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THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN YUGOSLAV COMMUNISTS AND SCANDINAVIAN SOCIALISTS IN THE LIGHT OF YUGOSLAV SOURCES (1950–1953)

Aleksandar V. MILETIĆ

Institute for Recent History of Serbia, Trg Nikole Pašića 11, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia

e-mail: samiletic82@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

After the Cominform Resolution in 1948 and the beginning of the Yugoslav-Soviet conflict, the Yugoslav leadership faced a completely new foreign policy situation. Under threat from the East, Yugoslavia was forced to seek new ways of co-operation in foreign policy, now in the West, among ideological “enemies”. In such a situation, cooperation with the socialist Left in the West was one of the least harmful alternatives. The aim of the article is a brief analysis of the first steps of cooperation between Yugoslav communists and Scandinavian socialists from 1950 to 1953. The analysis includes the most important meetings, correspondence, and mutual exchanges of experiences and opinions of the leading representatives of both sides. The article is an attempt to establish through the available Yugoslav historical sources the similarities and differences, possibilities and obstacles to the cooperation of Yugoslavia with the Scandinavian socialist options in the circumstances of the Cold War.

Keywords: Yugoslav communists, Scandinavian socialists, social democracy, socialism, ideology

LE RELAZIONI TRA I COMUNISTI JUGOSLAVI E I SOCIALISTI SCANDINAVI ALLA LUCE DELLE FONTI JUGOSLAVE (1950–1953)

SINTESI

Dopo la Risoluzione del Cominform (1948) e l'inizio del conflitto jugoslavo-sovietico, la leadership jugoslava dovette affrontare una situazione di politica estera completamente nuova. Minacciata dall'Est, la Jugoslavia fu costretta a cercare nuove vie di cooperazione in politica estera, nell'Ovest, tra i “nemici ideologici”. In tale situazione la cooperazione con la sinistra socialista dell'Europa occidentale si presentava come una delle alternative meno pregiudizievoli. Il tema del presente articolo è una breve analisi dei primi passi verso la cooperazione tra i comunisti jugoslavi e i socialisti scandinavi tra il 1950 e 1953. L'analisi comprende i più importanti incontri, corrispondenze e scambi di esperienze e opinioni tra i principali rappresentanti delle due parti. L'articolo vuole stabilire, in base alle fonti storiche disponibili, le analogie e le differenze, le possibilità e gli ostacoli per una cooperazione tra la Jugoslavia e le opzioni socialiste scandinave nelle circostanze politiche della Guerra fredda.

Parole chiave: comunisti jugoslavi, socialisti scandinavi, socialdemocrazia, socialismo, ideologia

INTRODUCTION¹

By the end of 1940s, due to the confrontation with the USSR, Yugoslavia faced a specific and very complicated situation in the field of international politics (Bekić, 1988, 23–113; Petranović, 1988, 357–379; Dimić, 2001, 339–341). This caused a great number of problems not only at the political but also at the ideological level, primarily because in the case of Yugoslavia the ideology represented an important segment of its political legitimization. All circumstances indicated that the support was to be asked from the West (Bogetić, 2000; Jakovina, 2002; Laković, 2006). However, a question that appeared was how a country such as Yugoslavia, with the Stalinist ideological and political system, could cooperate with the Western countries and ask for political, material, and even military aid (Životić, 2015) without causing inevitable discreditation in the socialist world. There were various political options on the political spectrum of the Western countries, which were different in program or ideology. In the Western political life, there were various parties and movements, ranging from the far and moderate right, over the political center, to the far and moderate left. The difference was clearly reflected in the sphere of the political left, where there were pro-Soviet communist or socialist parties, as opposed to pro-democratic and anti-Soviet oriented social democratic and socialist parties, as well as Christian democrats (Van Kemseke, 2006, 17–30; Hamilton, 1989). In such a situation, the West European socialist and social democratic left represented an important bond for political cooperation with the West, as well as a solid ideological alternative. This was the reason why the importance of cooperation with the West European Left reflected in both political and ideological sphere. The visits of Western political representatives to Yugoslavia were crucial for introducing and connecting Yugoslav political leaders with the West. The Yugoslav side was consciously initiating such meets and visits since each political contact and connection in the West was a valuable support for the current policy. Activities in this direction began in 1950. The first contacts were established with the British Labour Party (Štrbac, 1988; Miletić, 2011; Režek, 2018), and later with almost all significant West European socialist and social democratic parties, the most prominent of which were French, Belgian, German, Spanish, as well as socialist parties of the Scandinavian countries.

