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DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS OF THE SLAVIC STATES ON THE EVE OF 1945

I

On the eve of 1945 there existed the following Slavic states or governments: Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, the Soviet Union¹ and Yugoslavia. Besides it, there were two puppet states having ethnically Slavic character: Croatia and Slovakia, which could subsist owing to the German protection.

Two of the above listed states had their governments in their national territory: Bulgaria and the Soviet Union. In two cases there existed national governments in the liberated areas of the respective countries: in Poland and in Yugoslavia, i.e. the Committee of National Liberation in Lublin (PKWN), since July 23, 1944, and the National Committee of Liberation of Yugoslavia (NKOJ) in Belgrade since October 20, but they were not yet formally recognized by other states as governments *de iure*. They had nevertheless already concluded a few international agreements. Furthermore there existed three governments in exile: the Czechoslovak, the Polish and the Yugoslav, all three of them in London.

Only the Czechoslovak government had a chance to come back to their country, having agreed to substantial changes in political, economic and social structure of the future liberated Czechoslovakia. Moreover, the emigré government of Czechs and Slovaks was in very good relations with the Soviet Union,² i.e. with the Power which was certainly becoming the decisive factor in East Central Europe.

¹ The Soviet Union can be numbered among the Slavic states because of the majority of her population is ethnically Slavic.

² Cf.: *Sovetsko-čechoslovackie otnošenija vo vremja Velikoj otečestvennoj vojny 1941–1945 gg. Dokumenty i materialy* (Moskva 1960); *V. Kořalková, Vytváření systému dvoustranných spojeneckých smluv mezi evropskými socialistickými zeměmi (1943 až 1949)*, „Rozpravy Československé akademie věd“, 76/3 (Praha 1966), chapter 1.

Not so propitious was the situation of the Royal Yugoslav Government in London, which had to sign a formal compromise with the National Committee of Belgrade and the King of Yugoslavia had to renounce his authority in favor of a Regency Council accepted by the National Committee of Liberation. The compromise was realized owing to the Soviet and British mediation. The Royal Government continued to represent Yugoslavia in the Allied camp, maintaining the diplomatic relations with all Allied and neutral states.³ There was no probability, however, that the Royal Government might return to Belgrade.

It was evident already in the last months of 1944 that the emigré Polish government in London will be not allowed to return to Poland. The failure of negotiations between the London Poles and their leftist compatriots in Moscow, conducted in the summer and fall of 1944, and the non-existence of diplomatic relations between the Polish government in London and the Soviet Union,⁴ produced a nonplussed situation. Between the emigré government and the progressive politicians in the country (at home) was an impassable gap. However, the emigré government was still recognized by all the other Allied states — except the Soviet Union — and also by the neutral ones. The de facto government in Lublin has been recognized for the time being by the Soviet Union only.

II

Quite peculiar was Bulgaria's situation in the last months of 1944. Previously, being a member of The Tripartite Pact,⁵ she was considered as an ally of Germany and the state of war existed between Bulgaria and the Western Powers and also with Bulgaria's neighbors, Greece and Yugoslavia.⁶ But the Bulgarian government never severed the diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, in spite of German pressure. Only in the first days of September 1944 the Soviet Union declared war on the reactionary government in Sofia, but there was no fighting between the Soviet Army and the Bulgarian units. After few days the declaration of war was withdrawn and the new Bulgarian Fatherland Front Government declared war on Germany, simultaneously asking for an armistice with the Powers of the anti-German coalition. The armistice was granted and formally signed in Moscow on October 28. But the diplomatic relations with the previous enemy states could not be established before the

³ Cf.: *D. Plenča*, *Međunarodni odnosi Jugoslavije u toku Drugog svjetskog rata* (Beograd 1962), p. 26 sqq.

⁴ Severed in April 1943; cf.: *V. G. Truchanovskij*, ed., *Istorija vnešnej politiki i međunarodnyh otnošenij SSSR*, vol. II, 1939—1945 (Moskva 1962), p. 250 sqq.; *Documents on Polish-Soviet Relations 1939—1945*, vol. I, 1939—1943 (London etc. 1961); *E. Basiński*, ed., *Stosunki polsko-radzieckie w latach 1917—1945. Dokumenty i materiały* (Warszawa 1967), p. 345 sqq.

