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TITO'S PLOT

against Europe

THE STORY OF THE RAJK CONSPIRACY

by Derek Kartun

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TITO'S PLOT AGAINST EUROPE

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TITO'S PLOT AGAINST EUROPE

THE STORY OF THE RAJK CONSPIRACY

DEREK KARTUN

1949
LAWRENCE & WISHART LTD.
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By the same Author
THIS IS AMERICA

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TO MY WIFE

FOREWORD

So VERY much stranger than fiction is this narrative of the Rajk conspiracy that I feel it necessary to say a word about my sources. I have not invented, assumed, elaborated or modified any of the facts in these pages. In the main, I have relied upon the official Blue Book, *Laszlo Rajk and His Accomplices Before the People's Court*, issued by the Hungarian Government after the trial. This is an almost complete transcript of the proceedings, and I strongly advise anyone in whom my narrative may kindle some interest to obtain it (it is available in English). For the historical background to the trial and for information about Yugoslavia I have had recourse to newspapers and other usual reference sources. Where necessary I have quoted these sources. When drawing my own conclusions I have endeavoured to make the fact that they are my own perfectly clear. Where I mention the thoughts and feelings of the figures in the plot, I do so because in their own evidence at the trial they either described or betrayed them.

I was present throughout the trial itself, and I have been fortunate in being able to consult many people who knew Rajk and his associates well in the days before the discovery of the plot. But for any conclusions I have drawn from the facts of the case, I take full personal responsibility.

DEREK KARTUN.

Budapest, October 1949.

CHAPTER I

1944—BETRAYAL

THE YEAR 1944 was one of disaster for the armed forces of the German Reich. The year opened with the Red Army smashing and pounding its way through the vast concentrations of Hitler's military machine on the Eastern Front, encircling town after town and reducing the German hedgehog position to rubble. By the summer, the Red Army found itself poised on the frontiers of Hungary, and the Germans were making frantic preparations to use the Hungarian capital as a defence bastion. In June the long-awaited second front in the West had opened, and the smaller German forces in France reeled back under the Anglo-American thrust. East and west, Hitler's Third Reich was crumbling.

During that fateful year the underground Resistance movements which had worked and grown in every country from the beginning of the German occupation reached new heights of audacity and courage. In Hungary, as elsewhere, the Communist Party was the heart and soul of the illegal work.

But though the scope of the work was extending steadily and new people were coming into the fight in increasing numbers, in Hungary during 1944 the Resistance received some shattering blows. And these blows were surrounded in mystery.

* * *

There was, for instance, the case of the mass escape from Satoraljaújhely prison, in the far North-Eastern corner of the country. Satoraljaújhely was a jail for political prisoners only and there were both Hungarians and Yugoslavs there. It had seemed for a long time to the prisoners that the commander, a short, balding man with a big bushy moustache, Lieutenant of the reserve Lajos Lindenberg, had extraordinarily good sources of information on what went on in the cells. There was an occasion during 1943 when the prisoners managed to smuggle in

some political literature. Almost at once Lieutenant Lindenberg seemed to know of it and a cell by cell search led to the confiscation of the precious books.

It was in January, 1944, that a group of the prisoners first started planning a mass escape. During February details were discussed, and by the end of that month the proposals had become a plan. The brunt of the fight, for they knew that it would mean a costly fight with the guards, was to be taken by the Yugoslavs. Some 300 prisoners in all were to take part. By early March all was ready and only the exact date remained to be fixed.

It is not known whether the arrival of the Germans in Hungary on the 19th had any influence on the calculations of the leaders, but it was two nights later, on March 21, that the signal was given and the picked Yugoslav groups rushed the guards. In a few moments there was pandemonium throughout the jail. But within a few moments, too, it was clear that there had been a betrayal. For heavily armed pioneer units from a neighbouring camp appeared on the scene within minutes of the outbreak, and the prisoners found themselves suddenly outnumbered and being shot at from all sides. Even so, seventy-five of them managed to reach the main gates and get through. It was then that the massacre started. Fifty-four of those who had got out were rounded up by the pioneers and the guards and shot on the spot. The remaining twenty-one were captured. The break had been a complete and bloody failure. Five days later the court-martial of the Hungarian Military Court arrived on the scene and sentenced another eleven to be hanged.

All of the leaders of the movement inside the prison were thus wiped out. All, that is except one. Andras Szalai, a member of the illegal Communist youth movement, had also been in the jail. He had known the details of the projected prison break. But ten days before it occurred, on March 11, he had been unexpectedly released by Lieutenant Lindenberg.

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As the Germans got settled in Hungary the work of the Resistance became more and more risky. To the savagery and efficiency of the Szalasi government's political police were added the

brutality and cunning of the Gestapo. Throughout that summer, however, the work of propaganda, sabotage, and resistance to the fascists continued. And the losses continued too.

On the afternoon of July 27, two inconspicuous young men were sitting in the garden of the Nagy Bela pastry shop in Buda. It was a Sunday afternoon and the place, famous for its delicious pastries, was crowded with customers from the neighbouring middle-class districts. The two young men sat quietly beneath the trees in the very far corner away from the entrance. They did this because they wanted to have a clear view of the gate, and time enough to act should any unwelcome figure appear in it. They wanted, also, to attract as little attention as possible.

One of the two was a handsome man of twenty-nine named Endre Sagvari. He was general secretary of the Communist youth movement in Hungary, and had been wanted by the police for years. The other was a member of his group with whom he had fixed an appointment at Nagy Bela. It was a favourite meeting place of his because it was crowded and also because it was not in a district to which the police normally paid much attention.

Suddenly five figures in the uniform of the gendarmerie appeared in the doorway. Sagvari was a man who thought quickly. He knew that if he allowed himself to be captured he would be tortured, and perhaps die in the torture chamber as Ferenc Rozsa had died in 1942. Rozsa had been one of the outstanding leaders of the Communist Party. Or, if he survived torture without dying and without betraying his friends, he would be hanged, as Zoltan Schonherz, the former general secretary of the Communist Party in Hungary, had been hanged, also in 1942. Sagvari knew at once that the gendarmerie were looking for him; that somewhere in his organisation there was a stool-pigeon who had betrayed the rendezvous. There was nothing to do but make a fight for it. As the gendarmes made their way between the crowded tables towards his corner, he drew his revolver. He killed two of them before he fell, his body full of bullets. His companion managed to fight his way out while the main attention of the gendarmes was concentrated on Sagvari.

It was a big loss for the illegal youth movement fighting

against the Germans and the Hungarian fascists, and it has never been discovered who gave the police the information about the meeting in the pastry shop. But one of the members of Sagvari's group was a pale, earnest young man with a high forehead and a dry, pedantic manner. His name was Andras Szalai, and he had not long been out of prison.

* * *

During that year many people in Eastern Europe were having to make up their minds about the future. It had become clear that the Germans would not win the war. In Hungary, those who had served the old fascist regime of Admiral Horthy—and particularly those whose allegiance had been strong enough for them to continue to serve in the later, more openly Nazi period of the quisling government led by Szalasi—had a difficult decision to take. Were they to retreat with the German armies when the collapse started, in the hope that they would eventually meet the Americans coming from the West? Or were they to stay behind and take their chance with the Red Army? Both courses presented grave disadvantages for a man such as, let us say, George Palfy.

Captain Palfy had always set his heart on a military career. Coming from a banking family, he had studied at the Ludovika Military Academy, and had also spent a year in one of Mussolini's military institutions. There he had acquired a great admiration for the methods of Italian fascism. But though he dearly loved military life and had studied to be a staff officer, he had been forced to resign from the army in 1939 because his wife was of Jewish extraction. By 1944 George Palfy was an embittered man. Restless, inordinately ambitious, a typical fascist officer of the Hungarian upper classes, George Palfy was looking for a sphere in which to shine.

As far back as the winter of 1942 he had come to the conclusion that Germany would lose the war. He knew that Hitler could never recover from the disasters on the Don. And so by 1944, with the Red Army on Hungary's Eastern frontiers, Palfy was beginning to look towards the Left. He believed that after the liberation there would probably be a strong Communist Party in Hungary—possibly a Communist Government.

For an ambitious man, what could be better than to join the Communist movement now, before it had become easy and popular, and be there as a fully-fledged revolutionary at the liberation, one of the few with military experience? But to the cautious mind of George Palfy there were snags in this simple plan. Just supposing the Communists did not have the government? Or supposing they did, and later there was a war or a counter-revolution and the Americans came in and put the Horthy groups back in power?

If he, George Palfy, burned his boats and became a Communist right away, he would be finished for good should the Right stage a come-back. More, remembering the savagery of the Hungarian officers in 1919, when thousands paid with their lives for the five months of working-class power, George Palfy realised very clearly indeed that he might even be risking his neck.

Escape to the West then with the retreating Germans and put himself at the disposal of the American or British forces? Palfy knew only too well that *émigré* fascist officers would be ten a penny after the war. The best he could expect with the Americans was an exceedingly humble job officering riff-raff from the Horthy army which had accumulated in the West; and there would no doubt be an uncomfortable old age among the impoverished *émigrés* of Paris or Brussels.

To an ambitious fellow like Palfy, it all seemed gloomy and unsatisfactory beyond belief. But supposing the Americans won? Supposing there was another war between East and West, and the Hungarian *émigrés* were brought back in triumph? In that case he might expect a job in the new fascist Hungary commensurate with his talents and his ambition. Yes, but how long would he have to wait meanwhile, on half pay in some miserable garrison town? And what guarantee had he that it would ever happen?

It was a difficult problem, and not only George Palfy had to face it. Thousands like him were standing by the roadsides of Eastern Europe, trying to judge which waggon to climb on to. Later many of them were to go into Social Democratic Parties. Some found their way into the Communist Parties, but the

repeated cleansings to which the Communists rigorously subjected themselves after liberation were generally too much for the Palflys.

Palfy himself, perplexed as anyone might well be by such an exercise in political and military clairvoyance, consulted his old friend Captain Istvan Lancz. Lancz was still in the Hungarian Army at that time, but he too believed that the Germans were beaten. On the whole, Palfy and Lancz came to the conclusion that the brightest future in Hungary probably lay with the Communist Party. But these clever gentlemen were not so simple as to conclude from that fact that the thing to do was to attempt to get into the Party right away. They worked out a far better plan. Lancz was to retreat to the West when the Hungarian Army in which he was serving started to move. He would make contacts with the British or Americans after the German surrender. Meanwhile Palfy would try to get into the Communist Party and work his way up as high as he could. Then, if the Communists finally won out, he, Palfy, would go witness for Lancz and bring him back into a lucrative job. And should the Western Powers win, Lancz could vouch for the Communist Palfy as a thoroughly reliable member of the Right who went into the Communist Party in order to spy for the Americans. Lancz, in fact, was to tell the Americans that George Palfy, member of the Hungarian Communist Party, held himself at their disposal for any assignment they might care to give him.

The scheme was simple. Lancz covered for Palfy, and Palfy covered for Lancz. Whether democracy or fascism lost in Hungary, Palfy and Lancz would win.

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While the Resistance movement was fighting its life and death struggle against the police, with every die weighted against them, outnumbered, hunted, threatened with the worst sort of death that human ingenuity could devise, and while the supporters of the old régime such as George Palfy were laying their personal plans for the future, a man was spending the months of 1944 in a Hungarian internment camp. He had been detained since October 1941, and it was not until October 1944 that he was finally released. But he was to remain free for only

a few months. By the end of that year he had again been arrested, this time by the military counter-intelligence department. At his own request his trial was held in closed court. As a result of evidence given by a number of distinguished police officials who came specially from Budapest to the tribunal at Sopronkohida, all the charges were dropped. But by then the debacle had started. Sopronkohida was evacuated. Beneath the repeated hammer blows of the Red Army the Hungarian front was crumbling. The quisling government of Szalasi fled from Budapest and the Red Army freed the city on February 13. The liberation of Hungary was under way.

Before there had been a chance to make his release effective, the man whose case had been heard so secretly at Sopronkohida was removed with other prisoners to Germany. And there he did what George Palfy had done. He made plans to return to Hungary after the war, but he arranged with a friend to maintain contact with the Americans, in case the future had political surprises in store. The friend who was to stay in Western Germany and establish relations with the Americans and the *émigré* Hungarian fascists was named Istvan Stolte. The man whose case had attracted the attention of the authorities in Budapest was named Laszlo Rajk. At that time he was known in the Resistance movement as one of the finest members of the Hungarian Communist Party.

CHAPTER II

THE SWISS GROUP

IN BOTH world wars Switzerland was used by all the main combatants as an important centre of espionage. The choice is obvious. This little island of "neutrality" set in the raging seas of the European conflict was an ideal place from which to push out tentacles into enemy country. In the legations and consulates of Berne, Zurich, and Geneva, master spies framed instructions for their agents in every part of the continent.

Outwards went the orders, and inwards came the espionage reports: the number of ships seen during July in Genoa harbour; unexpected building activity at a remote spot in the Hartz mountains; a crisis in the Italian or Hungarian Governments; troop movements on the Eastern Front. All of this, and more, greatly interested the British and American intelligence organs in Switzerland during the years of the Second World War.

The Americans had set up the headquarters of their European espionage network in Berne under a far from commonplace legation official named Allan Dulles. Mr. Dulles had at one time been a banker and had played a prominent part in the elaboration of the famous Dawes Plan, which bolstered Germany's crumbling capitalist system and paved the way for Adolf Hitler. He was a well-connected man; his brother, John Foster Dulles, was a leading Republican and a confidant of Hoover, Taft, Vandenberg and many of the Democratic Party leaders in Washington as well. Mr. Dulles had at his disposal in Berne, Geneva, and Zurich unlimited quantities of money and an organisation which was not to be sneezed at.

If anyone in Britain or the U.S. had known at that time that Mr. Dulles headed the Office of Strategic Services (O.S.S.) in Europe, they would have described his job as espionage against the Germans and their allies. This, it is true, was part of his job. But it was only a part. For Dulles and his superiors in Washington also had their eye on post-war Europe. By 1944 the

Red Army was demonstrating a frightening tendency to smash its way through the German lines into the heart of the continent. As it became clear that many European States would be liberated not by the Americans and British, but by the Russians, so the main emphasis of Mr. Dulles's work changed.

By 1944 the American and British intelligence services in Europe were more concerned with espionage against the advancing Soviet forces and the Resistance movements which were welcoming the Red Army troops with joy and gratitude, than they were with the still powerful legions of Adolf Hitler.

With this objective in mind, Mr. Dulles started during the summer of 1944 to concentrate special attention on the Hungarian *émigrés* in Switzerland who called themselves the Swiss Group of the Hungarian Independence Front. The British and U.S. Intelligence services had been active for years among such groups of Eastern European expatriates, but with the certain knowledge that the Red Army would liberate these countries, the *émigrés* not unnaturally took on an added importance.

They did not present Allan Dulles with a particularly formidable task. They were woolly and generally reactionary in their political ideas and anxious at all costs to end the dreary life of emigration and get back home to good business and the coffee houses of Budapest. All of them came from middle-class homes; many were thoroughly reactionary Right-wing Zionists who had been driven from Hungary by the anti-Semitic policy of the Horthy régime; all of them were profoundly anti-Soviet and intoxicated by the glitter and ease with which the U.S. officials in Geneva surrounded themselves. There was not a single Communist among them.

To the Americans, the Hungarians were easy meat. For several years they had been accepting "relief" from a body calling itself the Unitarian Service Committee. The head of this committee was an American agent named Noel H. Field, who, according to evidence later given in court, specialised in contacting members of the Left for espionage work. Field's technique was to talk vaguely Left-wing politics until he had gained his victim's confidence in sufficient degree to be able to form an estimate of his views and character. In those cases where an

appeal on ideological grounds failed to enrol him as an American agent, the victim might be confronted with the receipts which he had signed in exchange for the financial assistance of the Unitarians. He would be told that, suitably used, these might cause him no end of trouble with the authorities after he had returned home.

A combination of these techniques was used during 1944 to strengthen the ties between the O.S.S. and the Hungarians. The leader of these *émigrés* was a physician named Tibor Szonyi, and he had in his group about a dozen fellow Hungarians.

Among Szonyi's many contacts in Zurich and Geneva were Noel H. Field and a Yugoslav named Misha Lompar. This Lompar was the leader of the Yugoslav groups of *émigrés* just as Szonyi was leader of the Hungarians. By the beginning of 1944 Szonyi knew Lompar well and had fallen under his political influence. On Lompar's advice, he started to educate his group politically along pro-American lines.

The group was preparing itself, not only to return to Hungary after the Liberation, but to join the Communist Party there in order to disrupt it from the inside. They were provided by Lompar and Field with copies of the two books by Earl Browder, *Teheran And After*, and *Victory And After*. Browder had not yet been expelled from the general secretaryship of the American Communist Party, and his theories were currently playing havoc with the Communist movement in the U.S. He preached a theory of long-term collaboration between workers and the "progressive" industrialists and bankers, which would have emasculated the revolutionary movement. The U.S. intelligence service understood immediately the value of the Browder theories in confusing and paralysing the European Communist Parties, and had distributed in Switzerland large numbers of the Browder books, translated into Italian and French. The Szonyi group, in common with others, held discussion classes around the ideas of Browder under the approving gaze of the American Legation.

In September of 1944, Field told Szonyi that he would put him in direct personal touch with the boss, and during that month Szonyi met Allan Dulles for the first time. From then

onwards he no longer received his orders from Field's office at 39 Quai Wilson, in Geneva, but direct from the U.S. Legation in Berne.

Immediately prior to the September meeting, however, Szonyi and one of his closest associates, Ferenc Vagi, had worked out a memorandum on the political future in Hungary, in which they expressed their willingness to co-operate with the U.S. intelligence service. This was sent to Allan Dulles via Misha Lompar, the Yugoslav.

By the end of November Szonyi had been formally enrolled as a U.S. agent—Dulles gently waving at him the receipts he had earlier given Field for "financial assistance". The Americans never relied on a man's ideas to bind him to them: they always liked to possess something with which they could blackmail him, too. It was, of course, safer that way.

At the November meeting, Szonyi received instructions to prepare his group for the return to Hungary. He was told that the journey across Europe would be arranged by the Americans. This journey, which took place in the early months of 1945, is one of the most remarkable and sinister incidents of the war.

* * *

Six members of Szonyi's organisation were selected to return home in the first operation—Ferenc Vagi, George Demeter, Gyula Kuti, Andras Kalman, Janos Dobo, and Tibor Szonyi himself.

After a final interview with Dulles in December, the machinery was put into operation. From Noel Field they received 4,000 Swiss francs to facilitate the illegal crossing of the French frontier. Misha Lompar, who appeared to be a man of infinite resource, and had by then become Yugoslav Consul in Zurich, produced forged papers showing the six Hungarians to be Yugoslav officers returning to Yugoslavia as an official delegation. Lompar also provided a confidential letter addressed to the Ministry of the Interior in recently liberated Belgrade. This letter, he told Szonyi, described the group as American agents returning to Hungary, and requested the help of the Yugoslav authorities.

Presumably, Szonyi and his friends were beginning to realise

by now that far from being an American agent secretly working against the interests of the new Yugoslav administration and the Yugoslav Communist Party, Misha Lompar was in fact working on instructions from Belgrade. It even seemed as if the Belgrade authorities themselves were also working for the Americans. But this was fantastic. Hadn't they already publicly declared themselves as outspoken supporters of Socialism? Were they not known to be highly suspicious of British and U.S. intentions in Europe? Didn't they eulogise the Soviet Union on every conceivable occasion? And was not the Yugoslav Communist Party regarded as a model by Communists in every part of Europe?

It is not known what view Dr. Szonyi and his five friends took of these mysteries. At all events, they were entrusting their lives to the Yugoslav authorities, and they were known to those authorities as American agents whose mission was to infiltrate into Hungary, behind the lines of the Red Army, and carry on espionage there for the American secret service.

The group rapidly reached Marseilles, where they reported to the Yugoslav Consul-General, Latinovich. They received a further batch of forged documents, and after some negotiation between Latinovich and the G 2 section of the U.S. Army Headquarters in Marseilles, a U.S. military plane was placed at their disposal. They flew to Naples, and thence direct to Belgrade.

In the Yugoslav capital, still festive and breathless from the recent liberation by the Red Army, they were driven straight to the Ministry of the Interior. Lompar's letter was handed in and immediately produced a remarkable result. They were passed on to a Major Nikolai Kalafatich. And Major Kalafatich was a high official in O.Z.N.A.—Tito's political police.

At once, Szonyi went into conference with Kalafatich, who told him that information collected in Budapest for the Americans should be handed to Colonel Obrad Cicmil, who was Yugoslav representative on the Allied Control Commission in the Hungarian capital. Cicmil would then transfer the reports to him, Kalafatich, in Belgrade, and thence they would travel by official courier to Latinovich in Marseilles, and on, via Lompar,

to Allan Dulles in the Berne Legation. It was already clear to Szonyi that there was no telling where the Yugoslav intelligence service ended and the American began.

The conference concluded, the group was provided with an O.Z.N.A. 'car, and travelling via Novisad and Subotica, they reached the Hungarian town of Szeged.

At Szeged they destroyed their documents. The first section of their assignment had been successfully accomplished: they had penetrated behind the lines of the Red Army. They were in liberated Hungary, where no one knew their connections with the U.S. intelligence service. They were ready to go into action as American spies. And it was Marshal Tito's intelligence service which had made it possible.

CHAPTER III

THE PAST OF LASZLO RAJK

LASZLO RAJK, who spent the fateful year 1944 in internment, was a complex character. His overweening pride was matched only by an ambition which knew no bounds. Of great physical charm, he was tall, with a sensitive, intensely serious face which would easily break into a boyish smile. This boyishness gave his personality a quite exceptional frankness. But he also had the eyes and mouth of an ascetic. He was very attractive to women, and men responded to his compelling personality.

