

# Josip Broz Tito's Role in the 1956 'Nagy Affair' <sup>1</sup>

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## 1.Explanation of Hungarian and Russian Abbreviations

AVH=Allam-Vedelmi Hatóság (State Security Authority; name of Hungarian secret police agency after 1949)

AVO=Allam-Vedelmi Osztály (State Security Department; name of Hungarian secret police agency until 1949)

AVPRF=Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii (Archive of Foreign Policy, Russian Federation), Moscow

CPSU=Communist Party of the Soviet Union

CPY=Communist Party of Yugoslavia

CC=Central Committee

GARF=Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii [State Archive of the Russian Federation]

HSWP=Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party

HWP=Hungarian Workers' Party (under Rákosi 's leadership)

KGB=Committee for State Security

RGANI Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Noveishei Istorii. The name of this archive was changed in March 1999; it used to be called the Center for the Preservation of Contemporary Documents [*Tsentr Khraneniya Sovremennoi Dokumentatsii*, or TKhSD.]

RGASPI Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial'noi i Politicheskoi Istorii. The name of this archive has changed; it used to be called the Russian Center for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Contemporary History [*Rossiiskii Tsentr Khraneniya i Izuchenii Dokumentov Noveishii Istorii*, or RTsKhIDNI.]

TsAM0=Tsentral'nyi arkhiv Ministerstva oborony Rossiiskoi Federatsii (Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense, Russian Federation)

F=Fond [Fund]

0=Opis' [Inventory]

Por.=Porttel'[Portfolio]

P.=Papka [Folder]

Per.=Perechen'[List]

D=Delo [File]

Dok.=[Document]

L=List [Page]

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The fortieth anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and the opening of communist bloc archives have stimulated fresh interpretations of this first major anti-Soviet uprising in Eastern Europe. One cannot fully understand the origins of this crisis without taking into account the Yugoslav connection. Rapprochement with Tito's Yugoslavia was a key component of Khrushchev's foreign policy of destalinization. Mátyás Rákosi, the Hungarian dictator was finally dismissed in July 1956 because of the key role he had played in the anti-Titoist campaign in the late 1940s. The former Hungarian interior minister, László Rajk, who had been sentenced to death on trumped-up charges in October 1949, was reinterred on October 6, 1956 in Budapest in front of a crowd of several hundred thousand people--an event often described as the "dress rehearsal of the revolution." In 1955-56 officials from the Yugoslav embassy in Budapest maintained regular contact with the reformist Imre Nagy and his associates. Rákosi's successor Ernő Gerő--who triggered the crowd's anger with a hardline speech on October 24, thus prompting the first Soviet intervention-- had been promoted to his post on Tito's endorsement, albeit halfhearted. Gerő had allowed the Rajk reburial as a convenient way to ingratiate himself with Tito (whom he had met in the Crimea at the beginning of October). Thus the Hungarian revolution was closely intertwined with Yugoslav politics.

Many scholars writing about this event during the Cold War have operated more or less on the implicit assumption that the Soviet leaders were the key aggressors and all the East European leaders the

reluctant and passivist allies.<sup>2</sup> To use a trite metaphor: the dog (USSR) wagged the tail (East Europe). The end of the Cold War and opening of Soviet bloc archives now permit scholars to gain a better understanding, not simply of Soviet behavior, but also of the behavior and motivation of the other communist states, and of the deeper nuances of intra-bloc relations. We can see that, although the Soviet leaders were the prime movers in 1956, they were not the only ones who feared the possible unraveling of the Warsaw Pact and "spillover" of anti-communist ideas across their own borders. Leaders in Czechoslovakia and Romania, for example, reported popular unrest in their own countries during the Hungarian conflict. Even Josip Broz Tito's Yugoslavia ended up supporting the Soviet use of military force against Hungary. Yugoslavia was the only independent communist state since the 1948 Moscow--Belgrade rift, aloof from the Warsaw Pact or Soviet bloc, courted in the 1950s both by the United States and Soviet Union, admired by the increasingly independent Asian and African countries, and vehemently critical of Soviet great power chauvinism. This article seeks to challenge previous sympathetic appraisals

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2. Since the collapse of the communist regime in Hungary a large number of studies have been published in Budapest by the Institute for the History of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and the Institute of History at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. See, for example, Magyar-Jugoszlav Kapcsolatok 1956 Dokumentumok (Budapest: MTA Jelenkor-kutato Bizottsag, 1995); Jelcin-dosszie Szoviet dokumentumok 1956-rol (Budapest: Szazadveg-1956-os Intezet, 1993); Hianyzo Lapok: 1956 tortenetebol: Dokumentumok a volt SZKP KP Leveltarabol (Budapest: Zenit Konyvek, 1993); Dontes a Kremlben, 1956: A szovjet partelnokseg vitai Magyarorszagrol (Budapest: 1956-os Intezet, 1996); and Gyorgy Litvan, ed. The Hungarian Revolution of 1956: Reform, Revolt, and Repression, 1953-1963 (London: Longman, 1996). In the 1956-1989 period, however, reliable Hungarian-language accounts were relatively few in number. Countless books and articles about the Hungarian revolution were produced in the West during that period. See, for example, Ferenc A. Vali, Rift and Revolt in Hungary: Nationalism versus Communism (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961); Bill Lomax, Hungary 1956 (London: Allison & Busby, 1976), esp. pp. 106-123; Charles Gati, Hungary and the Soviet Bloc (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1986), pp. 127-155; Paul E. Zinner, Revolution in Hungary (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962); and Paul Kecskemeti, The Unexpected Revolution: Social Forces in the Hungarian Uprising (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961).

of Tito and portray him instead as a practitioner of *realpolitik*. It also strives to illuminate his unique, zigzagging behavior<sup>3</sup> (and that of his subordinates) in the 1956 events, drawing on newly released documents from four of Moscow's major archives, including the secret notes of key CPSU Presidium meetings taken by Vladimir Malin.<sup>4</sup> It will also explain the hitherto murky circumstances surrounding Tito's decision to grant Imre Nagy political refuge in his Budapest embassy on the day of the invasion (November 4, 1956). Tito's reluctance to surrender Nagy--and the later Soviet abduction of him--chilled Soviet-Yugoslav relations once again.

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3. This study will attempt to synthesize the latest reassessments of Tito as ambitious opportunist rather than dogmatist. See, for example, Veselin Djuretic, Saveznici i Jugoslavenska Ratna Drama [The Allies and the Yugoslav War Drama] (Belgrade: Balkanoloski institut SANU, 1985); Stevan K. Pavlowitch, Tito, Yugoslavia's Great Dictator: A Reassessment (London: C. Hurst, 1992); Kosta Cavoski, Tito--Tehnologija Vlasti (Belgrade: Dosije, 1991); Michael Lees, The Rape of Serbia: The British Role in Tito's Grab for Power. 1943--44, 1st ed. (San Diego, Calif.: Harcourt, Brace, and Jovanovich, 1990); Nora Beloff, Tito's Flawed Legacy: Yugoslavia and the West Since 1939 (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985); David Martin, The Web of Disinformation: Churchill's Yugoslav Blunder, 1st ed. (San Diego, Calif.: Harcourt, Brace, and Jovanovich, 1990).

4. These are: the former top-secret working archive of the Communist Party's Central Commrtee called the Center for the Preservation of Contemporary Documents [RGANI], the Archive of the Russian Foreign Ministry [AVP RF], the Russian Center for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Contemporary History [RTsKhIDNI], and the State Archive of the Russian Federation [GARF]. Vladimir Malin, the head of the CPSU CC General Department during the entire Khrushchev period, took extensive notes of all Presidium meetings, although verbatim transcripts of CPSU Presidium meetings were not kept in the 1950s. Russian archival authorities released the Malin notes pertaining to the Hungarian uprising (October-November 1956) crisis in mid-1995 to a Russian historian, Vyacheslav Sereda, and to Hungarian scholars at the 1956 Institute in Budapest, who had exclusive access to the materials until the spring of 1996, when the full set were published in Hungarian translation. See Vyacheslav Sereda and Janos M. Rainer, eds., Dontes a Kremlben. 1956: A szovjet partelnokseg vitai Magyarorszagra (Budapest: 1956-os Intezet, 1996). The Russian version was published in the summer and fall of 1996. See "Kak reshalis voprosy Vengrii: Rabochie zapisi zasedanii Prezidiuma TsK KPSS, iyul'-noyabr' 1956 g.," Istoricheskii arkhiv (Moscow), Nos. 2 and 3 (1996), pp. 73-104 and 87-121, respectively. Malin's handwritten notes are now available to all researchers in RGANI. See F 3, 0 12, D 1005-6.

Despite the Soviet-Yugoslav rapprochement in July, 1955, when Tito was lavishly feted in Moscow, Tito's relations with Khrushchev, his colleagues, and the East European leaders had remained tense beneath the surface in the months preceding the Hungarian conflict. Normalization of ties with Rákosi's Hungary, in particular, dragged. Tito's representatives focused on obstacles to full reconciliation between the two Balkan countries, including Rákosi's reluctance to rehabilitate László Rajk, to grant amnesty to all Yugoslav political prisoners in Hungary, to treat fairly the Yugoslav minority living in Hungary, and to pay reparations to Yugoslavia. Although Tito wished to improve relations with Soviet bloc members, he was equally determined not to get pulled back into the Soviet sphere of influence. Soviet leaders, in turn, grew increasingly suspicious of Tito's overt support---mainly through his diplomats and journalists stationed in Budapest---of Imre Nagy's national communist movement. Like his press and diplomatic corps, Tito took keen interest in overcoming the concrete obstacles to full reconciliation mentioned above. At the same time, however, more fundamental values and memories compelled him. To fully understand Tito's behavior in the 1956 Hungarian conflict, it is first necessary to explore these deeper values.

To Tito destalinization entailed much more than simply the replacement of Stalinist leaders with national communists in the East European communist countries, or simply the resolution of issues like financial reparations. Rather, Tito sought a fundamental recognition that Yugoslavia was just as important as the Soviet Union in the international communist movement. He valued Yugoslavia's unique brand of national communism, which had emerged from indigenous Yugoslav soil and the experiences of World War II. From Tito's perspective, Yugoslavia's historical achievements were hard-earned and thus needed to be cherished. It was the twofold character of the National Liberation Struggle"---against both

fascist aggressors and traitors--that made Yugoslavia unique. In an article written in October 1946, Tito wrote:

The people of Yugoslavia were not fighting only against the invaders but also against their allies the local traitors--the gangs of Pavelic, Nedic, Rupnik, and Draza Mihailovic. Despite the fact that the invaders and domestic traitors joined forces, the people prevailed in their great struggle. Therein lie the specific features of the liberation struggle of the nations of Yugoslavia, therein lies its greatness. No other occupied country in Europe can boast of such a struggle and our people have a right to be proud of it.<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, Tito's Partisans had defeated the Nazi occupiers without the help of the Soviet Red army. True, Stalin sent security guards for Tito, but this was after the war and intended more as a method of Soviet control than of Yugoslav protection.<sup>6</sup> Later, in June 1948, of course, Stalin banished Tito from the Cominform, just nine months after its founding congress in Szklarska Poreba (Poland) in September 1947. While Tito seems to have believed in the intrinsic superiority of the "Yugoslav way"

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5. Josip Broz Tito, "Features Peculiar to the Liberation Struggle and Revolutionary Transformation of the New Yugoslavia," Kommunist [Organ of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia] no. 1 (October, 1946), quoted in *Military Thought and Work: Selected Writings [of Josip Broz Tito] (1936-1979)*, ed. Boro Pejcinovic (Belgrade: Vojnoizdavacki Zavod, 1982), 294.

6. GARF, F 9401, Special Folder [Osobaya Papka] of Stalin, D. 97, L.351-352, July 13, 1945, To Stalin from L. Beria, "about the Guard on Tito and Security Measures in the City of Belgrade." Also F 9401, Opis 2, D 97, L. 69-70, June 29, 1945, To Stalin and Molotov From Beria, "About the Measures for Strengthening the Guard of Marshal Tito. A total of "509 cadres" were sent to serve in Trto's personal group of bodyguards or to keep order in the city.