The aim of this article is a short overview of the basic elements of cooperation between Yugoslav communists and socialist parties from the Scandinavian countries: Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Denmark. This topic is significant since there has not been much scientific research so far, except for rare works (Kullaa, 2012; Pirjavec, 2014; Miletić, 2016). In this case, the period between 1950 and 1953 was selected: from making the very first contacts with the representatives of West European socialist parties until Stalin's death – the period which represents a completed whole not only re-

1 The paper was created as part of the Institute for Recent History of Serbia project "Serbs and Serbia in the Yugoslav and international context: internal development and position in the European / world community (No. 47027)". The project is funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

garding the cooperation with the West European Left but also in the history of socialist Yugoslavia. When it comes to the cooperation with the Scandinavian countries, the first to be considered are Swedish and Norwegian socialists. The relationships with Finnish and Danish socialists were not particularly developed, but some unofficial contacts were certainly there.

THE BEGINNINGS OF COOPERATION WITH THE SWEDISH SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Political contacts with the Swedish Social Democratic Party (SAP) were established in the middle of 1951. On Yugoslav initiative, the first visit of SAP representatives to Yugoslavia was arranged in spring of the following year. For Swedish social democrats, Yugoslavia was completely unknown, but they were interested in the general picture of Yugoslavia, its foreign policy, and theoretical questions about the Yugoslav experience regarding the development of socialism and democracy (Tilton, 1990).

In accordance with the mutual agreement, Kaj Björk,² a famous Swedish socialist, visited Yugoslavia in April 1952. During his visit, he resided in several cities, visited certain economic and industrial facilities, and met a range of prominent people. On that occasion, a several-month-long polemic with Rodoljub Čolaković began on the pages of the Yugoslav and Swedish party press, which would raise a range of questions primarily in the field of ideology and political practice about which Yugoslav communists and Swedish social democrats openly disagreed. The basic question that was discussed, and at the same time the problem which was the main “point of misunderstanding”, was the question of parliamentary democracy and the single-party system. The official topic of Čolaković–Björk polemic was “Socialism and Democracy”. In the following months, the polemic revealed profound differences between Yugoslav communists and Swedish social democrats regarding the questions of democracy and the multi-party parliamentary system of the Western type, i.e. the possibility for it to be established in Yugoslavia.

On the Yugoslav side, Rodoljub Čolaković supported official attitudes which were politically current at the time. Thus, Čolaković supported the official attitude that the working class’ fight for socialism was not developed according to a general pattern which would be shared by all countries, but that it took different forms (from case to case) which depended on historical and social conditions in each country. What was common for all, and what made it possible to establish the cooperation was the fight for the same objective, and that was socialism. Current democracy in the West had bourgeois character and its primary role was to preserve the capitalist order, serving it as the political upgrade. Thus, historical assignment of the working class was to

2 Kaj Ake Björk (1918–2014), a Swedish socialist politician, diplomat, and journalist. He was a secretary for the international affairs in the SAP (1947–1955), editor of social democratic newspapers *Tiden* and *Ny Tid*, a delegate in the upper chamber of the Swedish Parliament (1965–1973), the SAP representative in the Socialist International, and the Swedish ambassador to China.

surpass the frameworks of such democracy and replace it with socialist (proletarian) democracy. Such socialist democracy had exclusive character and was different from all other democracies known at the time as it gave the working class unreserved right to make decisions on surplus value and manage basic production resources. That right was the basic one which all other collective and individual rights stemmed from. Such type of democracy was currently being established in Yugoslavia, but, as Čolaković highlighted, in order to socialist democracy to function, a single-party system was not equally needed for all countries, but it varied from case to case. Čolaković wrote:

