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(Re)inventing Yugoslavia: American Cold War Narratives about Yugoslavia, 1945-1955

Abstract: This work represents an overview of American travel narratives about Yugoslavia from 1945-1955. Additionally, this thesis argues that travel narratives should be considered an important primary source for diplomatic history. This research shows that images created in these narratives sometimes influenced the United States' policy toward Yugoslavia by playing an important role in affecting both American public opinion and policymakers. Moreover, written accounts provide a valuable vantage point for one who would like to observe how domestic social and political themes and anxieties influenced the understanding of Yugoslavia.

Key words: Yugoslavia, travel narratives, United States, Communism, Cold War, New Deal, fascism, Soviet Union

Yugoslavia's unique position in the cultural and geopolitical context of the Cold War engaged what historian Benjamin Alpers called "cultural producers" from the United States in a debate about the relationship between the Yugoslav state and society, its international role, and its ambiguous association with the U.S. The focus of this article provides a new approach in studying Yugoslav-U.S. relations after World War II. The research is based on the published travel stories of American correspondents, diplomats, journalists, writers, professors and visitors. They were "a comparatively small group of men and women... in a position to interpret events abroad to American mass audiences."¹ They intentionally shaped American attitudes toward Communist Yugoslavia by publishing their observations in books, newspaper articles and essays.

This article therefore undertakes two tasks. The first is to locate their texts in a sociopolitical and geostrategic context and explain how the authors' ideology, profession, and class conditioned their written responses to Yugoslavian reality. The second is to offer an alternative path for understanding relations between the two countries. Their narratives clarify how Communist Yugoslavia was, at least tacitly, accepted

¹ Alpers Benjamin, *Dictators, Democracy, and American Public Culture. Envisioning the Totalitarian Enemy 1920's-1950s*, Chapel Hill 2003, p. 2.

in the United States as an ally. Yugoslavia was hesitantly accepted as a part of the West due to these claims: The Yugoslav regime was substantially different from the regimes in the Soviet Union and the satellites, because it enjoyed popular support and allowed a degree of personal and artistic liberty; the Communist regime was the best alternative for the country because it solved the national question and induced accelerated modernization. If these visions of Yugoslavia as an imitation of the West were a product of an emerging consensus among the authors, it is also important to mention the more pessimistic images that portrayed Yugoslavia's experience as merely a variation of the totalitarian camp.

Both claims relied on two assumptions that were, at different times, present in American foreign policy toward Yugoslavia. The first was based upon the specificity and distinctiveness of Yugoslav Communism. The United States *chargé d'affaires* in Yugoslavia (February 1947-July 1947) John M. Cabot noted, "The most qualities attributed to Yugoslav Communists and ascribed to its influence are in fact often Yugoslav rather than Communist characteristics." Roughly speaking, after the Yugoslav-Soviet split in 1948 Cabot's assertion became a leading principle in determining Washington's policy toward Yugoslavia to "keep Tito afloat." Cabot noted how a Yugoslav-Soviet split was imminent "despite [Yugoslavia's] position as favorite child." Cabot's assessment was the first official document that proposed a specific foreign policy toward Yugoslavia, outside the Soviet framework.² Loraine Lees noted that although Cabot was anticommunist like his peers, he was keen to see that the same policy should not be used for Yugoslavs and the Soviets.³

The second claim was based on an opinion that all Communist regimes in Eastern Europe (including that found in Yugoslavia) were a mere extension of the Soviet Union and a threat to U.S. interests. U.S. diplomat Charles "Chip" Bohlen articulated this attitude when talking about the Balkans: "In 1947, every Communist party in the world not only was patterned after that of the Soviet Union but was

² John Cabot was aware of this faulty thinking in the State Department. A lengthy report that he sent in July 1947 to the Secretary of the State George Marshall, was called the "Yugoslav Long Telegram" by Croatian historian Tvrtko Jakovina. Cabot proposed a redefinition of U.S. policy toward Yugoslavia, pointing out differences between Moscow and Belgrade. Additionally, Cabot proposed that the State Department take into account Yugoslav history and political culture. Cabot saw certain consistencies in the politics of the country, only "we [the U.S.] notice and resent them more now, primarily because they are aimed now at us rather than at nations we dislike." John Cabot to the Secretary of the State, July 7, 1947, *Foreign Relations of United States (FRUS)*, 1947, vol. 4; the impact of Cabot's "long telegram" was not immediate. Only after the Yugoslav-Soviet split in 1948, did Washington take Cabot's proposals seriously. But initially, when Cabot's report came to Washington "one of the top officials there, he wrote something like 'stuff and nonsense' on it." See <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/orallhist/cabotjm.htm> (28. II 2012).

³ Lees, Loraine, *Keeping Tito Afloat: The United States, Yugoslavia and the Cold War*, University Park 1997, p. 37. (furthermore: Lees, L., *Keeping Tito Afloat...*).

also the subservient instrument of Moscow policy.”⁴ Indeed, Tito’s foreign policy until 1948 was aggressive and caused concern in Washington, particularly because it seemed to be an extension of Soviet imperialism. A long list of Tito’s rogueries included: giving military aid to Greek Communists in the initial phase of the Greek Civil War (1946-1949); creating tension around Trieste; and planning to form the Balkan Federation – the union of Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria, under Yugoslavia hegemony. Although Yugoslavs were considered to serve as a proxy for the Soviets, recent historiography proved that Tito acted more or less independently, often “overstepping the limits of Stalin’s tolerance.”⁵

Descriptions of the Yugoslav experience were unevenly spread throughout the forty-five to fifty year span of the Cold War, with the most works clustered in the late 1940s. After the 1960s and early 1970s these accounts are quite rare for multiple reasons. Yugoslavia, as a relatively western(ized) country, did not stir the imagination of American journalists, correspondents and other visitors as it did in the early Cold War. Roughly speaking, the focus of United States foreign policy shifted from the Balkans to Far East Asia, inspiring investigation of that region.⁶ Instead Yugoslavia became a cheap paradise for American tourists who were no longer interested in Yugoslav Communism but rather in inexpensive meals and boarding.⁷ Serbian historian Radina Vučetić aptly noted how the open borders “did not ‘make’ writers from the majority of those who crossed them.”⁸

In historiography of United States-Yugoslavia relations after World War II, travel narratives have not played a significant role as a historical source. Among the fifty or more historical studies about United States-Yugoslav relations only two interpreted narratives in the context of diplomatic relations between the two countries: Tvrtko Jakovina’s *American Communist Ally*, and Radina Vučetić’s “America in Yugoslav Travel Writings. A Look through the Iron Curtain.” This paper will examine works from six visitors who experienced the Yugoslav reality, who can be broadly classified as “pessimists” (Eric Pridonoff, Hal Lehrman, Alex Dragnich) and “optimists” (Robert St. John, Louis Adamic, Louis Fischer). The pessimists’ works reflect “some great discomfort and cause for concern” present in the United States’ policy toward Yugoslavia. Their works should be interpreted in the social and political context of the early Cold War. Yugoslavia was clearly perceived as an enemy to the United

⁴ Bohlen, Charles, *Witness to History, 1929-1969*, New York 1973, p. 261.

⁵ Mastny, Vojtech, *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity. The Stalin Years*, New York 1996, p. 37.

⁶ See Hardesty, Michele L., “The Ambivalent American: Political Travel Writing During the Cold War” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2007).

⁷ “Travelers who had read about Yugoslavia in *Fodor’s*... what they’re looking for is a bargain-priced destination and some of the most scenic countryside in Central Europe,” wrote the *Orange Coast*, a lifestyle magazine, in January 1990.

⁸ Вучетић, Радина, „Америка у југословенским путописима. Поглед кроз гвоздену завесу“, у: *Годишњак за друштвену историју*, 1-3, XII, 2005, стр. 67.

States, due to Belgrade's aggressive foreign policy, the regime's terrorist practices toward the domestic population and foreigners, and its clear anti-American attitude. This image of the enemy abroad was combined with a fear of domestic subversive activity. After the Soviet-Yugoslav break in 1948, Washington's rapprochement with Belgrade was interpreted as a dangerous appeasement of the enemy. The pessimists feared that appeasement was a blunder of U.S. foreign policy that imperiled United States interests both abroad and at home.