(encompassing economic decentralization, experiments in worker self-management, and "active neutralism" in foreign policy), the rhetoric also served as a useful weapon in his power struggle with Stalin and his hard-line successors. The heart of the matter, as Ivo Banac and others have shown, was Tito's refusal to obey Stalin. Stalin was angry at Tito for several reasons, including the latter's support of the Greek communists,<sup>7</sup> and Tito's claim on the city of Trieste (thus delaying the Austrian peace treaty and complicating Stalin's wartime alliance with the British and Americans).<sup>8</sup> All the communist bloc countries broke off trade with Yugoslavia. But Tito's Communist party had stayed in power, despite the sudden economic boycott from all the Warsaw Pact countries. To the Soviet leaders' dismay, Tito managed to receive economic and military assistance from the Americans while still remaining communist. Both Tito and his representatives in Budapest were fond of reminding Hungarian and Soviet officials of the fact that they had not surrendered to the imperialists," despite their ostracism from the socialist camp.<sup>9</sup> Tito certainly had not disappeared when Stalin had shaken his little finger."<sup>10</sup> Indeed the Stalin-Tito feud was so intense that Tito allegedly expected the Russians to intervene while the West was

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7. Ivo Banac, With Stalin against Tito (New York: Cornell, 1988).

8. Nikita Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes (Boston: Little, Brown, 1990), 72.

9. AVP RF, F 077, O 37, Por 9, P 187, L 112, From the Diary of S. S. Satuchin, First Secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Hungary, "Notes of a Conversation with the First Secretary of the Yugoslav Mission, Milan Georgievic," July 2, 1956. "Georgievic said 'Despite the unfair accusations, as well as the difficulties, arising as a result of the rupture in relations, Yugoslavia continued to proceed along the path and did not surrender to the pressure of the imperialist states.'"

10. Expression used by Khrushchev. See N. S. Khrushchev, "The Crimes of the Stalin Era: Special Report to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Closed Session, February 24-5, 1956," annotated by Boris Nicolaevsky in The New Leader (New York, 1956): p. S48. Also cited in New York Times (March 15; June 4, 1956), p. 1, col. 8.

distracted by Korea.<sup>11</sup> Stalin may also have authorized an assassination of Tito in the fall of 1952, which was aborted only because of Stalin's own unexpected death in March 1953.<sup>12</sup> Having fought and won independence from both the Nazis (militarily) and from the Russians (economically and ideologically), Tito vowed never to relinquish Yugoslavia's new status, never to capitulate to Moscow.

In addition, Tito actively peddled the third-path model (between orthodox capitalism and Soviet communism), which evidently worried Soviet and Hungarian officials for both ideological and political reasons. First, it contradicted a major condition for earning the right to be a communist--unswerving allegiance to Moscow. Tito's third-path concept frightened Moscow because it was providing communists with an ideological sanction for disobedience. Both the Comintern and Cominform had been disbanded--in 1943 and 1956, respectively--but the CPSU still assumed it should play a leading role in the communist movement. (One of the twenty-one conditions" for admission of a communist party to the Comintern, one will recall, was rigid allegiance to the Bolshevik party line in Moscow). As Khrushchev explained to Tito,

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11. RGANI, F. 89, Per. 45, Dok. 2, L. 3, "Note by K. Voroshilov About a Conversation with Rákosi," June 26, 1956. Rákosi informed Voroshilov that the Yugoslav official Vukomanovic-Tempo told him that in the beginning of the war in Korea "guerrilla bases were created" in Yugoslavia "in case of attack by the Soviet Army." N.B. Yugoslavia's election to the U.N. Security Council in 1950-51 probably increased the chance of UN intervention if the USSR did attempt to intervene. A desire for such assistance may have been a motivating factor in Tito's decision to vote in favor of the UN "police action" against North Korea in 1950.

12. See Dmitri Volkogonov, "Nesostoyavsheesya Pokushenye: Kak Sovetskii Agent Maks Gotovilsya k Terroristicheskomu Aktu Protiv Tito [The Assassination that Didn't Take Place: How the Soviet Agent Max Prepared for a Terrorist Act Against Tito] *Izvestia*, June 11, 1993, p. 7, No. 109 (23964). Ironically the appointed "hit man" (Joseph Romual'dovich Grigulevich, alias "Max") was also involved in one of the assassination attempts on Leon Trotsky in Mexico. Also see Khrushchev, *The Glasnost Tapes*, 72. "[Stalin] was ready to go to war against Yugoslavia, and I suspect that he was thinking about this, although I never heard any conversation mentioning military action. Stalin, however, began to send out agents and put on displays of strength as soon as the break with Tito occurred."



apparently in earnest: we didn't seek a leading role; historical conditions have given us this special responsibility, and now we need to fulfill it.<sup>13</sup>

Second, in a political context, Tito's advocacy of a third path" bespoke possible intentions to form "from below" a separate alliance with some of the other communist countries, excluding the Soviet Union--a new "Little Entente," this time including Hungary.<sup>14</sup> The notion of intrabloc ties independent of Moscow repelled Soviet leaders--and the Hungarian leaders dependent on Soviet hegemony--because it reminded them of the Titoist threat back in the mid-1940s, when Tito strove to form independent ties with other Balkan countries without Moscow's participation. Tito's Balkan Pact with Greece and Turkey, established in 1954, was bad enough. Having ties with these two countries was tantamount to joining NATO, the Soviet leaders felt.<sup>15</sup> But an alliance of communist countries, or small countries with sizable

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13. RGANI, Rolik 5173, F 5, O 28, D 403, L 2, By I. Vinogradov, to Comrade M. A. Suslov, "About the Conversations of Comrades N. S. Khrushchev with Comrade Tito and the Other Leaders, which took place in Yugoslavia and in the Crimea in September-October, 1956." "Comrade Khrushchev stated that we do not lay claim to any special leadership, but we understand our responsibility before the peoples' democracies on the strength of historical conditions, which developed in the struggle for socialism."

14. The Little Entente during the interwar period consisted of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Romania (the successor states of the Austro-Hungarian Empire). This should not be confused with Stalin's plan--when relations with Tito were good--for the formation of a Balkan Federation consisting of Yugoslavia, Albania, and Bulgaria. Khrushchev, Glasnost Tapes, 105.

15. RGANI, F 89, Per 45, Dok 83, L. 10, Resolution of the CC CPSU: "About the Letter to the CC of the Yugoslav Communist Party, to Tito with Enclosed Text," January 10, 1957. "What also does not help is the position of the Yugoslav comrades in the issue of the two world camps. You repeatedly speak out against military blocs, including the Warsaw Pact, and declare that Yugoslavia does not belong to any blocs and pacts. However, one cannot ignore the fact that Yugoslavia belongs to the Balkan Pact, and the Yugoslav military organs cooperate with the military circles of Greece and Turkey. Via these partners in the Balkan alliance, you are simultaneously members of NATO...We cannot ignore the inconsistencies in the official Yugoslav position regarding blocs and pacts."

communist parties, that excluded the Soviet Union could not be tolerated. To them Tito seemed intent on forming one, or at the very least, driving a wedge between the USSR and the other bloc countries.<sup>16</sup> They could not understand the concept of neutralism; any alliance excluding them would ipso facto be an anti-Soviet alliance.

Even if a separate bloc or federation were not formed, what the Soviet and Hungarian authorities feared was the spillover effect," or ideological contagion of the Hungarian people via the Yugoslav media.<sup>17</sup> To some extent, the activities of the Yugoslav diplomats and journalists in Hungary caused the Soviet leaders to misinterpret the origins of the revolutionary movement in Hungary. They tended to think that only a small coterie of writers and intellectuals was causing the trouble, not the toiling masses of Hungary. This was especially true of Mikhail Suslov, who was sent to Budapest in mid-June 1956, and wrote back to Moscow, assuring the Kremlin that

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16. See, for example, the anti-Yugoslav report prepared just after the invasion. AVP RF, F. 077, O. 37, Por. 39, P. 191, L. 90. From I. Zamchevskii, Director of the Fifth European Department of the Soviet Foreign Ministry to the CC CPSU, "About the Issue of the Yugoslav Leaders' Support of Imre Nagy and His Politics: A Reference," December 4, 1956. "According to a report by Italian comrades, one of the leading workers of the Yugoslav Union of Communists, Mordic, who is now the director of the Institute of Party History in Zagreb, insinuated during a conversation with them that the USSR no longer reflects the interests of the workers of the small countries like Italy and Yugoslavia, and he even suggested that they 'unite the organizations of the small countries into their own International, without the USSR.'

17. However, scholars have not been able to ascertain just how much influence Tito's "third-path" idea had on the Hungarian population as a whole. Soviet fears may have been unwarranted, given the historic animosity between Hungary and Yugoslavia. The atrocities perpetrated by Hungarians against Yugoslav citizens in Bascka during World War II, for example, marred relations. Hungarians may have looked more to Poland—which had never been a military adversary--as a model. See Paul Zinner, Revolution in Hungary (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), 179n.

the mood of the workers and peasants is healthy....[A]mong them, as well as in the lower industrial party organizations, there are no conversations about a "crisis" in the party leadership or about distrust toward the leaders.<sup>18</sup>

According to the recently declassified Malin notes, Molotov made a comment during the October 28 CC CPSU Presidium meeting that "the initial messages from Comrades Mikoyan and Suslov were reassuring about...[the strength of the Hungarian] government." He now realized that, on the contrary, "the influence of the [Hungarian communist] party on the masses [was] weak."<sup>19</sup> Evidently, Khrushchev also believed there were some Hungarian workers loyal to the USSR, according to the Yugoslav ambassador to the USSR (Micunovic). During his meeting with Tito on Brioni on November 2-3,

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18. RGANI, F 89, O 2, D 2, L. 1. "Information of Mikhail Suslov from Budapest, June 13, 1956." Many other documents state that the majority of Hungarian people were not involved in the uprising. See, for instance, RGANI, F 5 O 28 Rolik 5195, Delo 479, List 14. "Report of the Delegation of the World Federation of Unions About its Trip to Hungary," November 23-27, 1956. "The overwhelming majority of the population tried to hide from the battle. A portion of the population demonstrated against the counterrevolutionaries and supported the new Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Government in order to end the fascist terror. A third group supported the counterrevolution." The author of this document went on to explain that, of the members of this third group, a half of them simply didn't understand that the Soviet troops had come to help Hungary put an end to the "white terror." The other half actively fought against the Soviet army and socialist forces of Hungary. Also, Tito hinted at this misperception later in his Pula speech on November 11, 1956, when he stated: "Their [the Soviet leaders'] eyes have now been opened and they realize that not only are the Horthyites fighting, but also workers in factories and mines, that the whole nation is fighting. (emphasis added)" See Borba, November 11, 1956; address by the Secretary General of the Yugoslav League of Communists, Tito, before a meeting of League members in Pula, cited in Paul Zinner, ed. National Communism and Popular Revolt in Eastern Europe (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957): 529.

19. RGANI, F. 3, Op.12, D. 1005, Ll. 54-63, "Working Notes from the CPSU CC Presidium Session on October 28, 1956," compiled by V.N. Malin.