It is not possible to reply to this question by simple debating on democracy, but only by analyzing particular conditions of every country in which social democracy is being born. Those conditions are always nationally specific and dependent on the range of historical, internal and foreign political circumstances under which the working class comes to power and organizes its rule. It is those circumstances that affect whether the single-party system would be necessary for functioning of social democracy, or it would be possible to have more parties. Theoretically, both cases are possible, since for the functioning of social democracy, what is important is not whether there are one or more parties, but its class content, its class essence [...]. Therefore, such democracy, if it is willing to obtain its legitimacy in history, must build such organs of the new rule which would enable faster, painless transition of the society from the jungle of the capitalist social relations to the classless society.³

His conclusion was that democracy itself, regardless of its type, could not be a working class' ideal, but only a means of achieving the class objective: classless society. Čolaković particularly persisted in emphasizing the necessity of making the difference between the Soviet model of socialist relations and the “genuine” socialist democracy advocated by the Yugoslav leadership. It was of great importance in the context of the Yugoslav conflict with the USSR and due to the Yugoslav political need for apprehension and cooperation with the West European socialist left. In that sense, the Soviet social and political model was sharply criticized and presented in the extremely negative light. He wrote:

Many people in the world consider the reality and practice of that country as the realization of the dictatorship of proletariat and socialist democracy, even though it is basically incorrect. Long ago, socialist democracy in the USSR became a hollow phrase trying to conceal the power of an oligarchy which was, against the will of people, maintaining its power with the help of the enormous violence apparatus. Due to this fact, it is unduly to take arguments from the Soviet reality and practice against social democracy.⁴

3 AJ, 507/IX, 125/II-16, Attachments on “Socialism and Democracy”, published in Sweden and Yugoslavia, according to the agreement of the Yugoslav and Swedish parties, 11. 2. 1953.

4 AJ, 507/IX, 125/II-16, Attachments on “Socialism and Democracy”, published in Sweden and Yugoslavia, according to the agreement of the Yugoslav and Swedish parties, 11. 2. 1953.

On the Swedish side, Kaj Björk concluded that the two countries were complete antipodes in historical, cultural, economic, political, and ideological sense, so that there were significant differences in basic notions. Firstly, Björk emphasized that Swedish social democrats dismissed the rigid understanding and interpretation of Marxism, did not believe in Utopia and idealism, and from this follow a different understanding of democracy and socialism in relation to Yugoslav communists. Contrary to Yugoslav understanding of the proletarian socialist democracy, the Swedish highlighted the Welfare State, dismissed strong class fight and advocated achieving objectives in the direction of gradual changes and for improvements and mitigations rather than abolishing capitalism. Also, they advocate the way of political activities within multi-party parliamentary democracy. Therefore, Swedish socialists had a rigid attitude, closely related to the classic way of parliamentary democracy, as well as to the applied value system and the rules that should be obeyed. Thus, Björk said to Čolaković:

Yugoslav communists are correct when they highlight that the authority in the USSR is concentrated in the hands of a single bureaucratic caste that oppresses the rest of its nation. [...] From our point of view, we draw the conclusion that a danger of oppression and tyranny is constant as long as one party has the monopoly. We do not deny the fact that the single-party rule could be justified by historical needs in some countries under special conditions. However, we believe that the single-party rule, at the end of the line, always involves the danger of suppressing the progressive forces [...]. With the existence of several parties and the guarantee of individual rights, citizens may feel greater security and freedom in their everyday life, as the abuse of power by the authority could be corrected by oppositional parties' criticism. [...] If it was possible to obtain the multi-party system that would satisfactorily work on solving social and economic problems, then it would also create the spirit of tolerance among opposite parties which, in turn, increased citizens' psychological welfare. Even if social and economic freedom is limited in such a system, political freedom is a positive advantage, and in our opinion, social and economic freedom cannot compensate for political freedom.⁵

Kaj Björk took this opportunity to express his doubt in the possibility to guarantee and preserve social and economic freedom in the single-party system (even if it was the Yugoslav). From his standpoint, Björk expressed his doubt in not only Yugoslav political assertiveness but of any other communists, as well as the doubt in their political arrogance, based on which they claimed the right that it was only them who could interpret the needs of the working class and other citizens. In accordance with his estimation of single-party system, Björk wrote:

5 AJ, 507/IX, 125/II-16, Attachments on "Socialism and Democracy", published in Sweden and Yugoslavia, according to the agreement of the Yugoslav and Swedish parties, 11. 2. 1953.