Rajk managed to keep his pride and ambition hidden well enough, and there was another trait in his complex character that he also managed to conceal. He was a coward.

It was simple cowardice that led him in 1931 to enlist in Horthy's political police as an informer and agent provocateur operating in the ranks of the illegal Communist movement. He had been arrested together with other university students over a matter of the distribution of Communist leaflets. Rajk was taken to the headquarters of the political police in Budapest. Presumably terrified at the rough treatment usually reserved for political suspects, he confessed everything at once and promptly gave away every one of his companions.

But he was luckier than those who had been caught with him. For he had an elder brother who was a police officer, and this brother asked the political department to treat him leniently. Further, his brother-in-law, a certain captain of police Lajos Bokor, was also brought into the affair. The scene in the office of Imre Hetényi, chief of the political department, on that autumn day in 1931 was to leave its impression on the history of Europe. But to those who took part, it was only the enrolling of another police spy, a small-time stool-pigeon in the work-class movement.

A paper was presented to Rajk and he was requested to sign. This paper stated his willingness to inform the police on the

activities of the Communist movement. Glad enough to get off so lightly, Laszlo Rajk signed, and in signing he gave evidence of yet another deformity in his character. For in addition to pride and cowardice, a total lack of principle blighted the personality of this remarkable youth.

Rajk was entering into a long tradition of European adventurers. Henceforth he would be working for the political police of Horthy's fascist Hungary. But Rajk was not the sort of traitor who betrayed because he believed in the principles of his secret masters. Rajk believed in nothing but himself. He betrayed because he was terrified, because he had contempt for his fellow men, and because his flighty, unbalanced personality welcomed the thrill of playing a double game. He had the character of the international adventurer, the cosmopolitan. And international adventurer he would now become.

Laszlo Rajk's political and moral degeneration followed rapidly and logically from his first betrayal. Within a year he had denounced the Communists at the university to the police, and mass arrests took place. Among those arrested were Rajk himself, in order to allay suspicion among his friends, and that Istvan Stolte who thirteen years later was to carry such an important message to Western Germany for Rajk. Stolte himself was also working for the police in 1932, and his activities were revealed a year later and he was expelled from the Communist Party.

It was in 1932 also that Rajk first came into contact with Dr. Joseph Sombor-Schweinitzer, at that time a first counsellor in the police, but destined to become Hungary's police chief. The name is important because many years later Sombor-Schweinitzer was to play a curious role in European politics.

Rajk continued his petty police spying until the end of 1934, when Hungarian fascism took a sharp turn for the worse with the establishment of the Gombos Government. Gombos was determined to smash what working class organisation there was, and Rajk, the last link in the chain of operations, was sent into the building workers' union as a spy.

The industrial workers of Budapest, led by the militant builders, were putting up the fight of their lives against the

Gombos decrees, and the atmosphere was heating up towards a general strike. Early in 1935 the threatened strike broke out, but by then Rajk had wormed his way into the building workers' leadership. He proposed a mass meeting, although meetings were strictly forbidden by the government: the builders accepted and a huge demonstration took place in the Ujlipotvaros in Budapest. According to a prearranged plan, the police smashed their way into the crowd of workers and arrested 200 of them. It was the end of the strike.

In 1936, on the instructions of Sombor-Schweinitzer, Rajk went to Czechoslovakia with orders to get into the Communist Party there. But world-shaking events were now to sweep up this insignificant agent of the Hungarian police and fling him into the midst of the whirlpool.

In 1933 Adolf Hitler had come to power. Early in 1936 an obscure Spanish officer of fascist convictions named Francisco Franco was plotting with a cabal of military men, millionaires, and priests to overthrow the newly founded Spanish Republic. On July 17 the war in Spain broke out, and at once Hitler and Mussolini made it their war. To Spain they sent dive-bombers, armour, military missions, and fighting troops. And to Spain the working class of the world sent its finest fighters to defend democracy in this, its first battle against fascism in Europe.

Rapidly the International Brigade was formed, and from Britain, America, France, Italy, Yugoslavia, Hungary and many other lands contingents began to go forth along devious, secret routes to embattled Spain. Among those organising the hazardous recruitment and despatch of men from Eastern Europe was a certain Josip Broz, who took the name of Walter, and later called himself Tito. Among the hundreds of Hungarians who answered the call was Laszlo Rajk. He had been ordered to Spain by Sombor-Schweinitzer with a two-fold mission. He was to discover the names of the members of the Rakosi Battalion, as the Hungarian unit was to be called; and he was to reduce its military efficiency by political disruption.

The battles in Spain ebbed to and fro for weary months as the fight against the farce of non-intervention went on throughout the world. Slowly, under the overwhelming pressure of the

German dive-bombers and Italian armour, the forces of democratic Spain were pushed back. In battle after battle they were outgunned and outnumbered. And so, in the fateful month of November, 1938, came the Ebro.

By then Rajk had become Communist Party secretary of the Rakosi Battalion, and it was in this capacity that he instituted disciplinary proceedings, immediately before the Ebro battle, against one of the Battalion's officers, named Haas. The aim was to produce political conflicts and animosity and so reduce the morale of the unit. Many years later, Rajk was to admit that in his opinion this manoeuvre did reduce the unit's fighting efficiency on one of the most important sectors in one of the decisive battles of the Spanish War.

By February of 1939 it had become clear to Rajk that the Spanish Republic had lost its war against Hitler and Mussolini. Madrid was hard-pressed and was to fall at the end of March. Rajk deserted his unit and crossed the border to France, where he was interned in St. Cyprien camp. Later he was transferred to Gurs, and later to the camp at Vernet.

At Vernet he met Enrique Gironella, deputy secretary-general of P.O.U.M. (the Spanish Trotskyist Party), who had escaped from a death sentence delivered by the People's Court in Barcelona and was later helped by the French secret service to reach Mexico. Rajk also met a number of leading Yugoslav Trotskyists. A Trotskyist group existed, too, among the Hungarians, and in this group there was a man called Cseresnyes, who was to appear in a surprising role later on.

Rajk carried on Trotskyist propaganda in the camps, together with these individuals, and in recalling the event ten years later he was to describe this Trotskyism as "the refutation and disruption of everything which is in the interests of the revolutionary working class movement, on a political basis that completely lacked all principle". It remains a good enough description for our purposes.

Both at Gurs and Vernet the French authorities were aware of Rajk's activities, and he was interrogated several times by an officer of the French intelligence service, the Deuxième Bureau. With this Deuxième Bureau officer a ridiculous comedy was

played. The Hungarian Trotskyists such as Rajk were busy providing the names of the Yugoslav Trotskyists. And the Yugoslav Trotskyists, for their part, were doing the same for the Hungarians. In this way the French intelligence service was able to compile a double-checked, watertight list of people who would act as police spies and provocateurs.

While these unsavoury proceedings were under way in the camps, Spain's heroic fight had ended on March 31, 1939. But within a few months the new rumblings in Europe had broken into a deafening roar, and the Germans had driven through Poland. In the West the phoney war was on, to be ended during the summer of 1940 with the destruction of the French Republic and the occupation of Northern France. In the South, the senile old reactionary, Pétain, was placed on a precarious pedestal and held there by permission of Adolf Hitler.

Now once again history was to pick Laszlo Rajk from the filth and obscurity of Vernet camp and thrust a new role upon him. He was to be taken from his humble political intrigues among the Spanish war veterans and made once more into a police spy.

During the spring of 1941, Hitler was topping up his giant war machine in readiness for his projected assault against the Soviet Union in June. From every corner of Europe workers were being press-ganged to work in the German war factories. Frenchmen, Belgians, Dutchmen, Poles, Hungarians, Czechs were being threatened and cajoled by their respective puppet governments or by the German Gauleiters to come to Germany. And within this Europe-wide plan for slavery figured the camps where the Spanish veterans had been rotting for over two years.

To Vernet, then, came a German commission. Within a few days, Rajk found himself in the office of the German major in charge. He was told that his name had been handed to the Gestapo by the head of the political department of the Hungarian police, in whose office he had signed the fateful paper eight years before.

Rajk was to be returned to Hungary to continue his work for the police there. And he was to be returned on the orders and with the indispensable help of Hitler's Gestapo. Having worked

for eight years for the Hungarian police, Rajk extended his connections, that day in the office at Vernet, to the Nazi police services.

It is interesting to note in passing that in the course of his talks with the German major, Rajk was asked for, and gave, information about the Yugoslav Trotskyists. It was clear to him that he was not the only internee who was to be helped to get out by the Nazis. It is also interesting to observe that among the Hungarians released by the Germans at this time was an individual named Imre Gayer, an international adventurer who had come to Spain from South America but had never been in action during his service with the International Brigade. This Imre Gayer was later to be responsible for some of the most serious losses suffered by the Hungarian Resistance movement during the whole course of the war. Like Rajk he was a police agent, and they travelled back to Hungary via Germany together, reaching Budapest in the month of August 1941.

Immediately on his return Laszlo Rajk did two things. He reported to police headquarters, and he got in touch with the illegal Communist Party. To the Communists he gave a rose-coloured account of his activities in Spain, and introduced Imre Gayer to them as a thoroughly trustworthy member of the Party who could be relied upon to check the homecoming members of the Rakosi Battalion. He himself was interned by the police to cover him in case Gayer's activities should arouse suspicion.

And thus Rajk spent the grim years between 1941 and 1944 in the comparative comfort of a Hungarian internment camp on special regime. Meanwhile, Imre Gayer was at work, and according to Rajk's later evidence in court it was Gayer who brought about the large-scale arrests of 1942 and the death of Ferenc Rozsa and Zoltan Schonherz.

In October 1944, Laszlo Rajk was released from internment and instructed to infiltrate once more into the Resistance movement, where his reputation as an outstanding fighter was, of course, intact. But it often happens that the policemen attached to one government department do not know what the policemen attached to another are doing. And so it proved in this case.

Over-zealous by half, the Hungarian military counter-intelligence department seized Rajk as a dangerous member of the Underground, and clapped him into jail. And thus it was, at the end of 1944, that he appeared in closed court at Sopron-kohida, and found himself once again picked up by the giant stream of events and deposited, in the last nightmare days of the war, in Germany. And there, as we have seen, he made his arrangement with his old friend and fellow-spy, Istvan Stolte, to contact the Americans while he, Rajk, returned in due course to Hungary.

* * *

In the intervening years, Sombor-Schweinitzer, whom we first met as a counsellor of police back in Budapest in 1931, had become chief of police to the fascist puppet government of Szalasi. Together with the braided officials of the Hungarian fascist state, Sombor-Schweinitzer found himself by the end of 1944 fleeing westwards for his life before the advancing tanks of the Red Army. It was to Sombor-Schweinitzer that Rajk told Stolte to go. He had heard that the Hungarian super-policeman was "somewhere near Munich" with the Americans.

Throughout the summer and autumn of 1945 the faithful Stolte searched. He was able, without much difficulty, to get across into American-controlled territory, and finally, in December, he found Sombor-Schweinitzer in the little town of Traunstein in Upper Bavaria. There the old servant of fascist Hungary and close collaborator of the German Gestapo was installed as chief of the Hungarian section of the American intelligence service (C.I.C.)! Stepping straight from the service of the fascists to that of their supposed opponents, Sombor-Schweinitzer was engaged, under the orders of his new employers, upon exactly the same work as he had performed for his old ones. He was selecting and training political agents to be sent into the progressive movement in Liberated Hungary. The rather hasty switch in allegiance had necessitated no change in the simple ideology of Dr. Joseph Sombor-Schweinitzer. A fascist political police officer he had been under Horthy and Szalasi and Hitler. And fascist political police officer he remained under the American High Command.

It is not surprising that Stolte was received with warmth by Sombor-Schweinitzer and the Americans at Traunstein. He was closely questioned about Rajk, and told that a way could be found "to make use of him".

CHAPTER IV

BUDAPEST, 1945

THE BUDAPEST to which Laszlo Rajk returned in the spring of 1945 was scarred and blasted by the eight weeks of stubborn fighting in the city's streets. But for the working people it was a joyous place to be.

At last the Germans had gone, and with them the hated Szalasi Government. The most arrogant supporters of the old Hungarian fascist regime were either in Germany or in hiding inside Hungary, or at any rate preserving a discreet silence. In the streets of the city walked groups of Red Army soldiers—the men who had brought freedom to Hungary after exactly thirty years of oppression. For the common people then, 1945 was a year of hope and enthusiasm.

For the bourgeoisie, of course, things were otherwise. They had not yet had time to recover from the blow of being liberated by the Red Army instead of by the Americans. The simpler souls among the businessmen and State functionaries viewed the future with unmitigated gloom. But the more ingenious and sophisticated among them had not given up hope.

Were there not British and U.S. Legations now in Budapest? Weren't there new "democratic" parties and "democratic" politicians who talked Socialism in public and capitalism in private? Would there not be elections which could be won by "left" coalitions of Social Democrats and assorted varieties of "left" Peasants and Liberals? Certainly, the Communist Party commanded an uncomfortably large body of support among the working people. But these things could be fixed. They had been fixed many times before, and the ruling classes in Hungary believed in 1945 that they had not lost their old cunning and resource. Nor had they lost all their old friends.

For their part, the Communists were forging ahead. For the first time in thirty years the Party was legal. From the obscurity of the dangerous underground movement there emerged the

men and women who had represented the true Hungary in those dark years. From Moscow there came back some of the outstanding Hungarian Marxists, chief among them Matyas Rakosi, the Party's general secretary, and Erno Gero.

By leaps and bounds the Party's strength and prestige grew. And with this development its responsibilities grew also. Hundreds of important jobs had to be filled in the Party structure, and soon in the Government and Ministries. Yet there were only a few thousand left alive after the dark years. Everyone who showed ability and trustworthiness and a willingness to sacrifice himself to the arduous work required of a Communist Party member was given a job.

It was not surprising in these circumstances that Laszlo Rajk's rise in the Party should be rapid. His police activities were completely unknown to the Party members. The incidents in the Rakosi battalion in Spain were shrouded in such obscurity and confusion that Rajk had no difficulty in passing them off. In fact, he was popularly regarded in 1945 as one of the most valuable members of the Party. Within a few weeks of his return he had been appointed to the post of secretary of the Budapest Communist Party organisation.

At this time Laszlo Rajk was at the height of his powers. Aged only 36, handsome, facile, and with easily discernible intellectual qualities, his popularity increased day by day. It was to be discovered later that Rajk was neither as intelligent nor as able as superficial knowledge led people to suppose. Beneath the apparent brilliance of three-hour speeches delivered without notes, a Napoleonic memory for the names and careers of his most inconspicuous subordinates, and an easy and knowledgeable manner with every type of person, the old weaknesses of character remained. And fundamentally, there were weaknesses of mental grasp and knowledge of Marxism which were to become obvious later and to give rise to the first suspicions among his closest colleagues.

But at that time, in 1945, the years of sordid police spying were over. No longer would he be forced to go in and out of jail, to take menial and distasteful jobs in order to write his police reports, to accept his orders from gross and stupid police

officials. If Laszlo Rajk had been a petty spy before, at last his reward was at hand and he was to be an adventurer in the heroic mould. Before him opened the pleasant vista of high office, with its comfort and popularity, combined with the thrill and degraded fascination of the double game.

Indeed, it is possible at this stage that for Rajk the intoxication of the game itself played as large a part as anything else in the motivation of his conduct. It can hardly be said that he betrayed the Hungarians because he loved the American bankers more. It is doubtful whether Rajk had ever seriously considered which side he agreed with. But he loved himself and the role he had chosen, and at the same time he always considered the possibility that one day, in some way, the Right would win again. A man had to take precautions against such an all-embracing development.

It was not until a little later that the glittering hope of becoming dictator of Hungary began to seize hold of the one-time back-street informer.

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At this point it is necessary to pick up once again the story of some of the men we have already met.

Tibor Szonyi and his group from Switzerland had safely emerged in Hungary as loyal Hungarian democrats with a considerable smattering of Marxism—ready every one of them to go into the Communist Party. They proceeded to join, and by the middle of 1945 Szonyi was holding a position of some importance at the Party's headquarters. It must be remembered that the Party was desperately short of personnel, and that Szonyi and his friends were carefully briefed in the role they were to play—that of persecuted and secret Communists of long standing.

From his position at headquarters, Szonyi worked his associates into the Party organisation. Vagi went to the press, and later to the press department of the Prime Minister's office; Kalman got an important job at the Ministry of People's Welfare; Demeter was sent into industry and ended up at the Institute of Technology. Later, as further members of the Swiss group returned home, they too were put into positions from which they could carry on valuable espionage.

In addition to deploying his forces, Szonyi held secret meetings of his group at his flat or at the homes of Kalman or Demeter. The Szonyi spy ring was thus in a high state of organisation by the end of 1945.

Then there was the dry, humourless young man who had been responsible for the massacre at the Satoraljaújhely prison the year before (for Andras Szalai had given away the plans for the jail-break, as we shall soon see).

This man Szalai also managed to deceive the Communist Party and become an open member. And he too got an important job—in the Party's propaganda department. But for the moment, indeed for the first time in his adult life, Szalai was not in touch with the police, for the simple reason that he had no means of establishing contact. It was not until the following year, 1946, that he was to resume his role of police spy.

We left George Palfy, the ambitious former officer of the Horthy Army, seeking a way into the Communist Party during 1944, as the German armies reeled back westwards. So well did Palfy work that we find him now, in 1945, as the chief of the political department of the new Hungarian Army. During 1945 Palfy and Rajk first met each other. They got on well, and by countless almost imperceptible hints mutually exchanged, they conveyed to each other that they held similar political views and that they saw nothing profitable in the new regime, the Popular Democracy, which was being built up in Hungary. It was not until later, in 1946, that this hinting and feeling out of each other's views developed into an open political alliance.

At this point, too, mention must be made of a certain Lieutenant Bela Korondy, a stiff-necked, haughty and ambitious young officer, typical product of the Ludovika Military Academy of Horthy's Hungary. In August, 1945, this unpleasant young man joined the political department of the Army and met Palfy. Palfy at that time was a Colonel. His instructions to Korondy in those early days were to clear as suitable for the new democratic army as many of the old fascist officers as he could. Only those whose guilt was too monstrous or too infamous to be hidden were proceeded against. Thus Palfy and Korondy started the work of building up an army which would be hostile to the new

Hungary and would lend itself one day to the purposes of the counter-revolution.

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It was in the late summer of that year that the mission of Istvan Stolte in the American zone of Germany bore fruit. We have seen that he found Dr. Joseph Sombor-Schweinitzer and had been told that a use would be found for his friend, Laszlo Rajk. Since that time the American organisation had been at work. And thus it was that Rajk was contacted in Budapest some time in August or September by Lieutenant-Colonel George Kovach, a member of the American Military Mission, later to become U.S. military attaché in the Hungarian capital.

Kovach did not mince his words. He had instructions for Rajk, he said, from his former chief Sombor-Schweinitzer. Rajk was to place himself at the disposal of the American intelligence service. If he refused to do so, he would be denounced to the Hungarian Communist Party. But Rajk did not need threats of this description. The double game had become second nature to him. It was both an insurance against political changes in the future, and the supremely fascinating pastime of a man who deemed himself cleverer than his fellows. Kovach did not have to insist.

Rajk, he declared, would not be assigned the duties of a small-time agent. Top-level political information was what the U.S. intelligence service wanted of him. And the first job of this character performed for the Americans by Rajk was concerned with the elections which took place in Hungary in November 1945. "It was of special importance to them," he declared afterwards.

Later, when he came to tell Kovach that various Right-wing parties, including the Right of the Social Democrats, were organising the infiltration of reactionaries into key posts in the factories and the State machine, Kovach replied that he knew all about it already—in fact the whole scheme was being organised and directed by the Americans.

This, then, was Laszlo Rajk, the man who had started as a police spy for the Hungarian fascist government, and now had graduated via the German Gestapo to become an American

intelligence agent. The progression throws a good deal of light, not on Rajk, whom we know well enough by now, but upon the Americans!

CHAPTER V

TITO AND THE MACLEAN MISSION

IT IS PERHAPS time that we asked ourselves the question, how it could come about that in 1945, the Yugoslav State organs should be helping American intelligence agents to penetrate behind the Soviet lines. We shall see in a moment that co-operation between the Yugoslav, U.S. and British intelligence services at this time was far closer than anyone imagined, and that it certainly had nothing to do, during 1945, with the defeat of the Germans. To find a satisfactory reply to this puzzling question we have to return for a moment to the camps at Gurs and Vernet.

As we know, Laszlo Rajk had been in touch with Yugoslav Trotskyist groups at Vernet, and he knew that the Yugoslav Trotskyist leaders were in contact with the French Deuxieme Bureau in exactly the same way as he was himself. There were at least 150 organised Yugoslav Trotskyists at Vernet in 1939, and this cannot be regarded as surprising in the light of the Yugoslav's Communist Party's history. At this point it will be useful to mention some of the leaders' names, for we are to meet them again later in very different circumstances. Chief among them were Ivan Goshnjak, Kosta-Nadj, Milich and Stefanovich.

These people knew Rajk in the camp and worked with him. And like him, they too were contacted by the German major who visited Vernet in the spring of 1941 after France had fallen. At his trial later, Rajk was to say that the major had particularly asked him about Kosta-Nadj, Goshnjak and several others. Like Rajk, they asked to be repatriated, and the Germans agreed. It may perhaps be remarked that the Gestapo was not in the habit of repatriating its political opponents, even for war work. All known Communists were always sent to concentration camps. This fact is important, because these Hungarian and Yugoslavs at Vernet were claiming among their

own comrades to be Communists. It appears that the Gestapo at any rate knew better.