**Khrushchev mentioned:**

**the workers in the Miskolc region, where Hungarian miners had remained loyal though reactionaries were in power. The Czechs had given the miners some arms and it might be possible to try some political action against Nagy with the help of those Hungarian miners or jointly with them.<sup>20</sup>**

**The Soviet leaders believed the Hungarian intellectuals were being infected" by the Yugoslavs.<sup>21</sup> If only Tito would clamp down on them, they thought, the situation in Hungary would calm down. In the summer months of 1956 Moscow received numerous reports from Andropov, Geró, and others, complaining about Yugoslav influence.<sup>22</sup> It is significant that during the October 28 CC CPSU Presidium**

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**20. Veljko Micunovic, Moscow Diary (New York: Garden City, 1980), 134. Of course, Khrushchev apparently did understand that some workers were "supporting the uprising," judging from Malin's notes of the October 28 CC CPSU Presidium meeting. See RGANI F 3, O.12, D. 1005, Ll. 54-63, "Working Notes from the CC CPSU Presidium Session on October 28, 1956," compiled by V.N. Malin.**

**21. AVP RF, Fond 077, O 37, Papka 191, D. 39, L. 75. August 23, 1956, "About the Activities of the Workers of the Yugoslav Mission in Budapest, Hindering the Normalization of Hungarian-Yugoslav Relations From the Soviet Embassy in Budapest." "It should be noted that there are people in the Yugoslav mission in Budapest who not only harbor hatred toward the USSR, but try to undertake actions which have an obviously hostile character regarding the USSR. Also see RGANI, F 89, Per 45, Dok 5, Sept. 17, 1956. Gromyko wrote that "the reactionary part of the intelligentsia and the opportunist elements in the party are conducting a policy to try to rip Hungary away from the Warsaw Pact and replace USSR influence with Yugoslav influence (emphasis added)."**

**22. See AVP RF, F 77, O 37, Por 9, P 187, D 036, L. 55-56. From the Diary of V. N. Kelin, "Notes of a Conversation with the Employee of the Newspaper Nepszava, Lorant, and the Editor of the Journal Csillag, Kiraly," June 17, 1956. "Lately the Hungarian intelligentsia is very strongly attracted to the Yugoslav question. The fact that Tito went to Moscow through Romania, and not by the more natural route--through Budapest--is seen as an open demonstration against Hungary. In Hungary Dedijer's**

meeting Khrushchev thought he could use the Yugoslavs' influence on Hungary to Soviet advantage. He asked his colleagues: Would it not be appropriate if the Yugoslavs appealed to the Hungarians?<sup>23</sup>

In the months leading up to the crisis, the Soviet and Hungarian leaders tried several times to get Tito to exert pressure on his diplomats and journalists. When the Hungarian envoy Kurimszki visited Tito on Brioni on July 21, 1956 to deliver the official note about Rákosi's resignation, he also reminded Tito about the commentaries on the Yugoslav radio and articles that appeared in the newspapers Borba and Politika written by journalists Gavro Altman and Julius Djuka. He "compared the roles of Tibor Dery and Tibor Tardos with the activities of Milovan Djilas."<sup>24</sup> Tito evidently ignored him.<sup>25</sup> The issue

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biography of Tito is passed from hand to hand. It was published in the Hungarian language for Hungarians living in Yugoslavia. The book is enjoying exceptional success..."

23. RGANI, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1005, Ll. 54-63, "Working Notes from the CC CPSU Presidium Session on October 28, 1956," compiled by V. N. Malin. N.B. the other bloc countries--China, Bulgaria, Poland, and Czechoslovakia--were also mentioned in the same sentence. As a result of this decision, the CPSU Presidium sent a cable to Tito expressing support for Nagy's new government and for the statement Nagy issued on October 28. The following day, October 29, the Yugoslav government published a message to the HWP, in Politika (the main Belgrade daily), which urged "an end to the fratricidal struggle" and warned that "further bloodshed would only harm the interests of the Hungarian working people and socialism, and would only promote the aims of reactionaries."

24. AVP RF, F 077, O 37, P 191, D 39, L 41, To Shepilov from Andropov, "About the Visit of Kurimszki, the Hungarian Envoy, with Tito in Yugoslavia (Brioni)," July 21, 1956. Milovan Djilas was a high official under Tito, at first a zealous communist, but later a harsh critic of communism. Tibor Dery and Tibor Tardos were veteran Hungarian communist writers who later turned against the Rákosi regime in the summer and fall of 1956.

25. Ibid., L. 41. "Tito didn't answer this question; he was only interested in what kinds of elements participated in the Petofi Circle discussions. 'I've been informed that the majority of those present were workers and only comrades who didn't oppose what was being said there.'"

was raised again when Mikoyan visited Tito on the same day,<sup>26</sup> and when Khrushchev, Tito, Gerő, Kádár and others convened in the Crimea (Yalta) in September-October, 1956.<sup>27</sup> (Earlier, on September 3, the CPSU had warned all the East European communist parties in a secret letter not to "take the Yugoslav example" too seriously; the purpose of the Crimea meeting was, in part, for Khrushchev and Tito to iron out their differences). "The Yugoslav mission in Budapest openly maintains ties with people in opposition to the CC HWP...[and] the Yugoslav newspapers shield the opportunists banished from the communist party...for example, Imre Nagy in Hungary," Khrushchev claimed.<sup>28</sup>

One must not overlook Tito's own Machiavellian instincts. Since his death in 1980 a spate of biographies have been published, reappraising Tito's character and policies. They challenge the orthodox view of his official biographer, Vladimir Dedijer, and describe Tito's skills of Realpolitik.<sup>29</sup> Undoubtedly Tito--like the Yugoslav diplomats and journalists--sincerely believed in the superiority of the "Yugoslav way" and the equality of all communist countries. Yet, as an experienced politician, he must have realized the usefulness of the third-path rhetoric. Permitting his subordinates freedom of expression won the approval of American policymakers, especially of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles.

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26. AVP RF, F 077, 0 37, P 191, D 39, L. 81. Ernő Gerő, in a talk with Andropov, said that Mikoyan called him from Sophia, Bulgaria, and reported that the Yugoslavs had "agreed to try not to support the hostile elements in the press and radio, although they did not give firm assurances."

27. RGANI, Rolik 5173, F 5, 0 28, D 403, L. 9, By I. Vinogradov, to Comrade M. A. Suslov, "About the Conversations of Comrades N. S. Khrushchev with Comrade Tito and the Other Leaders, Which Took Place in Yugoslavia and in the Crimea in September-October, 1956."

28. Ibid.

29. cf. Note 1 *supra*.

At the same time, much like Dulles's own "Liberation" rhetoric, it created the illusion of being on the offensive, of encouraging Nagy and his supporters. ("Liberation," it will be recalled, was coined by Dulles during the 1952 presidential campaign as an alternative to the more passive-sounding "containment" strategy of Truman and the Democrats, whom Dulles accused of being "soft on communism").<sup>30</sup> To some degree, Tito's call for "alternative roads to communism" served to mask his own secret fears about the Hungarian rebellion.

Like Khrushchev, Tito was caught off guard by the October-November, 1956 events in Hungary, specifically when the Hungarians' anti-Soviet mood shifted to an anti-communist mood. Moreover, it has been assumed that Tito wholeheartedly approved of Nagy's policies and the independence movement. Publicly, it is true, Tito was propounding the third-path rhetoric, "different roads to socialism," and noninterference in the internal affairs of sovereign countries. It was known that Nagy, like Tito, was also attracted to the Five Principles (Pancha Shila) propounded at the 1955 Bandung Conference. In early 1956 Imre Nagy was writing his book, In Defense of the New Course, the third chapter of which is devoted to these principles.<sup>31</sup> Nagy argued that the principles must extend not only to the Third World,

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30. On August 21, 1952 in a television debate with Averell Harriman, Dulles said: "The first thing I would do would be to shift from a purely defensive policy to a psychological offensive, a liberation policy, which will try to give hope and a resistance mood inside the Soviet empire." Transcript of television program "Pick the Winner," August 21, 1952, Dulles Papers, cited in Townsend Hoopes, The Devil and John Foster Dulles (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973), 131. The liberation policy was quietly dropped early in the Eisenhower presidency; it was primarily for domestic consumption, and lacked operational content.

31. These are: 1) mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty; 2) mutual nonaggression; 3) mutual noninterference in each other's internal affairs; 4) equality and mutual benefit; and 5) peaceful coexistence. See Imre Nagy, On Communism: In Defense of the New Course (New York: Praeger, 1957), 22-23. Chinese prime minister Zhou Enlai and Indian prime minister Jawaharlal

or to the capitalist system, but also "to the relations between the countries within the democratic and socialist camp."<sup>32</sup> (Interestingly, according to the Malin notes, the Pancha Shila was mentioned during the CC CPSU Presidium meeting on October 30, 1956 by Kaganovich, who said "I don't think they should propose that we build our relations on the principles of Pancha Shila").<sup>33</sup>

But Yugoslav journalists and diplomats in the early months of 1956 may have supported Nagy and his followers more enthusiastically than did Tito himself. During the revolution, despite Tito's outward support of Nagy, inwardly he felt threatened by Nagy's movement. With the opening of the communist party archives, it can be seen that Tito's perspective changed as the situation became violent in Hungary.<sup>34</sup> Tito realized the potential of nationalist (noncommunist) "spillover" into Yugoslavia, which itself was an artificial state composed of several ethnic and religious groups (Slovenes, Croats, Serbs,

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Nehru first endorsed these principles in a joint statement in New Delhi on June 28, 1954. The principles were intended to "guide relations between the two countries" as well as "relations with other countries in Asia and in other parts of the world." For the full text of the statement, see G. V. Ambekar and V. D. Divekar, eds., Documents on China's Relations with South and South-East Asia (1949-1962) (New York: Allied Publishers, 1964), pp. 7-8.

32. Ibid.

33. RGANI, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1006, Ll. 6-14, compiled by V. N. Malin. "Working Notes from the Session of the CC CPSU Presidium on 30 October 1956."

34. AVP RF, F 77, O 37, P 191, D 39, L 99. From the First Secretary of the European Department of the Soviet Foreign Minister, V. Bakunov and Second Secretary of the European Division, A. Khanov, "Information about the Position of the Yugoslavs toward the Events in Hungary," December 12, 1956. [The display of revanchist aspirations by counterrevolutionary elements, uttering the slogan 'Great Hungary,' noticeably influenced the Yugoslavs' position. If before this the Yugoslav press praised the actions of the Nagy government, so after the counterrevolutionary nationalist demonstrations, the press and various Yugoslav representatives spoke with alarm about the growth of the anarchic, counterrevolutionary forces in Hungary. This anxiety was noticeable in Tito's letter to the CC of the HWP on October 30.]



Macedonians, Bosnian Muslims, and Montenegrins). He himself was careful to conceal the fact that he was born into a peasant family from north Croatia and actually fought on the Austrian-Hungarian side against Serbia in 1914.<sup>35</sup> It was much easier to encourage faraway Poland, than nearby Hungary. Between October 31 and November 1, the leading Yugoslav newspaper Borba stopped supporting the Nagy government, as "in any case, not a counter-revolution," and now denounced its connection to "right-wing elements." Indeed, as his own fears of spillover intensified, Tito probably began to empathize somewhat with the Russians vis-a-vis the spillover of Yugoslav ideas into the bloc countries.

Some scholars have suspected Tito's own alarm, but the recently opened archives provide greater detail about Tito's apprehension.<sup>36</sup> In his letter of November 8 to Khrushchev (and later on November 11 in his speech at Pula), Tito stated clearly that he had promised Khrushchev he would try to "work on Nagy," and that he believed the military intervention was necessary.<sup>37</sup> In fact, Khrushchev himself apparently was surprised at how readily Tito agreed with him on the need to intervene.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, Tito

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35. See Stevan K. Pavlowitch, Tito, Yugoslavia's Great Dictator (London: C. Hurst & Co, 1992), 43.

36. See, for example, Vali, Rift and Revolt in Hungary, 350-51. It should be noted that many of these statements were reported by Soviet and Hungarian officials, and thus could be considered "hearsay." Given the numerous references, however, we have good reason to believe Tito actually did make these remarks.

37. RGANI, F 89, Per 45, Dok 38, L.1-2, From the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party, Brioni, to the First Secretary of the CC CPSU Khrushchev, November 8, 1956. "It is true that during our conversation on Brioni we agreed with your assessment, that the weakness of the Nagy government and its actions led to the danger of the destruction of the essential socialist achievements in Hungary. We agreed that the Hungarian communists should not remain in such a government, and that they should...decisively resist the reaction. There is no need to remind you that we expressed our doubts about the consequences of open assistance from the Soviet army from the very beginning, as well as during all conversations. But...such help became unavoidable." Also see Tito's speech delivered in Pula, November 11, 1956 in Borba, November 16, 1956, or cited in Zinner, ed. National Communism, 516-541.

