezhnev. At that time Romania signed a lot of economic treaties with some foreign countries: the USA, the USSR, Israel, East Germany, Egypt, Yugoslavia and Hungary. It joined some world economic organizations, like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. But, despite the already established political partnership with the West, Ceausescu was building up Romania upon the rigid communist model under the influence of China and North Korea⁸.

In the second half of the 70s Romania's foreign debt increased drastically. During the 1980's Ceausescu was paying off the foreign debts and Romania was going through a serious crisis. The crisis of Socialism in the world brought about the crumbling of Ceausescu's regime. His regime was overthrown in 1989 and Ceausescu was killed⁹.

On the basis of these short outlines of the histories of Romania and Yugoslavia during the Cold War, it follows that these two Socialist Balkan countries had different historical routes in a number of ways. First of all, the Socialist Yugoslavia and the Socialist Romania were formed in different ways. Yugoslavia was born on the grounds of the revolutionary, anti-fascist and guerilla-like warfare of Yugoslavia's partisans led by the Communist Party. That warfare, or to be more precise a communist revolution, was carried out during the occupation. In that way it was linked with the liberation of the country and the anti-fascism and, then, it was

⁸ More about: Ghiță Ionescu, *Communism in Romania 1944-1962*, London, 1964; Dennis Deletant, *Ceausescu and the Securitate: Coercion and Dissent in Romania 1965-1989*, London, 1998; Vlad Georgescu, *The Romanians: A History*, Columbus, 1991.

⁹ More about: Mary Ellen Fischer, *Nicolae Ceausescu: A Study in Political Leadership*, Boulder, 1989.

wisely linked with the interests of the Allied Super Powers. The Yugoslav communists would thus capitalize their warfare and the revolution and use it after its disagreement with the USSR as an argument for the defense of its independence. In Romania the events took a different course. Romania joined the Allied Powers no sooner than 1944 and until 1947 it formally had a civic society. It was only then that Romania, under the influence of the Soviets, became a Socialist country whereas in Yugoslavia the process of building up a Socialist society had been under way for three years¹⁰. At that time Yugoslavia, unlike Romania, had already reached its acme in its relations with the USSR and it foreshadowed the beginning of Yugoslavia's separation from the Soviets' political dominion. And it was the moment when Romania fell under the paramount influence of the USSR; at the time of the resolution of the Inform biro and the disagreement between the USSR and Yugoslavia it was Romania that strongly supported the USSR¹¹.

The death of Stalin in 1953 also pointed out to two differing countries. While Romania started to stay aloof from the USSR, Yugoslavia started to warm its way back the confidence of the USSR. In other words, that was the time when Romania started its politics of emancipation and independence from the USSR, while Yugoslavia, which had already become independent, was renewing its good relations with the USSR. Staying aloof from the most immediate influence of the USSR had different effects upon the two countries: for Yugoslavia it meant the politics of complete neutrality in its relations with the Eastern and Western blocs alike (the non-aligned politics) and for Romania it meant gaining independence from the USSR but not the politics of neutrality since Romania was still a member, though not an active participant, of the Warsaw Pact. It could be claimed that these two politics had two different objectives: the Yugoslav politics was aimed at gaining independence from the blocs whereas the Romanian politics was aimed at gaining independence within one of the blocs.

The converging point of the Yugoslav and Romanian politics was their propagation of "their own route into Socialism", i.e. the right of every country to develop in its own way without the influences and patrons from the Super Powers. That right would be one of the important factors for the close relations and partnership between Romania and Yugoslavia¹².

The relations between the two ruling communist parties of Romania and Yugoslavia largely affected the relations between the two countries themselves. In

¹⁰ Miša Gleni, *Balkan 1804-1999, nacionalizam, rat i velike sile*, Belgrade, 2001, p. 216-222.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 250-257.

¹² AJ [hereafter, Archives of Yugoslavia], 507/IX, CK SKJ (Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia), KMOV (Commission for International Affairs and Communications), RU (Romania), IX, 107/I-9, *Material on the visit of the Yugoslav state and party delegation to PR Romania*, June 23-26, 1956; AJ, 507/IX, CK SKJ, KMOV, RU, IX, 107/I-27, *Material on the visit of the Yugoslav state and party delegation to PR Romania*, November 20-30, 1963; AJ, 507/IX, CK SKJ, KMOV, RU, IX, 107/I-77, *Material on the visit Josip Broz Tito to PR Romania*, April 18-21, 1966; AJ, 507/IX, CK SKJ, KMOV, RU, IX, 107/I-114, *Material on visit Nicolae Ceausescu to Yugoslavia*, January 3-5, 1968; AJ, 507/IX, CK SKJ, KMOV, RU, IX, 107/I-176, *Material on visit Nicolae Ceausescu to Yugoslavia*, November 3-4, 1970.