There were many Yugoslavs in the groups of which Rajk was a member and which travelled from Vernet to Germany during 1941. And in the course of a temporary stay in Leipzig before being sent on to Budapest, Rajk was able to observe that quite large groups of Yugoslavs were travelling on to Belgrade from there by permission of the Gestapo. It is thus clear that a number of men who later were to hold positions of power in the partisan movement were already Trotskyites in Spain and were regarded by the Gestapo as valuable agents, in much the same way as Rajk was considered a useful provocateur for disruptive work inside the Hungarian Communist Party. Needless to say, these facts were unknown at the time to the Yugoslav Communist Party.

If we add to these undocctrinated Trotskyists those out and out nationalists who found their way into the partisan movement, and those honest men and women who, under the difficult conditions of years of illegality in the Yugoslav Communist Party, had not deepened and consolidated their Marxist training, we begin to have before us some of the elements which will help to explain what was to occur later. There were, of course, many tried and experienced Marxists in the Yugoslav leadership; but in a moment we will see what happened to them.

It is not possible to say exactly what political situation existed in the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party and the Partisan High Command by early 1943. At that time it had become clear that the partisans led by Tito were the only serious force fighting the Germans, and that Mihailovich and other right-wing bands were openly co-operating with the invaders.

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On December 14, 1943, Anthony Eden, the Foreign Secretary, made the following declaration in the House of Commons: "As a result of the information we had, we decided as long ago as the spring of this year that we should ask General Tito to receive a British military mission. He said 'yes', and British

officers have been with him ever since. Our mission is under the leadership of a member of this House, Brigadier Fitzroy Maclean, who has established most excellent relations with General Tito." To the world it appeared that Tito's fight against the Germans was so valuable to the allied cause that Mr. Churchill had been obliged to overcome his well-known antipathy for Communists and lend Tito British support.

But things were not quite as simple as they appeared, and in their enthusiasm for the fight against the Nazis people overlooked the fact that a man of Churchill's record and political experience would not have been moved by sentimental, or even purely military considerations. After all, if Tito the Communist deserved British help, how was it that the Communist Resistance movements in other countries were not favoured in similar fashion?

There was no doubt that the French Communists were the core of the Resistance, yet their urgent appeals for arms were ignored to the very end. In Greece, E.L.A.S. was putting up a fight as courageous and as useful as that of Tito; but instead of help they eventually found British troops shooting them down in the streets of Athens. Was there something different about Tito's Communism that made it acceptable to Mr. Churchill and MI5?

The thing is rendered even more curious by Churchill's known war strategy. All the American war personalities, including Elliott Roosevelt, General Eisenhower, and Harry Hopkins, have stressed repeatedly in their memoirs that Churchill's main concern had always been to keep the Balkans from falling under Soviet influence. He pursued this line even to the point of trying to direct Anglo-American military intervention on the European mainland into a Balkan expedition instead of opening the second front in the West as the Russians were insistently demanding from 1942 to 1944. Elliott Roosevelt reports his father, the President, as saying to him at Teheran that Churchill was thinking too much about the post-war situation, and that was why he was constantly proposing a Balkan invasion.

Churchill did not get his invasion, of course, but he did send his mission to Tito. And it was the purpose of this mission to

win a bloodless victory for Churchill in the Balkans. The men who went to Tito were mostly experienced intelligence officers. They knew that some of the partisan leaders could be won over, partly by obtaining incriminating material against them and enrolling them as agents by means of blackmailing threats, partly by personal influence and persuasion, partly by political intrigue at Tito's headquarters. It is not unreasonable to suppose that MI5 and the American G2 knew pretty well as much about the Trotskyists who had returned from Spain as the Gestapo had known. Also, the British pre-war espionage service in Yugoslavia had been far from mediocre; and a Communist Party which not so long before had found that even its general secretary was a police spy was quite likely to contain within its ranks British and American agents. We can thus see that if Churchill was prepared to do with Tito what he was unwilling to do with the Greek E.L.A.S. and the French F.T.P., he was probably basing his decision on pretty reliable information.

The British mission at Tito's general headquarters was headed by Brigadier Maclean and Colonel Hamilton of the U.S. Army, and was also joined by Major Randolph Churchill, the Premier's son. Satellite missions were despatched to the fronts in Macedonia, Serbia, Vojvodina, Croatia, Slovenia, and the Island of Vis.

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There is no means of telling when and how the men at the very apex of the ruling clique—Rankovich, Kardelj, Djilas, and Tito himself—abandoned, if they had ever upheld, the principles of Marxism. But there are a number of significant pointers.

When German parachutists surrounded the partisan headquarters at Drvar during 1944, for instance, the Yugoslav leaders were removed by plane to the safety of Bari. It was because they saw an opportunity of getting Tito even more closely under their control that Maclean and Randolph Churchill proposed that a British warship should take him and his staff to Vis for the duration of hostilities. Rankovich, Djilas and Kardelj strongly supported the proposal and Tito eventually agreed.

Then, there was a moment when Churchill still had hopes of operating his original plan to occupy the Adriatic coast. Here again, Rankovich, Kardelj and Djilas agreed. A dispute arose in the partisan general staff, with the genuine Communists opposing the move for reasons which must be obvious. Tito wavered, and eventually opposed the scheme.

Finally, there was the question of the liberation of Serbia and the capital, Belgrade. The Red Army was approaching rapidly and was already in Bulgaria and Rumania. The liberation of Serbia was an urgent military necessity. Maclean and Hamilton did their best through Rankovich, Djilas and Kardelj to persuade Tito to refuse Soviet help. But when he realised he could not do the job with his own forces, Tito applied to the Russians, and Red Army troops threw the Germans out of the Yugoslav capital.

These facts were mentioned later at the trial of Rajk by Lazar Brankov, whom we shall be meeting shortly. Brankov declared that he had heard them from Colonel Obrad Cicmil, a trusted member of Tito's staff. It is not, of course, possible to vouch for the precise accuracy of every detail in Brankov's revelations: indeed, on the question of Vis his evidence was inaccurate. And it is precisely the fallibility of a man relying on his memory to recall events long since past that lends authenticity to the general body of evidence given at the trial. But there is enough circumstantial evidence and enough proof that other of Brankov's statements were true to demand that we take them seriously into account.

Little can be said about the origins and the true political position of Alexander Rankovich and his immediate associates. Rankovich himself in 1944 was thirty-five years of age, and had been active in the Yugoslav working-class movement since the age of twenty. His record in the partisan war is shrouded in mystery. There was a good deal of talk in the movement, for instance, of an occasion when he and a small group had been captured by the Germans. All other members of the group were shot, but Rankovich succeeded in getting free a few weeks later. In view of what we shall shortly record about him, it is perfectly permissible to suggest, as Brankov suggested later, that

Rankovich may have been recruited as a German agent at this time. Certainly, Rajk was recruited by the police in similar and far less compelling circumstances.

There was also some general talk among the partisans to the effect that between 1941 and 1943 Tito had carried on negotiations with the Germans, and had broken these off only when the great Red Army victories of 1943 convinced him that the Germans could not win the war.

Upon Tito himself it is pointless to speculate. Whether he was an organised agent, or a nationalist masquerading as a Marxist, or simply a vain man who loved power more than his principles and found himself a virtual prisoner of his associates, the fact remains that we shall have occasion to observe his rapid political and moral degeneration. Whatever his own position—and there is some evidence to show that his main characteristics were a frantic desire to cling to power and a vacillating and weak temperament—he was surrounded from the beginning by some men whom we can safely regard as spies. Later, the Trotskyists and nationalists in the entourage gained a dominant position both in the Party and the Army and the development of Socialism in Yugoslavia was doomed from that moment.

During 1943 and 1944, however, the genuine Marxists were putting up a stiff fight against what then appeared to be the political deviations of the Tito group. Chief among these critics were Colonel-generals Jovanovich and Zujovich, and Andrija Hebrang, the latter two members of the Party's Central Committee. Jovanovich and Zujovich were on the General Staff. We shall see later how the dominating Tito group got rid of them.

Apart from these three, of course, there were scores of honest and able Marxists among the cadres of the partisan army and tens of thousands of sincere Communists in the movement as a whole. From the beginning, the Trotskyists who had reached positions of power started on a devilish plan to eliminate the best of the Communist leaders. They arranged to send them to those sectors of the battle where death was almost certain. And discipline was such that they knew their victims could never refuse. In this way, the men who could have saved the Yugoslav Communist Party and the Yugoslav State from the

disasters which were to beset them later were largely wiped out before 1945.

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It is revealing, in the light of what we now know, to re-read some of the literary works produced by the members of the British liaison group. Mr. Basil Davidson, who was in the Vojvodina, speaks in his *Partisan Picture* of the time it took to persuade the Foreign Office that Tito should be supported. It appears that MI5 knew more in 1942 and 1943 than it was prepared to tell the politicians in the Cabinet. One can visualise the intelligence service trying to make the politicians understand that there was more to Tito than at first met the eye, but unwilling to tell them exactly how much more.

Mr. Davidson also stresses in his book the "spirit of independence" of the South Slavs. He reports Tito as answering a question as to which great power Yugoslavia would find herself closest to after the war with a generalisation about "independence".

Brigadier Maclean himself, in his *Eastern Approaches*, gives an account of the flight from Drvar in 1944. *Eastern Approaches*, which was published in 1949, had the evident political purpose of countering the charge that Tito and his group had ever been anything but orthodox Communists protesting against the allegedly intolerable dictation of Moscow. Its history, and in particular its opinions, must therefore be treated with some reserve.

According to Maclean, Tito and his staff went to the island of Vis in a British warship and for a while their headquarters were set up there. One day, however, they disappeared. Here is Maclean's account of the incident (p. 498):

"There could be no doubt about it. Tito had gone. As an indignant telegram from Mr. Churchill put it, he had 'levanted'. One morning Vivian Street, who in my absence was in charge of Vis, had gone to visit him with a message from General Wilson, only to find he had disappeared from the island without leaving a trace. Inquiries as to his whereabouts only elicited evasive replies. It was the old story, so familiar from Moscow

days: he is sick, he is busy, he has gone for a walk. The more responsible members of the Marshal's entourage seemed to have gone too; the others, if they knew anything, were too nervous to reveal it. On further investigation, it was discovered that an unidentified Russian aircraft had landed on Vis and taken off again, presumably with Tito on board."

Whatever the accuracy or otherwise of the details as given by Brigadier Maclean, he is in fact claiming that Tito accepted the British proposal and went to Vis. It is certain that once there, he and his group were no longer free agents in their management of the partisan war. It is certain too that the Soviet Government had different ideas. And if the story of the sudden flight is true it bears witness to that fact.

Maclean seems unaware that there is any political significance in the fact that Tito and his friends, who must have known of Mr. Churchill's plans in the Balkans, were prepared to place themselves in his hands in this fashion, especially when the Red Army was all along offering an alternative. More, Churchill's anger is both understandable and highly significant.

As for the sudden departure, it could easily be accounted for by the all-important need, from Tito's viewpoint, of appearing to be an uncompromising political opponent of Mr. Churchill and his Balkan plans.

Eastern Approaches is couched in the text-book phraseology of the professional anti-Sovieteer, but among the stock slanders and silly distortions, some interesting and significant remarks can be found. At one point Maclean says of Tito (p. 340): "Already I had been struck by his independence of mind. And independence of any kind was, I knew, incompatible with orthodox Communism."

Justifying the despatch of his mission, Maclean declares (p. 340): "If, as seemed probable, the partisans were going to be the future masters of Yugoslavia, the sooner we established satisfactory relations with them, the better." Why did no one ever say this about E.L.A.S. in Greece, or about the Communist-led Resistance movements throughout Eastern Europe?

Finally, on the question of Tito's intense chauvinism, here is Maclean's distorted but revealing view (p. 325): "He reacted

equally strongly to anything that, by the widest stretch of the imagination, might be regarded as a slight on the national dignity of Yugoslavia. This national pride, it struck me, was an unexpected characteristic in one whose first loyalty, as a Communist, must needs to be a foreign power, the Soviet Union."

Of course, Communists do not place friendship for the Soviet Union above their own patriotism, since the two are inextricably entwined. But that Tito, a Communist, should give a man of Maclean's type this impression is remarkable indeed.

During the period that the British mission was with Tito, it was agreed that the Yugoslavs should appoint official representatives in a number of Western countries. The man sent to Marseilles was a certain Latinovich, whom we have already met. Misha Lompar, who was sent to Switzerland, is also known to us. And we shall soon see that General Velebit, who was sent to London, was an organised British intelligence agent. Thus the journey of the Szonyi spy group from Switzerland to Hungary, at first sight so incredible, now becomes simple enough to understand.

It is not possible to give with any certainty a complete list of the men who, during the war years, can be regarded as mainly responsible for the destruction of the Yugoslav Communist Party. Brankov later gave a list of names which is certainly incomplete. He declared that he knew it from his perusal of the secret files of the U.D.B., the Yugoslav foreign intelligence service; certainly, as a high U.D.B. officer, those files would be accessible to him.

Brankov listed, in addition to Rankovich, Kardelj, Djilas and those whom we have already mentioned, the names of Marko Belinich, who later became a member of the Croatian Cabinet; Karlo Mrazovich, who will figure largely in this story as Yugoslav Minister in Budapest and was later appointed Ambassador in Moscow; Petar Stambolich, later Prime Minister of Serbia; Avdo Humo, secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bosnia; Lieutenant General Mihailov Apostolski, of the General Staff in Macedonia; Svetozar Vukomanovich, later a member of the Yugoslav Government; General Orovich, of the Vojvodina General Staff; Jovan

Veselinov, secretary of the Vojvodina Party Central Committee; Jojkich, another member of that Committee who was later sent as a U.D.B. agent to Hungary; Miha Marinko, later to be premier of Slovenia; Boris Kidrich, later a member of the central government.

To these must be added the names of Ales Bebler, now Deputy Foreign Minister; Bozhidar Maslarich, Minister of Transport; Cicmil, whom we shall meet again in Budapest and who became Yugoslav Minister in London during 1949; and Ivan Goshnjak, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party, and Tito's deputy.

These at any rate were some of the men whom Churchill rightly regarded as worthy of his support. It must be recognised that the Maclean mission did its work well, though not as well as Mr. Churchill had hoped. For they were aiming far beyond the borders of Yugoslavia itself, and were planning an Eastern European policy of extremely ambitious proportions. We shall have occasion to examine it in the course of this narrative.

Nevertheless, the work inside Yugoslavia since 1943 had not been unfruitful. And when Brigadier Fitzroy Maclean finally left Belgrade on March 13, 1945, one day after the arrival of the first post-war British ambassador, he was probably well enough pleased with himself. Five months later he took his seat in the new Parliament as Tory M.P. for Lancaster.

THE U.D.B. IN HUNGARY

IN NINETEEN-FORTY-FIVE, when the Allied Control Commission was already at work in defeated Hungary, Marshal Tito asked for permission to send a Yugoslav military mission to Budapest. This request was granted, and a Yugoslav group under the leadership of Colonel Cicmil arrived in the Hungarian capital. The mission had been got together under the direct supervision of Minister of Home Affairs Rankovich and Minister of State Djilas, and Colonel Cicmil had also received a final briefing from the Marshal in person.

This briefing consisted of three instructions which, had they been generally known, would have caused incredulous astonishment from one end of Europe to the other. Firstly, the Yugoslavs were told that conditions were not stable in Hungary and they therefore had to organise a good intelligence service there. Secondly, they were to establish contact with the British and U.S. officers working in Budapest. And thirdly, they were to take good care not to come under the influence of the Soviet representatives on the Allied Control Commission. The exact nature of these secret instructions is known because Cicmil discussed them with his associates, some of whom were later to reveal them to the world at large.

At this stage it will be useful to meet the leading figures in the Yugoslav Mission. They will all be met with again later. First there was Cicmil, whose secret job was to establish contact with the British and Americans. Almost at once, according to evidence given later by Brankov, he got into touch with General Edgecumbe, British representative on the Allied Control Commission, and started to exchange espionage information on a regular basis.* Cicmil's reports were taken to the British General

* General Edgecumbe wrote a letter to *The Times* on October 26, 1949, in which he described Brankov's evidence as "pure fabrication".

by a Lieutenant Popovich. Contact was also established with Mr. Pettitt, the British Vice-Consul, Mr. Milton, American commercial attaché, and Captain Marty, Allied Military Permit Officer—again according to Brankov.

Placing them in the order of their importance as intelligence agents, the following Yugoslavs made up Colonel Cicmil's mission: Major Javorsky, chief representative in Hungary of the U.D.B.; Major Kovach (no connection with the American Lieutenant-Colonel Kovach); Lazar Brankov, who was later to become chief of the Military Mission, chief of the U.D.B. in Hungary, and eventually Chargé d'Affaires; Major Smiljanich, and a number of individuals of lesser importance.

Javorsky was to organise the espionage network in Hungary, Kovach had the main task of collecting information on the Red Army, and Brankov was responsible during the early days for reparations affairs and economic espionage.

This man Brankov, who four years later was to have his moment on the world stage before being swept away by forces far stronger than he and his friends, is worth a moment of study. As in the case of so many other Yugoslavs whose political development had not kept pace with their knowledge of fighting and conspiracy, four years in the partisan movement had bred in him a fanatical adoration for Tito. Further, his own deeds and those of the Yugoslav partisans in general had filled this already proud man with a consuming personal and national conceit. Whether he had been a nationalist and chauvinist before the war is not known. But the training of Yugoslavia's clique of nationalist and chauvinist leaders had made him one now.

His contempt for the Hungarians he paraded on every conceivable occasion. And in those days it was only too easy to mistake the haughty arrogance of a man like Brankov for the psychological scars of four years of unbelievable hardship in the mountains. At that time the world believed that every Yugoslav had endured privations and hardships never before encountered in the history of war. It was true of many, but it was not true of most of the leaders who survived.

Brankov used to drive hell-for-leather through the streets of

Budapest in a great, blue open German sports car, every inch the conqueror. His manner was hard and unyielding, his appearance immaculate. He was a small-scale edition of his master, the luxury-loving Marshal.

* * *

The Yugoslav Mission not only had the tasks entrusted to them in Belgrade. Soon a new and far more important role was to be filled, for in the second half of 1946 the main operations of U.S. and British intelligence in Hungary were handed over to the Yugoslavs. Rajk, as chief American agent in Hungary, was given instructions in the autumn of that year to sever his American connections and maintain contact only with the Yugoslavs from then on. But until that happened, the Yugoslav spy network can be regarded as a parallel organisation to that of the Americans, independently organised though clearly working in close harmony.

By 1945 the main strategy of the Tito group had been clearly formulated, though kept a strict secret from all but the higher ranks of the U.D.B. The aim was to undermine the Communist Parties in the Peoples' Democracies, while building up the personal popularity of Marshal Tito and his Yugoslavia. By political means, or if necessary by military means, these countries were to be detached from their close relations with the Soviet Union and welded into a Balkan federation under direct Yugoslav leadership. For the purposes of propaganda, this would be presented as a brilliant new development of Marxism in the realm of relations between Socialist States. Needless to say, a policy requiring for its operation the services of fascist police spies and the active co-operation of the British and U.S. intelligence services would be a novel form of Marxism indeed.

This policy was both Yugoslav, American and British at the same time. To the clique in control in Belgrade it offered power beyond their own borders and the possibility of maintaining themselves as rulers of a State which would become the centre of a new type of Balkan imperialism. At the same time, for Tito and his friends, an alliance of this kind under general American direction represented a powerful blow against the

Soviet Union and against the genuine revolutionary movement inside Yugoslavia. The whole political life of many of these men had been devoted to objectives of this kind.

For the British and Americans, the advantages of the plan were obvious. They had always suspected, and they were soon to know for certain, that the old Right-wing and the Social Democrats in Eastern Europe were spent political forces. The hope of simply turning the clock back and restoring capitalism without more ado receded steadily through 1945 and 1946, as in election after election the Right was defeated. This hopeful theory received its death blow in February 1948, in Czechoslovakia, when the Right was decisively beaten there.

Always, from the moment when the British intelligence service had persuaded the Foreign Office in 1943 to back the Maclean mission in Yugoslavia, the Yugoslav Trotskyists had been regarded as the main hope of the imperial powers in Eastern Europe. Thus, a policy which sought to organise a Balkan federation under Tito's leadership, may have been the policy of the Yugoslav Government: but it was very much more the policy of the British and Americans. And that is why, from the very beginning, the Yugoslav and Anglo-American espionage organisations worked so closely together, and only fused completely later in Hungary when contact between the spies and the Anglo-U.S. diplomatic representatives became too dangerous.

To operate such a policy in the neighbouring countries, a number of parallel lines had to be pursued at once. The Communist Parties—the only serious force standing between the Anglo-Americans and their objectives—had to be split, confused, rendered impotent. To do this, pro-Tito, nationalist groups must be organised within the Communist ranks. Secondly, plans must be laid for eventual military coups, to be carried out should political methods fail. These coups would involve the assassination of the Communist leaders. Thirdly, the Right, including the reactionary parties, the old clergy, the Trotskyists, the Right-wing Social Democrats, and even the *émigrés* in the West, must be encouraged in every possible way, as part of the process of creating difficulties for the struggling young Peoples' Democracies. And finally, general espionage must be pushed ahead,

directed both against the countries in question and against the Soviet Union itself.

We shall have occasion to observe how each of these complementary lines of action was pursued by the British, American and Yugoslav spy rings in Budapest. And we will need to remember that the plan in Hungary was by no means unique: similar plans and similar activities were in hand in every one of the Popular Democracies—Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Poland, Rumania, and Albania—and in the Democratic movement in Greece.

* * *

The Yugoslav mission started at once to carry out Tito's directive to build up an efficient information service. Among those they recruited in their first year of work Laszlo Rajk naturally has pride of place. But there were other useful figures as well.

Endre Szebenyi, the sharp and able Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of the Interior, was brought in. So was Sandor Cseresnyes, whom we last encountered as a Trotskyist in Vernet camp in France. Between whiles Cseresnyes had spent some years in the Psychological Warfare Department of the British Army, where he had been recruited as a British agent. He worked with the British until 1946, but already in 1944 in Bari, Italy, he had been in touch with the Yugoslav secret service and had become a Yugoslav agent as well. He was Press Chief at the Ministry of the Interior when he was picked up again by the Yugoslavs. And he had been put into the job by Rajk, who became Minister of Interior on March 21, 1946. Cseresnyes had the task of popularising the person of his chief, and his press department did nothing but this.