38. "I expected even more strenuous objections from Tito than the ones we had encountered during

was quoted often by the Soviet Presidium as having asked rhetorically: What kind of a revolutionary, what kind of communist, could Nagy be, if with his knowledge they hanged and shot leading workers, communists and public figures?"<sup>39</sup> Two months after the Soviet crackdown, Tito confided in Firiubin, the Soviet ambassador to Yugoslavia, that "the reaction raised its head [*podnial golovu*], especially in Croatia, where the reactionary elements openly incited the employees of the Yugoslav security organs to violence." After Firiubin told him that his speech in Pula on 11 November, and the speech of Yugoslav Vice President Edvard Kardelj later, made a bad impression in Moscow, Tito said, "I did not want to complicate in any way Soviet-Yugoslav relations."<sup>40</sup> The Pula speech shocked Moscow because Tito--to demonstrate his independence--described the Hungarian events as a grassroots revolution. exposed in it the secret Brioni meeting, and also denounced the first intervention, which "coming at the invitation of Gerő, was absolutely wrong." The speech also shocked Nagy and Western audiences because Tito had stated: "We are against interference and the use of foreign armed forces...[but] if it meant saving socialism in Hungary, then [the second] Soviet intervention was necessary."<sup>41</sup>

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our discussions with the Polish comrades. But we were pleasantly surprised. Tito said we were absolutely right and that we should send our soldiers into action as quickly as possible." Strobe Talbott, ed. *Khrushchev Remembers* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970), 421.

39. AVP RF, F 77, O 37, Papka 191, Por 39, List 100. From the First Secretary of the European Department of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, V. Bakunov and Second Secretary of the European Division, A. Khanov, "Reference about the Position of the Yugoslavs toward the Events in Hungary," December 12, 1956. Also RGANI, F 89, Per 45, Dok 83, List 3, Resolution of the CC CPSU: "About the Letter to the CC of the Yugoslav Communist Party, to Tito with Enclosed Text," January 10, 1957.

40. RGANI, F. 89, O 2, D 4, L 43, Infommation of Firiubin, Soviet Ambassador to Yugoslavia, "Notes from a Conversation with the President of the Yugoslavia (Josip Broz Tito)," January 11, 1957.

41. Zinner, National Communism, *op. cit.*, pp. 516-541.

The Soviet Presidium also claimed that Tito himself had plans to intervene militarily in Hungary.<sup>42</sup> Tito, in his talk with the Soviet military delegation on Brioni on November 18, 1956, allegedly declared that if the Soviet troops were not used to put down the insurrection, then Yugoslav troops, which were by that time braced [*podtianiuti*] on the Yugoslav-Hungarian border, would have been sent in for that purpose.<sup>43</sup> (Khrushchev himself may have thought about a possible Yugoslav intervention when he said during the October 31 CC CPSU Presidium meeting "We should negotiate with Tito...There will be no large-scale war.")<sup>44</sup> In a conversation with Andropov, Kádár said, "The Yugoslavs apparently are trying to save Nagy not because they need him, but because they fear he can cause some undesirable things for them."<sup>45</sup>

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42. RGANI, F 89, Per 45, Dok 83, List 5, Resolution of the CC CPSU: "About the Letter to the CC CPY (Tito) with Enclosed Text," January 10, 1957. Ivan Gosnjak, the Yugoslav State Secretary for Defense Matters, allegedly said something similar at the reception in the Soviet embassy in Belgrade on November 23 in honor of the Soviet military delegation. AVP RF, F 77, O 37 Papka 191 Por 39, List 82-93, "About the Issue of Imre Nagy and His Politics by the Yugoslav Leaders, Reference," December 4, 1956, by I. Zamchevskii, the Director of the Fifth European Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, USSR. Some speculate that Tito, and other prominent Yugoslav officials around him, may have contemplated this preemptive intervention, both to keep the Soviet army out, and to prop up the communist government in Hungary. See Richard Lowenthal, "Tito's Affair with Khrushchev, The New Leader, v. 41 (October 6, 1958), 14. Also Vali, Rift and Revolt in Hungary. 351.

43. RGANI F 89, Per 45, Dok 83, List 5, Resolution of the CC CPSU: "About the Letter to the CC of the Yugoslav Communist Party, to Tito with enclosed Text," January 10. 1957.

44. RGANI, F. 3, Op.12, D. 1006, Ll.15-18, "Working Notes from the CC CPSU Presidium Session on October 31, 1956," compiled by V. N. Malin.

45. RGANI, F. 89, Per. 45, Dok. 34, L. 3. "Draft of the Telegram to the Soviet Ambassador in Budapest, Yuri Andropov, from the CC CPSU, November 9, 1956." In this document the Soviet leaders recount a conversation Kádár had with Andropov. "...[I]n a talk with Ambassador Andropov you correctly observed that 'The Yugoslavs apparently are trying to save Nagy, not because he is necessary to them, but out of a fear that via Nagy some undesirable things can occur for them.'"

Moreover, while some scholars have asserted that Tito wholeheartedly favored Nagy as a replacement to Rákosi, there is surprisingly little evidence in the Soviet archives to prove this.<sup>46</sup> On the contrary, Tito seemed willing--although unenthusiastically--to tolerate the Stalinist Ernő Gerő, but to prefer János Kádár<sup>47</sup> or Zoltán Szánto to head the new post- Rákosi government.<sup>48</sup> When Tito was informed by Kurimszki that Rákosi had resigned," he never mentioned Nagy's name.<sup>49</sup> Of course, this

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46. Charles Gati, Hungary and the Soviet Bloc (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1986), 137. "Thus, with Tito as a key player now, and Nagy as Tito's obvious choice the Russians were increasingly interested in Nagy and the authority he could command." (emphasis added) See also Vali, Rift and Revolt in Hungary, 249-50.

47. RGANI, F 89, Per 45, Dok 38, L 2, Protocol 54, Resolution of the CC CPSU Presidium, "About the Answer of the Yugoslavs on the Issue of Imre Nagy and His Group," November 10, 1956. "[Y]ou completely shared our positive view of Kádár, as a prominent and authoritative leading statesman of the communist movement of Hungary, who is capable in the present difficult conditions to lead a new revolutionary government...You were very satisfied that the CC CPSU still in the summer after the departure of Rákosi tried to have Kádár appointed First Secretary of the CC Hungary (HWP)." (This may suggest that Khrushchev's choice of Kádár was overruled by Molotov and other hard-liners in favor of the Stalinist Gerő).

48. AVP RF, F 077, O 37, P 191, D 39, L 81, August 23, 1956, "About the Activities of the Workers of the Yugoslav Mission in Budapest, Hindering the Normalization of Hungarian-Yugoslav Relations From the Soviet Embassy in Budapest," by V. Kazimirov. "[O]n July 23, 1956, Gerő in a talk with Andropov said that Mikoyan called him from Sophia, Bulgaria... Gerő stated that if he correctly understood comrade Mikoyan, the Yugoslav embassy considered the candidacy of Gerő as unacceptable for the post of First Secretary of the CC HWP, where they would have liked to see János Kádár or Zoltán Szánto." (emphasis added). Zoltán Szánto (1893-1977) was a revisionist communist, a member of the moderate wing of the opposition before October 1956. He sought refuge in the Yugoslav embassy on November 4 along with Nagy and his other supporters, but was taken to Romania on November 18 as a "guest" of the Romanian Communist Party (along with Zoltán Vas, chairman of the Government Commission on Consumer Supplies). Later, in the Spring of 1957, proceedings were initiated against him and the others, and the Hungarian security police arrested him. He was permitted in 1958 to return to Hungary.

49. AVP RF, F 077, O 37 P 191 D 39, L 41, From Andropov, Soviet Ambassador in Budapest to D. T. Shepilov, Minister of Foreign Affairs, August 14, 1956. "Then Tito unexpectedly started to ask [Kurimszki] about the state of health of comrades Gerő, Kádár, and Revai... Comrade Tito did not

may be because Nagy was not readmitted to the Hungarian communist party until October 14, 1956.

Indeed, as much as Tito detested Rákosi, perhaps he was willing to tolerate Rákosi in the interest of maintaining calm relations between the Yugoslav and Hungarian communist parties.<sup>50</sup> As he said in July 1956 to the envoy Kurimszki:

Whomever the Hungarian people choose and recognize as their leader is their business...I also said in Moscow that I do not support Rákosi, but if the Hungarian people want him, then let him be. It is their business. We thought and still do think...that the settling of the issues between the two parties should not cause shocks to the Hungarian Workers' Party.<sup>51</sup>

This is not to say that Tito did not denounce Rákosi during the 1955 Belgrade and 1956 Moscow meetings. However, even these negative comments would not have persuaded the Khrushchev leadership

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mention Imre Nagy even once in the course of the whole conversation, and did not even drop a hint about him." (emphasis added). Words are underlined as they appeared in the original document. N.B.

50. More evidence would be needed to substantiate this view, of course. Prominent scholars have always believed that Tito did insist that Rákosi be dismissed before Yugoslav relations with the communist bloc countries could improve. See, for example, Sandor Kopacsi, In the Name of the Working Class (New York: Grove Press, 1986), 89. "The Yugoslav leader wanted the head of the Hungarian dictator who had mounted the false trials of Raik and Kádár in which everybody had been 'agent and spy for Tito's clique.'" Or Endre Marton, The Forbidden Sky (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), 207. When Khrushchev begged Tito to forget how Stalin had treated him in 1948, Tito demanded Rákosi's ouster." And Ferenc Vali, Rift and Revolt in Hungary, 223. "He [Tito] undertook to persuade the Kremlin to have Rákosi and his associates removed from the Hungarian leadership; but the Soviet Presidium steadfastly refused.

51. AVP RF, F 077, O 37, P 191, D 39, L 40, From Andropov, Soviet Ambassador in Budapest to D. T. Shepilov. Minister of Foreign Affairs. August 14, 1956.

to dismiss Rákosi in 1955.<sup>52</sup> The contemporary Western press speculated that reparations payments from Hungary--which were finally negotiated in May 1956--may have persuaded Tito to end his overt opposition to Rákosi 's incumbency.<sup>53</sup>

Moscow finally insisted that Rákosi resign, because the situation in Hungary was getting worse. Even the Hungarian Politburo did not want him, but they were too afraid to tell Moscow; they were waiting for Moscow to take the initiative.<sup>54</sup> Of course, Ernő Gerő, who took Rákosi 's place, was no different. Hungarians quipped: "In place of a fat Rákosi, we got a thin one." Even Khrushchev during the November 3 Presidium meeting remarked candidly: "It is my fault and Mikoyan's that we proposed

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52. See RGANI, F 89, Per 45, Dok 84, L. 7. To the CC CPSU from the CC CPY, Feb. 7, 1957. "In the course of our conversations with comrades Khrushchev, Bulganin, and others in May and June of 1955, we expressed our negative position regarding the policies of Rákosi. You passed by these remarks, defended Rákosi, and used the whole authority of the Soviet Union in defense of this person and his policies, which he personified, right to the very last moment, that is, until the majority of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Workers' Party eliminated him." Also see Tito's speech in Pula, November 11, 1956. "When we were in Moscow...we said that Rákosi 's regime and Rákosi himself had no qualifications whatever to lead the Hungarian state....[T]heir actions could only bring about grave consequences...[W]e were not insistent enough with the Soviet leaders to have such a team as Rákosi and Gerő eliminated" (emphasis added). cited in Zinner, ed. National Communism, 523-4.

53. John MacCormac, "Hungary Meeting Yugoslav Claims," New York Times, May 4, 1956, p. 6 col 3. "In return for getting his way, it is believed that Marshal Tito will cease his active opposition to Mr. Rákosi, who is chief of the Hungarian Workers (Communist) Party."

