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DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN YUGOSLAVIA AND CHILE, 1947–1950: FROM SEVERANCE TO RENEWAL*

Abstract: This paper analyzes the circumstances that led to a break in diplomatic relations between Yugoslavia and Chile, which began in the fall of 1947 and lasted until they were reestablished in November 1950. The analysis is based on archival material, relevant literature, and contemporary journalism. The events are considered within a bilateral context and the broader international context of the Cold War. Particular attention is given to argumentation on both sides and to the background behind this conflict. The influence of this rupture in Yugoslav–Chilean relations is also analyzed. The second part of the paper will discuss how all of this was presented to the Yugoslav public.

Keywords: Yugoslavia, Chile, Cold War, foreign policy, diplomatic relations, anticommunism.

1. Socialist Yugoslavia and Chile after World War II

Relations between the Yugoslav state and the countries of South America have never really been a focus, primarily due to the great geographic distance. Nevertheless, there were many Yugoslav diplomatic missions and honorary consulates active there during the interwar period. The first delegation was formed in January 1928 in the Argentine capital of Buenos Aires, which at the time represented the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. The delegation relied on the experience of the general consulate, which had been opened in the Argentine capital at the beginning of 1922. All honorary consulates in South America were also under the auspices of the delegation. This changed when diplomatic missions were opened in Chile in 1935 and Brazil in 1938.¹

In the years immediately after World War II when a new system was being built in a ruined country, socialist Yugoslavia was clearly not crafting policy regarding the countries of South America nor was it giving the issue any serious consideration. The same could also

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¹ Isailović 2000: 72–77.

be said for relations with counties in regions geographically closer than the distant South American continent.² The main focus was relations with the Great Powers and with European countries in the immediate vicinity. Yugoslav interest in South America was primarily connected to economic cooperation and issues regarding immigration.

It is difficult to pinpoint the exact number of Yugoslav emigrants in South America during this period, partly due to a lack of accurate lists, but mostly because of the different ways the legal systems of individual countries dealt with these people.³ According to estimates by the Yugoslav delegation in Buenos Aires at the end of the 1940s, the largest number of people originating from Yugoslavia resided in Argentina (60.000–80.000), followed by Chile (around 15.000). But some data indicates the numbers could have been twice these.⁴ A larger part of those who emigrated to Chile came from the Dalmatian islands and had arrived there before the creation of Yugoslavia.⁵ The majority of immigrants in Chile had come from the island of Brač.⁶ In the period following World War II, Yugoslav immigrants had already established themselves in Chile as businessmen, merchants, and clerks. There were also representatives, senators, and university professors of Yugoslav descent. Families like the Baburicas and the Bonačićes were considered affluent. The position of these immigrants in Chile differed from that of most other Yugoslav immigrants, who were primarily laborers. Most immigrants in Chile lived in Santiago, Antofagasta, and Valparaíso, but some also went to the southernmost part of the country and to Punta Arenas, across from Tierra del Fuego.⁷

Over the years, various immigrant organizations were formed, of which the most significant was the *Jugoslovenska narodna odbrana* [Yugoslav People's Defense] (JNO), founded in January 1916 to assist efforts to create an independent Yugoslav state. This organization was not very active during the interwar period but became active again during World War II. In the beginning, there was a rift between the supporters of General Mihailović and the emigrant government and those who supported the Partisan movement headed by Communist Party of Yugoslavia. At its congress in November 1944, the JNO definitively resolved to support the latter, and the organization was reinvigorated.⁸ After the war, the JNO worked to gather assistance for their homeland, and in 1945 and 1946 they collected around 12 million Chilean pesos that were dispatched in 620 crates.⁹

² See: Petrović 2007: 29–33.

³ In the case of Argentina, during the first postwar years, there was a clear trend of arriving immigrants assimilating relatively quickly, and this was also true for those from Yugoslavia. Simić 2021: 119–124.

⁴ According to data from the Immigrant Commission in Zagreb provided by Holjevac, there were around 30,000 Yugoslav immigrants in Chile in 1913. Holjevac 1967: 184.