On the other hand, the optimists shared a belief that Yugoslav Communism was positive, a unique political, social and economic phenomenon. They based their claims on the following convictions: the regime enjoyed popular support, unlike in other Communist countries; a Yugoslav Communist was more Yugoslav than Communist; the status of political, civic and economic liberties showed great advancement in comparison with its prewar level; and that the Yugoslav economy was capitalistic (in the best sense of the word) in many aspects. The 1948 split and the political and economic reforms that followed proved their convictions that Yugoslav Communism was distinctive from the Soviet model.⁹ Additionally, according to the optimists, Yugoslav anti-American attitudes were a natural reaction to the United States' aggressive and ignorant policy toward their country. These narratives, despite some somber warnings, played an important role in shifting U.S. policy toward Belgrade because they reinvented Yugoslavia in American imagination. They helped to persuade the public at home that Yugoslav Communism was indeed different from Soviet Communism. Of course, the first prerequisite for this shift was the split between Moscow and Belgrade, which Washington immediately grasped as an excellent strategic opportunity. Optimistic observations about the Yugoslav regime thus helped to justify this strategic decision. These narratives, to paraphrase Alex Dragnich's words, made Yugoslav Communism "more palatable" to Americans.

Eric Pridonoff and the Blunders of United States Foreign Policy

Eric Pridonoff served in the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade as an economic analyst from March 1945 until April 1946. Pridonoff was born in Belgium in 1913 but his family soon moved to Russia where his father was hired as an engineer. After the

⁹ In 1968 Dennison Rusinow described what he called "a curious kind of Communist in Yugoslavia." Rusinow wrote: „[The Yugoslav Communist] attacks 'statism' and big government, advocates free – but not private-enterprise, and condemns state interventions in the economy in terms that seem to be borrowed from Jeffersonian democracy and nineteenth-century economic liberalism. His attitude toward political parties, including the League of Communists as a party with traditional or even Leninist function, is that of George Washington". Rusinow, Dennison, „Marxism Belgrade Style", y: *Antioch Review*, 4, XXVII, 1967-1968, p. 481-482.

October Revolution in 1917 Pridonoff's family settled in Harbin, Manchuria. When the Pridonoffs finally settled in California in 1926, Eric "began to expose Communism for what it really is – i.e., a façade for totalitarianism."¹⁰

In June 1946 Pridonoff was encouraged by Richard Patterson, the U.S. Ambassador in Yugoslavia (1944-1948), to explain to the American public "the true conditions in this Communist country." In 1946 he published three related articles in the *Los Angeles Examiner*.¹¹ In these articles, announced as an "authoritative first-hand picture of conditions... behind 'iron curtain,'" Pridonoff attacked the Yugoslav government, stating that they were a mere instrument in the Soviets' hands. His articles were syndicated throughout the United States by the Hearst Corporation's press, attracting great attention among Americans. Pridonoff's firsthand experience confirmed the pervasive fear that Yugoslav acts were part of the USSR's grand scheme against the free world.¹² He also wrote that the Embassy's staff was subject to "prosecution and insult" from the Yugoslav government. "These are just incidents, of which I have personal knowledge, to show two things—the overall Russian domination of Yugoslavia and the official attitude to the United States..." wrote Pridonoff.

In explaining Yugoslav Communism, Pridonoff resorted to the analogy between Nazism and Communism. He described the OZNA as a "counterpart of Hitler's SS stormtrooper organization, all-Communist in membership and as brutally powerful as Hitler's Gestapo or Soviet Russia's NKVD."¹³ Historian Les Adler examined the origin of the notion of "Red Fascism," a popular analogy between Communism and Nazism/Fascism which "significantly shaped American perception of world events in the Cold War."¹⁴ Adler noted that many Americans after World War II accepted the belief that Communism was a mere replica of Nazism due to these ideologies' shared characteristic of opposing the American conception of liberalism. Pridonoff invoked this image of "Red Fascism" in his claim that he saw concentration camps,

¹⁰ Pridonoff, Eric L., *Tito's Yugoslavia*, Washington, D.C. 1955, p. vi. (furthermore: Pridonoff, E., *Tito's Yugoslavia...*)

¹¹ Cited in Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat...*, p. 27; According to Jakovina, Patterson himself intended to publish a book about Yugoslavia with the "original" title *Behind the Iron Curtain in Yugoslavia*. He even signed a contract with a publisher, however the book was never written. Instead, Patterson engaged in a series of lectures where he denounced the Yugoslav regime. See, Tvrtko Jakovina, *Američki komunistički saveznik; Hrvati, Titova Jugoslavija i Sjedinjene Američke Države, 1945–1955*, Zagreb 2005, str. 217.

¹² Pridonoff asserted that Tito was an insignificant figure, while all the power remained in the hands of the OZNA chief Alexander Rankovic and the Soviet military mission. In his 1955 *Tito's Yugoslavia...* he changed his mind and, correctly, designated Tito as the main figure in Yugoslavia. Pridonoff, Eric „Yugoslavia Held in Grip of Reds”, *San Antonio Light*, June 9 1946, p. 1. Pridonoff's texts originally appeared in the *Los Angeles Examiner*, however due to the *Examiner's* unavailability, Pridonoff's works are cited from the *San Antonio Light*, one of the newspapers that syndicated his texts.

¹³ Pridonoff, E., „Yugoslavia Held in Grip or Reds”, p. 4.

¹⁴ Adler, Les, *The Red Image. American Attitudes toward Communism in the Cold War Era*, New York 1991, pp. 239-240. (furthermore: Adler, L., *The Red Image...*)

during his extensive travels through Yugoslavia. Pridonoff underlined this connection between the Nazis and the Yugoslav Communists by asserting that Yugoslav concentration camps “included Yugoslavs who had been taken to Germany as slave-laborers, and then, after the war sent ‘home,’” to be imprisoned again by the Communist regime.¹⁵

In a didactic manner (he repeatedly began his sentences with “Americans should know”) Pridonoff wrote about the misuse of UNRRA (the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) aid by the regime that supplied the OZNA and Yugoslav Army with equipment and goods.¹⁶

Pridonoff’s articles worsened the already poor relations between the U.S. and Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav government charged the USIS office in Belgrade for copying Pridonoff’s writings and distributing them to Yugoslav citizens. Yugoslavs blamed the USIS for anti-government propaganda and demanded that the Embassy stop USIS activities. Ambassador Patterson was “shocked and depressed” with the Yugoslav demand, yet he complied with the request and closed the USIS in September 1946.¹⁷ However, Pridonoff’s defamatory writings about the regime would not have provoked such extreme reactions had they not coincided with two particular events, one of them directly involving Pridonoff. The first was a resurgence of the Trieste Crisis and the second was the discovery of a spy ring in Belgrade that Pridonoff founded in 1945.

In August 1946 the Yugoslav Air Force forced down an American transport aircraft and, several days after first incident, they shot down another unarmed American plane on its regular route to Vienna, killing all five members of its crew. The attacks on the airplanes had two important consequences: they helped Washington to articulate a policy of containment; and, they outraged the American public, driving them to question U.S. participation in the UNRRA. Some workers on the docks of New York refused to load ships with UNRRA goods destined for Yugoslavia. This showed the public appeal of Pridonoff’s arguments.¹⁸

¹⁵ Pridonoff, “It is Okeh if You Speak in Russian. One Password for Tito’s Roadblocks,” *San Antonio Light*, July 7, 1946. The image of concentration camps served as a powerful propaganda tool for mobilizing Americans against Communism, by establishing a direct link between Nazism and Communism. In 1947 Senator Howard McGrath of Rhode Island accused the Yugoslavs of keeping over 100,000 people in concentration camps. See Adler, 257.

¹⁶ While the rest of the population lived without food and clothes, Pridonoff wrote, “Tito’s military officers, and government officials have shoes in multiple pairs. They live in the best housing. They have ample food. Their wives wear silk and furs and diamonds. They have autos and ample American gasoline... The American trucks, driven by American gasoline, carried Tito troops all over Yugoslavia, but there was no mention that America gave them to the partisans.” Pridonoff, E., „Slav Cities in Grip of Terror”, *San Antonio Light*, June 16, 1946, pp. 1, 6; Pridonoff, E., „Tito Scorns U.S., Britain”, p. 2.

¹⁷ *New York Times*, September 25, 27, 1946.