54. See RGANI F 89, O 2 D 2, L. 9. "Information of Mikoyan from Budapest," July 14, 1956. When Mikoyan flew to Budapest on July 13 he had the impression that the Hungarian comrades [in the Central Committee] had long ago come to the conclusion that Rákosi must go," but that they were "too afraid" to say so openly, and were simply waiting for the Soviet leaders to make the first move. Also see RGANI, F 89, Per 45, Dok 84, L. 7. Letter of Tito of the CC CPY, Belgrade, to CC CPSU (Khrushchev), February 7, 1957, from Belgrade. "We are forced, in the interests of truth, although we do it unwillingly, to draw your attention to the fact that the CPSU leadership, Soviet government, and Soviet media rendered the greatest support to these people [i.e., Rákosi et al.] and their politics, even when it became clear that even the Central Committee of the HWP and all the members of the HWP no longer wanted these people to lead their party and government, not to mention the wider working masses." (emphasis added)

**Gerő rather than Kádár."<sup>55</sup>**

**Given his wariness of Imre Nagy, why did Tito offer the latter political asylum in his Budapest embassy? Scholars have been puzzled about Tito's motives. This event is worth examining in detail, both because Tito's act of granting Nagy asylum epitomizes his political philosophy, and because his reticence in handing Nagy over to the USSR contributed to a new cold phase in Yugoslav relations with both the USSR and Hungary.**

**Until the November 4 invasion, most of the Soviet and Hungarian remarks were directed against the activities of the Yugoslav diplomats in Hungary, and against the pro-Nagy reporting of the Hungarian situation by the Yugoslav journalists. Even at the Crimea meeting when Khrushchev discussed this problem with Tito, he approached it in a delicate way that would enable Tito to save face. Tito probably does not have any sinister designs, Khrushchev stated; it is the "reactionary forces" in Hungary that are using the "Yugoslav way" as a way to "camouflage their own nationalistic designs."<sup>56</sup>**

**It is plausible that Khrushchev and Kádár, until the November 4 invasion, had been willing to give Tito the benefit of the doubt and assume that the Yugoslav journalists and diplomats were simply acting on their own, and not on Tito's orders. But after November 4, when Nagy and forty-one others received political refuge in the Yugoslav embassy in Budapest, the Soviet and Hungarian officials attacked Tito ad**

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**55. Imre Horvath's Notes of Khrushchev's Speech at the November 3 Session, Magyar Orszagos Leveltar, XIX J-1-K Horvath Imre kulugyminiszter iratai, 55, doboz. This document is also contained in the Hungarian document collection edited by Vyacheslav Sereda and Janos Rainer, Dontes a Kremlben, 1956 (pp 92-93), cited in Note #2 *supra*.**

**56. RGANI, F. 5, O. 28 D. 403 L. 9, From I. Vinogradov to Comrade M. A. Suslov, "About the Conversations of Comrades N. S. Khrushchev with Comrade Tito and the Other Leaders in the Crimea, September-October, 1956."**

**hominem. How dare Tito shelter this leader of the counterrevolution? The Soviet leaders were enraged.**

**The course of events is well-known. At 5:20 a.m. Nagy made his last appeal on Radio Budapest and then went to the Yugoslav embassy with Zoltán Szánto and eleven other party leaders and intellectuals with their families.<sup>57</sup> In the Yugoslav embassy, Nagy remained safe from the invading Soviet army until his final departure from the embassy compound on November 22, 1956. What is less known, however, is how exactly Nagy's group ended up in the Yugoslav embassy and what Tito's motives were. From the newly available correspondence between Khrushchev and Tito, the following scenario emerges. On November 1 Zoltán Szánto spoke with the Yugoslav ambassador to Hungary, Dalibor Soldatic, about the possible need for political asylum. He was afraid of possible violence against Hungarian government members by the anticommunist insurgents. Soldatic gave a preliminary affirmative answer. and Szanto was supposed to tell him exactly when he and others would be coming to the embassy. Soldatic also informed Tito of this request.**

**The next day Tito, Rankovic,<sup>58</sup> Kardelj, and Micunovic met with Khrushchev and Malenkov at Brioni and discussed the Hungarian situation from seven o'clock in the evening of November 2 to five o'clock in the morning of November 3. Khrushchev and Malenkov informed the Yugoslav leaders of their plans for invasion, but not the actual date. As mentioned earlier, by November 3 Tito had agreed with**

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**57. These included Julia Rajk (widow of the executed Communist leader), Zoltán Vas, Gyorgy Lukacs (the philosopher), Geza Losonczy, Ferenc Donat, Gabor Tancos, (president of the Petofi Circle), journalists Sandor Haraszti, Miklos Vasarhelyi, Gyorgy Fazekas, and others. Altogether there were ten men, fifteen women, and seventeen children in the group. Elie Abel, "Nagy Is Abducted by Soviet Police; Sent to Romania," New York Times, November 24, 1956, p. 1, col. 7.**

**58. Aleksander Rankovic (1909-1983) was the second most important public figure in Yugoslavia. He was minister of internal affairs (although not in 1956) and party secretary responsible for cadres.**



Khrushchev both on the need to intervene militarily and on the wisdom of selecting János Kádár as the new leader. Tito also agreed to try to persuade Nagy to issue a declaration announcing his own resignation, his inability to stop the violence in the country, and his support for the new Kádár government.<sup>59</sup> During the course of the conversation, according to Micunovic, Tito informed Khrushchev about Szanto's request for asylum in the Yugoslav embassy:

They [Khrushchev and Malenkov] again asked what possibilities we had of trying to do something about Nagy. Apart from Losonczy we mentioned Zoltán Szánto. who has already asked for asylum in our embassy because of the danger of reprisals. It seems to us that such people are not to be distrusted, because they are decent folk with good intentions.<sup>60</sup>

The question arises: if Khrushchev objected so much to Nagy's refuge in the Yugoslav embassy, why did he not protest this possible scenario when it was first broached during the meeting at Brioni? Several answers can be deduced. First, Khrushchev may have construed this as a convenient way to keep the Nagy group off the streets where they might have been killed or injured. It would also prevent Nagy from fleeing to the West and setting up a government in exile.

A second possibility is that, since Tito apparently mentioned only Szanto, and not Nagy, Khrushchev

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59. Tito wrote: "...[W]hen they [the Nagy group] showed up here in our embassy,...[we] persistently tried to prove to them the usefulness of such a resignation for the regulation of the situation in Hungary." RGANI F 89, Per 45, Dok 84, L. 8. Letter of Tito to Khrushchev, February 7, 1957.

60. Micunovic, Moscow Diary, 137.

perhaps did not realize that Nagy himself might also seek asylum in the Yugoslav embassy. Third, the most pressing concern for Khrushchev and Malenkov at the time was getting Tito's support for the intervention and his promise to try to persuade Nagy to publicly resign and state his support for the new Kádár government. It was clear to the Yugoslavs that Khrushchev had already decided to intervene, and that he merely wanted Tito's ex post facto approval--not his advice or permission. Khrushchev needed Tito's help in making the Soviet invasion look more legitimate to the international community which would then facilitate the "normalization" in Hungary.

In addition, since Tito had been surprisingly supportive of the Soviet invasion plan, Khrushchev evidently assumed that, even if Nagy sought asylum in the Yugoslav embassy, Tito would quickly turn Nagy over to the Soviet authorities. This is indicated in the telegram of November 4, in which Khrushchev instructed Soviet Ambassador Firiubin to tell Edvard Kardelj, Deputy Head of the Yugoslav Government, that

as far as the further sojourn of Nagy and his group in the embassy, excesses could occur with them, not only by the reaction but also by the revolutionary elements. Thus, bearing in mind that the Hungarian Revolutionary Worker-Peasant government [headed by Kádár] does not have security organs at present, it would be expedient to deliver Nagy and his group to our troops for transport to the Revolutionary Worker-Peasant government in Szolnok.<sup>61</sup>

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61. RGANI, F 89, Per 45, Dok 25, L. 2. Telegram from the CC CPSU (Khrushchev) to Soviet Ambassador to Yugoslavia (Firiubin), November 4, 1956.

Despite Tito's assent to "work on Nagy," what complicated matters was Khrushchev's silence about when the invasion would begin. Micunovic writes:

The Russians still said nothing about when their troops would intervene. We can't ask them, and they don't want to say. For that reason the time factor remains unclear: We don't know what opportunity we may have to influence Nagy and try to reduce the number of casualties and the amount of unnecessary bloodshed. But we agreed that we would try and influence Nagy.<sup>62</sup>

Before Szanto could reply to Soldatic about when he would seek asylum, the actual invasion had begun, on November 4. Soldatic called Nagy at 1:00 a.m. on November 4 in the Hungarian Parliament building and invited him to the Yugoslav embassy. Thus, on the basis of the first tentative conversation on November 1, the Nagy group fled to the embassy.<sup>63</sup> Since Tito had mentioned Szanto's request during the Brioni meeting, he apparently concluded that Khrushchev condoned the possible offer of asylum to the Hungarian leaders. This is indicated in the November 4 telegram in which Firiubin wrote:

Kardelj reported that on the night of November 4 they called Imre Nagy, as it had been agreed with comrade Khrushchev...It is still not clear, said Kardelj, whether or not Imre

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62. Micunovic, Moscow Diary, 138.

63. RGANI, F 89, Per 45, Dok 38, L. 13. Letter of Tito to Khrushchev, November 8. 1956.

Nagy made his last declaration in the name of the government in Budapest. If he did make this declaration, then they, the Yugoslavs will try to get him to state that he made it under pressure from the reactionaries. They also intend to persuade Imre Nagy to make a declaration of support for the government headed by Kádár in Szolnok. In Kardelj's words such a declaration will facilitate discussion of the Hungarian question in the Security Council and [facilitate diplomatic] recognition of Kádár 's government as the legitimate government.<sup>64</sup>

This means that Nagy's group was already in the embassy before the Yugoslavs knew that Nagy had declared Hungary's neutrality.<sup>65</sup>

Later, in explaining to Khrushchev why he had granted asylum to Nagy, Tito cited the sheer "speed of events" and "absence of detailed information."<sup>66</sup> "This problem...in the final analysis...is a

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64. RGANI F 89, Per 45, Dok 25, L.2 op. cit. Underlining is in the original document.

65. RGANI, F 89, Per. 45, Dok 38, L. 12, "From the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party, Brioni, to the First Secretary of the CC CPSU Khrushchev," November 8, 1956. (Ties between Hungary and the USSR were not completely severed, since--among other things--Soviet Ambassador Andropov remained in Budapest, and Hungarian Ambassador to the USSR Boldoczki remained in Moscow.)

66. RGANI, F 89. Per 45, Dok 38, L 13. "From the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party to the First Secretary of the CC CPSU Khrushchev," Brioni, November 8 1956. "If you take all this into consideration, then it becomes clear that only the speed of events was not anticipated and created problems that now are essential to solve. We think the question of whether or not our embassy acted correctly in Budapest no longer has any significance. What is important now is that we work together to solve this problem in the spirit of friendly relations, which we already established between our countries and parties."

result of our conversation on Brioni, although because of the events in Hungary, things developed differently than we expected," he wrote. The conversation between Szanto and Soldatic had already taken place before the Brioni meeting, and Tito did inform Khrushchev of it. Khrushchev appears to be the one to blame for the initial presence of Nagy's group in the Yugoslav embassy, since he did not tell Tito at Brioni that the offer of political asylum to Nagy was unacceptable. He also did not give Tito a reasonable amount of time in which to persuade Nagy to make the declaration supporting Kádár. Soviet troops went into action less than twenty-four hours after Khrushchev and Malenkov left Tito at Brioni. (It is doubtful, in any case, that Nagy would have agreed to support Kádár, who was at this time still a member of Nagy's own government!)

The quarrel between the Soviet and Yugoslav leaders developed later when Khrushchev realized that Tito would not easily relinquish Nagy and his group. It was simply incomprehensible to Khrushchev that Tito could continue to harbor Nagy, the leader of the counterrevolution," when Tito had been so understanding during the Brioni meeting.