⁵ For more about Yugoslav emigration to South America before and during World War I, see: Antić 1987.

⁶ For more on this, see: Derado, Čizmić 1982.

⁷ Diplomatski arhiv Ministarstva spoljnih poslova Republike Srbije (DAMSP), Politička arhiva (PA), 1949, Argentina, fascikla 6, dosije 9, signatura 49700, Iseljavanje našeg naroda u Južnu Ameriku, I, 6.

⁸ Antić 1986: 53–58.

⁹ DAMSP, PA, 1947, Argentina, f. 9, d. 16, s. 427509, Izveštaj o stanju i radu jugoslavenskih iseljeničkih organizacija u Argentini sa kratkim pregledom iselj. organizacija u Urugvaju, Čileu, Boliviji i Brazilu, 47–48; Antić 1986: 78.

A diplomatic mission led by General Ljubo Ilić arrived in South America in August 1946 to regulate relations with the local governments.¹⁰ At that time, the new Yugoslavia had a certain amount of prestige due to its peoples' struggle for liberation during World War II, especially among the Yugoslav immigrants. In contrast, the countries in South America had acted differently during war: Brazil suspended diplomatic relations with Fascist countries in August 1942, Chile did so in January 1943, followed by Argentina in January 1944. After spending some time in several South American countries, General Ilić realized Argentina's significance and suggested its capital, Buenos Aires, as a center for Yugoslav action on the continent. The reasons he gave were the city's location, its economic significance, Argentine influence on neighboring countries, and the number of Yugoslav immigrants living there.¹¹

There appears to have been no agreement concerning how relations with countries in South America should be conducted. The foreign affairs ministry did not consider it necessary to reestablish formal relations, but Ilić took a different view. He believed it was necessary to pass laws in the assembly to maintain relations with a state or to issue a decree, as Uruguay did on April 16, 1946, because 'in American countries, formality is everything'. He acted in accordance with this view. Diplomatic, consular, and trade relations between Yugoslavia and Argentina were established on September 16, 1946 with an exchange of diplomatic notes between General Ilić as head of the Yugoslav diplomatic mission and Foreign Affairs Minister Juan Atilio Bramuglia.¹² This happened with Chile a bit later on November 18, when it officially recognized Yugoslavia.¹³ At the beginning of December, General Ilić received criticism from the foreign affairs ministry regarding how relations were established with Argentina and Chile, to which he responded by justifying his actions.

Due to the great geographic distance between Yugoslavia and Chile, there was not much bilateral contact during the first few years after World War II. An area in which there was successful collaboration between the two countries, and which was also sometimes an area of conflict, was the United Nations (UN). The two countries voted together at times, sometimes proposed resolutions, and sought mutual support for the election of their candidates to UN bodies. Thus, in an amendment to the 1947 report from the General Committee, the Yugoslav delegation pledged to extend the Jewish Agency's right to participate in debate to other representatives of the inhabitants of Palestine and, together with the delegations from Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and the Byelorussian SSR, entered this proposal into a new resolution. The UN General Assembly accepted this initiative.¹⁴

¹⁰ Ljubo Ilić (Split, 1905–Belgrade, 1994) was an architect and a diplomat. He completed secondary school in his native city and studied architecture in Paris. A prewar member of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, he participated in the Spanish Civil War and fought in the French Resistance, which is where he was promoted to the rank of general. He served as envoy to Norway, Mexico, and Denmark, and as ambassador to Switzerland. For more detail, see: Selinić 2013: 273

¹¹ DAMSP, PA, 1946, Južna Amerika, f. 7, d. 7, s. 13263, Pismo generala Ilića upućeno Ministarstvu inostranih poslova od 6. 10. 1946.

¹² DAMSP, PA, 1947, Argentina, f. 9, d. 2, s. 4183, 'Odnosi sa Argentinom', 3.