⁵ In 1940—1941 the following pro-fascist governments of Slavic states adhered to the Tripartite Pact: Slovakia (1940), Bulgaria (1941), Kingdom of Yugoslavia for two days only (1941), Croatia (1941).

⁶ Yugoslavia declared war on Bulgaria on April 7, 1941 (*D. Plenča*, op. cit., p. 49). Bulgaria declared war on the Western Powers on Dec. 13, 1941 (*Istorija Bolgarii v dvuch tomach*, Moskva 1955, vol. II, p. 273).

conclusion of the Peace Treaty (Febr. 10, 1947). However, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia agreed to receive Bulgarian envoys earlier.⁷ But certain diplomatic activities could be started even in the first weeks after the seizure of power by the Fatherland Front. On October 5, 1944, an agreement was signed between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia (the de facto government of the Liberation Committee) on co-operation against Nazi Germany.⁸

Bulgaria after her withdrawal from the Tripartite Pact and the declaration of war on Germany, had to sever her relations with all the satellite states of the latter, in particular with the puppet states of Croatia and Slovakia. She preserved the diplomatic relations with the neutral states: Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey.⁹ De facto relations existed after the installation of the Fatherland Front government with the Soviet Union, and with Rumania and new Yugoslavia.

The most powerful Slavic state, i.e. the Soviet Union, had the most developed diplomatic relations with almost all allied and neutral countries.¹⁰ The Soviet government was maintaining also diplomatic relations with several governments in exile, among them with those of the Slavic states temporarily occupied by Nazi Germany: with Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, but not with the Polish emigré government in London. But there existed de facto relations with the Polish Committee of National Liberation in Lublin, acting as a de facto government in the liberated Polish territory.¹¹ In fall of 1944 the number of foreign Ambassadors in Moscow increased because of the establishment of diplomatic relations with the new Provisional Government of France in Paris and with the Royal Italian Government, which solicited the re-establishment of these relations, severed in 1941 by Mussolini. Italy was now at war with Germany and considered herself as a member of the Allied camp.¹²

Moreover, the Soviet Union had also her military mission with the High Command of the Yugoslav National Liberation Army. That meant a de facto recognition of the new government in liberated Yugoslavia.

Soviet foreign policy was conducted by the "Narkomindyel" (People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs), headed since May 1939 by V. M. Molotov, who had several deputies (among them the Ukrainian A. E. Korneychuk and the well-known editor of the "History of Diplomacy", V. P. Potyemkin).

The Soviet Republics, members of the Soviet Union, were entitled, according to the amendment of the Constitution voted during the war, to enter into diplomatic relations with other states and to sign international agreements with them. In the late summer of 1944 some agreements regarding individual Soviet Republics were actually signed. The Ukrainian,

⁷ Diplomatic relations between Moscow and Sofia were re-established on August 14, 1945 (Istorija Bolgarii . . . , II, 588).

⁸ On that agreement see *infra*, note 27.

⁹ Almanach de Gotha 1944, p. 693-694.

¹⁰ *Diplomatičeskij slovar' v trjoch tomach*, Moskva 1960, vol. I, pp. 444-448; cf.: Almanach de Gotha 1944, p. 1138-1139.

¹¹ E. *Basiński*, *op. cit.*, p. 390 sqq.; W. T. *Kowalski*, *Walka dyplomatyczna o miejsce Polski w Europie 1939-1945* (Warszawa 1967, 2nd ed.), p. 418 sqq.

¹² Cf.: M. *Toscano*, *Pagine di storia diplomatica contemporanea* (Milano 1963), II, p. 299 sqq.

Byelorussian and Lithuanian SSR concluded with the Polish de facto government in Lublin (PKWN) agreements on the exchange of respective national minorities.¹³ The individual Soviet Republics organized also their own Foreign Offices.

