

## Article REVIEW

**Jeronim Perovic.** "The Tito-Stalin Split: A Reassessment in Light of New Evidence." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 9.2 (Spring 2007): 32-63. doi: 10.1162/jcws.2007.9.2.32. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1162/jcws.2007.9.2.32> .

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**T**he article is based on the deep analysis of its subject, the author uses new sources (documents from the archives of Belgrade and Moscow) and takes into account the international literature on his subject (the works of Leonid Gibianskij and other experts). We must agree with the main conclusions of Dr. Perovic. The Tito-Stalin split occurred not because of Yugoslavia's own path to socialism as Tito and his team later tried to allege. In reality the Yugoslav Communists intended to build socialism according to the Stalinist model. Moreover, for some years before 1948 the Soviet leaders presented Yugoslavia as a model and example for the other East European states they would follow in their internal development. Moscow's attitude changed only in early 1948 when in spite of Stalin's pressure the Yugoslav leaders continued to pursue independently from the Kremlin an expansionist foreign policy towards Yugoslavia's neighbors, especially Albania.

At the same time some assertions of the author provoke dispute. According to the author, Stalin intended not to remove Tito but to isolate Yugoslavia; such strategy was to strengthen Moscow's grip over the rest of the socialist camp. Thus, Stalin allegedly believed that what he actually gained from the conflict was, at least in the short run, worth the cost of losing Yugoslavia. This thesis seems me to be disputable. Not only in the long run, but even in the short run Stalin obviously was aware that the Yugoslav alternative way to socialism was the serious challenge to Moscow's ambitions. The existence of independent Yugoslavia caused a lot of difficulties for the Kremlin -- it meant first of all that Stalin lost the control over the whole World Communist movement. So the gains could not compensate losses. Stalin's closest associate, Molotov, was to confess in July 1953 at the meeting of the Communist Party Central Committee the failure of all of the previous policy: "Президиум ЦК пришел к выводу, что нельзя дальше продолжать проводившуюся в последнее время линию в отношениях с Югославией. Стало ясно, что поскольку нам не удалось решить определенную задачу лобовым ударом, то следует перейти к другим методам". ("The CPSU Presidium came to the conclusion that we cannot follow the policy towards Yugoslavia which we pursued recently. It is clear that as far as we did not succeed to achieve our goal by the frontal attack, we must find other methods.") Thus even Molotov (who unlike Khrushchev had serious reservations towards the far-reaching rapprochement with Yugoslavia) assessed the results of the split as a Soviet defeat. Khrushchev and his associates were more active

in their desire to include Yugoslavia into the Soviet camp. They pursued both ideological (to eliminate the alternative way to socialism) and strategic (to strengthen the Soviet's bloc positions in the Mediterranean region) aims.

The author also asserts that during the first Soviet-Yugoslav contacts in Belgrade (May-June 1955) Khrushchev tried to confirm that Stalin was solely responsible for the conflict. On the contrary, the Soviets not only made Beria responsible for the conflict but tried to justify Stalin. Later, in June 1957 at the Central Committee meeting Khrushchev remembered: “Во время наших переговоров с югославами мы им прямо сказали: “Вы на Сталина не нападайте, мы не дадим его в обиду, а будем защищать его”. (“During our talks in Yugoslavia we directly told them: ‘Don’t attack Stalin. We don’t let him hurt you, but we will defend him.’”) See also Khrushchev’s report at the meeting of the Central Committee July 1955 and the memoirs of the Hungarian party leader M.Rakosi (the pages concerning his meeting with Khrushchev just after the Soviets visit to Belgrade).

Finally we would agree with the author: the subject needs further exploration in archival documents.

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*Commissioned for H-Diplo by Thomas Maddux, California State University, Northridge*