¹³ Arhiv Jugoslavije (AJ), Kabinet predsednika Republike (KPR), I-2/17 (3-4), Informativni materijal o Čileu.

¹⁴ Jovanović 1985: 120.

In 1947 five documentary films were delivered through the Yugoslav Red Cross in Argentina: *Omladinska pruga*, *Maršal Tito u Hrvatskoj*, *Nova zemlja*, *Oslobođenje Zagreba* and *Rijeka u obnovi*, which were shown in several cities. Censors gave permission for them to be broadcast in the middle of June, and they were shown for three months, only to be re-evaluated at the end of September. The selection of these films shows that consideration was given to the fact that most Yugoslav immigrants had from Croatia, and that of these, the majority had come from Dalmatia. These films were also shown in Uruguay. In Chile they were only shown on September 28 in the capital Santiago. Data from the delegation indicates that 450 people were in attendance.¹⁵ Further screenings were suspended due to the crisis in international relations that occurred only a few days later.

2. Chilean accusations and severance of diplomatic relations

In 1946 after World War II, Chile elected Gabriel González Videla, a member of the left wing of the *Partido Radical* [Radical Party], as its third president. His presidency would come to be marked by his anticommunism.¹⁶ Even though he was elected with the support of the Communist Party (*Partido Comunista de Chile*), and his election campaign had included a number of their demands, he quickly came into conflict with them.¹⁷ First he demanded the resignation of three of their ministers in April 1947, and later refused to include them in his new government. The situation became more tense when miners went on strike en masse in August and October, paralyzing the country. It was quite evident that the communists were involved in the strikes. At this point, González Videla was worried about the further spread of unrest if the communists received support from the Soviet embassy in Santiago and from other communist countries. This led him to take a firmer stance regarding communists in the country and toward the countries under Soviet influence.

In the fall of 1947, Chilean President González Videla launched an offensive against communism. It began first with the expulsion of communists from public offices and, according to the assessments of American diplomats, González Videla then ‘declared war on communism’ on October 6. This move was connected to the 18.000 Chilean miners going on strike two days earlier. By then, the Americans knew the Chileans would make accusations against a Soviet satellite state due to its officials’ participation in organizing the strike. They alleged that Chilean communists were receiving instructions from Belgrade and General Ilić. González Videla explained to the Americans that the Chilean election had been sabotaged precisely because of the United States’ significant investments in the country.¹⁸

¹⁵ DAMSP, PA, 1948, Argentina, f. 19, d. 7, s. 43360, Izvještaj o prikazivanju naših dokumentarnih filmova u Južnoj Americi.

¹⁶ For more on this, see: Soto, Garay 2018; Collier, Sater 2004: 246–251; Bethell, Leslie 1993: 120–122.

¹⁷ This included, among other things, nationalizing insurance companies, oil sources, and a range of socially significant enterprises, as well as strengthening economic cooperation with the USSR and assisting the republican movement in Spain. Šifrin 1947: 28–31.

¹⁸ Foreign Relations of United States, 1947, The American Republics, Volume VIII, Memorandum by the Deputy Director of the Office of American Republic Affairs (Woodward) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Armour), Confidential, Washington 8. 10. 1947, 501–502. (<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v08/d451>, accessed 29. 3. 2021).

On October 8, Dalibor Jakaša, secretary to the Yugoslav delegation in Buenos Aires, and Andrej Cunja, the Yugoslav *chargé d'affaires* in Chile, were expelled, which led to a rupture in diplomatic relations two days later. Cunja was called to the Chilean Ministry of Internal Affairs, and Jakaša was found in his hotel. They were both informed they could no longer remain in the country and were then quickly transported to an airport from which they were flown to the Argentine border city of Mendoza. From there they were taken to Buenos Aires.