The Soviets then, in all likelihood, decided to intimidate the Yugoslavs in another, nonverbal, way. By explicitly mentioning in the November 4 telegram that "excesses" could occur, the Soviets seem to have been preparing a cover for a little-known event that took place on November 5 at 3:30 p.m.<sup>67</sup> On this day a Soviet tank fired on the Yugoslav embassy. The cultural attache Milenko Milovanov was killed

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67. RGANI, Fond 89, Per 45, Dok 29, List 3, From the Diary of D. T. Shepilov, Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs, "About the Conversation with the Yugoslav Ambassador to the USSR Micunovic," November 7, 1956. There is a discrepancy in the time of the incident. Micunovic and Shepilov said it occurred on November 6 at 12:45 p.m. The Soviet investigatory commission, however, established the time of the occurrence as November 5, "around" 3:00 p.m. See AVP RF, F 077, O 37, Por 18, P 188, L 38, From General-Lieutenant Beliusov, Chief of the Eighth Administration of the General Staff, to N. S. Patolichev, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, "Act."

in the gunfire, the building frame damaged, and all the windows shattered. The Yugoslav foreign minister, Koca Popovic, accused the Soviet authorities of having deliberately opened fire on the embassy, knowing that it was indeed the Yugoslav embassy and that Imre Nagy and his supporters were inside.<sup>68</sup> To reinforce Popovic's complaint, the Yugoslav ambassador to the USSR, Veljko Micunovic, visited the Soviet minister of foreign affairs, Dmitri Shepilov, the next day.<sup>69</sup> Dalibor Soldatic, the Yugoslav ambassador in Budapest, also complained about the incident to the Soviet ambassador in Budapest, Yuri Andropov. Soldatic requested that Soviet tanks near the Yugoslav embassy be moved. Andropov relayed this message to Valerian Zorin, the Soviet deputy foreign minister, warning that the demand for the withdrawal of the Soviet military unit from the building of the mission is of a suspicious nature."<sup>70</sup>

As we know from Malin's notes, these messages were discussed at the Presidium meeting by Khrushchev, Zhukov and Shepilov. A cable was prepared for the Yugoslav government and transmitted via Firiubin to Popovic.<sup>71</sup> On November 9, 1956 a commission composed of Major-General K.E.

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68. See Shifrtelgramma, November 5, 1956 (Strictly Secret), in RGANI, F. 3, Op. 64, D. 485, Ll. 143-144.

69. RGANI, F. 89, Op. 45, D. 29, Ll. 1-3. From D. T. Shepilov to the CPSU Presidium, "About the Conversation with the Yugoslav Ambassador to the USSR Micunovic," November 7, 1956. Shepilov told Micunovic that the Soviet military command would comply with the Yugoslav request to "pull back the military unit next to the [Yugoslav] embassy compound."

70. RGANI, F.3, O.64, D. 485, L. 130. "Telefonogramma," November 5, 1956.

71. RGANI, F. 3, O. 12, D. 1006, Ll. 41-45ob, compiled by V. N. Malin. See the formal protocol for this session RGANI, F.3, O. 64, D. 485, Ll. 141 "Vypiska iz Protokola No. 53 zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK KPSS ot 6 noyabrya 1956 g." The telegram, signed by foreign minister Dmitrii Shepilov, was sent to the Yugoslav foreign minister, Koca Popovic, via the Yugoslav ambassador in Budapest, Veljko Micunovic. It stated that the Soviet military commander in Hungary had been ordered to make a careful study of how the incident happened. See the following note *infra*.

Grebennik,<sup>72</sup> Colonel K.V. Boskoboinik, and Major A. B. Lukin conducted an investigation of the circumstances.<sup>73</sup> The Yugoslav government later presented a claim of \$84,446 to Hungary for the death of Milovanov.<sup>74</sup>

Although the Soviet officials claimed that it was an accident, the attack on the Yugoslav mission could very well have been deliberate (although this cannot be verified until other documents from the Soviet military archives are declassified). The Soviet leaders resented Tito for giving the Nagy group political refuge, and this would have been an easy way to take revenge. They had both the motive and the opportunity, and the incident could be readily explained. After all, Tito himself had earlier asked the Soviet government to "take measures to protect the Yugoslav embassy from possible attacks on it."<sup>75</sup>

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72. Major-General Grebennik was Serov's deputy in the KGB and Soviet commandant of Budapest after November 4, 1956.

73. AVP RF F77, O 37, D 18, P 188, L 35, From Major-General Grebennik, Lieutenant-Colonel Kuziminov, and Gaspar (Deputy of the Hungarian Government Assembly), November 6, 1956, "About the Accident to the Employee of the Yugoslav Mission in Budapest on November 5, 1956." This report was later sent directly to Colonel General N. Pavlovskii on November 9, 1956 and other superior officers in the Soviet General Staff. See AVP RF, F 077, O 37, Por 18, P 188, Ll 38-39, To Comrade N. S. Patolichev and Beliusov, November 9, 1956 From the Commission composed of Grebennik, Boskoboinik, and Lukin. "The Soviet soldiers said that the Soviet tanks were being shot at from the direction of apartment buildings situated near the Yugoslav mission. In reply to this shot, a Soviet tank opened fire on the indicated house. Apparently because the tanks were moving, a volley of shots fell on the embassy building, and as a result, one of the employees who was standing at the window was killed." The Soviet authorities pledged to transport the body to Yugoslavia.

74. AVP RF, F 144, O 18, Por 4, P 41, L 25, "Telephone telegram no. 185 from V. Astafiev, Temporary Charge d'Affaires of the USSR in Hungary (Budapest) to I.K. Zamchevskii, Director of the Fifth European Division, Soviet Foreign Ministry," April 14, 1957.

75. RGANI F 89, Per 45, Dok 25, L 4, Telegram from the CC CPSU to N. Firiubin, Soviet Ambassador in Belgrade," November 4, 1956.

From the Yugoslav point of view, once Nagy's presence in the embassy was a fait accompli amply covered in the world's major newspapers, the situation changed; Tito was caught in a dilemma. As Micunovic aptly articulated it:

They [the Soviets] have decided to sling mud at Yugoslavia as the organizer of the counterrevolution if we don't hand Imre Nagy and the others over to them. But if we do hand them over, they will then point to us as a country which does not keep its word and which nobody should depend on.<sup>76</sup>

Tito concluded that he might as well take advantage of this opportunity to persuade Nagy to resign--something he had promised Khrushchev he would do. As Tito wrote in his letter to Khrushchev, the act of granting asylum to Nagy "did not contradict the Brioni agreement."<sup>77</sup> The Yugoslavs, Tito assured Khrushchev, wanted the same thing Khrushchev and Kádár wanted: a strong communist party government in Hungary. They had sincerely tried to persuade Nagy to declare his support for Kádár.<sup>78</sup>

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76. Micunovic, Moscow Diary, 146.

77. Micunovic stated that..."During the conversations on Brioni it was agreed that Imre Nagy and others could facilitate the situation of the new revolutionary worker-peasant government [headed by Kádár] if they in some way or another declare their intention to cooperate with the government or at least, not demonstrate against it. The present location of Imre Nagy and others in the Yugoslav embassy does not contradict that agreement that was made with comrades Khrushchev and Malenkov with Tito and the other Yugoslav leaders during the Brioni meeting. RGANI, F. 89, Per 45, Dok. 29. L. 2, From the Diary of D. T. Shepilov, "About the Conversation with the Yugoslav Ambassador to the USSR, Micunovic." November 7, 1956.

78. RGANI, F 89, Per 45, Dok 38, L 13. "From the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party to the First Secretary of the CC CPSU Khrushchev," Brioni, November 8 1956. "Despite the absence of detailed information, we nevertheless thought that such a declaration from Nagy would have been essentially useful to Kádár 's government...and could help to correct the situation in



The fact that Nagy turned out to be so stubborn, Tito noted, should not be blamed on the Yugoslav Communist Party.<sup>79</sup>

Furthermore, as he tried to explain to Khrushchev, not all of the members of Nagy's group were "anti-Soviet"; some were "honest communists" who would be great assets to Kádár's new government. What was wrong with offering them asylum?<sup>80</sup> Szanto, for example, was one of the original leaders of the underground Hungarian communist party; he helped recruit Hungarians into the communist party while at a POW camp near Suzdal in the USSR in 1943.<sup>81</sup> He had also once been the Hungarian ambassador to Yugoslavia, and was highly regarded by the Yugoslavs.

When Tito refused to turn in the Nagy group, Khrushchev then began to accuse him personally of protecting Nagy, the man who had cleared the path for counterrevolution," as Tito himself had

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Hungary, which is what we suggested to you."

79. RGANI, F 89, Per 45, Dok 84, L. 8, To the CC CPSU from the CC CPY, February 7, 1957. "As far as the remark about the resignation of Nagy is concerned, we'd like to remind you that we informed Nagy and his comrades of our opinion when they ended up in our embassy and persistently tried to prove to them how useful such a resignation would be in regulating the situation in Hungary. The fact that Nagy did not take our advice is not the business of the Yugoslav Union of Communists: it is his personally. We even went too far in this, wishing to ease the situation of the Kádár government and USSR by taking advantage of Nagy's presence in the Yugoslav embassy."

80. RGANI, F 89, Per 45, Dok 25, L. 4. Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to Yugoslavia, N. Firiubin, Belgrade, to CC CPSU, November 4, 1956. "Tito asked also for the Soviet government to tell the Kádár government not to carry out repression against those communists who did not immediately take the correct line during the latest events in Hungary." János Kádár also urged lenient treatment for many of the members in the Nagy group. Since Tito supported Kádár, he was receptive to this idea. RGANI, F 89, Per 45, Dok 34, L. 2, Telegram from the CC CPSU to Andropov, Soviet Ambassador to Hungary, November 9, 1956.

81. See RTsKhDNI, F 495, O 142, D 827, list 10. "Letter from Zoltán Szántó in Hungarian POW camp near Suzdal to Mátyás Rákosi," December 24, 1943.

acknowledged at the Brioni meeting. From the Soviet viewpoint, offering Nagy political asylum was a supreme example of "interference in the internal affairs of Hungary."<sup>82</sup> The longer Tito kept Nagy, the more convincing became all those reports by the Soviet diplomats and Hungarian officials in Budapest in 1955 and in the early months of 1956. The accusations became more shrill. Tito, the Soviet leaders said, had "warned Nagy of the upcoming invasion."<sup>83</sup> This Titoist perfidy no doubt strengthened the clout of Molotov's Stalinist wing in the Soviet government. Molotov had opposed the 1955 reconciliation with Tito, and was later ousted in 1957 for his "erroneous stand on the Yugoslav question." (He apparently believed that even Kádár was too much of a titoist;" during the November 4 CC CPSU Presidium meeting, Molotov urged his colleagues to exert more pressure on Kádár "so that Hungary does not go the route of Yugoslavia.")<sup>84</sup>

It is true that the Yugoslavs did "warn" Nagy about the invasion; Soldatic called Nagy at 1:00 a.m. on November 4 and told him.<sup>85</sup> But by then probably everyone could see that an invasion was

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82. RGANI, F 89, Per 45, Dok 78, L. 12, "Protocol 164 of the CC CPSU Presidium Session," July 16, 1958.

83. RGANI, F 89, Per 45, Dok 83, L 4, Resolution of the CC CPSU: "About the Letter to the CC of the Yugoslav Communist Party, to Tito," January 10, 1957. [Paraphrased] Thus, because of your contacts with Nagy, he was warned about the upcoming action of the Soviet troops in Hungary.

84. RGANI, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1006, Ll. 34-36, "Working Notes from the CPSU CC Presidium Session on November 4, 1956," compiled by V. N. Malin. (In the November 6 Presidium meeting Khrushchev accused Molotov of thinking about "bringing back Hegedus and Rákosi." RGANI, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1006, Ll. 41-45, "Working Notes from the CPSU CC Presidium Session on November 6, 1956," compiled by V. N. Malin.

85. Endre Marton, the Hungarian journalist employed by the Associated Press, wrote: "Bela Kovacs was the first to tell me that Nagy and many Communists who remained loyal to him went to the Yugoslav embassy after Ambassador Soldatic called Nagy at dawn to say that Khrushchev had

imminent. Also, Soldatic could not have known exactly when the Soviet invasion would begin, so if he warned Szanto, it was only in a very general way.

Given Tito's wariness of Nagy, his agreement with Khrushchev on the need to intervene,<sup>86</sup> and his desire for harmonious relations with the USSR, one must ask: why did Tito not quickly hand the Nagy group over to Khrushchev? Why did he object to sending the Nagy group to Romania, the Soviets' chosen destination?