¹⁸ “The year 1946 was for the most part a year of learning that mind in the Kremlin worked very much as George F. Kennan had predicted they would. We reacted vigorously to the grosser forms of

In September 1946 the Yugoslav government discovered a spy ring founded by Pridonoff in 1945. It involved some of the other Embassy officials, a local translator and an officer of the Yugoslav Army. The Yugoslav government informed the State Department of the spy ring in a 22 page-long document entitled “Information on Unfriendly Work of American Representatives in Belgrade.”¹⁹ According to the Yugoslav charges, Pridonoff tried to obtain plans of the Yugoslav anti-aircraft defenses around Belgrade through a Yugoslav Army officer. In his report to the Secretary of State James Byrnes, the Ambassador Patterson called these accusations a “dangerous mixture of facts and fiction.” However Lorraine Lees noted that these charges held more truth than the Ambassador acknowledged.²⁰

The Yugoslav government responded swiftly to this information by widely publicizing espionage trials. The reasons for this reaction were threefold. The case of Pridonoff’s spy circle, similar to the unauthorized flights, seemed the ideal opportunity for the regime to show the world how the U.S. had actively worked against Yugoslavia’s legal government. Also, by designating Pridonoff as the leader of the circle, Yugoslavs tried to discredit him and minimize the significance of his articles in the U.S. press. Finally, the swift and merciless prosecution and execution of the Yugoslav spies sent a strong message to the domestic population to stay away from the Embassy and its staff, while simultaneously exerting pressure on the Embassy.²¹

Pridonoff’s involvement in Yugoslav affairs earned him enthusiastic approval from conservative circles in the U.S. Writer and member of the conservative American Writers’ Association Rupert Hughes endorsed Pridonoff, “for [he] explains and exposes a far reaching menace to our national honor and the future peace of the world.”²² Pridonoff held a series of lectures across the United States as “an authoritative speaker on communistic propaganda.” In the middle of the UNRRA debate, Pridonoff wrote a text for the *American Mercury*, in which he described the misuse of UNRRA aid to Yugoslavia. However, for the first time Pridonoff showcased the complicity of the alleged American pro-Communist elements in the UNRRA. Pridonoff explored this topic in his 1955 book *Tito’s Yugoslavia*, in which he summarized his Yugoslav experiences. In *Tito’s Yugoslavia*, Pridonoff developed his theory about how Communism was advancing due to the United States’ ignorance and the direct

Communist probing, such as the downing of our planes in Venezia Giulia,” Acheson wrote. Acheson, Dean, *Present at the Creation. My Years in the State Department*, New York 1969, p. 196; Lees noted that U.S. participation in UNRRA program in Yugoslavia became “a topic of national debate” quickly after the attacks. Lees, L., *Keeping Tito Afloat...*, pp. 18, 20.

¹⁹ Richard Patterson to James Byrnes, September 18, 1946, *FRUS*, vol. 6, p. 954.

²⁰ Richard Patterson to James Byrnes, September 18, 1946, *FRUS*, vol. 6, p. 954; Lees, L., *Keeping Tito Afloat...*, p. 25.

²¹ Pridonoff’s Yugoslav acquaintances were sentenced to death in January 1947 and executed a week after the trial.

²² *Bakersfield Californian*, February 10, 1949.

help of the New Deal bureaucracy and infiltrated Communist agents. According to Pridonoff, the UNRRA and the State Department were nothing but the “dupes or the willing tools of the communists.”²³

The story of his Yugoslav friend Lieutenant-Colonel Branko Simich²⁴ illustrated Pridonoff’s anxiety. Pridonoff described his friend as a polite, cultured person, with degrees in history and sociology, and an interest in symphonic recordings. “The fact that Branko Simich was both a communist and a cultured person is not necessarily a contradiction,” Pridonoff warned readers. “It is no longer fashionable for communists to go around with heavy beards or to furtively carry bombs.”²⁵ Pridonoff concluded that in the U.S. “we have examples of our own of fairly well-educated, if somewhat neurotic, people whose political slant is to the left. Most of them are quite effectual.” Pridonoff thus reinforced the fear incited by the arrest of Alger Hiss in 1950, which shattered “the stereotype of the Communist agent” and proved that anybody could be a spy.²⁶ He discovered a broad conspiracy in Washington D.C. where left-wingers were “parading under the guise of ‘Democrats,’ ‘liberals,’ and ‘New Dealers.’”²⁷ Pridonoff used his Yugoslav examples to criticize the New Deal administration by implying that the New Dealers were nothing more than a Communist “Trojan horse.”²⁸

Although *Tito’s Yugoslavia* was welcomed in rightist circles in the United States, Pridonoff’s book did not influence official relations between the two countries as his articles had nine years before. Relations between Yugoslavia and the United States, although not without problems, were friendly. In addition, anti-Communist hysteria

²³ Pridonoff, E., *Tito’s Yugoslavia...*, p. 224.

²⁴ As with majority of Yugoslav names in the book, Simich’s name is fictional.

²⁵ Pridonoff, E., *Tito’s Yugoslavia...*, p. 3. John Gunther who visited Yugoslavia in 1948 had a similar notion: “Let nobody think that Yugoslav Communists eat babies for breakfast. Somehow the silly illusion persists among Americans that Bolsheviks wear shaggy beards, have manners as rude as their eyeglasses are thick, and harangue the casual visitor as if he were at a revival meeting... many Communists we met were persons of considerable cultivation, discriminating intellectual equipment, and deep devotion to a cause they consider literally sacred. Also their table manners are perfectly good, they love their families, they dress neatly, and they are chockful (sic) of such bourgeois virtues as humility, obedience, self-respect, and diligence.” Gunther, John, *Behind the Curtain*, New York 1949, pp. 54–55 (furthermore: Gunther, J., *Behind the Curtain...*).

²⁶ Cited in Whitfield, Stephen, *The Culture of the Cold War*, Baltimore 1991, p. 28. (furthermore: Whitfield, S., *The Culture of the Cold War...*). In addition, Pridonoff stayed in line with U.S. conservatives. M. J. Heale noted how the Hiss trials “spectacularly confirmed conservative suspicions that the New Deal bureaucracy had been riddled with Communists.” See Heale, M. J., *American Anticomunism: Combating the Enemy Within, 1830-1970*, Baltimore 1990, p. 148 (furthermore: Heale, M. J., *American Anticomunism...*)

²⁷ Pridonoff, E., *Tito’s Yugoslavia...*, p. 194.

²⁸ Les Adler convincingly described how the resurrection of the Republican Party in 1945 and 1946 (re)introduced anti-Communism as a significant political stance. The Republicans charged New Deal liberals and former vice-President Henry Wallace for inclination toward Communism and “professed horror at alleged Communist infiltration into the federal government.” Adler, L., *The Red Image...*, p. 381.

incited by Senator Joseph McCarthy had already reached its climax one year earlier. Thus Pridonoff's arguments found less resonance.²⁹

Hal Lehrman and the Blunders of American Liberals

Hal Lehrman, a correspondent for New York leftist newspaper *PM*, visited Yugoslavia for the first time in the summer of 1945. By Lehrman's own acknowledgment, when he arrived in Belgrade in 1945 he had "misgivings... about us [the United States], not about the Russians."³⁰ During the war Lehrman served as a chief in the U.S. Office of War Information in Turkey where he developed an interest in Southeastern Europe as "a prime area of contact between Russian and the West." *Russia's Europe* (1947) represents a collection of his observations about this region, with an emphasis on Yugoslavia, which Lehrman claimed to have special importance in the relations between the Soviet Union and the West. Yugoslavia, noted Lehrman, was "a model of what we may hope for generally when the grand plan is fulfilled." By "the grand plan" Lehrman referred to Soviet conquest of the whole of Europe.

Lehrman's narrative reflects his personal ideological transformation. His first reports from the recently liberated Yugoslav capital were generally friendly toward the new regime. Yet, while still in Belgrade, Lehrman slowly became disillusioned with Yugoslav Communism. At the end of his journey he came to the conclusion that the situation in "Russia's Europe" was not a result of local aberrations of Communism but a part of the Kremlin's "grand strategy."

Lehrman's account is comprised of conflicting observations about U.S. policy toward Yugoslavia. When Lehrman arrived in Belgrade in 1945 he found that the entire staff of the U.S. Embassy was unfriendly toward the regime. He blamed the Embassy for poor relations between Yugoslavia and the United States. Lehrman accused Ambassador Patterson of spending more time in Washington than in Belgrade, adding how everyone, even "down to the last consular clerk," was talking about the iniquity of the Partisan regime. However, he also found pleasing the fact that "the UNRRA people" had a positive opinion about the regime, "as the other Americans had... bad." Lehrman's account, similar to Pridonoff's, offers insight into the United States' internal political struggles of the time.