President González Videla then announced they had tried to paralyze Chilean production 'as part of a plan to prevent preparations for the defense of the [Western] Hemisphere'. All of this was connected to the 'new Comintern' and the 'new Soviet Bolshevism'. There was talk of communist agents being organized and infiltrating the country.¹⁹ It could be said this was connected in part to the founding of Cominform, the new organization of communist parties headed by the USSR, for which Belgrade had been named as its seat immediately prior. The situation became heated, the strikes continued, and on October 10 shots were fired at the Soviet embassy in Santiago. In the days following, the pressreleased various documents confiscated from Yugoslav diplomats and immigrants meant to prove there was an international conspiracy. On the front lines were the newspapers *La Hora* and *El Diario Ilustrado*.²⁰

It seems that even before the Yugoslav diplomats were expelled, news had been leaked in Chile that 'one of the Soviet satellites' had been involved in the country's strikes. The Americans quickly realized they were referring to Yugoslavia. The same day, President González Videla informed the American ambassador Claude Bowers of the steps he had taken. He had been aware of the official statement from the Chilean government even before it was announced. Cunja was accused of having connections to the Chilean communists and the local Yugoslav emigrants in order to enable 'communist agents' to enter Chile. The accusations against Jakaša were even more serious. He was suspected of working to strengthen the campaign against both the US and South American countries, attacking continental security, and organizing the sabotage of the means of production through the strikes. It was stressed that these instructions were now being carried out by members of the local communist party. The beginning of Yugoslav actions in Chile was linked to the arrival of General Ilić, who had begun organizing communists in 1946 and had held several meetings with them.²¹

A statement by the Yugoslav Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the rupture in diplomatic relations between Yugoslavia and Chile said that the Chilean government had broken 'the most fundamental principles adopted in international relations', and claimed that the reasons were completely without merit, as was the entire litany of 'the most fantastical slander' against the Yugoslav government. The document concluded that the Yugoslav government had done nothing to instigate this action, which was interpreted as being against the interests of Chile and the Chilean people and which served the interests of powers with expansionist

¹⁹ Carrellán 2018: 90–91.

²⁰ Huneus 2009: 152.

²¹ Foreign Relations of United States, 1947, The American Republics, Volume VIII, The ambassador in Chile (Bowers) to the Secretary of State., 825.00B/10–847: Telegram, Santiago 8. 10. 1947, 504, (<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v08/d452>, accessed 26. 3. 2021).

aspirations who were opposed to cooperation among nations and who 'were increasingly directing Chile's internal and external policies'. It ended by stating that Yugoslavia had no need to continue maintaining relations with a government that 'does not determine its relations with other countries independently'.²² A few days later, the statement was published in the leading emigrant Yugoslav newspaper in Argentina, *Jugoslavenski iseljenički vjesnik*.²³

Preparations for a Yugoslav representative to travel to Chile had already been made in the summer of 1947. The Yugoslav legation had planned to send two officers, Dalibor Jakaša and Dalibor Soldatić. The goal of their trip was said to be to patch up relations among the existing Yugoslav immigrant organizations in Chile that were not cooperating. Another task was to organize a campaign to raise funds for Yugoslavia, of which much was expected since it was believed that many of the immigrants were wealthy. The remaining issues that needed to be resolved included the immigrant press and the delegation in Chile, which was run by only one officer who, according to the delegation, was not able to adequately carry out his duties.²⁴ A response from the headquarters in Belgrade arrived at the end of August. Foreign Affairs Minister Stanoje Simić approved a loan in the amount of 4000 pesos for the trip, but asked that only one official from the delegation in Buenos Aires travel to Chile.²⁵ The choice was Secretary Jakaša.

The Yugoslav envoy in Argentina, General France Pirc, scheduled a press conference during which he responded to the charges in the communiqué from the Chilean government.²⁶ He denied all charges, calling them 'fantastical slander and fabrications'. He concluded that the initiator of the campaign was 'one of the Great Powers that was increasingly directing Chilean foreign and domestic policy'.²⁷ There was no doubt he was thinking of the United States. Pirc's comments were clearly not made independently. Rather he was just following the general line of the official statement by the Yugoslav foreign affairs ministry, and even repeated its claims. At that time, Yugoslavia was strongly connected to the USSR. It saw the US as the biggest threat to world peace, and thus perceived its decisive influence in the actions of the Chilean government.