It must be rather difficult to ameliorate abuse, and that is why it is difficult to grasp how workers can be confident in obtaining their rights, regardless of how the party in power may assert to represent their interests. We do not doubt that Yugoslav communists seriously persist in improving the welfare of their people and offering their workers a better position than in the USSR or capitalist countries. But, personal wills of the communist officials are not a sufficient guarantee that their estimation of workers' needs is the same as that of the workers themselves. It could be stated that workers themselves do not always understand their interests and that the proletariat avant-garde, i.e. the Communist Party must take care of that as well. However, we have always felt severe doubt when our communists claimed they understand workers' interests better than the workers themselves. Even though we believe that the Yugoslav communists are of greater quality than the piteous figures who currently lead Swedish Communist Party, we cannot be assured that their standpoints always represent the genuine interests of those who follow them.⁶

Björk expressed his hopes for gradual development of Yugoslav society towards pluralistic democracy, emphasizing the fact that it was impossible for Swedish social democrats to regard any single-party system as democracy, however well-intentioned it might be regarding to development of socialism. But Swedish social democrats believed and strived towards socialism, so it was possible to find the mutual interest and cooperation with Yugoslavs in that sense. Björk also mentioned the fact that Yugoslavs showed greater flexibility and tolerance in their opinions, compared to Stalinists, which could have a positive effect on cooperation.

Through the Čolaković–Björk polemic, all differences in political and ideological attitudes and orientation can be perceived, not only between Yugoslav communists and Swedish social democrats, but also in regard with the entire West European Left. Each side had its own reason for debating and, generally, exchanging theoretical, practical and political experiences. The Swedish side took the opportunity to see, for that time and conditions, an “exotic” country, its system and authority politics. For them, Yugoslavia was a kind of an experimental area on which a “third” way of not only building socialism but also implementing the non-bloc politics was tested. For the Yugoslavs, contacts and experience exchange with the Swedish (as well as other western socialists) meant not only getting familiarized with the democratic method of building socialism, but also one of the possible ways of international affirmation of its way towards socialism. The Čolaković–Björk polemic is also significant as it encountered the response in the socialist press of the West European parties which had not been contacted so far, such as Danish and Dutch parties. However, ideological differences were too pertinent for the two sides to fully understand each other and to enhance their cooperation.

6 AJ, 507/IX, 125/II-16, Attachments on “Socialism and Democracy”, published in Sweden and Yugoslavia, according to the agreement of the Yugoslav and Swedish parties, 11. 2. 1953.

This significantly affected the official political cooperation of the two parties, as well as the Swedish and Yugoslav state cooperation, since the SAP leadership clearly expressed that, in principle, they cooperated only with parties that shared their primary attitude regarding political democracy, and which were members of the Socialist International. However, this did not mean that communication and “experience exchange”, as well as unofficial ways of cooperation, did not exist; quite the contrary, contacts and connections were being improved more and more in the following months, and friendly relations between the two parties were cherished and highlighted. This is confirmed by the documents which indicate that the SAP cared about the mutual contacts and connections with Yugoslav communists, although such practice, out of “principled” reasons and ideological considerations for the members of the Socialist International should not be made official. The Yugoslav side, on the other hand, had a clear platform for its activities towards Scandinavian political circles, coordinated with its strong foreign policy orientation. Therefore, in regard to this orientation, in one letter to Stockholm and Helsinki, in the spring of 1951, clear guidelines are given for proceedings, which contained the following principles: the equality of small and large countries and the right of every nation to self-determination, condemnation of every form of aggression and violence in international relations, decrease of all forms of armament in proportion to a country’s power, fight for the accomplishment of the UN Charter principles, aid for underdeveloped countries, development of international economic cooperation and cultural cooperation based on mutual respect.⁷