²⁹ See Whitfield, S., *The Culture of the Cold War...*; However, Heale argued that, despite Joseph McCarthy's failure, the Republican Party successfully established an enduring "anticommunist consensus." Healy, M.J., *American Anticommunism...*, p. 183.

³⁰ Lehrman, Hal, *Russia's Europe*, New York 1947, p. 4. (furthermore: Lehrman, H., *Russia's Europe...*)

During a discussion of Yugoslavia in 1946-1947, a “resurgent right” questioned the New Deal (and subsequently the UNRRA) as a vehicle of Communist advance.³¹ Thus, the animosity between the Embassy’s staff and the UNRRA’s staff reflected this debate in U.S. domestic policy. The UNRRA in Yugoslavia was staffed mostly by Americans (although the chief officer was Russian), and the UNRRA in general represented an international extension of the New Deal.³² Although he never explicitly said it, Lehrman shared the UNRRA staff’s joy about aspects of the new Yugoslav democracy which were similar to the early New Deal efforts. He wrote that “the UNRRA folks” were impressed with the “vigorous interest of government and people in the public welfare...,” the fact that “the Partisans are stressing road and school construction,” and “the people’s voluntary contribution of their labor.”³³ Yet, Lehrman abandoned his previous conviction about the positive effect of UNRRA aid, and in his 1946 report he called it the “swindle of the century.”

According to Lehrman, Yugoslavia under Communist rule resembled Germany under the Nazis. The country was controlled by the secret police and its democratic procedures were camouflage for genuine Fascism. In addition, Yugoslavia’s aggressive foreign policy toward Greece and Trieste confirmed Lehrman’s claim that “Soviet totalitarianism was for further export, across an unimpeded horizon beyond which bases for security turned into bases for empire.”³⁴ *Russia’s Europe*, wrote Lehrman, was a report of a “political war, the creeping conquest of many peoples,” whose main goal was to “disturb some liberals into reexamining their position.”³⁵ Lehrman made the parallel to Nazi-rallies when he attended the first Congress of the United National Liberated Front of Yugoslavia in August 1945. Lehrman described the Congress: “Mechanical ‘Tee-Toh, Tee-Toh, Tee-Toh’” with the “tomtom rhythm and ugly souvenir of *Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil!* and that other mechanical unanimity once fashionable at Nuremberg.” In 1946, he compared two Yugoslav soldiers who searched his

³¹ Whitfield, S., *The Culture of the Cold War...*, p. 19. Whitfield noted that the Cold War “put the reformist strategies of the New Deal... on ice.” The New Dealers were accused of being “pink.”

³² Historian Elizabeth Borgwardt successfully argued that economic projects, such as the UNRRA, “were to be New Deal projects writ large,” noting how the foundation of UNRRA “marked a further internationalization of New Deal-style problem-solving.” See Borgwardt, Elizabeth, *A New Deal for the World: America’s Vision for Human Rights*, Cambridge 2005, pp. 116, 119. A similar notion was expressed by David Ekbladh, who found a direct connection between the UNRRA and the New Deal due to the fact that many members of the Tennessee Valley Authority worked for the new agency. Additionally, Ekbladh pointed out that the first administrator of the program was New York Governor Herbert Lehman, personal friend of Franklin Roosevelt. See Ekbladh, David, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order*, Princeton 2010.

³³ Lehrman, H., *Russia’s Europe...*, p. 68. Robert St. John often compared public works in Yugoslavia to these conducted by the Civilian Conservation Corps, one of the most famous New Deal programs.

³⁴ Lehrman, H., *Russia’s Europe...*, p. 306.

³⁵ Lehrman, H., *Russia’s Europe...*, p. 8, 7.

hotel room during May Day to the “minor characters in a Grade B picture about the Gestapo.”³⁶ Moreover, scenes from the May Day parade reminded Lehrman of Fascist Italy. When he wrote about Tito and his grandstand Lehrman cynically noted that he thought “Mussolini would surely have felt at home... if he could have... beheld the worshippers in Terazije instead of the worshippers in the Piazza Venezia.”³⁷ “Terror is a prime weapon in the good Bolshevik’s arsenal,” conducted by “its own best-fed, best-clothed SS-style militia and a network of special prisons,” he concluded.³⁸

Lehrman noted numerous cases of the government harassing citizens who displayed friendly attitudes toward the U.S. He wrote about two boys in Belgrade who celebrated the U.S. Air Forces Day. They received informational material from the USIS office as well as a documentary film, “Memphis Belle: A Story of a Flying Fortress” (1944). In a hall “decorated tastefully with Yugoslav and American flags,” the boys delivered amiable speeches about the U.S. Air Force and showed the movie. The OZNA arrested the boys and Lehrman’s attempt to find out what happened to them eventually turned into a Kafkaesque situation: to see OZNA’s functionary Sardelitch who was in charge of the case, Lehrman needed a pass for OZNA headquarters signed by that same man.

The ultimate proof of the regime’s belligerence toward the U.S. was a snub that the Yugoslav Government made to former U.S. President Herbert Hoover. When President Hoover showed up in Belgrade to survey relief problems, no Yugoslav high official came to greet him. Additionally, the Belgrade press dedicated only a few lines on page three to his visit. “In short,” Lehrman concluded, “the ‘One World’ idea linking Yugoslavia and the West was taking quite a beating, on the Partisans’ home grounds.”³⁹

Alex Dragnich and the Problem of Looking Backward

In 1954, professor of political science at Vanderbilt University Alex Dragnich wrote *Tito’s Promise Land*, a critical assessment of the Yugoslav regime. Dragnich’s scientific analysis was based on his personal experience in Yugoslavia, where he served as the chief of the USIS in the Embassy in Belgrade from November 1947 until May 1950. Alex Dragnich was born in Ferry County, WA in 1912 and earned his doctorate in 1942 from the University of California, Berkeley. During the war Dragnich joined the OSS as a foreign affairs analyst.⁴⁰

³⁶ Lehrman, H., *Russia’s Europe...*, p. 128.

³⁷ Lehrman, H., *Russia’s Europe...*, pp. 128-129.

³⁸ Lehrman, H., *Russia’s Europe...*, pp. 152-153.

³⁹ Lehrman, H., *Russia’s Europe...*, p. 126.

⁴⁰ Dragnich’s interest in Yugoslav affairs originated from two factors: Being the son of a Serb from Montenegro who emigrated to the U.S. Dragnich had a personal interest in the “old country;” and

Dragnich rejected the widely accepted notion that Tito's Communism ("Titoism") was a distinctive form of national Communism and radically different from the Soviet model. According to Dragnich, Titoism remained a useful ally to the USSR and a natural enemy of basic human freedoms. Therefore, Dragnich's claim should be analyzed within the context of the Yugoslav-Soviet split in 1948 and Washington's attitude towards it.

Dragnich tried to define the nature of the split, explaining it in terms of unsuccessful Soviet attempts to establish economic and political domination over Yugoslavia. He claimed that ideological differences between Belgrade and Moscow were irrelevant despite both sides' equal use of ideological arguments.⁴¹ According to Dragnich, the Yugoslavs remained a Communist country. Dragnich based his claim on "personal investigation" that revealed "the so-called political reforms of the past two years [since 1952]... were primarily the result of a necessity to find a way out of the ever-present chaos, the increasing apathy among the people and the general sense of failure to be found everywhere – all of which have been generated by the regime's actions and policies."⁴² However, Dragnich noted that there was rationale behind the U.S. military and economic assistance to Yugoslavia following the split. It was an attempt to drive a wedge within the Communist bloc, to keep the Yugoslav Army at least neutral in the case of war, and to immediately solve the problems of the Communist uprising in Greece and at the Trieste frontier. However, Dragnich urged precaution; continuation and extension of the aid was not justified because Yugoslavia had not been a part of the free world. Moreover, Yugoslav Communists were exploiting the West "by acting as if the West needed them more than they needed the West." Lastly, assisting the regime posed an important moral question for the United States about how to justify its contribution to the "indefinite enslavement" of the Yugoslavs. Dragnich concluded that Yugoslav Communism was as dangerous as Soviet Communism to the United States' strategic interests and moral prestige in the world.⁴³

Dragnich restated his claims in 1958 in "The Myth of 'Titoism,'" a text written for The House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC). He rejected the "popular conception" that understood Titoism as a national form of Communism.

as a political scientist he wanted to explain the phenomenon of Yugoslav Communism.