Troubles for the Yugoslav diplomats expelled from Chile did not end there. When they arrived in Argentina, the local police ignored their diplomatic immunity and placed them under arrest. This was particularly serious for Dalibor Jakaša, who had been accredited as an advisor within Argentina by the delegation in Buenos Aires. He was told to sign a document and be fingerprinted and photographed. Jakaša responded by cutting a vein in his

²² Dokumenti 1986: 254–255.

²³ *Jugoslavenski iseljenički vjesnik*, 16 October 1947, 1.

²⁴ DAMSP, PA, 1947, Argentina, f. 9, d. 11, s. 415688, Telegram Ministarstvu inostranih poslova od 6. 8. 1947.

²⁵ DAMSP, PA, 1947, Argentina, f. 9, d. 11, s. 415688, Telegram ministra inostranih poslova Stanoja Simića od 29. 8. 1947.

²⁶ France Pirc (Sodražica, Slovenija, 1899 – Ljubljana, 1954) graduated from Officer Candidate School in Austria-Hungary and Flight School in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. During World War II, he served the Independent State of Croatia with the rank of colonel but defected in 1943 and joined the Partisans. Because of this, the Ustaša liquidated members of his immediate family. He was promoted to the rank of major general in 1944. After the war, he served as commander-in-chief of the Yugoslav air force. He was an envoy in Argentina from 1947 to December 1949. Selinić 2013: 71.

²⁷ *Jugoslavenski iseljenički vjesnik*, 16 October 1947, 3.

left arm and going on a hunger strike. Even his release from prison did not proceed according to standard protocol. He was released at the outskirts of the city in the middle of the night and, according to the Yugoslav delegation, did not arrive home until around four in the morning.²⁸ All of this, of course, elicited new protests from the Yugoslavs.

On October 9, while Andrej Cunja was being held in Medoza, Pirc appealed directly to the Argentine foreign minister Juan Atilio Bramuglia for his release.²⁹ When Cunja was arrested, an envelope was taken from him that contained two documents he was taking to the post office. The documents were a draft budget for the press. They were not returned to him after his release, so Bogdan Popović, the secretary to the delegation, sent a note to the Argentine foreign affairs ministry. When the Spanish version was being compiled, an error was accidentally introduced when the word *seized* was mistranslated as *despojada* [robbed]. Popović tried to rectify the error by sending a corrected version without referring to the previous one. However, he did not receive an answer.³⁰ Cunja had lived in Chile since 1937 and had been appointed *chargé d'affaires* by General Ilić during his mission in South America.

Not everyone in Chile supported the actions of the president and the government. Pablo Neruda, a senator in the opposition, writer, and later Nobel laureate, accused the government of succumbing to US dictates and fabricating a non-existent conflict based on a forged document. Conflict with the government forced Neruda to leave Chile and flee to Europe the following year.³¹

A possibility existed that Argentina would follow the same path as Chile, and according to some news accounts, there had been some movement in that direction. Yugoslav diplomats suspected the US was pressuring Perón and that Chile had allegedly tried to lead the Argentinian authorities to take 'an irreversible step'. At the same time, Chile and Brazil had severed ties with the USSR and Czechoslovakia. Within a few days it was clear that Argentina would not be following the same path as Chile.³² Secretary Popović reported that, according to 'reliable sources', on October 22 the Chilean government had sent Argentina a note regarding the latest events. It allegedly suggested talks and asked that diplomatic relations with the USSR and the countries of Eastern Europe be severed. Argentina sent a negative reply five days later on October 27.³³

Nevertheless, there was still some short-term tension between the two countries after Jakaša's detention and Cunja's arrest after their arrival in Argentina. Belgrade responded by calling in the Argentine *chargé d'affaires* Carlos Ferro for a conversation. The meeting took place on October 11 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was led by Srđa Prica, one of the

²⁸ DAMSP, PA, 1947, Argentina, f. 9, d. 3, s. 424329, Nota SP 94 od 12. 10. 1947.