The answer lies, again, with Tito's values and fears. He valued Yugoslavia's reputation as a responsible, sovereign state, and was convinced that Yugoslavia should honor the principles of international law as befits such a state. It is noteworthy that Tito kept the Brioni meeting with Khrushchev secret from the Yugoslav public for several days after the meeting, to avoid tarnishing Yugoslavia's reputation.<sup>87</sup> Once Nagy's presence in his embassy was an accomplished fact, Tito took the concept of political asylum seriously. In his February 1957 letter to the CC CPSU (Khrushchev), Tito maintained that he could not "violate his word and simply give up these people," citing the Yugoslav

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informed Tito about his decision to use force to quell the revolt....Nagy was invited to seek refuge in the Yugoslav embassy at one o'clock in the morning, November 4th, by Dalibor Soldatic." (Bela Kovacs was secretary-general of the Smallholders Party until his arrest in February 1947, and was later appointed minister of agriculture by Imre Nagy on October 27, 1956). See Endre Marton, The Forbidden Sky, 197.

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87. Aleksandr Stykalin and Elena Orekhova, "The 1956 Hungarian Events and the Position of the Soviet Leadership." Unpublished paper presented at Cold War History Project Conference in Moscow, January 1993, 23.

constitution on the issue of political asylum.<sup>88</sup>

Apart from this reason, one must also remember Tito's considerable skills in realpolitik. Just as the "third-path" rhetoric served a dual purpose (winning the approval of both the Yugoslav people and U.S. policymakers), so sheltering Nagy in the Yugoslav embassy served both to incarcerate Nagy (thereby defusing the uprising), and also to win the approval of the international community for "protecting" Nagy from the Soviet aggressors. As Micunovic wrote:

[I]t could not be disputed that the fact that the Nagy government had in effect disappeared from the moment it entered the Yugoslav embassy had proved useful and had helped both Kádár and the Russians.<sup>89</sup>

Tito could then take advantage of Nagy's presence in the embassy to coax him to cooperate with the Kádár government. If he could discredit Nagy, perhaps he could reduce the chances of anticommunist "spillover" into Yugoslavia. Tito was so sure he could get Nagy to support the Kádár regime that he believed the Yugoslav embassy might be attacked "when the reaction finds out that Nagy, who is in the embassy, supports the Kádár government."<sup>90</sup> Like a true disciple of Machiavelli, Tito

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88. RGANI, F 89, Per 45, Dok 38, L.14. Letter from CC CPY (Tito) to CC CPSU (Khrushchev), November 8, 1956.

89. Micunovic, Moscow Diary, 150.

90. RGANI, F 89, Per 45, Dok 25, L.106. Telegram from N. Firiubin (Soviet ambassador to Yugoslavia) to CC CPSU (Khrushchev), November 4, 1956. Tito asked the Soviet government to take measures to protect the

understood the political advantage of seeming (to the West) as if he were protecting Nagy. "Everyone sees what you seem to be, few touch upon what you are." Machiavelli wrote; "and those few do not dare to contradict the opinion of the many who have the majesty of the state to defend them."<sup>91</sup> Although Tito himself may not have fully supported Nagy's movement when it turned anticommunist, some observers in the West thought that he did. To simply hand Nagy's group over to Kádár and the Russians would destroy Yugoslavia's reputation as an independent sovereign country with respect for human rights. Meanwhile, those domestic opponents who knew how Yugoslav prisoners at Goli Otok were treated did not dare to contradict Tito and his followers.

During the rift of 1948-55, Tito had discovered the advantages of neutrality, even before the Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser did. U. S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles had been eager to extend economic aid to Yugoslavia, confident that the Yugoslav example would encourage Hungary and the other Soviet satellites to fight for independence. In a speech to the Four-H Club in Chicago in 1954, Dulles said:

In 1948 Yugoslavia broke free from the grip of international communism and reasserted its own nationalism. Now, the Soviet Union treats Yugoslavia with deference while it continues to treat with contempt the puppet governments of Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria. That

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Yugoslav embassy from these possible attacks.

91. Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince, ed. Peter Bondanella (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 60. Emphasis added.

may embolden the satellites to demand a measure of independence.<sup>92</sup>

When Dulles visited Tito in May 1955, Tito ostensibly told him what he wanted to hear, speaking about "independence," rather than about "national communism." He told Dulles that the "transformation in the satellite countries" would take place faster than Dulles can even imagine, and that he, Tito, was trying to accelerate this process, so the satellites would become independent, which Tito wanted very much.<sup>93</sup> In the tightly bipolar world of the 1950s, both superpowers vied for client states among the neutral countries. Tito could pretend to do the bidding of each superpower, but neither would know his real intentions.

Moreover, if Tito had simply handed Nagy over to Kádár 's government, Khrushchev might have been encouraged to see Yugoslavia as just another obedient Soviet satellite. Tito feared the prospect of Yugoslavia once again getting pulled back into the Soviet camp. He had swallowed his pride enough at the Crimea meeting, when he assured Khrushchev that he had "no fundamental disagreements," and that in Yugoslavia "only a different method of building socialism [was] being applied." Khrushchev had replied, "The methods and forms can differ, but there must be a single principled line." Tito had agreed: socialism can never be divided into various sorts; it is a "single revolutionary doctrine, which we,

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92. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, "The Captive Peoples," Four-H Club Speech, Chicago, Illinois, November 29, 1954.

93. AVP RF, F 77, O 37 Papka 191, List 89, December 4, 1956, "On the Issue of Imre Nagy and His Politics by the Yugoslav Leaders, A Reference," by I. Zamchevskii, Director of the Fifth European Department of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, USSR.

communists, should adhere to."<sup>94</sup>

Thus, respecting Nagy's political asylum was a useful way of reminding Khrushchev that he, Tito--despite the official normalization of Soviet-Yugoslav relations--would still act independently, even if that displeased the Kremlin. His concern for Nagy's physical safety stemmed from his determination to safeguard Yugoslavia's international reputation--not from any desire to encourage Nagy and his plans for a multiparty system in Hungary.

As if to retaliate for Tito's stubbornness in holding on to Nagy, the Soviet leaders made a deliberate decision on November 17 to kidnap the Nagy group as soon as it left the Yugoslav embassy (on November 22).<sup>95</sup> A bus was driven up to the Yugoslav embassy, supposedly to transport Nagy and the other officials with their families to their apartments. While the Hungarians were climbing into the bus, a Soviet military official also entered the bus, despite the Yugoslavs' vehement protests. (The bus driver was also a Russian.) To make sure that the Hungarians were taken to their homes, the diplomat Milan Georgievic and military attache Milan Drosa were ordered to accompany the group. The bus proceeded just around the corner from the Embassy, and then the Soviet lieutenant colonel forced Georgievic and Drosa to get off. The bus took the Nagy group first to the Soviet military headquarters at (Budapest), and then continued on to Romania where the group was imprisoned, contrary to the assurances that Kádár 's

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94. RGANI, F 5, O 28, D 403, L 9, From I. Vinogradov to Comrade M. A. Suslov, "About the Conversations of Comrades N. S. Khrushchev with Comrade Tito and the Other Leaders in the Crimea, September-October 1956."

95. RGANI, F 89, O. 2, D. 5, L. 3-4, "Information of Malenkov, Suslov, and Aristov," November 17, 1956. "Our recommendations are: a) provide for the arrest of Nagy as soon as he is released from the Yugoslav embassy; b) demand that Nagy sign a declaration in which he admits his mistakes; c) send him and his group to Romania; and d) prepare a text for the Hungarian government about Nagy."

government had given to the Yugoslavs.<sup>96</sup>

What angered Tito so much about the kidnapping was the blatant deception. Nothing quite stings the ego as outright betrayal after lengthy negotiations in good faith.<sup>97</sup> In an official letter to the CC CPSU on November 24, Tito wrote:

The Yugoslav government regards the abovementioned action a crude violation of the agreement negotiated with the Hungarian government. The [actions taken by the Kádár government] . . . are completely inconsistent with the agreement. The Yugoslav government cannot accept the version that Nagy and the others voluntarily went to Romania, since it

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96.RGANI, F 89, Per. 45, Dok 56, Ll. 9-10. "Protocol #62 from the CC CPSU Presidium session of December 6, 1956, to Malenkov, Shepilov, and Gromyko, "About the Answering Note to the Yugoslav Government's Note of Nov. 24, 1956 on the issue of Imre Nagy and his Group." See also the note of protest that Yugoslav foreign minister Koca Popovic sent to the Soviet and Hungarian embassies on November 24, 1956, in RGANI, F. 89, O. 2, D. 5, Ll. 19-26, and RGANI, F. 3, O. 64, D. 488, Ll. 95-96. Information from Malenkov, Suslov, and Aristov, November 23, 1956. This elaborate plot was devised by Ivan Serov and other senior KGB officials. Interestingly, Serov thought about using the same trick to arrest Cardinal Mindszenty--who had sought refuge in the American embassy. RGANI, F 89, Per 45, Dok 53, L. 2, "Notes of Serov on November 27, 1956." (There were several communications, incidentally, between Szanto and the Hungarian leaders, as well as several telegrams between the Yugoslav Embassy and Belgrade, in the final days before the Nagy group left the Yugoslav Embassy).

97. For details on the abduction, see the newly declassified correspondence between Tito and Khrushchev in early 1957, now stored in the former CPSU Central Committee archive "Pis'mo Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soyuza ot 10 yanvarya 1957 goda Tsentral'nomu Komitetu Soyuza Kommunistov Yugoslavii/Pis'mo Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Soyuza Kommunistov Yugoslavii ot 7 fevralya 1957 goda Tsentral'nomu Komitetu Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soyuza," (Top Secret), February 1957, in RGANI, F. 89, Op. 45, D. 83, Ll. 1-12 and D. 84, U. 1-18. This secret correspondence suggests that Tito was genuinely surprised by the deception. The possibility cannot be ruled out, however, that Tito did indeed suspect that the Nagy group would be arrested when they left the Yugoslav embassy, and that the lengthy negotiations with the Kádár government and the displays of outrage were merely for public consumption.



was known...--while they were still here in the Yugoslav embassy--that they wanted to stay in their own country. The Yugoslav government expresses an energetic protest to the Hungarian government, and demands that the agreement be followed immediately. [Failure to do so] will damage Soviet-Yugoslav relations. [The...violation of the agreement is in complete contradiction of widely recognized international legal norms.<sup>98</sup>

Tito's indignation probably equalled or surpassed the dismay Nagy felt when he realized the negotiations on November 3 for Soviet troop withdrawal were all a hoax. The negotiations concerning the Nagy group were conducted between Dobrivoje Vidic, Tito's representative, and János Kádár of the Hungarian Revolutionary Worker-Peasant Government until November 22. The document that emerged from these talks guarantee[d] the security of the indicated persons," and pledged "not to hold the Yugoslavs responsible for the past events."<sup>99</sup> Both of these pledges were broken: Nagy and several others were abducted, and Yugoslavia was blamed for fostering the "counterrevolution in Hungary. This deception, Tito felt, had made Yugoslavia a laughingstock in the international community. Characteristically enough, the Romanian (and probably Soviet) officials were surprised that

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98. RGANI, F 89, Per 45, Dok 56, Ll. 10-11. "Protocol #62 from the CC CPSU Presidium session of December 6, 1956, to Malenkov, Shepilov, and Gromyko, About the Reply to the Yugoslav Note of November 24, 1956 on the issue of Imre Nagy and his Group, including enclosed copy of the November 24 letter.

99. RGANI, F 89, Per 45, Dok 49, L 2, "Information of Malenkov, Suslov, and Aristov," November 22, 1956. In the end two promises were broken. The document "guarantee[d] the security of the indicated persons," and pledged "not to hold the Yugoslavs responsible" for the past events.