THE BEGINNINGS OF COOPERATION WITH NORWEGIAN, DANISH, AND FINNISH SOCIALISTS

Due to the lack of sources,⁸ we are not able to present more precisely a general picture of the cooperation with Norwegian socialists, i.e. the Norwegian Labor Party (AP). However, from some limited sources, it can be stated that the cooperation with the AP was dynamic and that the activity on that field was present from 1951, when the first contacts were made. In the same year, the AP delegates resided in Yugoslavia, and in the following period, there were mutual visits of Yugoslav and Norwegian journalists, as well as the continuation of strengthening the cooperation. The peak of good relations with the AP was the invitation to Milovan Đilas, Vice President of the Republic and one of the leading party officials in Yugoslavia, sent by Norwegian socialists in 1953 to visit their country. The invitation was sent by the Secretary General of the AP, Haakon Lie.⁹ Đilas’ visit was formally supposed to be of private character, but the content of the visit

7 AJ, 507/IX, 125/V-18, Letter to Stockholm and Helsinki, 28. 5. 1951.

8 In the fund of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (AJ), which contains the most important and numerous documents on Yugoslav cooperation with the foreign political parties and movements, the documents regarding Yugoslav cooperation with the Norwegian socialists are missing.

9 Haakon Steen Lie (1905–2009), a Norwegian socialist politician. At the beginning of the 1920’s, he joined the AP. During WWII, he was an active member of the Norwegian resistance movement. After the war, he was the General Secretary of the AP (1945–1969).

was rather ambitious. Lie even thought that it would be quite useful if Đilas visited also both Denmark and Sweden. On that occasion, it was arranged that Đilas' visit would last about seven days, and about twelve including Denmark and Sweden. During that period, Đilas would, besides meeting the AP leadership, representatives of the government, and labor organizations, have the opportunity to visit a range of industrial plants, facilities, and factories. All costs would be borne by the Scandinavian parties. The Secretary General of the AP used that opportunity to highlight the importance of the visit to Scandinavia as a whole. During the conversation, there was an attempt to relate that with potential change of Norwegian and Danish foreign policy course towards the Atlantic Pact, i.e. the rumors about the possible creation of "*the alliance of the Scandinavian countries based on neutrality*", which was denied by Lie as the possible political future of Norway, as well as other Scandinavian countries. Besides the need for mutual rapprochement of Norwegian socialists and Yugoslav communists, political benefits of these visits were particularly highlighted in a telegram addressed from Oslo to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in August 1953. Having received the recommendations from the AP leadership, the Yugoslav Embassy "*heartily recommends to comrade Đilas*" to accept the invitation, "*even more so Norwegian Labor Party is now in the Executive of the Socialist International.*" The visit to the Scandinavian countries was supposed to be realized in February 1954.¹⁰ However, it would never be realized due to the removal from power of Milovan Đilas in January 1954, which did not significantly affect further friendly relations with the AP, although there was a mild and temporary standstill (Miletić, 2016).

Norwegian socialists undoubtedly had affinities towards Yugoslav communists and their reformative efforts in the direction of society democratization. What they particularly appreciated was the Yugoslav radical separation from the USSR and its politics. However, just like the Swedish, Norwegian socialists misunderstood the Yugoslav "democratism". Namely, mutual contacts of Swedish socialists and Yugoslav communists revealed a huge gap in the apprehension of not only democracy as the political system, but also the relation of democracy and current political priorities. Thus, a Yugoslav diplomat described this in his "political report" from Norway by the end of March 1952 as following:

Affinities towards our country are undoubtedly great, both in the Labor Party and other parties, especially in the former, because 'we develop democratism along with socialism'. But I could express those affinities in the following way: they are more affected by a trivial incident which they consider an attack to democratic freedom than they are delighted by a great matter that we do consider a step towards further development of socialism. When Cominformers have recently been disclosed in 'Borba', they were more affected by the fact that they were arrested

10 DAMSP, PA, 1953, Norway, f. 64, no. 415178, The record of the conversation of councilor P. Popović with the general secretary of the Norwegian Labor Party Haakon Lie, 22. 9. 1953; DAMSP, PA, 1953, Norway, f. 64, no. 417481, Annual report of the SFRY embassy in Oslo, 24. 12. 1953.