⁴¹ Dragnich, Alex, *Tito's Promised Land Yugoslavia*, Brunswick 1954, p. 293. (furthermore: Dragnich, A., *Tito's Promised Land...*)

⁴² Dragnich, A., *Tito's Promised Land...*, p. 297.

⁴³ Historian Henry Brands noted, "The fact that a Communist country like Yugoslavia could be on the U.S. side of the fence in the Cold War was confusing to many Americans, especially to those who viewed the struggle with the Soviet Union as essentially a moral contest. As they saw it, making common cause with a dictator like Tito blurred the ethical issue that animated much of American diplomacy and vitiated U.S. claims to moral superiority." See, Brands, Henry W., „Redefining the Cold War: American Policy toward Yugoslavia, 1948–60”, y: *Diplomatic History*, 1, XI, 1987, p. 41–54.

Yet, he stated that if national Communism existed there “would be nothing to cheer... [because] basic policies would be contrary to everything that we hold dear.”⁴⁴ Additionally, Dragnich argued that Tito was the most valuable and important agent in world Communism. According to Dragnich, Tito convinced many people around the world “that there could be a different type of communism, a good communism.” He reminded the United States that it shared responsibility for promoting Communism by materially and militarily supporting Tito: “U.S. aid has helped Tito make communism more palatable to many people by creating the illusion that a ‘respectable’ type of communism is possible.”⁴⁵

Tito’s Promised Land failed to convey Dragnich’s message that the Titoist regime remained a ruthless tyranny despite contact with the West. Although critics praised Dragnich’s analytical skills and his sophisticated mix of personal experiences and numerous Yugoslav sources, they accused Dragnich of subjectivity and an “aprioristic point of view.”⁴⁶ M.S. Handler of the *New York Times* noted that Dragnich was “by training and first-hand experience... one of the best informed American students of post-war Yugoslav affairs,” however, Dragnich often lacked in objectivity and “[his] style too frequently descend[ed] to the level of polemics.”⁴⁷

Robert St. John and a Glimpse of the Future

The first affirmative book about the Yugoslav Communist regime written by an American author after World War II was Robert St. John’s 1948 *The Silent People Speak*. St. John already possessed an authority in Yugoslav affairs, as his first book about Yugoslavia and the Balkans, *From the Land of Silent People*, was a bestseller in 1942. Additionally, St. John was well known to the American public due to his exciting journalism career. St. John was born in 1902 and when only 21, he founded *The Cicero Tribune*, a weekly publication in which he exposed Al Capone’s illegal activities. Because of his disclosure of Capone’s operations, St. John was beaten up and “left for dead in a ditch.” In the summer of 1939 he moved to Europe and was assigned to cover the Balkans.

In 1947 he visited Yugoslavia for the second time, intending to write a sequel to his first book, *From the Land of Silent People*. However, this second book about Yugoslavia contributed to the abrupt end of St. John’s radio journalism career less

⁴⁴ Dragnich, A., „The Myth of ‘Titoism’”, September 15, 1958, y: *Committee on Un-American Activities, Annual Report for the Year 1958*, Washington D.C. 1959, p. 78 (furthermore: Dragnich, A., „The Myth of ‘Titoism’”...).

⁴⁵ Dragnich, A., “The Myth of ‘Titoism’”..., p.79.

⁴⁶ *New York Times*, May 9, 1954; Mayda, Jaro, review of *Tito’s Promised Land Yugoslavia*, by Alex N. Dragnich, y: *The American Slavic and East European Review*, 2, XV, 1956, p. 290.

⁴⁷ *New York Times*, May 9, 1954.

than three years after its publication. St. John's accolades about Tito's regime earned him a citation in the notorious publication *Red Channels* (1950) which was committed to exposing Communists and their sympathizers in radio and television. He was fired from NBC although, according to his wife, he was never a Communist.⁴⁸

In St. John's account Yugoslavia appeared as a harmonious union between government and people, where the regime worked for the benefit of all and hence enjoyed popular support. St. John's benevolence toward Communist Yugoslavia originated from three sources. First, he developed a great fondness toward the Yugoslavs during his visit in 1941. At the same time St. John despised the old royalist regime for its ineptness, corruption and backwardness. Lastly, as FDR's supporter, he often compared the regime with the New Deal administration, finding that it strove for modernization by administering voluntary public works and insisting on the country's industrialization.

When St. John attended the 1947 May Day parade in Belgrade, he did not find any resemblance to Nazi rallies. St. John compared the parade with a sporting event, noting "that the parade did not make much sense from the American point of view," due to the great number of people participating. "We Americans pack ten thousand people into a stadium to watch eighteen men play baseball... But in eastern (sic) Europe there are generally more people taking part in a sports program than there are spectators. And the same with parades," he wrote.⁴⁹ According to St. John, there was no coercion, OZNA, or people looking for salvation from Americans; "it was a gay, happy celebration."⁵⁰ He mentioned a dispatch from New York that he read the night before the parade in which members of all great nominations had been told to pray for the people of Yugoslavia who were described "as victims of evil persecution, living in constant terror."⁵¹ However, St. John optimistically concluded that what he saw at the parade was "a glimpse of the future." He regarded the parade as "symbolic and symptomatic," claiming that all people of Yugoslavia regardless of their nationality, religion or "way of life" presented real Yugoslavia only "if the world would open its eyes and look."

St. John had not identified the regime with Soviet Communism but instead with the Yugoslav national character. He denied that the regime relied on coercion, noting that "95 per cent [sic] of the population" supported it. St. John scoffed about

⁴⁸ *New York Times*, February 08, 2003.

⁴⁹ John, Robert, St., *The Silent People Speak*, Garden City 1948, p. 342. (furthermore: John, R. St., *The Silent People Speak...*)

⁵⁰ John, R., St., *Silent People Speak...*, p. 344; St. John did mention OZNA's presence in the apartments surrounding the parade route. However, he was benevolent toward this security measure, noting that policemen were polite and sympathetic. Pridonoff interpreted these heavy security measures in a different way: "Obviously Tito, like other dictators does not care to put himself at the mercy of those who are supposed to 'idolize' him." Pridonoff, E., *Tito's Yugoslavia...*, p. 120.

⁵¹ John, R., St., *Silent People Speak...*, p. 344.

“the terror” of the secret police. While buying English newspapers with Reuters’ correspondent Peter Furst in a kiosk in downtown Belgrade, a man approached them and asked for help. He wanted to immigrate to the United States and asked for their assistance. “‘Life here in Belgrade was better under the Nazis than it is today. For me, I prefer Fascism to what we have now...’ He kept talking about ‘The Terror’ and how no Yugoslav could even think his own thoughts, let alone express himself these days. Everyone lived in terror of being picked up by Osna (sic) and thrown into a death chamber,” wrote St. John about this encounter in January 1947. He scornfully remarked that one month after their meeting “the unhappy little man” was still hanging around the newspaper stand. “‘The Terror’ hadn’t gotten him yet,” he concluded.⁵²

St. John admitted that the regime had its opponents, “dissatisfied percentage, whatever that percentage was.” According to St. John, the opposition had been a small group that despised the regime because of lost privileges and the inability to accept modernization. St. John met a woman in Sarajevo, Fatima, who was introduced to him as an enemy of the new order. Her family business was nationalized and she seemed unhappy with the Communist regime. Moreover, Fatima’s teenage daughter wanted to study metallurgy in Moscow despite her mother’s will. After listening to this family argument about the girl’s future, St. John concluded that “the New Yugoslavia seemed to be passing Fatima by.”

St. John implied that those who suffered under the new government deserved mistreatment. A barber from the small Bosnian town of Čajniče complained how he “hated government and everything it represented.” His barber shop was nationalized as well, yet St. John learned that the barber had collaborated with the Germans, Italians, *Ustashas* and *Chetniks*. St. John often depicted the opponents of the regime that he met as petty individuals, who hated new order because their small passions could not be fulfilled; or they were part of the group that had (justifiably) lost their material privileges. Similar to St. John’s other encounters, a woman from Slovenia did not like the regime because she could not travel abroad and could not renew her subscription for *Good Housekeeping* magazine.⁵³ A person who he called “the Prankster” said

⁵² John, R., St., *Silent People Speak...*, p. 29. St. John emphasized that the newsstand sold “a complete stock of English newspapers and magazines” along with publications in French and other languages. This observation served to prove the lack of censorship. However, the official documents of the Yugoslav government tell a different story. Foreign publications, particularly magazines from the United States, were perceived as a very powerful and dangerous means of “enemy propaganda.” The only authorized importer of foreign press was the state owned publishing company “Jugoslovenska knjiga.” Foreign press was censored before distribution. However, Party officials complained that a certain number of foreign publications entered Yugoslavia through private channels, due to “inattentiveness and sloppiness of the postal service,” and through foreign embassies that received more copies than they needed, which they further distributed. See Архив Југославије (АЈ), Централни Комитет Савеза Комуниста Југославије (ЦКСКЈ), Идеолошка комисија (ИК), VIII, VI/2-h-3, кутија 37, “Извештај о страном пропаганди у нашој земљи,” 1947.