Tito was so angry about the abduction; they thought he might raise the issue at the United Nations.<sup>100</sup>

Khrushchev later expressed his regret about Soviet involvement in the kidnapping during the November 27 CC Presidium meeting. "It was a mistake for our officer to go into the bus," he said, according to notes taken by Malin's deputy Vladimir Chernukha. He thought the matter should have been left up to the Hungarians.<sup>101</sup> For the Yugoslavs it felt like a "return to 1948."<sup>102</sup>

Tito's disappointment extended to János Kádár. As early as the summer of 1956, Tito had favored

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100. RGANI, F 89, O 2, D 5, L. 13-15, "Information by V. Nikolaev from Bucharest," November 26, 1956. Emil Bodnaras (head of the Romanian armed forces from 1947 to 1957 and senior aide to Gheorghiu-Dej) told Nikolaev: "We didn't think the Yugoslavs would raise a fuss [*podnimut shum*] about the transfer of Imre Nagy and his group to Romania. However, as You know, they appealed with notes of protest to the Soviet and Hungarian governments. It is possible that this issue can be presented at the United Nations and so on. We think we ought to be ready for various speeches and conversations in connection with Imre Nagy." The CC CPSU Presidium later discussed this telegram, which went on to state that Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej (the Romanian leader) planned to have high-level talks with Yugoslavia to soften tensions between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union and Hungary about the fate of Imre Nagy. RGANI, F. 3, O. 64, D. 488, L. 177 "Excerpt from Protocol No. 60 of the CC CPSU Presidium Session," 27 November 1956. The protocol stated that "on the basis of the exchange of opinions at the session of the CPSU CC Presidium, Comrade Bulganin is instructed to hold negotiations with Comrade Gheorghiu-Dej." Later that same day, Bulganin called Gheorghiu-Dej, which he later recounted in writing for the other CPSU Presidium members: "I told Comrade Gheorghiu-Dej that, in our opinion, a meeting at the highest level with the Yugoslav leadership about Imre Nagy and his group will not produce a good solution, since the Yugoslavs have a set position on this matter, and such a meeting might complicate the situation. The Yugoslavs might demand a meeting with Imre Nagy and the others, which would hardly be worthwhile...." RGANI, F. 89, Op. 2, D. 5, Ll. 16-17, "Information of Bulganin to the CC CPSU Presidium about the telephone conversation with Gheorghiu-Dej," November 27, 1956.

101. RGANI, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1006, L. 52, "Working Notes from the Session of the CPSU CC Presidium on November 27, 1956," compiled by V. No. Chernukha.

102. "We asked the Yugoslavs to refrain from any additional declarations about the Nagy affair. The Yugoslav ambassador said any talks are useful, but the situation is deteriorating, as if we are returning to 1948." (emphasis added) RGANI, F 89, O 2, D 3, L. 13-15, "Information by V. Nikolaev," November 26, 1956.

Kádár as a possible replacement for Rákosi.<sup>103</sup> At the November 2-3 Brioni meeting, the Yugoslavs persuaded Khrushchev and Malenkov to choose Kádár rather than Munnich to head the new Revolutionary Worker-Peasant Government, since Kádár had been in prison while Stalin and Rákosi were in power, whereas Munnich had been Hungarian ambassador to the USSR.<sup>104</sup> (This was clearly a wise choice, since Munnich was evidently involved in the plans to abduct the Nagy group.)<sup>105</sup> Kádár had given his word concerning the Nagy group; now he had turned out to be almost as deceitful as Rákosi.

It should be pointed out here, however, that Kádár was not as hawkish during the October-November 1956 events as most books published in the West have portrayed him. In fact-as the Malin notes reveal-- Kádár did not at first advocate a massive Soviet military intervention. At the CC CPSU Presidium meeting on November 2, Kádár warned the Soviet leaders that "the use of military force will be destructive and lead to bloodshed" and would "erode the authority of the socialist countries," causing

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103. AVP RF, F 077, O 37, Papka 191, D 39, L 81, August 23, 1956. "About the Activities of the Workers of the Yugoslav Mission in Budapest, Hindering the Normalization of Hungarian-Yugoslav Relations From the Soviet Embassy in Budapest." On July 23, 1956, Geró in a talk with Andropov said that Mikoyan called him from Sophia, Bulgaria and reported that the Yugoslavs agreed not to support the hostile elements in the press and radio... Geró emphasized that if he correctly understood comrade Mikoyan, the Yugoslav embassy considered the candidacy of Geró as unacceptable for the post of First Secretary of the CC HWP, where they would have liked to see János Kádár or Zoltán Szántó." (emphasis added)

104. Micunovic, Moscow Diary, 135.

105. RGANI, F 89, O 2, D 3, L. 11. "Yesterday, late last night, the negotiations of the comrades Kádár and Vidic were concluded...On the evening of November 22 Nagy and his group must leave the Yugoslav embassy. Essential measures [neobkhodimye mery] in connection with this have been prepared jointly by comrades Serov and Munnich." (emphasis added)

the morale of the Communists [in Hungary] to be reduced to zero."<sup>106</sup>

Ironically Kádár *was* deceitful in the one area where Western accounts have been more forgiving of him: the abduction of the Nagy group. Most writers have expressed the view that Kádár had not known about the kidnapping plan and had disapproved of the Soviet treatment of Imre Nagy.<sup>107</sup> But recently declassified documents indicate that Kádár knew and approved of the secret KGB plan to arrest Nagy, Maleter, and others the minute they stepped outside the Yugoslav embassy.<sup>108</sup> If Nagy remained in Hungary, Kádár worried, he would inspire the Hungarian "reactionaries." Rumors about an imminent American intervention vexed him as well.<sup>109</sup> Sporadic fighting in Budapest lasted until mid-November,

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106. RGANI, F 3, O 12, D 1006, L 24 (on the back), "Working Notes of the CC CPSU Presidium Session on November 2, 1956," compiled by V.N.Malin. It is true that Kádár did agree to travel to Moscow without informing Nagy and other government officials, and he did say during the November 3 Presidium meeting that "the correct course of action [in Hungary] is to form a revolutionary government." Also, he emphasized the fact that the Nagy government had failed to prevent the "killing of Communists" and said he "agreed with [Soviet officials]" that "you cannot surrender a socialist country to counterrevolution." However, even then Kádár stated that they should avoid creating a "puppet government." Apparently Kádár had not planned to head this new pro-Soviet regime either. RGANI, F. 3, O. 12, D. 1006, L. 32, "Working Notes from the CC CPSU Presidium Session on November 3, 1956, compiled by V.N. Malin. *N.B.* Until the declassification of the Malin notes scholars had not known what Kádár was doing in Moscow on November 2 and 3. Both Kádár and Munnich participated in sessions of the CPSU Presidium on these two days, although Kádár spoke the most. On November 2 they were joined by Istvan Bata (Hungarian defense minister until October 24), who was flown to Moscow on the evening of October 28 (along with Geró, Piros, Hegedus). On November 3, they were joined by Imre Horvath (Hungarian defense minister until November 2), who took detailed notes of that day's session.

107. Marton, Forbidden Sky, 211.

108. RGANI, F 89, O 2, D 5, L13-4, "Information of Malenkov, Suslov, and Aristov," November 17, 1956. " Kádár has agreed with these recommendations." (emphasis added)

109. RGANI, F 89, Per 45, Dok 38, L 4, November 10, 1956, Resolution of the CC CPSU Presidium, "About the Answer of the Yugoslavs on the issue of Imre Nagy and his Group," with the enclosures:

and widespread passive resistance continued into 1957. To gain the peoples' cooperation, Kádár had to resort to lies, namely, that he would share power with Nagy as soon as Nagy returned from the Yugoslav embassy. Clearly, Kádár wanted Nagy taken out of Hungary--not to Yugoslavia (technically a neutral country), but to Romania (a loyal Soviet satellite). He knew that if Nagy went to Yugoslavia, "there would be two existing Hungarian governments: one there, and one here in Budapest."<sup>110</sup>

Not surprisingly, given Tito's disappointment with Kádár, Hungarian-Yugoslav relations cooled after the so-called Nagy affair. Hungarian diplomats snubbed their Yugoslav colleagues by rejecting the latter's invitations to social events, and by declining to invite the Yugoslavs to their own social events.<sup>111</sup> Thus, Yugoslav-Hungarian relations had come full circle. This clear case of betrayal began a brief new cold war between Hungary and Yugoslavia. In preparation for the Nagy trial, the judicial proceedings of which were initiated in February 1957,<sup>112</sup> the Hungarian and Soviet foreign ministries went to great lengths to gather data on Yugoslavia's "role in the Hungarian counterrevolution." In November 1957 the Yugoslav delegation alone refused to attend the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the October

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telegram from Andropov and Epishev in Budapest; letter of Khrushchev to Tito; letter of Tito to Khrushchev. " Kádár in a slightly worried tone also said the information reached him that the United States began military mobilization. He requested that someone tell him whether there is any truth to these rumors."

110. RGANI, F 89, Per 45, Dok 34, L 2, "Draft of the Telegram to the Soviet Ambassador Andropov in Hungary," November 9, 1956.

111. AVP RF, F 077, 0 39, Por 7, Papka 197, List 39, From the Diaries of V. V. Astafiev and V. M. Baskakov, "Notes of a Conversation with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, Janos Peter," September 5, 1958. Also: AVP RF, F 077, 0 39, Por 3, Papka 197, List 7, From the Diary of P. S. Dedushkin, Manager of the 5th European Division of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, "Notes of a Conversation with Janos Boldoczki, Hungarian Ambassador to the USSR." January 23, 1958.

112. Litvan, *op cit.*, 187.

Revolution in Moscow and sign a declaration affirming the Soviet Union's leading role in the communist movement. In late April 1958 the Soviet leaders then refused to send a delegation to the Yugoslavs' Seventh Party Congress held in Ljubljana, where a document was signed that rejected the USSR's claim to any leading role in the communist movement. Evidently at this time Khrushchev also decided to punish Imre Nagy. On June 16, 1958 Imre Nagy was hanged. The Hungarian authorities warned the Yugoslavs not to make a fuss about the execution, or they would publish more "evidence" of Yugoslav involvement in the Hungarian events. Jovo Kopicic, the new Yugoslav ambassador replied that the Nagy trial was just "another link in the chain of the new anti-Yugoslav campaign, being conducted by the USSR and other bloc countries."<sup>113</sup> The Yugoslavs were keenly aware of the similarities between the Nagy trial and the Rajk trial nine years earlier.<sup>114</sup>

In conclusion, despite Moscow's rapprochement with Tito's Yugoslavia in 1955, tensions between Yugoslavia and both the USSR and Hungary remained. Rákosi's Hungary had played a leading role in the anti-Tito campaign in the late 1940s, and Tito wanted a full apology. Tito cherished his hard-won

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113. AVP RF, F 077, 0 38, Por 14, Papka 193, From the Diary of V. K. Gulevski, Attache, and V. Astafiev, Temporary Charge D'Affaires, wNotes of a Conversation with Janos Peter, Hungarian First Deputy Foreign Minister and Istvan Sebes, Hungarian Deputy Foreign Minister, June 17, 1958. Peter told Guievskii about a recent talk he had with Jovo Kopicic, the Yugoslav ambassador to Hungary. Kopicic had just learned about Nagy's sentence and execution. Peter told Kopicic that other material--about the role of Yugoslavia in the Hungarian events--would be included in the report of the Nagy execution. Peter warned that if the Yugoslav government begins to attack Hungary, then "Hungary will be forced to publish other materials in its possession."

114. RGANI, F 89, Per 45, Dok 77, L 8, Text of the "verbal note" from the Yugoslavs given to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry on June 23, 1958 by the Yugoslav Ambassador Kopicic, transl. from Hungarian, enclosed with "Telefonogram from Astafiev of the Soviet Embassy in Budapest to P.S. Dedushkin of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, June 24, 1958.

reputation as a neutralist, a leader of the nonaligned countries, and a charismatic communist leader who had stood up to Joseph Stalin. At the same time, Tito was also wary of the nationalist ferment of the Hungarian Revolution and in early November worked with Khrushchev behind the scenes to prevent it from spreading to Yugoslavia. (As the four-year war in Bosnia-Herzegovina has indicated, Tito certainly had good reason to fear). Furthermore, Tito's willingness to shelter (or incarcerate) Nagy after the Soviet crackdown and Kádár 's collusion in his abduction opened all the old wounds. Ironically, Khrushchev was just as chagrined as Tito about the new rift between Hungary and Yugoslavia. Yet, had it not been for the Sino-Soviet dispute of the early 1960s, the events of 1956 might have led to another complete break between Yugoslavia and the bloc countries closest to the USSR.

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