Also recruited by the Yugoslavs were Ferenc Gondi, deputy chief of the Protocol Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Joseph Rex, another high-ranking Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, who had earlier deserted from the Yugoslav partisans and was being threatened by Brankov with exposure.

These names are only typical. There were many more of equal importance. All told, they added up to a respectable spy ring

which constituted a real menace to the security of the Hungarian State. To them must be added, of course, the name of Colonel, soon to be Major-General, George Palfy, who was on good terms with the members of the Yugoslav Military Mission in no time. Shrewd judges of men, Cicmil, Javorsky and Brankov soon understood what manner of democrat Palfy really was. By 1946 the thing was put squarely to him and he enlisted formally as a Yugoslav agent.

At this point too must be added the name of Paul Justus. Justus had been a leading member of the Right-wing of the Social Democrats. Later, following the visit to Budapest of Dennis Healey on behalf of the Foreign Department of the British Labour Party, Mr. Justus was observed to switch sides with startling rapidity. It had become clear that the political future lay with the Left. Eventually, after the fusion of the Communists and Social Democrats, Justus was to become Vice-President of the Hungarian Radio. But at the moment we are speaking of, in 1945 and 1946, he was an influential member of the Social Democratic Party Executive Committee.

What was not generally known about Justus at that time was that for 20 years he had been a Trotskyist, and that in 1936 in Paris, and later after his return to Hungary, he had spied for the same police department for which Laszlo Rajk had worked for so many years.

Justus met Colonel Cicmil at a reception at the end of 1945, and by early 1946 Major Javorsky had confronted him with a photostatic copy of a report on him from the pre-war Hungarian Legation in Paris to the police in Budapest. It was clear from this report that Justus was an agent, and Javorsky told him unkindly that the report would be published unless he was prepared to become a spy once again. Clearly, the industrious Dr. Sombor-Schweinitzer had been at work again, passing the secret files of the Horthy political police to the Americans, who were passing them in turn to their chief agents in Eastern Europe, the Yugoslavs.

It need hardly be stressed that Paul Justus' training as a Trotskyist and a Social Democrat of the Right did not prepare him to resist blackmail of this description. He tried to pretend

to the Yugoslavs that he would work for them, not because he was afraid, but because he agreed with their ideas. But like Allan Dulles when recruiting Tibor Szonyi in Switzerland, Major Javorsky preferred a good blackmailing document to all the ideological protestations in the world. And after all, Paul Justus had adopted such a wide variety of ideological positions in his time. There was no telling when he might turn his coat again. For such individuals there was nothing like a good photostat.

CHAPTER VII

THE MEETING AT ABBAZIA

IN MAY OF 1947, Lazar Brankov, who now headed the U.D.B. in Hungary, paid a visit to Minister of the Interior Rankovich in Belgrade. There he was told about the Yugoslav plan for a Balkan federation. It was the first time he had been given open and exact information on Tito's strategy. Rankovich said that in order to operate Tito's plan the policy of the Hungarian Government would have to be changed, and he mentioned the names of Matyas Rakosi, leader of the Hungarian Communist Party, Gero, head of the Economic Council, and Farkas, Minister of Defence, as the chief obstacles to a change of line in Budapest. Rajk, he said, was the man to popularise, and the prestige of Rakosi, Gero and Farkas had to be decreased by every means open to the many agents who were now operating in Hungary.

Soon after Brankov had visited Rankovich in Belgrade, Rajk also went to Yugoslavia, to Abbazia, for his summer holidays. From the frontier onwards he got a reception which he was to describe later as "demonstratively extravagant". Everywhere stations and streets were decorated for him, and under the leadership of the Yugoslav Communist Party the local populations came out in their thousands to greet him.

Scarcely had he arrived in the luxurious villa placed at his disposal in Abbazia by the Yugoslav Government than he received a visit from a leading member of the U.D.B. in Croatia, a blonde woman of about thirty. Speaking Hungarian, she informed him that Rankovich wanted to see him and would shortly arrive in Abbazia. She would act as interpreter and the meeting must be regarded as absolutely secret.

That first meeting between Hungarian Minister of the Interior Rajk and Yugoslav Minister of the Interior Rankovich must be regarded as a classic in the annals of international political intrigue. Rankovich was direct to the point of brutality. He knew, he said, that Rajk had worked for the Horthy political police,

and he was there to tell him that unless he supported Tito in future, his record would be exposed. This, declared Rankovich, was stated directly on the Marshal's behalf.

Rajk protested that he had never been a police spy. If he was supporting Tito's policy in Hungary it was because he agreed with it. But Rankovich was not prepared to do Rajk even the small kindness of permitting him to pretend to a genuine political viewpoint. Let us quote what happened next from Rajk's evidence at his trial two years later:

"Upon this, Rankovich, somewhat mockingly, pulled from his pocket a photostat copy which he gave me to read. I discovered that it was the declaration I had given to Hetenyi, of Horthy's political police, when I was arrested in 1931. I asked Rankovich how he came to possess a photostat copy of such a document. . . . Rankovich replied that it did not turn up from the files of the Yugoslav fascist police but was given to them by the Americans. The files of the Horthy police were evacuated to the West. . . . and these files fell into the hands of the Americans."

Rajk tried to protest that common blackmail was unnecessary, since he agreed politically with Tito's ideas anyhow. But Rankovich was quite unwilling to be an idealist, or to believe that Rajk was capable of any greater sincerity towards Tito than he had demonstrated towards the Communist Party. Speaking as one Minister of the Interior to another, he said, it was better for "technical reasons" if the photostat copy of the 1931 document were carefully borne in mind.

Rankovich then told Rajk that the Yugoslav authorities had full information about his conversations with U.S. representatives in Belgrade since 1945. His main task now would be to build up a strong anti-Rakosi fraction in the Hungarian Communist Party, under his personal leadership. And Laszlo Rajk was sent back to Budapest by his new master, the Minister of the Interior in a Yugoslav Government which the people of the world still believed to be a government of principled and steadfast Communists.

* * *

By the time Rajk met Rankovich in Abbazia, he had already proved his worth as a spy. He had provided Brankov and the

other Yugoslav agents in Budapest with preliminary details of the Hungarian budget, and with secret information on the investigations which led to the exposure of the Ferenc Nagy plot in June 1947. This information was in the hands of the Yugoslavs at the beginning of the year, and was sent to the American Legation by Colonel Cicmil. Rajk also provided the operation and service regulations of the Hungarian police force, and a copy of the secret Hungarian administrative map. And the Yugoslavs were given one of Hungary's most closely-guarded secrets—the measures being taken by the Ministry of the Interior to deal with British and U.S. intelligence agents on Hungarian territory.

In the realm of sedition and conspiracy, Rajk had been equally active. He made possible the escape from Hungary of the Right-wing plotters, Bela Varga, Karoly Peyer, Szelig, Sul-yok and Pfeiffer, who were later to set up their counter-revolutionary headquarters under U.S. State Department supervision in Washington. In the case of the Nagy conspiracy, he suppressed a number of documents incriminating various individuals.

Early in 1947, at the direct request of Brankov, he ordered the forcible transportation from the Yugoslav-Hungarian frontier area of seventy Hungarian families designated by the Yugoslav U.D.B. as unfriendly to Tito. This move, which was concealed from the government, was the first of a series designed to foster pro-Tito sentiments along the frontier. It was the preparation for frontier incidents which were to be organised later.

Also during 1946 and 1947, Rajk freed from detention a number of war criminals and agents. Among these was one Imre Gayer, the man whom he had introduced into the Communist Party in 1941 after his return from Spain, and who, according to Rajk, had caused the death of Rozsa and Schonherz. The paper authorising Gayer's release was dated December 17, 1946, and it bore the signature of Laszlo Rajk. It is still on the files of the Ministry of the Interior in Budapest.

* * *

During this period General George Palffy was also at work.

In the spring of 1946 he added the post of Commander-in-Chief of the Frontier Guard to that of head of the Political Department of the Army. Palfy was now in a position to be of greatly added use to his masters. By early 1947 he was on terms of complete frankness with Rajk, and they were already starting to work together. At that time, while the new Hungarian Army was being built up, Palfy concentrated on keeping workers out of the officers' schools.

Although the government's policy was to produce new cadres of working class and peasant officers, Palfy managed his role so well that during his three years in the Political Department, not a single worker was commissioned. The Army was being built up as a suitable instrument for the counter-revolution.

Meanwhile, Palfy was giving the Yugoslav Legation everything they asked for: the disposition of Hungarian troops, the secret maps of the Hungarian High Command, the disposition of the Frontier Guard, and information about Red Army forces which were in the country under the terms of the peace treaty.

Tibor Szonyi, the man from Switzerland, was also active. During 1946 he had received by special courier a message from Switzerland which read: "Peter should get in touch with Wagner's acquaintance from France." It is necessary to explain here that before leaving Berne he had arranged with Allan Dulles, the chief of the American O.S.S., that for matters of special importance the Belgrade-Marseilles-Berne channel of communication should be by-passed, and direct contact set up by courier. His code name would be Peter, and Dulles would call himself Wagner. More, Dulles had spoken to Szonyi of Rajk and mentioned that he had known about him in France.

A few days after receiving the message, Szonyi asked Rajk to meet him in his office in the Organisation Department of the Party headquarters in Akademia Street. There, really frank contact was established between them for the first time, and when Szonyi got the highly important post of chief of the Party's Cadres Department in November of 1947, that relationship developed into one of the most dangerous of all for the Hungarian State.

Andras Szalai had been officially enrolled as a Yugoslav agent

at the premises of the Yugoslav Military Mission at 14 Javor Street in the spring of 1946. There he had been confronted with the information that the Yugoslav authorities knew about his responsibility for the massacre at Satoraljaújhely prison in 1944 and had every intention of denouncing him should he refuse to sign on the dotted line. Becoming a spy presented neither moral nor political problems to Szalai, who had been a spy all his life. He signed.

He handed secret information of various kinds to Major Smiljanich of the Military Mission until, later in 1947, he joined the Communist Party's Cadres Department. From there he was able to influence the choice of parliamentary candidates and the placing of officials in many spheres of work. He found himself in the thick of the developing plot against the State.

* * *

It can be seen that by mid-1947 the various independent spy rings, some organised by the Americans, some by the Yugoslavs, were being drawn together and centralised in a powerful and dangerous organisation. Most of them had passed from espionage to the first stages in the organisation of a treasonable plot.

The Army was being prepared by Palfy; the police and internal security organs by Rajk from his post of vantage as head of the Ministry of the Interior. In every sphere of industrial and State life, spies and ex-fascists were being put into positions of power and workers were being excluded. At the same time, the person of Rajk was being propagandised by every conceivable means, and the first tentative efforts at bringing about political confusion within the ranks of the Communist Party were put under way.

Rajk and the main plotters had become thoroughly conversant with the American plan to build a Balkan federation under Tito's leadership as a preliminary to a return of capitalism in the People's Democracies. Lazar Brankov had been told of the plan by Rankovich; so had Rajk at the meeting in Abbazia. And the conception of replacing the Soviet Union by Yugoslavia in the minds of the people as Hungary's protector and friend had now being explained to the lesser members of the ring.

The stage was set for the great effort to popularise Tito which was to be made on the occasion of his visit to Budapest for the

signing of the Hungarian-Yugoslav treaty of friendship at the end of 1947. But first we must turn for a moment to the remarkable story of a young Yugoslav woman named Ljubitsa Ribar.

CHAPTER VIII

THE STORY OF LJUBITSA RIBAR

LJUBITSA RIBAR was a Yugoslav woman of 31 who had lived for several years in Hungary as a refugee. Among her Yugoslav friends in the Hungarian capital was a certain Rudolf Cacinovich. In 1945 she met Major Javorsky when she visited the newly-arrived Yugoslav military mission in order to register. Javorsky, unknown to Ljubitsa Ribar, was a leading member of the U.D.B., and as we know, he had instructions from Minister of the Interior Rankovich to recruit a wide network of spies in Hungary.

At this first meeting Javorsky questioned Ljubitsa Ribar closely, and at a second meeting shortly afterwards the questions were continued and he suggested for the first time that it was her duty to help the Yugoslav Government in every possible way. He expressed interest in her wide circle of acquaintances in the aristocracy and the Church. And his demands that she should work for the Yugoslav intelligence service were backed up by her friend Cacinovich. She refused.

It was in the summer of 1947 that these agents of the Yugoslav U.D.B. first used threats against her. Here is how she described the incident afterwards in her evidence at the trial of Rajk and his accomplices:

"Cacinovich called me up in the Szent Istvan Hospital, saying that he absolutely had to speak to me. When I met him at the agreed time he showed me a Yugoslav newspaper in which they had written that my brother in Yugoslavia had been arrested as a member of a conspiracy against the Government. Cacinovich declared that if I were not willing to be helpful and work for the U.D.B. my brother would be sentenced to death. He also declared that he knew very well how fond I was of my family and therefore he had already reported my consent to

Belgrade. I did not answer anything and he took my silence for consent."

From that moment onwards the drama of Ljubitsa Ribar moved rapidly to its climax. Towards the end of the year she applied to the Yugoslav Consulate for a visa to travel to Austria in order to see her young daughter. One day in December Cacinovich told her the Legation authorities wanted to see her about the application. When she arrived at the offices she was received by the Consul, Smiljanich. Harshly, Smiljanich told her that they had no intention of granting her the visa to go to Austria, because she really wanted to escape.

Then, in the Yugoslav Consulate in the very centre of Budapest, Ljubitsa Ribar was arrested and locked in a back room.

What happened next is best described in her own words at the trial:

"After this, two days later, in the evening, two employees of the Legation brought me down and forced me to get into a car. They warned me not to cause any disturbance. Another civilian unknown to me, and the chauffeur named Nikolai, got into the car and we started towards the frontier. At that time I was not aware of where we were going.

"A little before the frontier we stopped. They said I had to get out and took me over to the other side. There, in Yugoslav territory, a completely closed truck was already waiting. They made me get in and I was guarded there by soldiers. In a short while they brought into the car three men whose hands and eyes were bandaged and bound. Then the truck started again. In a few hours we arrived in the yard of a building. Before I could get out my eyes, too, were bound and they took me into a gaol and there my eyes were unbound.

"I was kept there from about December 15 until January 5, 1948. Then Blazich, Javorsky and an unknown U.D.B. officer inquired of me about Mr. Pettitt, British Consul General in Budapest, and about my connections with the British Legation. Then they told me that I must do intelligence work in Hungary against the Hungarian Government and at the same time they wanted me to act as liaison between the Yugoslav and British intelligence agents. When I did not want to give my consent,

they threatened that I, too, would be liquidated. After this they made me sign a statement in which I bound myself to work for the Yugoslav U.D.B.

"When I signed this, in about an hour they took me out of the gaol and put me into a car. Then we stopped again at a street corner and Cacinovich got into the car, and then we went again to the frontier. At the frontier the driver called Nikolai stepped out with three passports, arranged the matter of the passports, and then they took me to Budapest almost to my house, where they set me free."

The case of Ljubitsa Ribar is instructive because it illustrates several of the recruiting techniques of the Yugoslav and American intelligence services. To Ljubitsa Ribar were applied personal intimidation and the agonising moral pressure of the threats against her brother. Then, when she had been reduced in this way to signing an undertaking to spy, that undertaking itself was used to blackmail her into continuing her work.

Like the Americans, the Yugoslav U.D.B. regarded a blackmailing hold as the most effective way of ensuring the loyalty of their agents.

THE SECOND MEETING—KELEBIA

RAJK AND THE Yugoslav Legation did their best to make Marshal Tito's visit to Budapest in the autumn of 1947 the nearest thing to the triumphal progress of a conquering hero that could be devised in the circumstances. Apart from the beflagging of streets and the organisation of processions and festivities, the idea was to make the security arrangements so prodigious and so inconvenient that the extreme importance of the Marshal's person would be forcibly impressed upon the minds of the people of Budapest.

Yugoslav Minister of the Interior Rankovich sent a delegation led by Milich, a high U.D.B. official, to see Rajk a few days before Tito's scheduled arrival. Milich instructed Rajk to see that heavy guards, fully armed, were placed at every point visited by the Marshal; that occupants of flats and houses along his route were forcibly evacuated, ostensibly to guard against the possibility of a bomb being thrown at him; that all the sewers along the route of his procession were examined on the day before his arrival. Further, Tito must have one of the finest villas in Budapest as his headquarters.

Rajk was not altogether successful in this arduous assignment, and the Hungarian Government eventually refused to permit him to indulge some of the wilder fancies of the U.D.B. In particular, he did not succeed in obtaining quite the most splendid villa of all. The reaction of the Yugoslav Legation was sharp. The recently appointed Minister, Mrazovich, informed the Hungarian Government officially only thirty-six hours before Tito was due to arrive that if they failed to provide the accommodation and security measures regarded by the Marshal as proper to his station, the whole journey would be cancelled and the friendship pact, presumably, would remain for the moment unsigned.

While this curious diplomatic farce was being performed by the Yugoslavs, Rajk was mobilising the Federation of People's

Colleges, the Hungarian-Yugoslav Society, and the Democratic Union of the South Slavs of Hungary to organise a kind of Tito festival in Budapest. The first of these bodies was the special creation of Rajk and was led by his men and indoctrinated, as far as possible, with pro-Tito ideas. The third had been captured by Yugoslav agents who were using it to spread dissatisfaction among the people of Yugoslav origin inhabiting the frontier areas of Hungary.

The Yugoslav Government, of course, was far too anxious to show the splendid figure of the Marshal in Budapest to follow through the threat to call the visit off. And so Tito duly appeared in the Hungarian capital. And if the life of the city was not completely disrupted for the occasion, Rajk had nevertheless organised an impressive show.

After the Budapest proceedings, a hunting party for the Yugoslav delegation was organised near Kelebia. Among the members of the delegation was Yugoslav Minister of the Interior Rankovich, and it was in a carriage of the special Yugoslav train at Kelebia that he and Laszlo Rajk held their second meeting, this time with Lazar Brankov, chief of the U.D.B. in Hungary, as interpreter. It was a meeting which must rank in importance with the first encounter during that summer at Abbazia.

Rankovich stressed again the aim of building a Balkan federation under Tito's leadership. The countries taking part in this federation would halt the development of Socialism and would adopt bourgeois (Western) democracy as their political system. Revelations at Rajk's trial were later to demonstrate that what Rankovich and Rajk really had in mind even then was a personal dictatorship in Hungary on lines similar to those of the Tito dictatorship in Yugoslavia. Rankovich added that the proposed federation of States would command the support of the U.S.

In the early days after liberation, said Rankovich, it had been necessary for the Yugoslav Government to undertake sweeping Socialist measures because the Yugoslav people had demanded them. And they had been markedly friendly to the Soviet Union for the same reason. At that time they had not considered it

necessary to push themselves forward in opposition to the Soviet Union as the leaders of a Balkan grouping because it had looked as if the Right was going to win in a number of Eastern European countries. If this had happened, bourgeois democratic States would have been set up and would readily have joined an American-sponsored military bloc under Yugoslav leadership, directed against Russia.

But since the Communist Parties were consolidating everywhere, including Hungary, Yugoslavia now had to come into the open and seek to change the line of the Hungarian and other parties. She must become the "organiser and guide" of the Peoples' Democracies. Rankovich added that all this had been elaborated by Tito himself.

But this new role was not an easy one to play, he declared, because the Communist Parties were strong and so were the feelings of friendship for the Soviet Union. Some subtlety, therefore, would be required. Yugoslavia's strategic role in the fight against imperialism must be stressed (Rankovich probably had in mind here Ales Bebler's noisy and demonstrative outbursts against the British and Americans in the United Nations). The economic advantages of a Balkan bloc must be canvassed. Sports, cultural and trade union bodies on a Balkan basis must be set up, with the Yugoslavs clearly in the lead.

Finally—and this was the hard core of Rankovich's instructions—immediate steps must be taken to prepare the overthrow of the régime in Hungary. He stated that similar actions were being initiated in other Eastern European countries at the same time, and gave Rajk clearly to understand that the plan was not a plan for Hungary alone.

It was at this moment that Rankovich declared for the first time that the leaders of the Communist Party—Rakosi, Farkas, and Gero—would have to be assassinated. The term "physical liquidation" was used. The meaning, however, was unmistakable.

It is interesting to note that in his concluding remarks to Rajk, Rankovich extended the range of his observations somewhat and declared that Rajk's actions in Hungary were part of a whole series of measures, some of them of international signifi-

cance. He mentioned that the adoption of the Marshall Plan in Europe would aggravate the economic difficulties of the People's Democracies, presumably by splitting Europe's economy in two. This should strengthen the reactionary elements in Eastern Europe, and serve also as a basis for economic unification in the Balkans. Further, the war talk in the West was also useful because it sowed doubt and confusion in the minds of the politically immature, who in their panic might be expected to turn towards the United States. Also, strong propaganda campaigns from the British Labour Party, and the French and Italian (Saragat) Socialists might be expected to help.

At the very end of his remarks he stressed that should Rajk work successfully he could count on the aid of Hungarian-speaking military units from Yugoslavia.

* * *

The Kelebia meeting produced rapid results. By now Rajk had clearly before him the intoxicating vision of complete personal power. Surveying his forces at that moment he had every reason to feel confident. The whole of the State security apparatus, including the police, was in his hands. Paiffy, an absolutely reliable man, had largely rebuilt the cadres of the old fascist Army. In almost every Ministry there were key men who were in the grip of the Yugoslavs and could be counted upon to support a *putsch*. And now Rankovich had indicated clearly that he would send troops across the frontier to help.