*(‘since everyone has right to advocate their personal opinion’) than they were delighted they were disclosed.*¹¹

The basis for the initiative of Yugoslav communists for the contacts and cooperation with socialist parties in the Scandinavian countries was the political interest in the geostrategic positions of Scandinavia in the Cold War conditions and Yugoslav relationship with the USSR. In such a situation, defense politics and military strategy of the Scandinavian countries were monitored minutely. Since the beginning of the 1950s, Scandinavian governments had been associating their strategy with the Western security system and the newly formed Atlantic Treaty (NATO), opposing the USSR and Eastern bloc countries. Belgrade found such tendencies rather interesting, so the diplomacy services and intelligence channels were actively included in monitoring all those activities. The important role of Norway was particularly highlighted due to its specific geostrategic location in the north of Europe. Thus, in a report from Oslo in October 1951, it was clearly concluded that the strategy of the Atlantic Treaty was

*to put the entire territory of Norway, especially its northern part, under control. [...] The territory of Norway, especially its northern part, must be defended and not liberated. Besides, the northern part of Norway is considered the last defense line of the North Atlantic.*¹²

The interests in those matters were intense which was obvious in the efforts of Yugoslav diplomatic representatives in Norway to obtain as much information. In that sense, at the initiative of the Yugoslav diplomatic representative, a meeting was arranged with General Dahl, the Commander-in-Chief of so-called Northern Autonomous Norwegian Army, which had a special assignment to defend the northern borders from the potential raids from the Soviets.¹³ During this period, in the strategic and defensive sense, the Yugoslav side was particularly interested in so-called Scandinavian Defensive Bloc and its politics towards the USSR.¹⁴ Annual political reports from Norway for the years of 1951 and 1952, in which the current state of the country, political strategy, and plans of the Norwegian government in regard of foreign affairs and cooperation with the Atlantic Treaty were reconsidered also testify about the Yugoslav close monitoring of the situation.¹⁵

The politics of the Scandinavian countries was monitored minutely in the context of their geostrategic politics towards the West and the USSR, as well as Yugoslavia. The entire picture of the current Cold War constellation of power was established, and, in relation to that, the politics of Yugoslavia. The complexity and sensitivity of the current politics

11 AJ, 507/IX, 92/IV-25, Political report, 21. 3. 1952.

12 AJ, 507/IX, 92/IV-10, Report on Soviet-Norwegian relations, 20. 10. 1952.

13 AJ, 507/IX, 92/IV-14, Report on conversation with General Dahl, 16. 12. 1951.

14 AJ, 507/IX, 92/IV-23, Questions about the Scandinavian defense block, 30. 1. 1952.

15 AJ, 507/IX, 92/IV-20, Political reports from Norway for 1951; AJ, 507/IX, 92/IV-25, Political report, 21. 3. 1952.

of Yugoslavia, squeezed between the two blocs, required such interests and analyses of Yugoslav diplomatic services. A detailed report of the Yugoslav diplomatic service from November 1952 revealed the relationships of the Scandinavian countries (particularly Norway and Sweden) with the Atlantic Treaty and situations in these countries. Thus, the report mentions the words of one of the Norwegian Socialist Party representatives and, at the same time, the Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway, who explained the current situation to the Yugoslav diplomat in the following way:

We have joined the Atlantic Treaty because we are confident that only decisiveness and competence for defense can refrain the Soviets from further infiltration in Europe. We have long debated that issue and reached the conclusion that all possibilities should be predicted as soon as possible. We have adjusted our politics according to our defense plans, considering that the USSR is our neighbor. We share 178 km of our frontier with Russia, and, in addition, we are obliged to respect the neutrality of Spitzbergen, i.e. the demilitarization of the archipelago. We let the Americans know we cannot give our territory for military and navy bases. However, we have undertaken everything so that we could welcome our allies in case of war.¹⁶