⁵³ John, R., St., *Silent People Speak...*, p. 385.

that “he didn’t like the New Yugoslavia because there wasn’t any fun here any more (sic). All they talked about was work, work, work. What he liked was a fast motorcar, plenty of liquor, plenty of women, and a good time.”⁵⁴ He wrote about a Belgrade family: “The father had been a corporation lawyer...He didn’t like anything about the present system. Especially that there were no more private corporations.”⁵⁵

St. John never objected official estimates of the regime’s popular support: ninety percent for the regime and ten percent against it, taking its self-representation for granted. St. John’s method inspired C.L. Sulzberger to wonder: “how he ran into so few people who were not in sympathy with Tito’s regime and how it happened that they were all either fools or collaborators.”⁵⁶ Similarly, Charles Poore from the *New York Times* accused St. John of “playing up the peasant and worker reforms and playing down the secret police.”⁵⁷

Louis Adamic Revisits Yugoslavia

Louis Adamic came to Yugoslavia for the second time in 1949. He was already renowned for his ardent support for Tito and the Partisans during the war.⁵⁸ Besides that, Adamic had a personal friendship with some high ranking CPY functionaries. His arrival at Belgrade’s airport in January 1949 was glamorous, at least by Yugoslav standards. Despite meeting at a “rough table in the chill, bare restaurant in the airport,” (Adamic carefully described how they all sat in their overcoats due to lack of heat), the delegation that greeted him was indeed impressive; nearly the entire Yugoslav political and cultural establishment came to the airport.⁵⁹

The reason for his trip was a strange mixture of personal, professional and, broadly speaking, humanist motifs. Adamic wanted to visit his mother and brother, but he also “wanted to see... what war and revolution had done to my native land.” “I expected to meet Tito... The over-all purpose of my trip was to see if a non-official person could do anything, if I could presume to think I could do anything as a writer, to help prevent another war,” wrote Adamic, adding how curiosity about the Soviet-

⁵⁴ John, R., St., *Silent People Speak...*, p. 187.

⁵⁵ John, R., St., *Silent People Speak...*, p. 334.

⁵⁶ *New York Times*, January 18, 1948.

⁵⁷ *New York Times*, January 8, 1948.

⁵⁸ The CPY’s chief theorist Edvard Kardelj told Adamic that *The Native’s Return* helped the Communist cause, being a powerful propaganda tool in their struggle against King Alexander’s dictatorship. Additionally Adamic’s wartime writings in *The Saturday Evening Post* and book *My Native Land*, by Kardelj’s admission, “lifted spirits” of the “hard-pressed Liberation forces.” Adamic, Louis, *The Eagle and the Roots*, Garden City 1952, p. 55. (furthermore: Adamic, L., *The Eagle and the Roots...*). Additionally, opponents of the regime such as Pridonoff and Lehrman thought that Adamic was responsible for Washington’s decision to support the Partisans instead of Mihailović.

⁵⁹ !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Yugoslav split was only “a fraction of [his] pursuit.”⁶⁰ He intended to visit Yugoslavia briefly, along with Israel, India and Italy on his way to the final destination of his trip – the Soviet Union. Yet, Yugoslavia turned into the central point of his journey, mostly because the Soviets rejected his visa application. Additionally, his Yugoslav experience became so emotionally and intellectually overwhelming that, at the end he decided to write a book about Yugoslavia. He described his traveling observations in the posthumously published *The Eagle and the Roots* (1952).

Adamic was disillusioned with Soviet Communism, perceiving it as a disguise for Russian imperial ambitions; the Cominform split served to prove this conviction. He was critical toward U.S. foreign policy as well, noting that it was estranged from the interests of American people.⁶¹ He saw the only hope for world peace in a combination of American technical and economic power (modernization) and the moral and political virtues of the Yugoslav regime (social justice and anti-clericalism). Adamic ascribed an almost religious character to the Yugoslav revolution, comparing it to the Reformation.⁶²

The Eagle and the Roots was still in manuscript form when Adamic was found dead on September 4, 1951 from a gunshot wound to the head, while his farm in New Jersey was set ablaze. His friends suspected that Adamic was murdered because of the book in progress.⁶³ Despite these speculations, the Federal Bureau of Investigation concluded that Adamic committed suicide due to physical and emotional exhaustion.

The Eagle and the Roots served two purposes. First, Adamic tried to exonerate the regime from its “Soviet phase” by claiming that the Sovietization of Yugoslavia from 1945-1948 was a revolutionary necessity and an inevitable phase in eliminating Western financial and political interests. Second, he claimed that the United States was blinded by hatred toward Communism in general and therefore incapable of

⁶⁰ Adamic, L., *The Eagle and the Roots...*, pp. 3–4.

⁶¹ Adamic wrote that the U.S. foreign policy was created by a small group of people who wanted to protect large financial interests. “Some of the State Department personnel was homosexual; much of it was under subtle British and Vatican influence if not control.” Adamic, L., *The Eagle and the Roots...*, p. 16.

⁶² Adamic, L., *The Eagle and the Roots...*, pp. 529. Adamic noted that Titoism derived (“via heresy”) from Stalinism, “as Christianity derives from Judaism, Protestantism from Catholicism.” He even claimed that spirit of the Revolution cured the diseased. In writings, Adamic explained the revolution by using the familiar motifs of early Christian legends. Revolutionary struggle healed the sick, as Jesus did; the Revolution gave women pregnancy-like symptoms, thus resembling the New Testament tale of the Holy Spirit and Virgin Mary. “In itself, *partizanstvo* [the Partisanship] was a terrible, wonderful, powerful phenomenon. . . . People chronically ill with ulcers, colitis, and tuberculosis a good part of their prewar lives suddenly became well after plunging into the struggle and experiencing the freedom. . . many women fighters didn’t menstruate for months, even for years at a spell. Their hips widened strangely, and their stomachs swelled.” Adamic, L., *The Eagle and the Roots...*, p. 516.

⁶³ *New York Times*, September 6, 1951; *New York Times*, September 8, 1951.

comprehending Yugoslav Communism as a distinctively positive phenomenon that was similar to the American Revolution.

Adamic wrote how Sovietization was unavoidable, being the only way to disrupt the degenerated political and social system that he described in *The Native's Return* (1934). Nevertheless, he emphasized that Yugoslav Communists from 1937-1938 (coinciding with the Spanish Civil War and Tito's emergence as a leader of the CPY) sensed that the Soviet system had devolved into "Great-Russianism, which always had imperialistic overtones." However, they hoped that Soviets would admit their blunder and return to the ideals of the Great October Revolution.⁶⁴ Adamic claimed, the Cominformist split was not only a matter of political or ideological competition, but a struggle between the principles of humanity (represented by the Yugoslav regime) and those who denied it (represented by the Kremlin). "Much of these men [Tito, Djilas, Kardelj and Rankovic] talked had to do with humanism, morality... with what is right... with the belief that man is man, or rather that *a* man is a man, loaded with human nature, and not a component of rabble, not a robot who must be steered and pushed this way and that, who must be dictated to. I think that difference of concept is one basic reason for the Soviet-Yugoslav split," Adamic concluded.⁶⁵

Adamic found that the biggest fault of the U.S. policy toward Yugoslavia was its failure to perceive the true character of the Yugoslav regime. He noted that the U.S. was obsessed with Communist menace, therefore unable to make a distinction between the Soviet Communism that served as a vehicle for Russian imperialism and Yugoslav Communism which was the purest expression of democracy.⁶⁶ However, he complained that mutual misunderstanding existed between Yugoslavia and the United States. Adamic partially blamed Yugoslavs for this problem, explaining how, due to their Marxist rigidity, they were unable to comprehend the complexity of United States politics, culture and society: "During my first week here, in Belgrade and in Slovenia, the absurd ideas many Yugoslavs have about the United States vexed me no end."⁶⁷ Due to this, Adamic wrote, Yugoslavs unintentionally steered American public opinion to the Right. The writer advised his Yugoslav companions to "crack the conspiracy of silence" about U.S. injustices toward Yugoslavia, claiming that this would lead many Americans to take the Yugoslavs' side.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Adamic, L., *The Eagle and the Roots...*, p. 102–103.