Bemused and fascinated by the game he was playing, inflated too by the knowledge that the British Foreign Office and the U.S. State Department were behind him, it is not surprising that Rajk went back to work in Budapest with a will.

Already, before Kelebia, he had carried out a number of special assignments for Rankovich. At the summer elections, for instance, he had argued inside the Communist Party in favour of an electoral campaign directed exclusively against the Right-wing parties, leaving the Right Social Democrats alone. He suggested that this was necessary because the Party could not fight on two fronts at once. He knew, of course, that this strategy was the one best suited to the needs of the Western Powers, who had long since abandoned their friends on the extreme Right and were

now supporting the Right Wing of the Social Democratic Party.

Now, after the meeting at Kelebia, he received a further message from Rankovich, instructing him to do what he could to reduce the influence of the Communist Party among the rank and file of the police. He did this by the simple expedient of dissolving all the party organisations in the police force, including the Communists. Later, the same trick was to have been employed in the Army.

It is here that former Lieutenant, now Colonel, Béla Korondy returns to the scene. It will be recalled that this one-time officer in Horthy's Army joined the Political Department of the new Army under Palfy in August 1945. There he had helped Palfy to bring the old fascist cadres back from retirement. But in November 1946 he had been transferred to the Ministry of the Interior, where Rajk placed him in command of a department of the armed police, with the task of organising special police formations. In the spring of 1947 Rajk instructed him to form a highly mobile and well-armed motorised battalion, its officers to be drawn from Palfy's carefully screened and indoctrinated Frontier Guard. This formation had heavy arms and was a formidable striking force.

In March of 1948 Colonel Korondy was summoned to Rajk's office in the Ministry. Here is how he later described the scene:

"He [Rajk] asked me emphatically, so that one could feel that this was important, whether I was willing to fulfil his personal orders and commands. When I replied in the affirmative he informed me that he was preparing an armed *putsch* against the Government and his intention was for me to organise a special detachment, with whose help I could arrest the members of the Government, in the first place, Ministers Rakosi, Farkas and Gero."

At about this time, too, Rajk had a conversation with Selden Chapin, the U.S. Minister in Budapest.* Rajk, as he was to confess later, told him that he had spoken with Rankovich at Kelebia, and had been informed there that "when the time came for action, the United States would try to time something for them, to tie down the Soviet Union and so to prevent the Soviet

* Mr. Chapin later denied that he had ever been in contact with Rajk.

Union from interfering in the seizure of power in Hungary". Chapin was a little hesitant at first, but later admitted that he knew of the Yugoslav plan, adding that "America would not put any obstacles in the way of carrying out Yugoslavia's policy".

It was also at this time that Rajk tried to carry out the Yugoslav instruction to organise various Balkan associations as a means of strengthening Yugoslav influence among trade unionists, young people, and so forth. But now, for the first time, the conspirators were to meet serious difficulties.

So far, the whole conspiracy had been childishly easy for men schooled in the police forces of Eastern Europe. They had needed nothing more than those elementary precautions outlined in the textbooks of every intelligence organisation in the world. They had placed their men in more key posts than they had dared to hope for. They had the Minister of the Interior, who was also one of the leading figures of the Communist Party and a highly popular personality in the country. Inside the Communist Party, their chief enemy, they had the chief and deputy chief of the Cadres Department—the department responsible for recommending personnel for every kind of job. They had the Frontier Guard and the Political Department of the Army. And they were working not through the Americans or the British, with the constant dangers attendant upon such contacts, but through the unsuspected Yugoslavs—representatives of a State which was still regarded as a model of the new type of Popular Democracy. It was only now, as the year 1948 wore on, that difficulties began to appear.

Early in the year, talks on unification of the Communist and Social Democratic Parties were started, and this led, in June, to the formation of the united Hungarian Workers' Party. In the drastic reshuffle of jobs which ensued, many of Rajk's agents were ousted. Some of the hopes they had placed in the reactionary leadership of the Catholic Church were also shattered when in the early part of the year the Government took serious measures to curb the political activities of the bishops, led by Cardinal Mindszenty, and placed the Church schools under the control of the State.

But these blows were as nothing to an event which took place

at Bucharest in the second half of June 1948. This event was to remove the Tito plot from the back rooms of the Embassies and Foreign Ministries and thrust it, for the first time, into the searching light of day. From June onwards, the political line of Tito and Rankovich was to be discussed openly by working people in every part of the world.

In the course of 1947, nine Communist Parties of Europe (the Soviet, Polish, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Rumanian, Yugoslav, Czechoslovak, French and Italian) had created the Communist Information Bureau, with its headquarters in Belgrade. Now, on June 28, at the conclusion of a secret meeting in the Rumanian capital which the Yugoslavs refused to attend, the Bureau issued a document of lasting historic significance—The Resolution of the Information Bureau on the Situation in the Communist Party of Yugoslavia.

Tito and his friends had known for some time that the blow was coming, because Rajk, as a member of the Political Bureau of the Hungarian Workers' Party, had prior knowledge of the proposed resolution and had dutifully communicated the gist of it to Belgrade. But nothing could be done to stop a move which was to expose Tito and his group and expel them from the ranks of international Communism.

CHAPTER X

THE INFORMATION BUREAU ACTS

FROM WHAT we know of the situation in the Communist Party of Yugoslavia as far back as 1943, we will not be surprised to observe the Communist Party of the Soviet Union paying sharp attention to some of the activities of the Yugoslav leaders during the years 1945 to 1948. At the time, the incidents in question no doubt appeared as weaknesses or mistakes, certainly in large measure a result of that overweening confidence and pride which had become an outstanding characteristic of the group around Tito.

As far back as May 1945 Tito made a speech at Ljubljana which indicated his poor grasp of Marxism and, to put the matter at its mildest, an attitude towards the Soviet Union which must be regarded as remarkable in a leading member of a Communist Party. Speaking of Trieste, to which Yugoslavia was then laying an insistent claim, and which had become a cause of grave international tension, Tito said: "We demand that every one be master in his own house; we will not pay the accounts of others; we do not like to provide the cash for other people's exchanges; *we don't wish to be mixed up in a policy of spheres of interest.*"

This statement could only be interpreted as an allegation that Yugoslavia was in danger of becoming the victim in a squabble between the Soviet Union and the Western powers; but in fact the Soviet Union was supporting the Yugoslav claims to Trieste because they were just and in spite of the intense difficulty of the diplomatic battle. It is not surprising that the Soviet Government had occasion to make some remarks to the Yugoslav leaders over this unguarded and significant outburst by the Marshal.

Yugoslav Foreign Minister Kardelj had an interview on the matter with the Soviet Minister in Belgrade, Sadchikov, on June 5. At that interview Kardelj, taken somewhat off his guard, agreed

with the Soviet criticism of Tito's speech, and in the words of Sadchikov's subsequent report, "stated that Tito . . . is somewhat inclined to consider Yugoslavia as a self-sufficient country, and standing outside relations with the development of the proletarian revolution and Socialism. Secondly, in the Party things had reached such a pass that the Central Committee as an organised political centre had ceased to exist".

This remark of Kardelj's is revealing, both as an appreciation of Marshal Tito and as an illustration of his own duplicity, since there can no longer be any doubt that he himself had exactly the same political position as Tito and the rest of his group at that time.

In the early years after the war Mr. Molotov told Kardelj and Djilas that General Velebit, the Yugoslav Deputy Foreign Minister, was a British agent. The Soviet Government declared that it was prepared to vouch for the fact. So certain, indeed, were the Russians, that by 1948 the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs was refusing to deal with the Yugoslav Government through their Foreign Ministry. Yet the Yugoslav leaders, beyond saying vaguely that Velebit's past life was being investigated, did nothing about the case.*

By 1945, anti-Soviet talk had become general in the circles of the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party. The general line was to call the Soviet Communist Party decadent, to speak of "Soviet chauvinism", and to suggest that Soviet Socialism had ceased to be revolutionary—the standard of the revolution having been taken up by the Yugoslavs. By that time the Central Committee had been almost entirely cleared of the genuine Marxists and packed with Tito's personal supporters.

This Central Committee had originally been elected at a secret conference of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia on October 19-23, 1940. At that time, twenty-two members and sixteen candidates were elected. Of these original full members,

* This incident, and that concerning the Ljubljana speech, appear in the version of the subsequent correspondence between the Central Committees of the Soviet and Yugoslav Communist Parties which was published by the Yugoslavs themselves. There appears to be no reason to doubt their authenticity.

ten were killed in action during the war and sixteen new members were co-opted. Thus, by the end of the war, it had ceased to be a representative body, and it had a majority of co-opted members.

Part of the fight against the Marxists in the Central Committee had centred on Andrija Hebrang and Sreten Zujovich. These two Marxists of long standing had repeatedly opposed Rankovich and Tito in the period when the Tito group was coming under the influence of the British mission. Later, when the deviations of the group had visibly degenerated into betrayal, the criticisms of Hebrang and Zujovich became more outspoken.

A climax was reached at the meeting of the Central Committee held in the first half of April 1948. At that meeting Hebrang and Zujovich made a spirited defence of the policy of the Soviet Union, and supported the criticisms which the Soviet Communist Party was already making of the Yugoslav Party. It is significant to note that the Tito group subsequently admitted in an official document on the Hebrang-Zujovich "case" that one of their criticisms at this meeting was that there was no freedom of discussion inside the Yugoslav Central Committee.

The Tito clique obtained from the obedient majority the appointment of a commission of enquiry, headed by that Ivan Goshnjak who had been a Trotskyist in Spain and was now Tito's deputy. The commission found, not surprisingly, that Hebrang and Zujovich had committed every crime in the political calendar. All the familiar charges of factionalism, hindering economic recovery, treachery and so forth were produced, plus a charge of having dubious relations with the Germans. This, from Rankovich and Goshnjak, was the supreme irony.

Armed with the findings of the commission, Rankovich and his associates were quick to act. Hebrang was dismissed from his post of President of the Economic Council and Zujovich was also stripped of his appointments. Immediately afterwards they were expelled from the Party and thrown into jail.

Something of what was happening from 1945 to 1948 was naturally becoming clear to the Communist Party of the Soviet

Union. They could see some of the unavoidable outward signs which were beginning to demonstrate that the Tito regime was not a genuine Popular Democracy, and that the Yugoslav Communist Party had fallen into the hands of Trotskyists and nationalists.

By the third month of 1948 the accumulation of such evidence was overwhelming. The strange facts manifest for so long in Belgrade and understandably dismissed heretofore as honest mistakes, could no longer be overlooked. Soviet missions in the Yugoslav capital were being trailed and their work hindered. It was clear that members of the Yugoslav Communist Party, which was still an underground conspiracy in organisational form, no longer had the minimum democratic rights. It was clear, too, that the class struggle inside Yugoslavia was being progressively abandoned.

On March 18 Tito was informed that the Soviet military mission, originally sent at the request of the Yugoslavs, would be withdrawn. On March 19 the Soviet civilian specialists who were advising the Yugoslav Government were also recalled. On March 20 Marshal Tito addressed a letter of pained surprise to Mr. Molotov. In reply a letter was sent on March 27 from the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party to Marshal Tito and the Yugoslav Central Committee. This letter outlined some of the aspects of the situation inside Yugoslavia which were causing concern to the Soviet Marxists.

There followed, between March and June 20, an exchange of letters in which the Soviet Communist Party made its position clear beyond a shadow of doubt, while the Yugoslavs confined themselves to an undocumented denial of everything. The other members of the Communist Information Bureau were kept informed of these developments, and when they finally met in Bucharest in the second half of June, they had been able to form a new estimate of Tito's Yugoslavia.

The historic document produced by the Bucharest meeting finally exposed the leadership of the Yugoslav Party for all to see.

"The Information Bureau notes that the leadership of the Yugoslav Communist Party has been carrying out of late, on the

basic questions of foreign and home policy, an incorrect line which represents a deviation from Marxism-Leninism," it declared.

"... In Yugoslavia it is not the Communist Party that is being regarded as the country's principal and leading force, but the People's Front. The Yugoslav leaders belittle the role of the Communist Party, and are in fact dissolving the Party in the People's Front. ... The Information Bureau considers that the bureaucratic regime established inside the Party by the Yugoslav leaders is disastrous for the life and development of the Yugoslav Communist Party. The Party does not have any internal Party democracy; elections are not held; there is no criticism or self-criticism.

"... Such an organisation as the Yugoslav Communist Party cannot be called other than sectarian-bureaucratic. It leads to the Party's liquidation as an active body with an initiative of its own, cultivates military methods of leadership within the Party similar to those that once were implanted by Trotsky. It is quite intolerable that in the Yugoslav Communist Party the most elementary rights of Party members are being trampled upon, that the slightest criticism of the incorrect way in which things are run in the Party is followed by grave repression.

"The Information Bureau regards as disgraceful such facts as the exclusion from the Party and the arrest of the members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia Comrades Zujovich and Hebrang because they dared to criticise the anti-Soviet attitude of the leaders of the Yugoslav Communist Party and to advocate friendship between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. The Information Bureau considers that the Communist Party cannot tolerate such an ignominious, purely despotic terrorist regime. The interests of the very existence and development of the Yugoslav Communist Party demand that an end be put to such a regime."

The Resolution then said that by their actions the Yugoslav leaders had betrayed the cause of the international working class and placed themselves outside the family of fraternal Communist Parties and outside the Information Bureau.

For the Yugoslav leadership it was the end of the period of

facile duplicity. They could no longer present themselves as friends of the Soviet Union and enemies of the imperialist powers, and hope that anyone would believe them.

CHAPTER XI

THE MURDER OF MILOS MOICH

THE EFFECTS produced by the Information Bureau's Resolution were profound. To the Communist movement throughout the world, which had come to regard Tito's Yugoslavia as a heroic model of a whole people striding towards Socialism, the revelation of this greatest betrayal in the history of the working class came as a profound shock. But the Resolution was so explicit in its accusations, and the Yugoslav leaders themselves were soon to demonstrate so clearly where they really stood, that people were quick to understand and learn from what had been revealed.

For honest and clear-headed Yugoslav Communists who had neither been terrorised by Rankovich's political police nor crazed by adoration of the Marshal, the Resolution came as a call to duty. Inside Yugoslavia the first Communist Party members openly to express agreement with the Resolution were seized by the police and thrown into jail. Carefully staged meetings of different bodies throughout the country obediently passed resolutions of worship for Tito. To any Communist trained in the traditions of self-criticism and open recognition, or at least discussion, of mistakes, these servile and grotesquely over-simplified resolutions carried no conviction whatever.

It was clear from the start that Tito and his friends were staging demonstrations of support by the Communist Party which were nothing but a sham on a colossal scale.

For those Yugoslavs outside the country, in Legations and Embassies, or simply living abroad, the Resolution offered a clear chance to work for the salvation of their country. They could resign from their various posts and join the free Yugoslav Communist movement which immediately sprang into being in the Popular Democracies.

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Among those who had been impressed by the Information Bureau's Resolution was a Hungarian of Yugoslav origin named

Milos Moich. This man was active in the Federation of South Slavs of Hungary. He had been an organised Yugoslav agent for some time, but pondering the criticism of the international Communist movement, he determined to break with Tito and make a public statement.

The Presidency of the South Slav Federation had, until the summer, been held by a certain Anton Rob. This Rob, who was a member of the Hungarian Parliament thanks to the intervention on his behalf of Tibor Szonyi in the Communist Party Cadres Department, had been a leading Yugoslav intelligence agent since 1945. After the publication of the Resolution it was decided that the atmosphere had become too oppressive for him in Budapest, and he was provided by the Yugoslav Legation with forged papers and smuggled across the frontier to Yugoslavia in a Legation car.

Now the post had become vacant. Moich had made no secret of his support for the Information Bureau. A movement developed inside the South Slav Federation, where rank and file feeling against Tito was strong, to elect him to the Presidency.

But Moich underestimated the U.D.B. He would have been better advised to tread warily and work on the assumption that the Yugoslavs would go to any lengths to prevent their former agent from telling what he knew. Brankov informed Budapest of the anticipated defection of Moich and in reply received instructions from Minister of the Interior Rankovich to have him either put across the frontier into Yugoslavia, or failing that, murdered. It is interesting to note that it was Andras Szalai, assistant chief of the Cadres Department of the Communist Party, who first came to hear of the proposed nomination of Moich and promptly informed the Legation. He was told in reply, on Brankov's behalf, that Moich would be risking his life if he accepted.

This conversation between Szalai and the Yugoslavs took place on July 8. Two days later, on the 10th, a meeting was held in the room of Yugoslav Minister Mrazovich at the Legation in Dozsa Gyorgy Street. Present were Zivko Boarov, Yugoslav press attaché; Lazar Brankov, Councillor of the Legation and chief of the U.D.B.; Blazich, another U.D.B. officer; and the

Minister himself. At this meeting Boarov was selected to carry out the assassination of Moich, on the grounds that being a Serb he was closest to the intended victim. The Minister handed Boarov his own revolver for the purpose.

That evening Boarov went to Moich's flat. First he tried to persuade him to come to the Legation to talk the matter over, but Moich was at least wary enough to refuse the invitation. Certainly, if he had gone there he would have been kidnapped like Ljubitsa Ribar and delivered in due course to the tender mercies of Rankovich's O.Z.N.A. Then, according to Boarov's later evidence at the Rajk trial, Moich was told that he was playing with his life. A quarrel developed. Finally, Boarov drew Mrazovich's revolver from his pocket, shot Moich, and made his escape.

But the job had been badly bungled. As Boarov left the building he was seen by Moich's woman friend who was on her way up to the flat. When she got there she found Moich lying in a pool of blood. But he was not dead. She asked him if Boarov had shot him, and he was able to answer yes. Then he died.

The woman then called the police and steps were taken at once to secure Boarov's arrest. But that individual had taken refuge in the Yugoslav Legation, where he was protected by extra-territorial rights, and refused to come out.

There ensued a lengthy exchange of Notes between the Hungarian and Yugoslav Governments, with a careful police watch on the Legation to ensure that the bird did not fly away. Finally, the police obtained possession of the person of Mr. Boarov and took him off to jail. He was to become one of the key witnesses in the Public Prosecutor's case against Rajk and Brankov.

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One of the tasks given to the Yugoslav spy ring in Hungary immediately after the publication of the Communist Information Bureau's Resolution was the organisation of widespread propaganda in favour of Tito. This was no longer the simple matter it had been before, for now Tito had been outlawed by the international Communist movement. The great flood of propaganda material in many languages from the printing presses in

Belgrade could only come into the Popular Democracies by illegal means. To bring the material into Hungary the services of General George Palfy were enlisted.

He was asked by a Yugoslav Legation official named Zokalj to select a number of points along the frontier at which parcels of literature could be safely got across. As head of the Frontier Guard of the Hungarian Army, Palfy had little difficulty in arranging the matter. He chose five places on the border, three in Trans-Danubia and two between the Danube and the Tisza. At these places the geographical formation made smuggling particularly easy, and the guards, already few in number, were further reduced for a while on Palfy's instructions.

Supplementing Palfy's efforts, the Yugoslav Legation itself started to bring in supplies of literature. A Legation official named Lazar Torbica was sent back to Belgrade during the summer to collect propaganda material. What he brought back was distributed in Hungary through Boarov's press department to people on a mailing list compiled and supplied by Tibor Szonyi.

But these ingenious and painstaking efforts to influence the people of Hungary, and in particular the Hungarian Communists, in favour of Tito, met with disappointing results. For the Information Bureau's Resolution was being studied throughout the Party and had been thoroughly understood.

CHAPTER XII

THE LAST MEETING—PAKS

DURING AUGUST Brankov visited Belgrade, where he had a long talk with Rankovich about the new situation produced by the Information Bureau Resolution. The chief result of this conversation was a message from Rankovich to Rajk suggesting a meeting to plan a new strategy for their work in Hungary. On his return to Budapest, Brankov delivered the message, and Rajk agreed to a meeting, provided it were held secretly and within the boundaries of Hungary.

His reasons for these stipulations were simple enough. Since June, the Yugoslav diplomats were regarded everywhere with the greatest suspicion. An open meeting at Ministerial level was bound to provoke questions in the Government and the Party. Further, Rajk himself was becoming nervous. The reorganisation following the formation in June of the united Hungarian Workers' Party had dislodged many of his most reliable followers. The discussion of the Resolution was leading people to re-examine some of the recent actions of the Yugoslavs and of those who had been their most outspoken advocates.

And there was more than this. On August 5 the conspiracy suffered its most severe setback to date. By decision of the Government and the leadership of the Hungarian Workers' Party, Rajk was transferred from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

To all appearances this was no demotion. But for Rajk the change was a disaster. No longer could he directly control the police and internal security organisations. More serious, perhaps his successor at the Ministry of the Interior might become suspicious when he found what type of personnel had been collected together there by Rajk. For there was not one promoted worker to be found among the Ministry's top officials. Nearly all those holding key jobs were lawyers or former officials of the Horthy regime, or otherwise of dubious political antecedents.

By no sign had the leaders of the Workers' Party indicated that they were in any way suspicious of Rajk. But Rajk himself could smell suspicion everywhere. He was convinced that the removal to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, if not a result of direct suspicion, was at least a precaution. And for a precaution to be taken, there must be somewhere, in however vague a form, some first doubts about him. . . .

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Rankovich agreed to a meeting inside Hungary, and the organisation was instructed to proceed with the affair. The planning and carrying out of this third meeting between the two men illustrates the high degree of perfection to which the plotters had brought their machine.

At the beginning of October Rajk summoned General Palfy and told him to plan the crossing of the frontier. The need was to find a spot at which a car could cross without being challenged by the guards. It would bear a Hungarian number plate to lessen suspicion should it be seen after getting into Hungary. The crossing must be made somewhere in Trans-Danubia, as far East as possible, in daylight; and the car would have to return on the same day.