When it comes to general matters related to defense strategies, the Norwegian representative also stated that, “*for the time being*”, there was no chance to station the US troops on the Norwegian territory, “*except for the regular commissions predicted by the Atlantic Treaty*” and that, in case of a raid, the Norwegians would have to leave the northern part of the territory but not strategically significant points, such as the Spitzbergen Archipelago which on no account should fall into the Soviet hands. He also highlighted the fact that Norwegian defense maneuvers in the North Atlantic were in accordance with “*the general defense plans of the West*”, i.e. that they knew the Americans had set their entire strategic defense plan along the geographic line from North Africa, over Spain and England to Scandinavia. Thus, the Norwegian representative concluded that the Norwegians were under the impression that the Americans would not let the Soviets “*install themselves on Norwegian coasts*”, as it would jeopardize them from the north and hinder their operations in the Mediterranean Sea.

Therefore, we must be watchful and do everything to let the Soviets know we want good relationships. The Swedish military neutrality is of great help for us, and we deem that, in case of greater tension or war itself, we could play an important role, especially if the Soviets could not transfer the greater part of their forces on the positions in Scandinavia.¹⁷

16 AJ, 507/IX, 92/IV-28, Norway and Sweden on the problem of defense of the West, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, 20. 11. 1952.

17 AJ, 507/IX, 92/IV-28, Norway and Sweden on the problem of defense of the West, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, 20. 11. 1952.

It could be seen from the mentioned examples what replies from the Scandinavian political representatives were of great interest for the Yugoslav diplomats. The Scandinavian military and defense bloc had a significant role in the Western politics towards not only the USSR but for Yugoslavia as well. Thus, during his conversation with the Yugoslav diplomat, one of the Norwegian politicians stated that Norway supported Yugoslavia as it needed it in this political situation, regardless of its internal organization. He said:

*At this moment, we need Yugoslavia, even though we know it is a police state as well. It is very convenient for us in our fight against the Russians. Without Yugoslavia, we would be in a very difficult situation due to the power of communist parties in France and Italy. Our diplomacy is aware that the Marshall Plan has not violated the power and dynamics of communism, but it enabled the integration of the powers that are by nature anti-communist, and which could unconsciously act in favor of the Soviets, as it is the case in France.*¹⁸

The first indications of the cooperation with Danish Social Democratic Party appeared in the second half of 1952; until then, the contacts were rather superficial and at the formal level. As stated in a report, by the end of 1953, contacts with Danish socialists were quite rare and accidental. Thus, the Vice President of the Danish Social Democratic Party spent several days in Yugoslavia in 1951, but only in the by going, in passing, and as a member of the Danish inter parliamentary delegation. However, one may get an impression from the documents that the Yugoslavs noticed this demerit, and from the mid 1952 were becoming interested in closer relations with Danish socialists, especially when their representatives indicated that they supported Yugoslavia in the conflict with Italy regarding Trieste. Thus, the Vice President of the Danish Social Democratic Party, Alsing Andersen, in a conversation with the diplomatic representative of Yugoslavia in September 1952, suggested to improve the cooperation, even to send a powerful delegation led by the president of the Danish Social Democratic Party to Yugoslavia the following year. In October 1952, a delegation of Yugoslav journalists spoke to the President of the Danish Social Democratic Party, Hans Hedtoft. On that occasion, Hedtoft was interested in the issue of democracy development in Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav type of single-party democracy.¹⁹

As with the Danish Social Democratic Party, the similar situation was with the Finnish Social Democratic Party. Until the end of 1953, no official contacts were made, although there were frequent informal encounters between Yugoslav representatives and Finnish social democrats. Those encounters brought various ideas on the both sides. For instance, by the end of 1953, there was an informal agreement on the visit of

18 AJ, 507/IX, 92/IV-28, Norway and Sweden on the problem of defense of the West, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, 20. 11. 1952.