III

Among the emigré Slavic governments residing for the time being in London, the strongest position was held by the government of Czechoslovakia, established since summer of 1940. Head of the Czechoslovak Foreign Office was a well-known diplomat, Jan Masaryk (former Minister to Britain). The Czechoslovak government in London was recognized by all Allied and neutral states.¹⁴ Some Allied governments never ceased to maintain relations with the Czechoslovak missions, which remained abroad after the events of March 1939, among them Great Britain and the United States.¹⁵ The former allies and satellite states of Germany after their reversal of alliances were also joining the governments already recognizing the Czechoslovak government.¹⁶ Of course, they ceased to recognize the puppet government in Bratislava, with which they had previously established diplomatic relations, following the advice of Germany.

The Czechoslovak government succeeded in concluding several international treaties during the war. Among them the most important one was the treaty of alliance with the Soviet Union, signed in Moscow on December 12, 1943, while President E. Beneš was on a state visit to the Soviet capital.¹⁷ Afterwards followed other agreements with the Soviet Union, among them one signed in London on May 8, 1944, regarding the relationship between the Soviet Army and the local Czechoslovak administration in the areas which had to be liberated by the then planned Soviet offensive.¹⁸ The Soviet Union was declaring that she recognized the pre-Munich Czechoslovak boundaries. When in the late fall Soviet units liberated first the former Czechoslovak autonomous province Subcarpathian Ruthenia,¹⁹ the agreement of May 8 was entirely respected by the Soviet Union, although the population of that province, mostly

¹³ Agreements signed on September 9 and 22: *E. Basiński*, ed., op. cit., pp. 401–404.

¹⁴ Recognitions: USSR and Great Britain July 18, 1941; U.S.A. July 31, 1941; Norway Oct. 12, 1940; Poland Nov. 27, 1940; Belgium Dec. 13, 1940; Egypt March 13, 1941; Netherlands March 15, 1941; Yugoslavia May 19, 1941; Ireland July 28, 1941; China Aug. 27, 1941; Luxembourg Febr. 27, 1942; Mexico March 26, 1942; Iran May 27, 1942; several republics of South and Central America in June and July 1942; Greece Aug. 19, 1942; other South American states in 1943. Cf.: *E. Beneš*, Paměti. Od Mnichova k nové válce a k novému vítězství (Praha 1947), p. 268.

¹⁵ Such missions remained in London, Moscow, Paris, Warsaw and Washington. The mission in Moscow was closed between the end of 1939 and July 1941.

¹⁶ Among them was Italy after the fall of Mussolini. The government of Bonomi has declared on Sept. 26, 1944 the Munich Agreement as null and void. Cf.: *E. Beneš*, Šest let exilu a druhé světové války (Praha 1946), pp. 478–479.

¹⁷ Cf. note 1; also: *O. Janeček*, in the collective work Střední a jihovýchodní Evropa ve válce a revoluci 1939–1945 (Praha 1969), p. 91 sqq.

¹⁸ Ut supra; texts also in: Dokumenty československé zahraniční politiky 1945 až 1960 (Praha 1960), p. 93 sqq.

¹⁹ That area (now the Transcarpathian District of the Ukrainian SSR) was seized by Hungary in March 1939.

Ukrainian, expressed the wish to join the Ukrainian SSR.²⁰ The Soviet government declined proposals of certain Slovak circles asking for the recognition of an independent Slovak State.²¹

Other important agreements signed by the Czechoslovak government in 1941 and 1942 with the Polish government in London and regarding the future confederation of the two states, were in 1944 considered as null and void, as they were incompatible with the Czechoslovak-Soviet treaty of alliance.²² Relations with the Poles deteriorated also because of the unsolved problem of the Teschen area.