Palfy declared that the thing could be done, and three or four days later he was able to report that a spot near the village of Udvar, some ten to twenty kilometres south of the town of Mohacs, had been selected. About two kilometres north of Udvar, the main road from Eszek to Mohacs runs along the frontier line, just inside Hungarian territory. Across the line are Yugoslav farmlands, crossed by a number of tracks. All a car would have to do would be to come up one of these tracks, stop at the main road, which was also the frontier, and after making sure that there were no patrols in sight, roll on to the highway and drive off on Hungarian territory.

Palfy had arranged that the guard in the area should be so depleted in numbers that only two sentries could be sent out daily. The chances of hindrance were thus reduced to a minimum.

This, in fact, was how Rankovich and two companions crossed

the border. But before recounting what took place at the meeting, it is necessary to go back for a moment . . . to the love affair of Yugoslav Minister in Hungary, Karlo Mrazovich.

The girl who had attracted the eye of the imposing and handsome Yugoslav diplomat was a plain little school teacher named Gyorgyi Tarisznyas. Her father was the town clerk at Paks, not far from the Yugoslav border, and Gyorgyi taught in the school there.

Near Paks was the big hunting reserve of Biritopuszta, belonging to a well-connected old aristocrat named Antal Klein. This decaying remnant of the old Hungary had been in the habit since the Dinnyes government had come into power in May 1947 of entertaining its less revolutionary members at hunting parties. At these parties, too, could sometimes be found diplomats, and old man Klein, being a host of long experience, went to some trouble to see that among his guests were people who could converse with the foreigners in their own tongues. Gyorgyi Tarisznyas could speak some foreign languages, and so she had been invited to the estate one day in January 1948. On this occasion Mrazovich was of the company.

There is little point in speculating about the exact nature of the relationship between Gyorgyi and the Yugoslav Minister. Suffice it to say that they met again shortly afterwards at a reception given by the Polish Legation at the Park Club in Budapest, and after that Mrazovich was frequently to be seen at Gyorgyi's home in Paks. It was common talk in the town that he wanted to marry her.

One day late in September, as she was returning from her work at the school, Gyorgyi met Mrazovich near her house. Together they went to the Baumann Restaurant, where Antal Klein was taking a meal. Mrazovich complained that since the Resolution of the Communist Information Bureau he had great difficulty in meeting his Hungarian friends. Would Klein be good enough to permit him to come down with some friends to hunt one day? And could Gyorgyi accompany him? The answer in both cases was in the affirmative.

Here we can quote the evidence given later by Antal Klein himself at the trial of Rajk:

"Mrazovich asked that, as he wanted to come down in his car with one or two friends, I should do him the favour of coming by carriage to the so-called Road 6, the main Budapest-Szekszard road, to the 116th kilometre stone, where the lane meets the road. I should wait for him there and take him further as no car could pass along the sandy lane. He asked that I should drive the horse and carriage because he wanted to hunt incognito. I promised to do this.

"A few days later, at the beginning of October, I went to the main road, Road Six, with my carriage at the stipulated time, where the main road crosses the lane. About half an hour later Minister Mrazovich arrived. He and a man wearing a green felt coat and black spectacles, whom I did not know, got out of the car. After a short greeting both of them seated themselves in my carriage. I drove the carriage along the lane as far as the edge of Biritopuszta. I stopped a good distance from the buildings.

"They got off, together with Gyorgyi Tarisznyas, took with them the food brought by Gyorgyi Tarisznyas as well as two guns, and went into the hunting reserve. They asked me to wait for them. They would return in about two to two and a half hours' time, when I should take them back to the car on the main road. Then they left. What happened then I do not know. They returned two and a half hours later and then I took them back by carriage to the main road."

In her evidence Gyorgyi Tarisznyas told how they reached a keeper's hut, and found a man in hunting clothes, carrying a gun, waiting for them there. This fact appeared to indicate that old Klein knew rather more than he cared to admit in court about the real purpose of the alleged hunting trip.

Gyorgyi described the man as of medium height and about forty years of age. When shown a photograph of Yugoslav Minister of the Interior Rankovich, she recognised the huntsman who had met them at the hut. Let us quote her evidence at the trial:

"Mrazovich asked me to stay in the keeper's hut and prepare the snack. It struck me that this man had not been introduced to me, neither had the other one when he got out of the car. Then they talked, walking up and down in front of the keeper's

hut, and also farther away from the hut. Now and then they came close to me. I heard that one of the men was speaking in some Slav language. I am certain that it was not Russian, but perhaps Serb. The man in the green felt coat spoke Hungarian and Mrazovich interpreted between the two.

"I could understand a few words of the conversation when they came near me, for instance that Mrazovich was speaking about Yugoslavia and said that action had to be taken. The other man, that is the one I did not know, spoke in that Slav language, so I could not understand what he was saying. Then they spoke about someone called Palfy who would be made Minister of Defence. I also heard the names of Ministers Rakosi and Farkas mentioned a number of times.

"When they had finished their talk they came into the keeper's hut and ate a snack. Then we started on our way back to the carriage. The unknown man, however, went to his two companions and together they went in the direction of Csampa-puszta."

Presumably unbeknown to her, the little school teacher from Paks had been thrust that afternoon into the maelstrom of history. While she was preparing the food and grumbling to herself (she told the court later that she was in a bad mood because no one took any notice of her), the third meeting between Rankovich and Rajk was taking place, and plans were being laid for a military *coup d'état* and the assassination of the leaders of Hungary.

At the meeting Rankovich started off by outlining in detail to Rajk Tito's plan for the future inside Yugoslavia. We shall have occasion a little further on to observe how this plan actually worked out in practice. Suffice it to say here that Rankovich gave Rajk a preliminary insight into the technique to be adopted to take the people of Yugoslavia out of the Socialist camp into that of the imperial powers.

Rankovich declared that the Information Bureau's Resolution did not affect the objective of a Balkan federation, led by Yugoslavia: only the methods of bringing it about had now to be modified. It was Tito's firm conviction that since the publication of the Information Bureau Resolution there could no longer

be any question of taking over power in the Popular Democracies in a peaceful way. The State power would have to be seized by means of a *coup d'état*.

He directed Rajk's attention to the economic measures being undertaken by the Western Powers under the terms of the Marshall Plan, designed to curb trade with Eastern Europe and thus provoke economic difficulties there. He added that full advantage should also be taken of the unprecedentedly violent campaign against the Government which had been started a little earlier by Cardinal Mindszenty. This attack, said Rankovich, was not happening as a result of the personal ideas and convictions of Mindszenty. The Vatican was much concerned with halting the development of Socialism in the Peoples' Democracies. And whereas Mindszenty's opposition to the nationalisation of the Church schools had only produced one small peasant rising at Pocspetri earlier in the year, the new, bigger campaign should produce similar disturbances in every town and village in the country.

Rajk could count on armed Yugoslav help from the very moment the projected *putsch* started, said Rankovich. Tito had authorised him to state that units of Hungarian-speaking Yugoslavs would be held ready just across the frontier, dressed in Hungarian uniforms. To make doubly sure, these units would be stiffened with Serb officers.

At the same time as the armed rising, it was essential to arrest the Government and kill its leading members, Rakosi, Farkas and Gero. Of course, said Rankovich, any appearance of brutality must be avoided. Perhaps it could be explained that one of them met with an accident, the second had died of some illness, and the third had committed suicide or had been shot while trying to escape.

Tito regarded these three leaders as so dangerous that he absolutely insisted upon their "liquidation", and suggested for the purpose a unit consisting of picked Yugoslavs, "because they have excellent experience from the partisan struggles of how to get rid of people, and the supporters of the Resolution of the Information Bureau who had been arrested or had tried to escape could also talk about this experience".

Rankovich also said that measures had already been taken to get into touch with former military units of the Horthy regime which were now stationed in the Anglo-American Zones of Germany and Austria. These units would be brought into Hungary through Yugoslavia and would be available to take part in the *putsch*. Giving evidence at his trial later, Rajk admitted that he knew such fascist units would have committed "acts of the greatest cruelty and barbarism against those democratic forces which have pushed them out of the country".

Rankovich also announced that Kardelj and Djilas had worked out a plan whereby Yugoslavia would revive the charge that Hungary was seeking a revision of the frontiers. This charge, that Hungary sought to incorporate those Yugoslav territories inhabited by Hungarians, would be followed by deliberately provoked frontier incidents which would then be blamed upon the Hungarians. We shall see in a moment how this line of attack was developed.

After the meeting, Rajk returned to Budapest a troubled man. He was under pressure from his inexorable Yugoslav masters to lead a rising of the utmost danger. He believed that he himself was already under suspicion. But there was no retreat and no way out.

CHAPTER XIII

SPYING IN MOSCOW

RANKOVICH HAD mentioned to Rajk at Paks that Yugoslavia was pushing ahead with espionage and the organisation of rebellion in the other Popular Democracies. It was also the case that the Yugoslavs were doing quite an amount of Britain's and America's espionage for them in Moscow. Before the publication of the Information Bureau's Resolution, Yugoslav diplomats had been warmly received as allies in Moscow and were thus in a position to do a certain amount of quite effective spying if they wanted to. With the publication of the Resolution, however, the Soviet authorities took precautions as far as the Yugoslav Embassy was concerned. And so it was that Rankovich, here again, turned to his Hungarian friends.

Among the agents recruited for the Yugoslavs by George Palffy was an officer named Dezso Nemeth. In the autumn of 1946 he became Chief-of-Staff of the Frontier Guard, and early in 1947 he was put in direct touch with Brankov, with instructions to give him any information he might require. From then until May 1948 Nemeth fulfilled this assignment, apparently to the satisfaction of the U.D.B., for in May the U.D.B. asked Palffy to get him transferred if possible to the Hungarian Embassy in Moscow as Military Attaché.

As chief of the Army's Political Department, Palffy vouched for Nemeth and the transfer went through. Before going, Nemeth was instructed to continue his espionage for the Yugoslavs in the Soviet capital. Palffy stressed the need to establish close relations with the other Military Attachés in Moscow, who would be able to give him useful information. Among the items regarded as interesting to the Yugoslav (and presumably the American) intelligence services were the organisational structure, armament, supply position, and discipline of the Soviet Army.

Here is Dezso Nemeth's subsequent evidence at Rajk's trial concerning his activities as Military Attaché:

"I entered into contact with Karlo Mrazovich, Yugoslav Ambassador to Moscow, in the spring of 1949 in Moscow.* We first met at a reception. Mrazovich approached me, and referring to Palffy and Brankov, told me that on the instructions of the Yugoslav intelligence organs and in their name, he would establish contact with me. After that he asked me what instructions Palffy had given to me. I told him about the instruction I had received from Palffy, and Mrazovich asked me, on the basis of these instructions, to hand over to him the espionage material I had collected until that time.

"On the occasion of the next meeting which we had fixed before, and which was also at a reception, I handed over to Mrazovich in a closed envelope the espionage material containing data about the Soviet Army that I had collected. Mrazovich told me then that for reason of secrecy we would in future always meet at receptions and we would use these good opportunities to talk with one another without attracting any attention.

"Mrazovich commissioned me to try to get secret data about the Soviet Army from the officers of the Ministry of Armed Forces of the Soviet Union and instructed me to find out the political views, concerning Tito's policy, of the Military Attachés of the Popular Democracies and the personnel of the Hungarian Embassy in Moscow.

"I succeeded in collecting this espionage data because of the confidence shown by the officers of the Soviet Army and the Military Attachés of the People's Democracies towards me in my capacity as the Military Attaché of a friendly country. I handed over the espionage data I collected to Mrazovich on the occasion of our next meeting by word of mouth and again in writing, in a sealed envelope: these data were almost entirely of a secret nature."

The case of Dezso Nemeth is instructive in that it helps to indicate the enormous value to the imperial Powers of the tame Yugoslav intelligence service. It illustrates, also, what a severe

* Mrazovich had by this time been transferred from Budapest to Moscow. In October 1949, after the Rajk trial had revealed his espionage activities, the Soviet Government demanded his removal from the Soviet Union.

defeat for those Powers was the publication of the Information Bureau's Resolution, which hamstrung the activities abroad of the U.D.B.

CHAPTER XIV

LAZAR BRANKOV REPENTS

ON OCTOBER 27 there took place in Budapest an event which thoroughly frightened every one of the members of the conspiracy in the Hungarian Workers Party. On that day a number of Yugoslav officials signed a public declaration in which they broke with Tito and proclaimed their support for the criticisms of the Communist Information Bureau.

That this should occur was not surprising, since a number of Yugoslav Communists in different parts of the world had already done the same thing. But there was one name, at the top of the list, which frightened the plotters out of their wits. It was the name of Lazar Brankov.

Brankov, as we know, was the head of the U.D.B. in Budapest. In the absence of Mrazovich he was now Chargé d'Affaires at the Legation. He had been at the very centre of the conspiracy from the beginning, and he knew enough to land at least twenty people in jail on charges of treason. Would he speak?

Terrible uncertainty was worsened four days later when a long statement appeared under Brankov's signature in *Szabad Nep*, the organ of the Hungarian Workers Party. It was an uncompromising and violent attack upon Tito, and it gave some new facts about the repression inside Yugoslavia. Clearly, the whole conspiracy was about to go up in smoke.

"The Resolution of the Information Bureau came as an aid and encouragement to the Communist Parties of the world to examine, with Bolshevik self-criticism, whatever defects should appear in their work," wrote Brankov.

"Influenced by the Resolution, every Communist Party in the world, with the exception of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, set about improving the quality of their work with great intensity. . . . The Tito clique avoids the issue and talks about

'injuries' and 'the honour of the nation', vilely accusing the Soviet Union of harbouring 'covert intentions', and at the same time it stabs the international working-class movement treacherously in the back by charging the Soviet Union with impeding the building of Socialism in Yugoslavia."

So far, things looked pretty black. But there was far worse to come.

"Our successes, especially those achieved during the people's war of liberation, and the acknowledgement we received for them from all over the world, led us to believe little by little that we were superior to other people. As a result, vigilance in our work slackened and we did not see the mistakes and errors we had committed in transforming and rebuilding our country. A severe blow had to be dealt to awaken us. . . . The Tito group has undermined the national and political independence of the peoples of Yugoslavia.

" . . . In the course of my talks with leading personalities of the Tito group in recent months, it has struck me that they all seemed to be interested in one particular thing: whether in the other Communist Parties, and in their leadership, there were people with anti-Soviet opinions, and how such people could be contacted.

"Rankovich has sent confidential telegrams in different directions telling us to denigrate both those comrades who, on account of their uncompromising internationalist stand, have either been killed or arrested in Yugoslavia, and those who have fled abroad in order to escape the increasingly savage terror in Yugoslavia. . . . Upon my comrades and me, who have signed the statement refusing to follow the Tito clique along the road of treachery, the title of embezzlers has been conferred by Rankovich. Yet it is known that neither I nor my comrades have ever been treasurers or handled public funds that could be embezzled.

" . . . The thugs of Rankovich are killing people off without legal procedure and then reporting that they have fled abroad. Relatives of the arrested or the assassinated are informed that they had better not try to make enquiries. Colonel-General Arso Jovanovich, the hero of the War of Liberation, was

assassinated by order, after which they arranged what amounted to a real comedy, pretending that he had tried to slip across the border. This comedy was staged by officers of the U.D.B., who were promoted as a reward for it.

"The prisons of Yugoslavia are crowded with Communists who have remained faithful to the international working-class movement. In the 'Glavnyacha', the ill-famed prison of the late Kingdom of Yugoslavia, there are imprisoned such popular figures as Andrija Hebrang and Sreten Zujovich, both of them members of the Political Bureau of the Party. Also in prison are, among others, Bozha Ljukovich, Vice-Premier of the Government of Montenegro, and those members of the Governments of Montenegro and Bosnia who had resigned their posts.

"Prisons all over the country teem with members of various village, town and district committees of the Party. . . . Among those recently arrested are Sima Balen, director of Tanjug, as well as Djuro Shpolarich, member of the Central Committee of the Trade Unions, Comrade Shotra, author of *Heroes of the People's War of Liberation*, Comrade Novakov, the secretary of the Control Committee in Vojvodina, and others.

" . . . Lies are circulated in the country alleging that the People's Democracies have claims on Yugoslav territories and that these claims are supported by the Soviet Union. . . . Tito and his clique, who have built up their authority with the blood of our peoples, at the price of the lives of tens of thousands of Party members, now want to use this authority to break up the ideology of the international working class movement and to bring our country into the imperialist camp."

The statement ended with a glowing tribute to Stalin and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The outlook for the conspirators was certainly gloomy.

But they had no cause for concern. What they did not know as they read *Szabad Nep* on the morning of October 31, but were to find out soon afterwards, was that the fiery statement of Lazar Brankov was nothing but an extremely cunning and carefully elaborated provocation worked out between Rankovich in Belgrade and the Yugoslav Legation in Budapest. Brankov was not changing sides. He did not agree with the Communist Informa-

tion Bureau. But he was being sent among the Yugoslav Communist refugees to continue his work there.

Re-read the *Szabad Nep* statement in the light of that fact and it emerges as one of the most cynically hypocritical documents in modern history. For Brankov's statement was in fact the absolute truth about Tito's Yugoslavia.

Tito and his clique were arrogant, they were searching for anti-Soviet elements in other Communist Parties, they were arresting and murdering their opponents and filling the jails with Communists. It was true that Arso Jovanovich had been assassinated and Hebrang and Zujovich jailed. And it was true that Tito was spreading the lie that neighbouring countries had designs on Yugoslav territory. There was everything in the statement to make an honest man break with Tito. And it was in order to work more effectively for him that Brankov had published it.

* * *

If Brankov's subsequent evidence at the trial is to be believed—though it is by no means trustworthy on the point—Rankovich had not found it easy to persuade him to take this extremely dangerous step.

In October, shortly after the secret meeting at Paks, Brankov had paid another visit to Belgrade and had there received instructions to pretend to change sides. The aim was to spy on the Yugoslav Communist refugees, and if possible collect material which the Yugoslav Government could use in order to prove that the Hungarian Government was intervening in Yugoslav internal affairs. The change would also enable him to keep an eye on Rajk without arousing suspicion.

Brankov was unwilling to exchange the complete safety conferred by his immunity as a diplomat for the exposed position of an expatriate who would be subject to Hungarian law and certainly the object of the most careful political scrutiny by the Hungarian Workers Party.

When he got back to Budapest he thought things over and could not summon up the necessary courage to obey his orders. After a fortnight a letter arrived for him from Rankovich via the diplomatic bag. Rankovich, the master-spy and police chief,

knew his man. If Brankov was unwilling to pretend to support the Communist Information Bureau, he said, he would be treated by the Yugoslav authorities as if he really supported it. Further, measures would be taken against his family in Yugoslavia. Rankovich knew that Brankov was a coward and that only threats would move him in such a crisis. And Brankov immediately made the declaration of October 27.

It was not until a few days later, during November, that he had a chance of telling the apprehensive Rajk that there was nothing to worry about. This he did when they met by chance in a corridor at the Workers Party headquarters. It is almost comic to note that Rajk betrayed signs of considerable fear at this unexpected encounter. He, the simple plotter, did not yet know that Brankov had gone one better and was now playing a double game.

Brankov's contact with Belgrade was now maintained by means of an ingenious system of timed meetings with a member of the Legation staff in remote open land on the Gugger Hill. His task of maintaining contact with Palfy, Rajk, Szonyi, Szalai and the others was, of course, easy enough. But his own position was exposed in the extreme. It is certain that Lazar Brankov, in those last brief months before his arrest, was a nervous and unhappy man.

THE PUTSCH IS READY

AND NOW WE are nearing the climax of these extraordinary events. Rajk is back from Paks with clear instructions to organise an armed *putsch* as soon as he can. Lazar Brankov has made his public renunciation of Tito and is still in Budapest, keeping an eye on the preparations. Szonyi and Szalai continue to scheme at the Cadres Department to get their men into key jobs and, what has now become far more difficult, to keep them there. And General George Palfy now enters the picture once more, as the organiser of the *putsch* itself.

As we have already seen, difficulties had been piling up for the plotters since the beginning of 1948, and by early 1949 Laszlo Rajk was in a state of gloom regarding the possibilities of success. Brankov was increasingly certain that he himself was under suspicion and liable to be trapped at any time. He had the feeling, and he was right, that the Workers' Party was only pretending to trust him.

Only the inexorable grip of Rankovich kept the plotters moving. Not one of them dared to defy the insistent instructions and urgings which descended with ever-greater frequency from the U.D.B. in Belgrade.

At the end of October and again in November, Rajk was visited by Brankov and Yugoslav Minister Mrazovich. Belgrade was dissatisfied, they said, with the slow progress in Hungary. The troop concentrations across the Yugoslav border were fairly advanced. Rajk replied by quoting his difficulties. Cardinal Mindszenty, who had been greatly counted on to assist, had been arrested: the formation of the Hungarian People's Front had greatly strengthened the power of the Government: a thorough sifting of personnel in the Army and the Civil Service had winkled out still more of Rajk's men. It was all very difficult and Rankovich was being unreasonable.

But Rankovich was not taking no for an answer. In the

early months of 1949 he goaded Rajk and Palfy forward, partly with glowing tales of big troop formations ready to cross the frontier once the *putsch* started in Budapest, partly by assurances that the British and Americans had promised to organise a diversion to distract the attention of the Soviet Union, and partly by direct threats.

Palfy was instructed to draw up a list of Army units which could be relied upon to seize key points in the capital and occupy the revolutionary working-class suburbs of Diosgyor, Salgotarjan and Ozd. He prepared a detailed plan for the occupation of the Workers Party headquarters, the Ministries of Defence and the Interior, the State Defence Authority, the Radio, the offices of *Szabad Nep*, the main railway stations, and other strategic points and buildings. The signal for the *putsch* was to be the murder of the three leaders of the Hungarian Workers Party—Matyas Rakosi, Erno Gero, and Mikhail Farkas.