⁶⁵ Adamic, L., *The Eagle and the Roots...*, p. 139–140.

⁶⁶ "To put power into the hands of the people' is no empty demagogic phrase [in Yugoslavia]. Nor is 'people's democracy,'" wrote Adamic.

⁶⁷ Adamic, L., *The Eagle and the Roots...*, p. 132.

⁶⁸ Yugoslav Ambassador in Washington Sava Kosanović complained in 1948 that Yugoslav propaganda in the U.S. was indeed inadequate and often damaging to the country's interests. Kosanović noted that in the U.S. "exist wide masses into which we should penetrate" with propaganda. He said that propaganda activity in the U.S. would be particularly easy and effective because the Americans had not had any "traditional prejudices" toward Yugoslavia. Kosanović advised Belgrade to treat

Adamic identified the regime, the revolution and the whole of Yugoslavia with Tito. According to Adamic, Tito was both a man and an abstraction of “‘everything’ that was, is, and will be in Yugoslavia.”⁶⁹ Before learning about “New Yugoslavia,” Adamic felt discomfort with omnipresent expressions of devotion to Tito. On his way to Yugoslavia Adamic spotted Tito’s name inscribed on the plane’s wing, a job performed by some workers at the Belgrade airport. Although Adamic admitted that Tito’s cult formally reminded him of similar practices in pre-war Germany and Italy, he found Tito himself more like the U.S. 1940 presidential nominee Wendell Willkie. Adamic visited the Second Congress of the Communist Party of Serbia in January 1949. Upon Tito’s arrival to the Congress hall, 1200 delegates greeted him for an hour with “extremely loud chanting: *Heroy Tito! Heroy Tito! Heroy Tito!*... Hero Tito! Hero Tito! Hero Tito!... on and on... and on... and on -”⁷⁰ He asked himself what was the difference between “*Heroy Tito! Heroy Tito! Heroy Tito!*” and “*Duce! Duce! Duce!*,” particularly for foreigners who listened to the Congress on their radios. However, he noted that the atmosphere in the hall was nothing like a Fascist rally. Tito was no Mussolini, wrote Adamic, adding that the Yugoslav leader “looked decidedly undictatorlike (sic).” Adamic continued, “There was nothing cheaply theatrical about him, nothing fraudulent. He couldn’t be a tyrant; rather, he was the most obvious, perhaps the most emphatic nod in a vast, well-nigh incredible consensus.”⁷¹ After a series of personal meetings with Tito, Adamic enforced his opinion: Tito was not dictator, but personally charming individual (“when he turns it on full tilt, it brings the birds down”), who embodied all the ideals of the revolution. Tito’s negative image was created by “cliques” in the Foreign Office, the State Department and the Kremlin. Besides the appeal of Tito’s personality to all who met him, Adamic expressed the conviction that the ideals of the revolution (broadly defined as accelerated modernization, social justice, equality and national independence) embodied by Tito enjoyed popular support. Tito’s name written on factories’ chimneys, walls, aircraft wings and posters was a genuine expression of people’s devotion to everything that Tito represented. Adamic saw Tito walking without bodyguards, emphasizing that as the

American correspondents fairly and to “cultivate” them by regaling and accommodating their needs. Дипломатска архива (ДА), Савезни секретаријат иностраних послова (ССИП), Политичка архива (ПА), фасцикла 7, 1948, Сава Косановић Министарству спољних послова, 8. април 1948.

⁶⁹ Adamic, L., *The Eagle and the Roots*..., p. 134. According to Adamic’s friend, writer Shaemas O’Sheel, Adamic wanted to call the book “Tito Is Tito Is Tito,” however he decided to call it “The Eagle and the Roots” instead. The idea came from a scene that Adamic saw during a field trip in his native Slovenia: an eagle’s beak got clamped around a protruding root. Finally, the eagle managed to escape and “to be an eagle again.” That was an enlightening moment for Adamic, who realized that the eagle symbolized Tito and the “snake-like” roots of the Soviet Union and the West. *Saturday Review*, August 16, 1952; Adamic, L., *The Eagle and the Roots*..., p. 174.

⁷⁰ Adamic, L., *The Eagle and the Roots*..., p. 87.

⁷¹ Adamic, L., *The Eagle and the Roots*..., p. 88.

chief proof of his wide popular support. “There’s a security police, to be sure,” noted Adamic, yet in his account the notorious OZNA was as “unobtrusive” as the FBI.

Hal Lehrman harshly criticized *The Eagle and the Roots* in his *New York Times* review. Lehrman assumed that Adamic’s book had a dual purpose: by explaining how Tito once regarded the USSR as a “light of humanity” and “now as the scourge of mankind, both in equally good faith,” Adamic tried to exonerate himself from the same blunder.⁷² Although Lehrman remarked how “distasteful” it was to argue with a man who could not answer back, he noted that issues raised by the book were “too large to be benignly overlooked.” He blamed Adamic for describing the regime with “simulated objectivity” and purposely hiding the facts about its terrorist practices (“stag[ing] mock Hitler-style elections, declar[ing] war on independent peasantry”). According to Lehrman, the only valuable parts of the book were Adamic’s portraits of the Yugoslav leaders, most notably Tito. Scholar Henry Roberts arrived at a similar conclusion, noting that this “highly subjective book... contains some useful information, especially concerning the personalities of the Partisan leaders.”⁷³ Yet, Adamic’s book was welcomed among the Left, disillusioned with Soviet Communism. Adamic introduced a notion about the regime as a desirable alternative to the imperialisms of the West and the East. This perception of Yugoslavia would become a common motif in many works of liberal Western intellectuals interested in Yugoslav affairs.

Louis Fischer’s Yugoslavia as a Model for the Future

Journalist and writer Louis Fischer visited Yugoslavia in 1952 and was so delighted by the extent of civic and intellectual freedoms in the country that he recommended it as a model for the future “in a world where the trend is in the other direction.”⁷⁴ Fischer was born in Philadelphia in 1896 to a poor Jewish family. “Born and bred in poverty, I instinctively welcomed any endeavor to eradicate it,” Fischer wrote about the origin of his affection for Communism.⁷⁵ In 1921 Fischer moved to Germany as a correspondent for *The New York Evening Post* and year later he went to Moscow where he stayed until the mid 1930s, sending dispatches for the leftist weekly magazine *Nation*. After experiencing the Spanish Civil War and Stalin’s harmful policies in Spain, Fischer gradually became disillusioned with Soviet Communism. He described this experience in a famous 1949 book, *The God That Failed*.

⁷² *New York Times*, May 25, 1952.

⁷³ Roberts, Henry, review of Louis Adamic, *The Eagle and the Roots*, y: *Foreign Affairs*, 2, XXXI, 1953.

⁷⁴ Fischer, Louis, „How Much Freedom in Yugoslavia”, y: *The Saturday Review*, August 16, 1952, p. 36 (furthermore: Fischer, L. „How Much Freedom in Yugoslavia”...).

⁷⁵ Crossman, Richard ed., *The God That Failed*, New York 2001, p. 202.

Fischer spent five weeks in Yugoslavia, where he met with Yugoslav officials and intellectuals. Fischer juxtaposed the Soviet and Yugoslav experiences, highlighting the advantages of Yugoslav Communism. In contrast to the gloomy and pessimistic atmosphere in Moscow in 1937-1938, described in his essay in *The God That Failed*, the situation in Yugoslavia seemed promising for the world and Communism alike.