The relations between the Czechoslovak and the Royal Yugoslav government in London were correct. In the late fall of 1944 Bulgaria solicited establishment of diplomatic relations, but the Czechoslovak Foreign Office did not want to forestall other Allies' decision.²³

The Royal Yugoslav Government in London (previously in Cairo) had diplomatic relations established with all Allied and neutral countries.²⁴ Of course, none of them had recognized the puppet state of Croatia. The Soviet government successfully co-operated with the British diplomacy in establishing a compromise between the Royal government and the National Committee of Liberation.²⁵

Yugoslavia concluded in 1941 an agreement with the emigré Greek government, providing for the establishing of a confederation between those two states.²⁶ In the last months of 1944 there was no chance at all that the realization of that agreement might be possible. Both governments had other headaches and their situation was entirely different from that in 1941. They were still at war with Bulgaria because of the latter's co-operation with Germany in 1941. But the Royal Yugoslav Government's attitude toward Bulgaria was not conclusive for the Committee of National Liberation in Belgrade. The Committee recognized the new situation in Bulgaria after September 9 and was inclined to enter into friendly relations with the new Bulgarian government. On the contrary, the Committee's attitude toward the reactionary Greek government was negative.

Marshal J. Broz-Tito, head of the Yugoslav Liberation Committee, accepted the Bulgarian proposal for an understanding and signed with the Bulgarian delegates the above mentioned agreement of October 5, 1944, providing for co-operation in war against Nazi Germany. Besides it, Bulgaria promised to pay damages caused by the former Bulgarian occupation of certain Yugoslav areas since 1941 in collaboration with Germany.²⁷

²⁰ Cf.: Z. Fierlinger, *Ve službách ČSR*, vol. II (Praha 1948), p. 371 sqq.; I. F. Evseev, *Narodnye komitety Zakarpatskoj Ukrainy organy gosudarstvennoj vlasti 1944—1945* (Moskva 1954).

²¹ Cf.: G. Husák, *Svedectvo o Slovenskom národnom povstaní* (Bratislava 1969, 2nd ed.), p. 178 sqq.

²² Z. Fierlinger, op. cit., II, 112 sqq.; P. S. Wandycz, *Czechoslovak-Polish Confederation and the Great Powers 1940—1943* (Bloomington, Ind., 1956), p. 118 sqq.

²³ Z. Fierlinger, op. cit., II, p. 543 sqq.

²⁴ D. Plenča, op. cit., p. 26 sqq.; also J. Opat in the above quoted collective work (note 17), p. 206 sqq.

²⁵ Ut supra; also: *Istorija Jugoslavii v dvuch tomach* (Moskva 1963), II, p. 231 sqq.

²⁶ D. Plenča, op. cit., p. 42 sqq.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 349—350; also V. Božinov, *Zaštitata na nacionalnata nezavisimost na Bălgarija 1944—1947* (Sofia 1962), p. 42.

That was not the first international agreement concluded by the Yugoslav Liberation Committee. Before that, during Marshal Tito's stay in Moscow, an agreement was signed on September 23 between the Soviet Union and the Yugoslav Committee providing for co-operation of the Soviet units with the Yugoslav Liberation Army.²⁸ Furthermore, in the first days of November 1944, Marshal Tito's deputy E. Kardelj and the Prime Minister of the Royal government, I. Šubašić, went together from Belgrade to Moscow to negotiate other agreements with the Soviet Union on behalf of new Yugoslavia. The Soviet government approved the Tito-Šubašić compromise.

Much worse was the situation of the Polish emigré government in London, headed, until November 24, by Stanisław Mikołajczyk with Tadeusz Romer as Foreign Minister, and since November 29, 1944, by Tomasz Arciszewski with Adam Tarnowski in charge of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.²⁹ They were still recognized by the Western Allies and by the neutral states. The former pro-German countries were also establishing contacts with that Polish government, e.g. Italy.³⁰ But the severing of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in 1943 continued to be the most disadvantageous event in the international situation of the London Poles. They were looking forward to other misfortunes in the future.