A number of different units were contemplated for the execution of this task. Colonel Bela Korondy had been charged with the formation of three groups of about a dozen men each—fascists from Horthy's old gendarmerie—who could be trusted to seize the three Communist leaders and kill them on the spot. On the other hand, Rankovich had suggested that this all-important task should be entrusted to a picked group of Yugoslavs who could be sent to the Hungarian capital specially for the purpose. In the end, he actually sent to Budapest two experts in political assassination with the task of watching the movements of the three intended victims in order to work out a fool-proof routine to kill them.

The first move in the *putsch* had to be carried out on a day when all three were sure to be in the capital for a meeting of the Party's Political Committee or for a Council of Ministers. At Rajk's suggestion the hour was tentatively fixed at 11 p.m., about the time when they could be expected to go home. The special assassination groups were to attack and disarm the staffs in each of their residences and then murder them. A few days before May 1, Rajk discussed the matter in detail with Korondy, who reported that the groups would be ready.

Palfy, meanwhile, had perfected his military plans. The *putsch*, starting with the murder of Rakosi, Gero and Farkas in the evening, was to be completed by the following day when selected Army units from the provinces would reach the capital. Szonyi, meanwhile, was told to prepare for a Party Congress which would meet sometime during the summer and legalise the *putsch* in retrospect. This faked Congress would confirm Rajk in the leadership of the Party.

While all this was going on, between November 1948 and May 1949, it began to look as if the promised American efforts to distract the attention of the Soviet Union were getting under way. The Berlin crisis had started in June of 1948. By the end of the year the warlike threats in London and Washington had reached the highest pitch since the beginning of the cold war. The war atmosphere had become so serious that a world-wide peace movement came into being to combat it.

In Washington in particular, threats to bomb Russia, to smash a way into Berlin, to fight the Soviet Union before she had the atom bomb, became current among leading Congressmen. An atmosphere was created in which events of the kind which were being planned by the Yugoslavs and Americans could most easily take place.

On May 1 in Budapest the Hungarian working people celebrated their traditional holiday with a vast and enthusiastic parade. On the tribune, receiving the cheers and applause of the great crowd, stood Laszlo Rajk among the leaders of the Hungarian Workers Party. In the course of the parade, Rajk retired to the back of the tribune with General Palfy and discussed the fact that it no longer seemed possible to postpone the *coup*. Rankovich had insisted on fixing the date himself—presumably in consultation with the Americans—and only his signal was now awaited. The two men remarked to each other that the atmosphere of suspicion was increasing day by day, and not only towards Rajk himself. There were now signs that Palfy was also regarded with distrust by the Party.

While the two conspirators laid their plans behind the gaily decorated tribune, the people of Budapest marched happily past, shouting slogans for peace and for the building of Socialism.

It will be recalled that Rankovich had told Rajk at the Paks meeting that frontier provocations would be organised and would be blamed on the Hungarians. These acts of terrorism on the frontiers started during April.

On the night of the 25th two Hungarian frontier guards were shot at point-blank range across the boundary line by Yugoslavs. Already, four days previously, an attempt had been made to put a concentration of agents across the frontier during the night. No less than one hundred were captured by the Hungarian authorities. They consisted of former Horthy gendarmes, officers, soldiers and other fascists who had fled to the West with the Germans.

In both of these cases strong Notes of protest were sent by the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Yugoslav Government. Rajk, the Foreign Minister, was particularly scrupulous about the formulation of these Notes, constantly having them redrafted until the wording had just that sharpness and political point which would best serve their purpose. He knew, of course, that the provocations were being planned by Rankovich in order to stir up the frontier population and thus help the *putsch* that he himself was to lead.

On May 14 a Hungarian soldier standing 600 metres inside Hungarian territory was shot at and killed from the Yugoslav side. "The Hungarian Government rightly expected that the Government of the civilised and democratic people of Yugoslavia would take all measures to end the intolerable situation on the frontier," wrote Foreign Minister Rajk. "But in each case the Yugoslav Government ignored the events brought to their attention."

On May 30 Yugoslav troops again opened fire across the border line and killed a Hungarian soldier named Miklos Vetesi. Again a stinging but quite hypocritical protest went out from Rajk's office to the authorities in Belgrade.

Only the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Big Four in May finally lessened the intolerable international tension. It began to look as if the conspirators had missed their chance.

But Laszlo Rajk, spurred on no doubt by the desperation which came from the increasingly certain knowledge that the

authorities were about to act, informed Palfy and the other leading conspirators that the general aim should be to start the action in the last days of May or the beginning of June.

CHAPTER XVI

THE ARRESTS

BUT AT LAST the authorities decided that the time had come when the conspiracy must be smashed.

Both Brankov and Rajk were right in sensing that they had been under suspicion for some time. Rajk, in particular, exposed to the searching test of constant political debate in the Party's Political Bureau, must have found the strain of the last months intolerable. To the acute and intelligent men by whom he was surrounded (far more cultured and penetrating Marxists than he could ever pretend to be) his actions, the political line that he was forced by Rankovich to adopt, and the weakness in his theoretical understanding which the complex and developing situation undoubtedly began to reveal, all served to confirm the first vague suspicions against him. And the conclusion reached in this way was being further confirmed and strengthened by the evidence the police had been steadily collecting.

At last the police put into operation their carefully timed plan to mop up the conspirators. On May 18 both Tibor Szonyi and Andras Szalai were arrested.*

To Rajk, the arrest of Szonyi and Szalai must have been a certain warning that he himself could not escape for long. Whatever the police may have known before, it was hardly to be expected that either Szalai or Szonyi would refrain from incriminating Rajk without delay as the chief of the conspiracy and the man whose orders they had been carrying out.

In fact, Rajk had only twelve days to wait. In the early hours of Monday, May 30, he was quietly arrested at his home.

Paul Justus was taken into custody on June 18. He had been

* At the time of his arrest Szalai still had on his desk a large photograph of Endre Sagvari, the Communist martyr killed by the gendarmerie in the garden of the Buda pastry shop in 1944. Szalai had been in the habit of pointing to that picture when members of the Party came to him, and sternly exhorting them to be true Communists like Sagvari.

at his office at the Hungarian Radio during the day. On his way home by car, he saw a police car draw ahead and signal his chauffeur to the side of the road. In two moments Justus had changed cars and was on his way to jail.

George Palfy was meanwhile in an agony of suspense. His agony was to last one month more. It was not until July 18 that he was arrested. And on the following day Lazar Brankov, former Yugoslav Chargé d'Affaires and chief of the U.D.B. in Hungary, was also taken to jail.

Throughout this period the lesser conspirators were being mopped up, and as they waited their turn, in the hope that they would be missed but in the knowledge that it was highly unlikely, they tried in their various ways to appear utterly innocent.

The plot, of course, had become a matter for some discussion among those who had known the arrested men. The remaining plotters tried to put on airs of flippancy and light-heartedness. No one was more punctilious in applying the new regulations for the security of Government offices which were naturally enough introduced at this time than the very men whose conspiracy had been designed to seize every Ministry in the capital. One man, at the Prime Minister's office, became a famous model for security-mindedness. But it did not save him from detection and capture. Another, at the Radio, developed his own line in jokes about the probable guilt of every one in sight, and kept the whole place laughing until he, too, was picked up.

From the Premier's office, the Ministries of the Interior, Foreign Affairs, and Public Welfare, from the Hungarian-Soviet Oil Co., the Army, the Police, the Federation of South Slavs, and many other organisations, the plotters were winkled out and rounded up. The cleansing took some months to complete, but it was a thorough job.

The Hungarian police have naturally not revealed the shape of the investigations and the order in which the facts were disclosed. But it can be assumed that quite a number of the arrested men were perfectly ready to betray their fellow-conspirators and attempt to shift their guilt on to every one in sight. This process, coupled with the most careful and painstaking collection of direct evidence over what must have

been a considerable period of time, enabled the Public Prosecutor's office to build up a damning and water-tight case.

THE RAJK TRIAL

THE TRIAL of Laszlo Rajk and seven of his fellow-conspirators opened in the main hall of the metal workers' trade union in Budapest at 9 a.m. on Friday, September 16, 1949. The case was tried by the Special Council of the Budapest People's Court, presided over by Dr. Peter Janko, who sat with four lay magistrates. The various charges of sedition, war crimes, espionage and attempting to overthrow the democratic order in Hungary were presented by the Public Prosecutor, Dr. Gyula Alapi. The defendants were represented by counsel of their own choice.

Side by side with Rajk on the row of chairs for the accused in front of the judges' platform sat George Palfy, Lazar Brankov, Dr. Tibor Szonyi, Andras Szalai, Milan Ognjenovich, Bela Korondy, and Paul Justus. In the body of the court were several hundred members of the public—workers from the factories of Budapest, office employees, and peasants from the neighbouring countryside. There were forty-seven foreign press representatives from fourteen countries, in addition to the press of Hungary.

Little purpose would be served by attempting to paint a picture here of the full human drama which was played out in court during the week of the trial. Everything went to make a trial unique in modern history: the scope of the plot, its international ramifications, the prominence of the accused, the close attention of the whole world. Our narrative so far has given us the essence of the proceedings, since the details of the conspiracy that we have outlined were nearly all revealed in the lengthy personal statements of the accused, and the evidence of numerous witnesses.

It is well known that, without exception, the eight plotters pleaded guilty and proceeded to confess everything they knew.

And this fact, common enough in political trials of this character, provoked as usual a spate of partly genuine and partly ill-intentioned speculations in the Western countries. Yet there is nothing mysterious at all in these confessions.

First let us quote Dr. Tibor Szonyi himself on the subject:

"I have during my examination here, as earlier before the investigation authorities, perfectly sincerely and frankly told everything I know and knew in connection with the charge. However, the fact that even before my arrest I lacked an inner conviction of the rightness of what I was doing, contributed to a great extent to the fact that I could sincerely and openly expose what was known to me. I have repented of my actions and tried with all sincerity—as far as this is possible so belatedly and under such circumstances—to make amends for my guilty actions.

"I consider it necessary to state this here and to emphasise it, because I know from experience that in trials of a political character certain circles and certain expert writers have the habit of spreading the story that confessions of guilt of the accused are made under duress, or are due to certain drugs, injections or suggestion. I am a physician and a neurologist, and I have known for a long time that such things are impossible. And now I have learnt from my own experience that such things are out of the question. The sole reason for my sincere confession is that I made up my mind to be sincere, in order to make good what little can be made good at all in connection with such a grave crime."

To this Lazar Brankov added in the course of his last speech that he considered it necessary to state that he had spoken the truth, but not under any coercion. "This is my answer to those who will say that I confessed something under coercion, or that some narcotic medicine was used. I consider it my duty to declare squarely here, in front of the People's Court, why I have told about everything and why I have told about everything sincerely."*

Brankov then went on to explain at some length that he had an extraordinarily bad conscience and hoped by confessing to

* The stilted language of Brankov's testimony is accounted for by the fact that it was given in Hungarian, which he speaks imperfectly.

put right some of the wrong he had done to the people of Hungary.

We need not be too much concerned for the moment with the belated repentance of men who, had they won, would certainly have shown not an iota of mercy towards their unfortunate victims. What concerns us, since it appears to puzzle so many people, is the reason for the confessions. And before going further, it can be said that not one of the foreign, and frequently hostile, press representatives at the trial believed for a moment that either drugs, terror or physical violence had been used to obtain them.

All of the accused looked far fitter than one would have expected of men who had been under the strain of expecting shortly to be condemned to death. All of them spoke coherently and at length, and betrayed all the small signs of temperamental and psychological differentiation which would not be present had they been hypnotised or otherwise not in control of their faculties.

The nonsense about drugs and beatings, then, can be consigned to limbo with the baby-talk about unexpected and overwhelming kindness by the jailers being responsible for the psychological breakdown, and hence the confessions, of the prisoners.

These people confessed, primarily, because they were confronted with absolutely overwhelming and inescapable proof. It is absurd to imagine that a police service capable of unearthing a conspiracy as carefully concealed as this would suddenly be seized with paralysis when it came to collecting evidence. It is obvious that once the plot was suspected and the plotters kept under observation, they were bound to give unlimited evidence against themselves.

Secondly, we are not dealing here with a band of idealistic brothers, but with participants in a dog-eat-dog game of espionage, where anyone would betray his fellow if he thought it would mitigate his own crime. All their lives these men had been cheating and betraying, and it would be fantastic if now, in the biggest and most dangerous crisis of all, they suddenly adopted a high and unshakable moral tone.

Thirdly, there can be little doubt that the enormity of the crime they had committed preyed heavily on the minds of some at least of the eight. And the probability of this is surely underlined on almost every page of this narrative.

Several of the accused pleaded in mitigation of their offence that they had been the victims of blackmail. It is true that Rajk, Szalai, and Justus were threatened from the beginning with exposure, and once on the slippery path of espionage, the others, too, were unable to escape. But the answer to this is that, though they may have been forced to spy, they could not be forced to work their way up inside the Communist movement and the Government service. But they did work their way up because they were ambitious and greedy men.

There is little enough to choose between these people, but Rajk did stand out from his fellows in certain respects during the trial. He played the role of the adventurer on the heroic scale—the man who staked everything on a throw of the dice, lost, and would now meet his debt like a gentleman. He refused to plead for mercy and did not support his lawyer's appeal to a higher court. But Rajk was not a gentleman, and the public prosecutor had a penetrating remark on the subject:

"What sort of people, what sort of group is this?" he asked. "In the dock there are mean, petty sneaks and big political agents; but this difference between Ognjenovich and Laszlo Rajk, for instance, is only a matter of quantity and not of quality; for Laszlo Rajk began his career not as the candidate for the premiership of the counter-revolution, not as a big political agent but as a petty police informer. And, indeed, it is not this that is the real difference between the individual accused, but the fact that there are among them common fascists who hate the people, like Palfy and Korondy, and there are among them some who practised the trade of the traitor, infiltrating into the Labour movement.

"A common feature is, however, that we are dealing with the scum of society, all of whom became what they are in the 'thirties in the atmosphere of growing fascism. Szonyi and Rajk, Justus and Szalai, at that time were swept along to the fringe of the Labour movement, but at the moment of the first

trials they became traitors because of their cowardly and vacillating characters and their rootless personalities."

It is difficult to understand why people expected, or pretend to expect, anything but abject confessions from men of this kind. What right has one to anticipate principled or consistent behaviour in such a situation from men whose lives have been nothing but inconsistency and a monstrous and total denial of every principle? Could one reasonably expect that Szalai, who gave away the plan for the escape from Satoraljaúhely prison, should suddenly become a man at his own trial and fight for those ideas of Tito's which he had claimed to believe in?

Could one expect Rajk, whose treachery dated back to 1931, suddenly to be loyal enough to his fellow-conspirators to refuse to give them away? He had given his fellow-Communists away to the police for eighteen years: why should he scruple over Brankov and Palfy now? Could one expect a man like Palfy, trained by the fascists and professing an admiration for Mussolini, to make a spirited defence in court of capitalism, or even the fascism he believed in? The answer, surely, is that one is entitled to expect no such thing.

The absurdities of the popular press on the question of the trial were far outstripped in the columns of the *New Statesman and Nation*—a journal which had shown some warmth for the idea of a new kind of Communism, Tito or Rajk Communism, and was perhaps disappointed to find little in the trial to corroborate this novel political development. Be that as it may, the *New Statesman* had the utmost difficulty in believing in the conspiracy at all, and thought it "very unlikely" that Rajk had worked for Horthy's political police in 1932.

But why should this be unlikely? The history of the workers' movement is cluttered and befouled by the thousands of weak or bad men who have done just what Rajk did in Hetenyi's office back in 1931. And in regard to the question of evidence, one had not only Rajk's detailed confession, but the manifestly true corroborative evidence of Lajos Bokor and another police officer of the old regime, now in dignified if bloodstained retirement, who were actually present when Rajk signed his undertaking to spy.

It would seem that the *New Statesman* has never learned, or chooses to ignore, the history of the past 250 years and more. For all of that history is punctuated with cases of betrayal and treachery, and very often on a scale far greater than the treachery of Rajk.

Was not Danton himself found to have among his papers a letter from the British Foreign Office to the banker Perregaux, when he was arrested by the Convention? And Danton both in the days of the French Revolution and in ours, is a far bigger figure than Laszlo Rajk.

Was not the Chartist movement a constant victim of paid police provocateurs and spies—men who deliberately incited violence in order to provoke arrests, in exactly the way Rajk provoked the arrest of the Budapest building workers in 1935?

Hasn't the French police in particular an unrivalled record in the realm of provocation and espionage in the working-class movement? They had their spy Marcel Gitton as Organising Secretary of the French Communist Party for years. In the revolutionary movement in Russia there were agents whose names have become household words for treachery and whose stories do not need to be retold here. In the Yugoslav Communist Party itself before the war there was Gorkic, General Secretary of the Party and a police agent. If Gorkic had never been unmasked and had been the Party's Secretary today, no doubt the *New Statesman* would defend his Marxist integrity to the last drop of ink in their ink wells.

There are some people who are singularly unwilling to learn a thing from history, even when history is in the act of repeating its lessons at dictation speed.

It is of course true, and it is known by every one who is honest in the matter, that the police always did and always will expend much time, ingenuity and money on placing their agents in the ranks of the working-class movement, and primarily in the Communist Party. In the United States, every time a new trial is rigged up against the Communists another handful of agents are given their orders and come trooping into the open to recite their miserable evidence. In the course of 1949 a

round dozen of them were doing it at the trial of the Party's twelve leaders.

All this, coupled with the particular ease of planting agents during the turbulent times of pre-war illegality, followed by the Spanish War and then the Second World War, is evidence enough of the existence of police agents in the international Communist movement. It is not surprising that they are there: it would be astonishing if they were not.

No, the *New Statesman* and many other people would have liked the Budapest proceedings to be the trial by a dominant group of Communists of a little band of noble heretics who believed in an alternative, but equally Communist, line of action. That would have pleased them because the holding of reservations, the putting of alternatives, the opposition to the Soviet Union, are, for them, the things that matter most.

Perhaps it would, in the event, be better to let them have their way and admit for the sake of argument that Rajk and Tito and Rankovich, Szalai and Szonyi and Palfy and the whole gang are their kind of "independent Communists" after all. Unfortunately, the trial also proved that they were fascist police spies, traitors, American agents, and organisers of what would have been the bloodiest military *putsch* in even Hungary's history. If those are the sort of people the *New Statesman* wishes to clasp to its bosom, one can only tell it regretfully to go ahead and be careful of the bloodstains.

Perhaps the last word here should be with the Public Prosecutor:

"In connection with this case they ask in the Western countries: how did so many traitors get into the ranks of the revolutionary Labour movement? It is ironic that the very people ask this who should be able to answer this question; that these spokesmen of the intelligence services who call us to account for these traitors are the very ones who sent them into our ranks for the international dissolution of the revolutionary movement. It is an old method to send hostile spies and provocateurs into the workers' parties.

"It may be asked why the workers' parties were not able to expose these traitors immediately. If only we had had in our

hands the files which contained the lists! As is known, the dossiers of the Hungarian police are not at our disposal but at the disposal of the American intelligence service."

* * *

In addition to the full confessions of the eight accused, supplemented by the indictment, the court heard a large variety of witnesses.

Dr. Lajos Bokor and another police official gave evidence of Rajk's first betrayal in 1931. Dr. Ferenc Janosi, a former Captain in the legal department of the Horthy Army, gave evidence that he had been the prosecutor in the trial of Rajk at Sopronkohida in 1944. Istvan Stolte, the man whom Rajk had sent to Germany to contact Dr. Sombor-Schweinitzer and the Americans, gave an account of his activities. Dr. Szebenyi and Sandor Cseresnyes also gave evidence.

The secret meeting at Paks and the love affair of Mrazovich were illuminated by the evidence of the little schoolteacher, Gyorgyi Tarisznyas, and by the aristocratic Mr. Antal Klein, who stamped into court in a state of indignation and perplexity.

Among the other witnesses were Dezso Nemeth, the man who had spied in Moscow, Jozsef Rex, Hegedus, Ivan Foldi, who had been the courier between Szonyi in Budapest and Allan Dulles in Berne, Kalman, and two members of Paul Justus's Trotskyist study group.

A former Horthy police officer named Miklos Reti told how Szalai had been recruited as a police spy in 1933 at Pecs. Mr. Reti had some difficulty in restraining his own understandable tendency while giving evidence to refer to Communists as "conspirators". He brought with him into court the smell of the old fascist police stations.

Szalai was further discomfited by the appearance of that Lieutenant of the reserve Lajos Lindenberg, who had been so savage at the time of the Satoraljaujhely prison break, but who now spoke in such an awed whisper that the judge had to remind him to speak more loudly, as he had done when he was in charge of the jail.

The court also heard Zivko Boarov, an arrogant and immaculate young man, who grinned at the audience as he prepared to

confess to the murder of Milos Moich and recount Brankov's part in that action.

And there was the evidence, too, of Ljubitsa Ribar, the girl who had not wanted to spy for Tito and had been kidnapped by the Yugoslav diplomats in Budapest.

As the six days of hearings wore on, no one in court could reasonably doubt that a devastating case had been built up against the conspirators. And so, if there was any surprise at all at the sentences announced by the president of the court on Saturday, September 24, it was that they were not heavier.

Six of the accused were found guilty in varying degrees, and the cases of Palffy and Korondy were referred for retrial to a military court.* Laszlo Rajk, Tibor Szonyi and Andras Szalai were condemned to death, and could scarcely have expected anything else. Lazar Brankov was condemned to life imprisonment, and the judge remarked that it would be for his own Yugoslav people to judge him further. Ognjenovich, who had been an agent in the Federation of South Slavs, received nine years. Paul Justus was sentenced for life. In Hungarian law, life imprisonment is nineteen years, reducible by good conduct to fifteen.