Yugoslavia it was the Yugoslav Communist Party which was called the League of Communists of Yugoslavia from 1952 to 1990. In Romania it was the party which changed its name three times: it was called the Communist Party of Romania until 1948, the Romanian Labour Party from 1948 to 1965 and the Romanian Communist Party from 1965 to 1989. Also, the Yugoslav-Romanian relations can be viewed through their party and country leaders, Josip Broz Tito in Yugoslavia and Gheorghe Dej (later Nicolae Ceausescu) in Romania.

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The archives of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia offer the best insight into the relations between the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the Romanian Communist Party in the period from 1944 to 1989; the archives are situated in the Archives of Yugoslavia in Belgrade. The Archive Department of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (the archive material numbered 507) contains a separate section named the Commission for International Affairs and Communications with the Foreign Parties and Movements and that section houses the documents known as 107-Romania dealing with the relations with that country (Romania). The classification scheme of this special unit (the archive) for Romania consists of three parts: 1) the relations between the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the Romanian Communist party from 1944 to 1989¹³; 2) the internal politics of Romania and its international relations from 1945 to 1977¹⁴; 3) a part which houses the documents of various sorts and character¹⁵. Here is presented the very first part which houses the archive material related to the relations between the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the Romanian Communist party from 1944 to 1989.

The archive material is classified and ordered chronologically (on the yearly basis). It contains the total of 452 files in which there are documents of various sorts and size. The files are located in eight boxes. The first six boxes containing 318 files for the period up to 1977 is said to be available for research; the archive material from the boxes number 6 and 7 for the period from 1977 to 1989 is not available for researchers at the moment. That is why the following analysis is focused on the available archive material.

The archive material is diverse. It can be divided into nine groups:

1. The ordinary notes and stenographic ones of the official talks, meetings and preparations for those meetings. This group of documents is the most numerous one and it contains the official talks and meetings among the statesmen, party members, politicians, ambassadors, delegates, students' groups, intellectuals and many other official and unofficial delegations.

¹³ AJ, 507/IX, CK SKJ, KMOV, RU, IX, 107/I-1-452.

¹⁴ AJ, 507/IX, CK SKJ, KMOV, RU, IX, 107/II-1-164.

¹⁵ AJ, 507/IX, CK SKJ, KMOV, RU, IX, 107/III-1-25; AJ, 507/IX, CK SKJ, KMOV, RU, IX, 107/III-26-73.

2. Some special materials about the visits and the brief residences. This group of documents the details of both official and unofficial visits, and the details of the brief residences of the statesmen, state officials and party members, delegations etc.

3. Information. This group of documents contains the information of various length and form about the following events: visits, brief residences, official talks, bilateral relations and some other events.

4. Reports. This is a kind of documents containing the facts about various events.

5. Examinations, suggestions and analyses. This kind of documents contains various examinations of certain events and phenomena on different levels and in different situations; these examinations are expert's, political or analytical.

6. Letters and copied-down materials. These documents refer to the individual and group letters as well as the copied-down materials of statesmen, state officials and institutions.

7. Dispatches, greeting cards and telegrams. This is the least numerous group of documents and it contains the documents of lesser importance.

This archive department offers various important information to future researchers of the Yugoslav-Romania relations; the documents are of different provenience. The most informative material is in the first group of documents containing the notes of the official talks (it is placed in 160 files). On the basis of the documents of this kind the politics of the Yugoslav-Romania relations can be viewed almost completely. The official talks of the leaders of the states, delegations, politicians and other officials offer the best picture of the most delineating features of the politics within a span of more than thirty years. The archive department has the documents which contain the information about the intensity of the cooperation between two countries and parties, the method of cooperation, the areas in which the cooperation existed, some conflicting issues, disagreement, divergent or convergent aspirations in the international relations, the attitudes of the statesmen and politicians, the mutual perceptions of the societies, which can be seen in the rich archive material of the brief residences of the delegation of researchers as well as other delegations etc. The archive material of this archive department can help researchers on various topics: the histories of diplomacy, civic histories, economic histories, the history of culture, ideologies, the research of the biographies of statesmen and politicians, etc.