He wrote that foreigners enjoyed absolute freedom in Yugoslavia, mentioning his unrestrained wanderings in Belgrade schools and a visit to an agricultural cooperative. Fischer was convinced that the regime possessed widespread popular support. He came to this conclusion after spotting the omnipotent chief of the OZNA Aleksandar Ranković in downtown Belgrade. "He was waiting for his driver. That is the whole story. It could not have happened in any Soviet or sovietized country," wrote Fischer. Another one of Fischer's examples was the case of the Yugoslav Army Assistant Chief of Staff General Peko Dapčević whose brother Vlado, also an officer in the Army, was imprisoned and sentenced for ten years due to his pro-Soviet views.⁷⁶ Despite his brother's arrest, General Dapčević retained his position. "In the Soviet empire and even, one fears, in some democratic countries, guilt by association would have eliminated the general too," wrote Fischer, concluding that "Yugoslavs have a traditional aversion to despots and have effective means of revolting against them."⁷⁷ In Fischer's account the Yugoslav political establishment⁷⁸ demonstrated that they were enlightened rulers who sought to learn from their own mistakes as well as others' and were carefully concerned about public opinion.⁷⁹

Yugoslav Communists, noted Fisher, abolished both private and state capitalism by turning all enterprises over to their employees. The regime thus avoided the economic bureaucratization, which led the Bolshevik Revolution into decadence. "The Yugoslav regime is groping for new forms, for something that is neither capitalism nor Stalinism," Fischer wrote.⁸⁰ Yugoslav attempts to beat the evils of both worlds – Stalinism and capitalism – did not stay confined to the economic realm. Fischer explained how political elasticity (the absence of dogmatism, in the words of one

⁷⁶ Fischer did not know that Vlado Dapčević was brutally tortured in prison.

⁷⁷ Fischer, L. „How Much Freedom in Yugoslavia”..., p. 35.

⁷⁸ Fischer met with Tito, Đilas, Ranković and one of the leading ideologists Moša Pijade.

⁷⁹ "He [Tito] told me of his personal relations with many peasants and others. 'But the entire nation does not approve of you,' I said. 'No,' he frankly confessed, 'not the whole nation but the overwhelming majority.' 'But what could the people do if they disapproved?' I probed. 'Throw us out,' Tito answered. 'How?' 'Very simply,' Tito explained. 'Isn't the army the people?'" According to Tito, Ranković "possessed no right under the constitution to shoot anybody without a court sentence and that *he had not shot anybody with or without a court sentence since 1947*. But what, I continued, would prevent Ranković from shooting somebody if he wished to do so? Tito asserted: 'He would not do it. The Government would not do it. The Government must be the first to see to it that laws are obeyed. Why, if we would start breaking the law...' 'But what compels you to observe the law?' I interrupted. 'Public opinion,' Tito stated." Fischer, L. „How Much Freedom in Yugoslavia”, p. 36. Emphasis added.

⁸⁰ Fischer, L. „How Much Freedom in Yugoslavia”..., p. 7.

Yugoslav ideologist) positively affected literature and art: “There is no censorship of books in Yugoslavia.... There is no literary dictator, no man like Zhdanov.”⁸¹ Fischer noted that bookstores in Belgrade carried a variety of foreign books of an “idealistic, realistic, materialistic, surrealist, Freudian, existentialist, religious, mystic content... some books are Marxist, most are not.” He saw works of Sartre, Gide, and Thornton Wilder, as well as the memoirs of Omar Bradley, Churchill and Eisenhower. ⁸²Additionally, “lively literary controversies [shook] the Yugoslav air” that were unthinkable in the Soviet Union. Fischer concluded, “the cultural night has been turned into day since the break with Russia.” Fischer argued that cultural, political and economic reforms in Yugoslavia were not the product of necessity but of a conscious effort to “broaden the area of freedom and thus broaden the regime’s political support.” Fischer was sure that Yugoslavia, unlike the Soviet Union, had no Siberia nor did it have the desire to use one.⁸³

Fischer’s example confirmed the concept of Yugoslavia as a source of hope for disillusioned Communists and fellow travelers.⁸⁴ Disenchanted with Soviet Communism, they resorted to the “Communism with a human face,” as the Yugoslav regime often advertised itself. Of course, the split in 1948 was the first and most important prerequisite for this new, unexpected sort of “political pilgrimage,” as scholar Paul Hollander called it. Yet, it was also influenced by the set of political, economic and social reforms (Dennison Rusinow called them “Marxism Belgrade Style”) that attempted to offer different and, according to the Yugoslav Communists, truthful interpretations of Marx’s ideas. Writers who were optimistic about “the Yugoslav

⁸¹ Fischer, L. „How Much Freedom in Yugoslavia”..., p. 8.

⁸² Fischer, L. „How Much Freedom in Yugoslavia”..., p. 8; Four years earlier American journalist John Gunther had a different impression. “Most of the books fell into two groups: standard Marxist-Leninist works, and technical and vocational literature of all kinds. There were sprinklings of European classics in translation and a few scattered translations of American authors like Upton Sinclair, John Dos Passos, Jack London, and Mark Twain,” he wrote, noting that bookstores were supplied with a “tremendous amount of Russian ideological literature.” Gunther, J., *Behind the Curtain...*, p. 51–52; Fischer’s notion was overly optimistic. The regime indeed showed certain liberalism in culture, yet it maintained a tight control over publishing. One of the chief Yugoslav ideologists Milovan Đilas encouraged the translation and publication of modern English, American and German literature. However, he warned that “modern stuff” should not be published before someone from the Department for Agitation and Propaganda had read it. АЈ, ЦКСКЈ, ИК, VIII, II/2-b-69 к. 4, Записник са састанка Агитпропа о питањима издавачке делатности, 5. март 1952.

⁸³ Although Yugoslavs indeed had not had a Siberia, the regime had its own system of concentration camps specially designed for the Cominformists. Approximately 8,000 people went through these camps from 1949 until 1954. Milovan Djilas admitted in his memoirs that the camps were “the darkest and the most shameful event in Yugoslav communism,” reminiscent of the Soviet camps. Cited in Banac, Ivo, *With Stalin Against Tito. Cominformist Splits in Yugoslav Communism*, Ithaca 1988, p. 253. The above mentioned Vlado Dapčević was severely tortured in one of these camps.

⁸⁴ Raymond Aron noted, not without sarcasm, that after the split the whole of “Saint-Germain-des-Prés was Titoist.” Aron, Raymond, *The Opium of the Intellectuals*, New Brunswick 2009, p. 317.

experiment” often overestimated the extent of these reforms. They were presented with facts favorable to the regime, connected with the “right people,” and spared from compromising information (such as prisoner camps in the Adriatic archipelago) that could tarnish Yugoslavia’s bright image. Thus Susan Sontag’s notion that when “[travelers] came to write about an exotic country; what they actually wrote about was their itinerary, the strenuous program that is laid out for privileged visitors,” serves as a good warning about how to read these works.⁸⁵

Travel narratives represent a useful source for interpreting the history of U.S.-Yugoslavia relations. Close analysis of these works can uncover the fine structures that rested behind U.S. foreign policy toward Yugoslavia. These works present new ways of understanding relations between Yugoslavia and the United States. Often better than official documents, they captured the domestic political and social anxieties that influenced foreign policymaking; they can effectively illuminate the connection between foreign policy and domestic public opinion. Therefore, any new history of relations between these two countries should consider travel narratives as an informative historical source and dedicate the attention they deserve.

⁸⁵ Sontag, Susan, *Where the Stress Falls*, New York 2001, p. 280. Hans Enzensberger noted that in Communist countries there was no traveling without a program.

Резиме

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(Поновно) откривање Југославије: Амерички путописи о Југославији, 1945-1955

Рад се бави анализом америчких путописа о Југославији у периоду између 1945. и 1955. године. Овај чланак заступа тезу да су амерички путописци својим радовима одиграли значајну улогу у стварању слике о новој Југославији у Сједињеним Америчким Државама. У првим годинама након Другог светског рата ови радови су, готово без изузетка, представљали Југославију као најагресивнији инструмент совјетског утицаја. Након разлаза Београда и Москве 1948. године, у америчкој путописној прози почиње да доминира позитивна слика Југославије. Ови нови, афирмативни описи Југославије омогућили су једноставнију транзицију у дипломатским односима две земље од непријатеља (1945–1948) до савезника (после 1948). Овај рад, природно, узима у обзир друштвени, културни и политички оквир у којем су настајали путописи, почев од личних уверења аутора (одређених класом, професијом и др.), до опште социјалне и политичке климе тога доба у обе земље (успон конзервативног републиканизма у САД, друштвене и привредне реформе у Југославији после 1948., и др.). С тим у складу, овај чланак предлаже путописну прозу као користан инструмент у интерпретацији дипломатских односа САД и Југославије јер путописи пружају изврстан поглед на социјалне и културне факторе у трансформацији дипломатских односа две земље.