19 AJ, 507/IX, 23/II-2, Note on the conversation of the Yugoslav journalist delegation with the President of the Social Democratic Party of Denmark Hans Hedtoft, 25. 10. 1952.

the Finnish Social Democratic Party delegation to Yugoslavia, but the proposal was postponed indefinitely. Negotiations lasted for more than two years and until the end of 1953, no final agreement on the visit was reached. Finland's indecisiveness and restraint regarding the establishment of a more serious and intensive cooperation was interpreted by the Yugoslav side as political opportunism from Finnish side (territorial closeness and danger from the USSR).²⁰ However, from the Finnish side, the restraint towards Yugoslavia was justified by "the communist dictatorship" which was established in Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, mutual fondness was not questioned.²¹

CONCLUSION

The cooperation and contacts with the Scandinavian socialists as well as other officials from the West European Left mainly had a form of formal mutual introduction and experience exchange at the party level, without transparent interference of the official state politics. There were multiple types of contacts, ranging from official visits of party delegations and individuals to informal connections and agreements. As presented on the example of a public interparty debate known as the Čolaković–Björk polemic, the differences between the Yugoslav communists and Swedish socialists were considerable and to a great extent insurmountable, which was the case with Norwegian, Danish, and Finnish socialist parties as well. The differences were reflected primarily in the field of ideology and apprehension of social and political organization, and they stemmed from the different nature of the two parties and different political systems they operated in. Basically, Scandinavian socialists did not accept the single-party system in Yugoslavia, which they considered undemocratic, and advocated a multi-party parliamentary democracy. Contrary to them, the Yugoslav communists believed that the Western democracy had a bourgeois character and served to preserve the capitalist system. In that sense, there was almost no way for a closer cooperation. Nevertheless, the Scandinavian socialists considered that Yugoslav communists showed more flexibility and tolerance than the Soviet Stalinists, and that the cooperation with them was possible. However, a far greater degree of mutual understanding and potential for cooperation was indicated in the spheres of *realpolitik*, i.e. in the matters of foreign affairs and relations with the USSR, far from abstract ideological criteria and attitudes. At that point, the cooperation was possible and was regarded with mutual affinities. Certainly, this side of cooperation was far more significant and was related to interstate relations and geostrategic interests. Yugoslavs were primarily interested in the policy of the Scandinavian governments in relation to NATO, Western defense policy, the deployment of military forces towards the USSR, and military-strategic plans in this regard. This is illustrated by the analysis of the diplomatic documents which contain a great degree of interest of the Yugoslav side for the matters of political and strategic-defense nature that were in the background of official party contacts and communications.

20 For more on Finland–Yugoslavia relations, see: Kullaa, 2012.

21 AJ, 507/IX, 26/II-4, Material on the arrival of the delegation of the Finnish Social Democratic Party to Yugoslavia.

ODNOSI MED JUGOSLOVANSKIMI KOMUNISTI IN SKANDINAVSKIMI
SOCIALISTI V LUČI JUGOSLOVANSKIH VIROV (1950–1953)*Aleksandar V. MILETIĆ*

Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, Trg Nikole Pašića 11, 11000 Beograd, Srbija

e-mail: samiletic82@gmail.com

POVZETEK

Začetek petdesetih let Jugoslaviji ni ponujal razlogov za optimizem na področju zunanje politike. Stisnjena med dvema blokoma in v nezavidljivem položaju socialistične države s prekinjenimi odnosi z nedavno vzornico in zaščitnico Sovjetsko zvezo, se je morala po pomoč obrniti na Zahod. V teh razmerah je skušala navezati stike z ideološko bližjimi partnerji – z zahodnimi socialističnimi in socialdemokratskimi strankami in gibanji, med katerimi so imeli posebno mesto skandinavski socialisti, najprej švedski in norveški ter zatem danski in finski. Jugoslovansko sodelovanje s švedskimi in norveškimi socialisti je potekalo na ravni medsebojnega spoznavanja in izmenjave izkušenj. V ta namen so bili organizirani uradni obiski delegacij strank in javne razprave. Ideološke razlike med njimi so bile precejšnje in niso niti ponujale niti obljublje nadaljnega sodelovanja, toliko več skupnega pa so imeli jugoslovanskimi komunisti in skandinavski socialisti na področju zunanje politike, zlasti glede odnosa do Sovjetske zveze. Bistvo in ozadje njihovega sodelovanja so bili torej predvsem skupni geostrateški interesi v razmerah hladne vojne.

Ključne besede: jugoslovanski komunisti, skandinavski socialisti, socialdemokracija, socializem, ideologija

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