After establishing relations between the Soviet government and the Polish de facto government in Lublin (the chairman of that government, Edward Osóbka-Morawski, was also in charge of external relations), the Soviet diplomacy started to exert some pressure on friendly governments in favor of the recognition of the Lublin Committee. This problem was discussed during General de Gaulle's visit to Moscow in December 1944, and frequently with the Czechoslovak Ambassador, Zd. Fierlinger.³¹

Since January 1st, 1945, the Committee of Lublin renamed itself the Provisional Government of the Polish Republic, with Osóbka-Morawski as Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Soviet Union at once established normal diplomatic relations with that new government,³² which started activities in order to obtain the recognition from other Allied governments too. The new Polish government at home — since the end of January in liberated Warsaw — succeeded, in the first months of 1945, in obtaining the recognition only from Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia and a semi-official one from France.³³

The emigré government continued to maintain diplomatic relations with

²⁸ *D. Plenča*, op. cit., p. 343; also *F. Čulinović*, *Stvaranje nove jugoslavenske države* (Zagreb 1959), p. 286.

²⁹ T. Romer was previously (until 1941) Polish Ambassador in Tokyo and A. Tarnowski until 1940 Polish Minister to Bulgaria, afterwards Polish representative with the Czechoslovak government in London.

³⁰ A Polish Consul was appointed in Rome on Oct. 1, 1944, a chargé d'affaires (S. Janikowski) on Febr. 1, 1945.

³¹ Cf. in *de Gaulle's* *Memoirs*, vol. III, *Le salut*, p. 379 sqq.; also *Z. Fierlinger*, op. cit., vol. II, p. 508 sqq.; *W. T. Kowalski*, op. cit., p. 482 sqq. and 499 sqq.

³² Cf. respective documents in: *Sprawa polska w czasie II wojny światowej na arenie międzynarodowej. Wybór dokumentów* (Warszawa 1965), No. 85 and 88; cf. also *W. T. Kowalski*, op. cit., p. 497.

³³ Documents No. 95-96 and 110 in the above quoted collection.

all the other countries³⁴ until the end of June, when all the democratic forces of Poland joined to form a new Government of National Unity in Warsaw, which received at once the recognition also from the Western Powers and all the other states.³⁵ By that the role of the emigré government in London was finished.

IV

Very limited and without any real importance were the diplomatic relations maintained by the two puppet states, Slovakia and Croatia, existing exclusively by the will of Nazi Germany, which wanted to have some apparent allies in Europe.

Slovakia, established before the outbreak of the Second World War (in March 1939), had been, however, recognized by a larger number of states than Croatia. Although she was since the beginning a German protégée, she could obtain the recognition also by Poland and by some neutral states. In September 1939 even the Soviet Union established diplomatic relations with Slovakia in order to exert some influence in that area.³⁶ But as the pro-fascist government in Bratislava became Germany's ally, first against Poland and in 1941 against the Soviet Union, all the other countries belonging to the anti-German camp, and the neutral ones, took an appropriate attitude toward the Slovak Republic and no further recognitions followed, except by some satellite states of Germany. The list of the diplomatic corps in Bratislava in 1944 was very short and it diminished at the end of that year, because of the reversal of alliances of some allies and satellites of Germany.³⁷

The international status of the "Independent State of Croatia" (NDH) was still weaker than that of Slovakia. The Croatian State was established in April 1941 as a result of the German and Italian aggression against Yugoslavia. Berlin and Rome recognized the new state at once (Italy only after the annexation of large areas on the Adriatic), and their satellite governments followed the example of the main fascist Powers. But no other country considered the Croatian "independence" as legal and natural, because of the circumstances in which it had been proclaimed. Therefore, in the list of the Diplomatic Corps in Zagreb were listed only the representatives of the pro-German camp.³⁸ As happened in Bratislava, also in Zagreb some representations left because of the reversal of alliances in 1943—1944.

A particular case was the problem of relations between Croatia and the neo-fascist "Italian Social Republic", established by B. Mussolini in the last period of 1943. The Croats reconquered Dalmatia in the fall of 1943, after the Italian capitulation. When the question of mutual recognition arose, the Croatian government posed as a pre-condition of receiving an

³⁴ The list of the Diplomatic Corps with the Polish government in London: *Polska służba zagraniczna po 1 września 1939 r.* (London 1954), pp. 37—40.