In his concluding remarks, the Public Prosecutor had declared:

"Why do they confess? Why don't they deny, or why don't they defend themselves? Because they have been exposed, because they know that they cannot help themselves by a denial. Their confessions are the results not of regret, but of their exposure. Precisely because of this there is no extenuating circumstance.

"There are not extenuating circumstances, only aggravating circumstances. When you mete out sentence to the treacherous gang leader Laszlo Rajk, do not forget Ferenc Rozsa and Zoltan Schonherz, whose death he brought about, and do not forget the betrayed building workers who were imprisoned. When you pass judgment upon Andras Szalai, remember the sixty-four revolutionaries who were killed in the prison of Satoraljaihely and for whose death he is responsible.

"When you judge Palffy and Korondy, think of their pre-

* At their military trial later, Palffy and Korondy were found guilty together with Nemeth and another officer. All four were executed.

decessors, of the officer murderers whom they were getting ready to imitate, of the officer murderers of 1919, the Pronays and the Ostenburgs. When you pass your sentence on Brankov, think of the hangman Rankovich, one of whose chief agents this man was, think of the suffering of the Yugoslav patriots. When you judge Szonyi, think of his masters, the American imperialists who wish to bring the Hungarian people to the fate of the suffering, bleeding people of Greece."

On the day after the end of the proceedings, the newspapers of Hungary were full of appeals for a great effort to complete the Three-Year Plan under time, and it seemed as if the people understood that this was the real answer to Rajk and his friends.

TITO'S POLICE STATE

WE ARE APPROACHING the end of this account of the Tito betrayal but there is one important chapter of the tragedy which remains to be told. It will be recalled that at the final secret meeting in the forest at Paks, Rajk was informed that Tito had worked out a plan to draw the people of Yugoslavia gradually out of the Socialist camp and into alliance with the imperialist powers. It is this process that we now have to examine.

The phases of Yugoslav policy from the publication of the Information Bureau's Resolution in June, 1948, down to the open alliance with the Anglo-American bloc at the General Assembly of the United Nations in September, 1949, can be clearly traced. At his trial, Rajk declared that Rankovich had outlined these steps to him at Paks. And since that meeting took place as far back as the autumn of 1948, it is clear that the later evolution of Yugoslav policy towards the Soviet Union and the Popular Democracies was carefully premeditated.

Immediately after the publication of the Resolution, the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party issued a statement the burden of which was that there had been a dreadful misunderstanding. Running through all the speeches of the Yugoslav leaders at this time was an appeal to Stalin to correct what, it was suggested, was simply a sad mistake on the part of the Communist Parties of the Information Bureau. In this period propaganda for Stalin and the Soviet Union inside Yugoslavia was kept at a high pitch.

At the same time, one month after the publication of the Resolution, the Yugoslav leaders did exactly what they had been criticised for not doing before. They brought their Communist Party briefly into the open and held a Congress.

But by now everything had been arranged in such a way that with very few exceptions, the hand-picked delegates would vote exactly as Tito required. And so it surprised no one when, after

shouting "Hero Tito! Hero Tito!" for minutes on end, the Congress confirmed the Tito-Rankovich clique in power and passed a resolution, more in sorrow than in anger, upbraiding the Information Bureau.

This first period lasted only a short while. It merged during the late summer of 1948 into a phase in which the Soviet Union was still presented as Yugoslavia's greatest friend, but an increasingly sharp attack was made on the Popular Democracies. All sorts of gross and silly accusations of revisionism were made, for reasons that we can now understand, against Hungary and Bulgaria.

At this period the Yugoslav leaders were still spending some time in routine attacks on American imperialism; but they were to be the last. And from the late summer months of 1948 until the present day the whole of the lavish Yugoslav propaganda machine has been devoted to the task of destroying the love of the Yugoslav people for the Soviet Union.

In January of 1949 Marshal Tito was referring in public speeches to the "dishonesty" of the neighbouring Communist Parties, and hinting darkly at "grave consequences". By now the Yugoslav leaders were making the first tentative attacks on the Soviet Union, but to confuse the issue as thoroughly as possible they pretended to draw an absurd distinction between Stalin and the Soviet Communist Party. Stalin, it appeared, was still good: the Party was bad.

By April the talk had become a good deal plainer. General Kreatitch, of the Yugoslav Army, declared at the People's Front Congress that "calumnies and fantastic inventions" were being put out by the Soviet Union. Learned talk was also heard at this time purporting to demonstrate that something had gone wrong with Moscow's Marxism.

But soon the last remaining half-measures were abandoned. By the summer of 1949 Belgrade was producing the most violent, ill-intentioned and palpably false propaganda against the Soviet Union and the Popular Democracies that could be found anywhere. There were repeated claims that Russia was planning an invasion; that the Soviet Union had made a call for civil war in Yugoslavia; that there was no difference between

Churchill and Stalin (this last, in a Navy Day telegram from Rear-Admiral Juro Loncharevich, was going a little far for the time being. The newspaper *Politika* published it, but *Borba* cut it out of their version of the wire).

Throughout this campaign, the most hysterical and vicious of all the publicists had been Milovan Djilas and Moshe Pijade. Writing from the heart of Tito's police state in September of 1949, Djilas accused the U.S.S.R. of organising "the arrest and killing of innocent people". And although the Press which he controlled had not had a harsh word to say for American imperialism for months, Djilas, in a passage of unique unconscious humour, criticised the Russians for no longer attacking the Tsar!

"It is not accidental that in their propaganda, criticism of Tsarism and Tsarist imperial policy has almost disappeared," cried Djilas in triumph.

The purpose of this careful propaganda campaign was not only to prepare the minds of the Yugoslav people for a new political orientation. Tito also intended to develop close economic relations with the West, and knew that moves to accept American loans would be regarded with the greatest suspicion by people who had earlier been told by Tito himself that the Marshall Plan spelt economic and political slavery.

By August Tito felt sufficiently sure of himself to declare that he would welcome a U.S. loan. At the beginning of September he received in Belgrade an investigating mission from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. This mission toured the country, prying into its economic affairs in much the same way that the imperial powers investigate the commercial possibilities of a new colonial territory into which it is proposed to sink some hard cash.

Both Britain and the U.S. made it clear that credits would be granted to Yugoslavia. During September the U.S. State Department authorised the sale to Tito of a U.S. steel mill. A 20 million dollar loan was negotiated through the U.S. Export-Import Bank. The International Bank got ready to announce a loan for Yugoslav timber development. During November,

Britain and the U.S. agreed to supply Yugoslavia with aircraft and aviation fuel.

The culminating point came at the General Assembly of the United Nations at Lake Success in September. There, for the first time, all pretence was finally dropped. Not only did the Yugoslav delegation under Kardelj vote with the Anglo-American bloc. For most of the time they were leading the attack on the Soviet Union, and Kardelj's speeches were received with glee and hearty applause by the British and American delegations, who brought Yugoslavia into the Security Council in defiance of Soviet wishes.

They were not, of course, quite as gleeful as they pretended. For it would have been so much better for them if the Information Bureau's Resolution had never been published, if Tito had managed to maintain the bluff and stay in the Socialist camp, and if he had managed to win Hungary and maybe some other Popular Democracies away from Socialism and into that Balkan federation that Churchill dreamed of, and the plotting for which had been started by the British mission in 1943.

On September 28 the Soviet Union sent a Note to Yugoslavia pointing out that the Rajk trial had revealed that Yugoslavia was pursuing a policy hostile to the U.S.S.R. This fact tore the Soviet-Yugoslav Friendship Pact to pieces, and therefore the Soviet Union felt herself to be free from its obligations.

* * *

Here we must say a word about that Colonel-General Arso Jovanovich who, in the days of the war, supported Hebrang and Zujovich in their stand against Tito and his group.

Jovanovich, like Hebrang and Zujovich, supported the criticisms of the Information Bureau. He had been Chief-of-Staff of the Partisan Army, and a man of great personal popularity. He was thus a constant menace to Tito and his friends. The world was not surprised to hear therefore, in August 1948, that Arso Jovanovich had been "shot while trying illegally to cross the frontier". It was one of Rankovich's pet euphemisms for murder. What Brankov had revealed in his *Szabad Nep* article was true.

Jovanovich was one of the most courageous, because one of

the most exposed of the Yugoslav Marxists who had started the arduous and dangerous task of breaking the grip of the Trotskyists and re-establishing a genuine Communist Party in Yugoslavia. There were many thousands like him who have either been shot out of hand or thrown into Rankovich's jails. Tito's Yugoslavia has now become a thorough-going police state, and the police machine is not directed against the former fascists and the remains of the Yugoslav capitalists. It is directed against the genuine representatives of the working class movement. But for every Communist jailed or killed others have arisen to continue the fight.

It is not within the scope of this book to detail the heroic work of the new, illegal Yugoslav Communist Party, nor to show in detail the appalling hazards with which they are faced. But no mention of Tito's Yugoslavia could be complete without this brief reference and tribute to their work in the most dangerous and difficult sector of the class struggle in the world today—a sector as dangerous to the fighters for Socialism as was Hitler's Germany.

CHAPTER XIX

THE LESSONS OF THE TRIAL

MANY WESTERN observers at the Rajk trial adopted a position that can perhaps be summed up as follows: Rajk and his associates were clearly guilty of both espionage and treason. Their confessions were genuine and probably based upon irrefutable proofs. Rajk no doubt wanted to be dictator of Hungary, and was willing to allow Tito to help him in the matter. Tito for his part was not averse to an obedient and friendly Hungary. But two things at the trial were impossible to accept. Firstly, it is absurd to charge the leaders of Yugoslavia with being either anti-Socialists or American agents, or with pursuing a pro-American policy in the Balkans. Tito's actions during and since the war make these things impossible. Secondly, to charge Allan Dulles and the U.S. intelligence service with plotting for the establishment in Budapest of an "American" government is nothing but a serious symptom of spy-fever. And as for Mr. Dulles's activities in 1944, all he was doing was helping to win the war against the Germans.

A characteristic exponent of this viewpoint, and I believe I have given it fairly, was Mr. Stephen White, the representative of the *New York Herald-Tribune* at the trial.

Mr. White found no difficulty in accepting the genuineness of the confessions and the evidence of guilt. On these matters he had this to say (*N.Y.H.T.*, September 30):

"The matter of drugs and torture, for example, can be disposed of at once. Not only is there no physical evidence to show that the eight men have been subjected to unusual treatment (at least in the recent past) but there is in addition ample evidence to suggest that they have not.

"The most convincing phase of this derives from the attitude of the defendants. To take extreme cases, the chief defendant, Laszlo Rajk, was the most arresting and the most commanding figure in the court. His record showed him to be a man of

great abilities and acute perceptions, a proud man and a bold one. His appearance bore this out, item by item. There was on the other hand, Andras Szalai, a self-admitted police spy and one whose previous activities were accessible for the record. His past showed him to be a most unattractive sniveller—in court he was exactly that.

"Each of the defendants, in fact, was a personality. The two Army officers behaved like Army officers; the intellectual dissident behaved like one. Accordingly, if one is to believe in drugs or torture as the impelling force behind the confessions, one must believe that the Communists have invented a drug, or discovered a torture, that will lead a man to confess, make it utterly certain that he will not renounce his confession in open court, and yet will leave every other phase of his personality unaffected. This is a good deal to believe, and the best comment is that no one at the trial, so far as this reporter knows, is willing to give the theory a moment's credence."

To this, Mr. White added that he believed that Rajk and his associates were guilty of the charges brought against them.

But at this point commence the reservations of both Mr. White and a number of other people who take, or pretend to take, an altogether naïve view of British and American policy.

They claim that in 1944 and 1945 the British and U.S. intelligence services could not have had the foresight, the cunning or the political acumen to plan such a development as the Rajk conspiracy in Hungary and the Tito betrayal in Yugoslavia.

They are underestimating the qualities of the British and American bourgeoisie. Do they imagine that a class that is capable of hoisting itself into power, of conquering and holding down a vast segment of the earth's surface, of maintaining its privileges and position at a moment when the workers in every part of the globe are turning against capitalism and striving to conquer power themselves, and of fighting a stubborn rearguard action in Europe long after history has sounded the knell of the old order and proclaimed the new—do they seriously imagine that such a class cannot or will not evolve policies of the utmost unscrupulousness and cunning, but will seek to rely upon political simplicity and kindness alone?

Here again the lessons of the past are ignored. The history of every country in Europe is packed with examples of intrigue and cunning in no way inferior to the intrigue of Mr. Dulles and the cunning of the O.S.S. It is popular to suggest, and Mr. White suggests it, that only in the Balkans does one find spies and provocateurs. But the lending libraries of Britain are full of the memoirs of British agents, proudly telling the tale of their exploits. Certainly there are agents in the Balkans: and many of them get their orders in London or Washington.

Is it impossible that a 100 per cent American could participate in a plot which involves the use of fascists for the purposes of political assassination?

Come, come, Mr. White. No one will seriously believe that such considerations play the slightest part where a crucial struggle between capitalism and socialism is concerned. For that is what we are here examining.

Mr. Churchill and the Foreign Office were capable of using the dregs of Europe in their war of intervention against the young Soviet Republic. Why should they not use Europe's dregs now against socialism in Eastern Europe? The Americans are using the fascists of Japan and the Nazis of Western Germany in building their famous bulwarks against Bolshevism. Why should they be more squeamish in Hungary?

But what of Tito and his friends? Is it really so impossible that the men who fought the Germans, bitterly attacked the West on every international issue, nationalised the means of production, placarded Belgrade with photographs of Lenin and Stalin, and behaved, broadly, as Communists, should now be the spearhead of the imperialist attack in Eastern Europe?

If this is impossible, so are a number of other things in history. Napoleon is impossible, so is Joseph Fouché, so are Ramsay MacDonald, Ernest Bevin, Jacques Doriot and Benito Mussolini. Every turncoat there ever was becomes an impossibility and every betrayal a myth. But as we know, there were turncoats and betrayals, because the dangers and temptations of a pitiless class struggle have always produced them and produce them still.

Napoleon Bonaparte, who rose to power in the great turmoil of the French Revolution, betrayed the principles of the Revolu-

tion and bequeathed us the word "Bonapartism". Fouché, who served five masters and betrayed them all, sent to the scaffold under the Monarchy the men who had been his boon companions under the Republic. Ramsay MacDonald betrayed the British working class. Ernest Bevin has long since abandoned the fundamental principles of the British Labour movement. Doriot was a member of the French Communist Party, turned traitor and became a fascist. Mussolini had been a Socialist in his youth.

Is all this utterly irrelevant? Has it suddenly become impossible in the year 1949, for anyone to abandon his principles or for anyone to have professed views which all along were not his own?

Perhaps the word "Bonapartism" is the most convenient and helpful for us in seeking to analyse the case of Tito. For Bonapartism means the degeneration of the revolution into dictatorship and terror, the abandonment of principles and the ending of freedom. This is precisely what has happened under Tito's rule in Yugoslavia. And there is surely enough evidence even within these pages to indicate the nature of that downward progression and its more salient and easily recognisable features.

It may be said that even granting Tito's fall towards fascism (for Bonapartism can take only this form under the conditions of the twentieth century), it is unlikely that he would become an instrument of American policy in Europe.

The answer, surely, is that there is no *modus vivendi*, and Tito knows there is none, for a State which refuses to co-operate either with the Soviet Union and the newly developing Socialist countries, or with the Anglo-American bloc. And since the Marshall Plan and the Atlantic Pact have now provided evidence in abundance of precisely what "co-operation" with the West actually means, it becomes unthinkable that Tito will have any choice but to do precisely what Washington requires of him.

It may be added that if the work of the Yugoslav U.D.B. on behalf of the Americans is not proof of servile obedience of a most advanced kind, then it is difficult to know what would be regarded as satisfactory evidence.

But one has no need to require of the sceptics that they satisfy themselves with this admittedly compelling but neverthe-

less circumstantial evidence alone. For in establishing American responsibility in the matter we find coming to our assistance none other than two of the most powerful policy-makers in the United States.

Firstly, we have Mr. George Kennan, chief of the Policy Planning Division of the U.S. State Department. Mr. Kennan, an "expert" on the Soviet Union, was the author during 1947 of an article in a leading U.S. review which set out the broad lines of American strategy in the struggle against Communism. The article was signed "X"; but its real authorship was revealed almost at once and never denied.

Mr. Kennan expounded the conception that the Soviet Union must be "contained" diplomatically and militarily by the U.S. and her allies, and that the capitalist Powers must then work for the internal disintegration of the social systems of the Soviet Union and her associated Powers.

It would be absurd to suggest, if this was the State Department's policy—and who can deny that subsequent history confirms the fact that it was?—that the State and War Departments would not do everything in their power to hasten the hoped-for disintegration.

Here we come to a speech of Mr. John Foster Dulles, our second witness, in the spring of 1948. Mr. Dulles is chief Republican foreign policy expert and has been closely associated with the directors of U.S. foreign policy since the beginning of the Truman doctrine.

In his 1948 speech, Mr. Dulles revealed the existence of a certain "Plan X" (the letter appears to exercise a cabalistic fascination for American politicians). This plan, which involved the expenditure of a greatly increased intelligence budget, was designed to develop in Eastern Europe an extensive and efficient espionage network. It was openly stated in these terms. And the theme was taken up by other responsible authorities in Washington at the time.

What was this espionage for? To strengthen the existing political structure, or to weaken it? To put Standard Oil and Shell and Dunlop and the western banks back into Hungary and the other Popular Democracies, or to keep them out? The

answer, of course, is too obvious to need stating.

Since such American plans do exist, then, what is there about the Rajk trial that is impossible to accept? Surely the trial is nothing but the revelation of one important segment of a programme that extends to every one of the Popular Democracies, is part of the general strategy of hostility to and eventual war against the Soviet Union, and is capitalism's desperate and degraded way of defending its last European ditches.

That being so, it is easy to see why the two major events described in these pages were first-class disasters for the imperial Powers.

The exposure of the Tito gang in the Resolution of the Communist Information Bureau isolated the nest of traitors and ended for good this centre of Anglo-American plotting inside the Communist movement. And the trial of Rajk both scotched the plan for Hungary and exposed in full for the first time the ramifications of American-Yugoslav strategy.

In this matter, as in others of recent years, the Americans have been the inheritors of a British policy. As in Greece, where Mr. Churchill first sent British troops in to smash the Left and then handed over to the Americans to finish the job, so in Yugoslavia, British intelligence commenced the operation and bequeathed their achievements to the Americans. Mr. Churchill's military mission laid the foundation: Mr. Dulles, the O.S.S., and the U.S. State Department built upon it. And the American banks are now sending their representatives into Yugoslavia to scrape up what financial pickings they can by the side of the more important political revenue provided for the State Department by Tito's intrigues among his neighbours, his betrayal of Democratic Greece, and his help for the Anglo-American bloc at the United Nations.

The Rajk trial has thus demonstrated anew the dishonourable role played by Britain in the American drive to smash Socialism and prepare a new war.

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It has become fashionable in certain circles in Britain, as we had occasion to remark in an earlier chapter, to hail Tito as a new type of "independent Communist". A number of

persons, including some who should know better, have permitted themselves to become the guests of this blood-stained tyrant since his guilt has been demonstrated.

But what more does one need than the revelations of the Rajk trial and the contents of the newspapers of the last six months to convince one that Tito's Yugoslavia has degenerated into a fascist State?

It is all very well for politicians and journalists with Left reputations to return from Tito's palatial residence and quote the Marshal on the subject of human dignity and justice. But what Rankovich and the U.D.B.? What of the murder of Arso Jovanovich and thousands of others?

It is all very well for these visitors to come back and declare that Tito is not joining the Western camp, because he took them on one side and told them that he wasn't. But what of the U.N. General Assembly, and the mission of the World Bank?

It is all very well, too, to suggest that Yugoslavia's quarrel with the Soviet Union is the classic quarrel of the small State which seeks to rid itself of the domination of the large. But what exactly was this domination? These Eastern European countries are not forced to cripple themselves with huge war budgets, as the Atlantic Pact Powers are forced by Washington. When they accept loans or trade agreements these are of a character which assists the whole economy of the country and does not involve the sort of political conditions imposed by the Marshall Plan.

Some of those people who woo Tito now and still call themselves the friends of progress are going to look uncommonly silly when the Tito gang gives even more irresistible evidence both of its brutality and its dependence on imperialism. The best advice one can offer them, perhaps, is to pull themselves together before it is too late. And that advice pays them the honour of assuming that their support for Tito is an error and not a manoeuvre. In many cases it is undoubtedly the latter.

It should be clearly understood that there is no such thing as this middle way of Tito's. Either States are based upon an existing or developing socialist system, or they are based upon a capitalist system. If the former, they must form part of the peace bloc with the Soviet Union at its head, because without the

power and assistance of the Soviet Union they will inevitably be gobbled up by the ever-watchful imperialist Powers. If the latter, they are bound by the logic of political and economic facts to be drawn into the orbit of the most powerful capitalist State in the world—the United States. Whether their political system is bourgeois (Western) democracy, as in Britain, or dictatorship and the rule of the police, as in Spain and Greece and Yugoslavia, they are still dependent for their survival upon the goodwill of the United States.

Yugoslavia's industry has been largely taken over by the State. But these nationalisations, without democracy and genuine popular control, become State capitalism. Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, after all, nationalised or controlled decisive sectors of their industry. Further, Tito's policy of encouraging the kulaks in the countryside is rapidly rebuilding the capitalist structure in the villages.

There is no doubt at all that under the Tito gang Yugoslav "Socialism" will degenerate rapidly in the near future and their supporters will not be able to maintain very much longer their protestations of attachment to Marxism and Socialism. This would mean a bleak and terrible future for the Yugoslav people, one of the most energetic, heroic and generous peoples in Europe, but for the fact that among them the forces of resistance are arising and growing stronger as they learn the lessons of their experience. And for the progressive movement everywhere the same lessons have to be applied, for the choice today can only be between the front of Socialism and peace led by the Soviet Union and the front of imperialism and war.