³⁵ Documents in the above quoted work (note 32): No. 151 sqq.

³⁶ Cf.: *C. Amort*, *KSSS a náš národní odboj* (Praha 1961), p. 50—51.

³⁷ Cf.: *Almanach de Gotha 1944*, p. 1099.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 720—721.

Italian envoy to Zagreb the renouncement by the Italian Social Republic of all claims to Dalmatia. The Italians refused and, therefore, the diplomatic relations between the two German protégées were never established.³⁹

In April and May 1945 both Slovakia and Croatia ceased to exist as separate states. The former was re-incorporated into the fully restored Czechoslovak Republic, and the latter became entirely a component of the Federative Democratic Yugoslavia in which a People's Republic of Croatia had already been organized in 1944.

The two other semi-states created by Nazi Germany, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, and Serbia, were not entitled to maintain diplomatic relations with other states,⁴⁰ and they had no international status.

RESUMÉ

DIPLOMATICKÉ VZTAHY SLOVANSKÝCH STÁTŮ NA PŘELOMU LET 1944 A 1945

Cílem článku je vylíčit a pojednat o diplomatických vztazích mezi slovanskými státy, které existovaly na přelomu roku 1944 a 1945, a o jejich vztazích s jinými státy, a to na základě skutečnosti, jako jsou: akty uznání de iure, navázání diplomatických styků a konečně mezinárodní smlouvy uzavřené za 2. světové války. Nejdříve autor charakterizuje skutečnou a formální situaci jednotlivých slovanských států na přelomu r. 1944 a 1945. Dovojuje, že pouze dva z nich, tj. SSSR a Bulharsko, měly plně uznávané vlastní národní vlády na vlastním teritoriu. Dále dva další státy, Polsko a Jugoslávie – měly rovněž vlastní vlády, ale ty vykonávaly pravomoc jen nad částí národního teritoria a nedosáhly ještě obecného mezinárodního uznání. Československá vláda byla tehdy ještě v emigraci (v Londýně), kde se rovněž nacházely dvě emigrační vlády – polská a jugoslávská, které však nebyly uznávány činiteli, vykonávajícími skutečnou pravomoc na osvobozených částech národního území. Konečně tehdy ještě existovaly dvě loutkové vlády, které existovaly jen díky německé péči: slovenský klerofašistický režim v Bratislavě a charvátská fašistická vláda v Záhřebu. Pražská vláda tzv. protektorátu Čech a Moravy nebyla oprávněna udržovat diplomatické styky s jinými vládami a státy.

Od stávající mezinárodní situace a rýsujičho se rozdělení na dva protikladné bloky ve světové politice byla závislá i mezinárodní situace jednotlivých slovanských států. Pouze SSSR byl obecně uznávaný ostatními státy světa, sám pak postupně uznal jednotlivé slovanské vlády de facto, jak v případě Bulharska, Jugoslávie a Polska, což bylo v r. 1945 doplněno uznáním de iure, od r. 1941 SSSR uznal československou emigrační vládu de facto i de iure. Západní státy uznávaly vedle SSSR a československé vlády též polskou a jugoslávskou emigrační vládu, ale neuznávaly národní vlády existující de facto na osvobozeném území. K tomu mělo dojít teprve až na jaře a v létě r. 1945, nejprve v případě Jugoslávie a pak Polska. S bulharskou vládou navázaly západní státy diplomatické vztahy až po uzavření mírové smlouvy na počátku r. 1947.

Němci a jejich satelitě neuznávali žádnou z národních slovanských vlád, které s nimi byly ve válečném stavu. Němci uznávali oba loutkové režimy v Bratislavě a v Záhřebu, které však nebyly uznány žádnou jinou vládou s výjimkou satelitů Němců. V okamžiku porážky Německa přestaly i tyto loutkové vlády existovat.

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³⁹ Cf.: *J. Jareb*, *Pola stoljeća hrvatske politike* (Buenos Aires 1960), pp. 109–110.

⁴⁰ Bohemia-Moravia had an envoy in Berlin without full diplomatic privileges.