²⁹ Juan Atilio Bramuglia, 1903–1962 was a lawyer and a child of Italian emigrants. He completed a doctorate in law in Buenos Aires in 1925. He was a participant in the 1943 Argentine coup d'état. He was appointed minister of foreign affairs after Perón became president. In 1948, he served as president of the UN Security Council. He resigned in 1948, for which a conflict with Eva Perón was a contributing factor.

³⁰ AJ, Kabinet maršala Jugoslavije (KMJ), I-3-b/57, Pismo sekretara Poslanstva FNRJ u Buenos Ajresu Bogdana Popovića upućeno Ministarstvu inostranih poslova FNRJ od 10. 11. 1947.

³¹ Huneus 2009: 154.

³² AJ, Ministarstvo rada vlade FNRJ (25), fascikla 66, Izvještaj iz Argentine, undated, most likely from the end of 1947.

³³ DAMSP, PA, 1947, Argentina, f. 9, d. 3, s. 422711, Telegram str pov. br. 140 sekretara poslanstva u Buenos Ajresu Bogdana Popovića upućen Ministarstvu inostranih poslova od 10. 11. 1947.

department heads. When asked directly to explain the actions of the Argentine authorities, Ferro explained that he knew nothing more than what he had seen from news agencies. When he was given handed a request for the Yugoslav diplomats' immediate release, he expressed astonishment at how events had unfolded and said he would inform his government of the request. Prica laid out the prospect of 'vigorous diplomatic measures' if Jakaša and Cunja were not released quickly. However, Ferro said that he did not believe his government would apprise him of events unless it adopted some 'decisive' measures. In the end, he expressed his gratitude for the hospitality he had received thus far in Yugoslavia and that he would be sorry if something happened to disrupt relations between the two countries.³⁴

Representative Pirc left Buenos Aires on October 14 and returned to Belgrade for council. It was decided that Jakaša would return to Yugoslavia with him and thus essentially be recalled, even though the facts indicated he was 'not at all guilty'. This move could be seen as an attempt to somehow calm the tensions in relations with the South American countries—and above all with Argentina, Yugoslavia's most important partner on the continent.

The Yugoslav diplomats were quickly released, and later analysis blamed lower-level Argentine officials under the influence of Chile for their detention. Sometime later, Ambassador Pirc went to see Minister Bramuglia to seek answers in connection with the 'unpleasant' proceedings involving the Yugoslav diplomatic representatives. The Argentine minister answered that the unpleasantness had not resulted from the will of the government, that at the beginning they 'did not know' who the people involved were, and his orders were that, if there were diplomats in question, they should be immediately released.³⁵

Cavendish W. Cannon, the American ambassador in Belgrade, informed his government after Yugoslavia broke off diplomatic relations with Chile. Cannon pointed out that he had heard similar allegations from other colleagues about other Yugoslavs using diplomatic missions to carry out various subversive acts under the guise of trade. It was concluded that there was an already significantly developed communist network abroad, and the choice of Belgrade as the seat of Cominform was not coincidental.³⁶

An October 13 telegram from Ambassador Bowers showed that the American embassy considered the situation in Chile to be serious. In it Bowers wrote that, in light of the 'world contest between communism and democracy', the US should not be 'indifferent to the major battle communism is waging in Chile' or permit a 'Communist triumph in our backyard... which will spread to other American nations'.³⁷ The ambassador was clearly not pleased by the State Department's lack of action, and he was trying to do something about the issue. British diplomats in Santiago, however, had a completely different viewpoint.

³⁴ AJ, KMJ, I-3-b/57, Zabeleška o razgovoru načelnike Price sa Otravnikom poslova Republike Argentine g. Ferrom, dne 11. X. 1947 godine.

³⁵ DAMSP, PA, 1947, Argentina, f. 9, d. 3, s. 424329, Telegram poslanika Pirca upućen ministarstvu inostranih poslova FNRJ od 26. 11. 1947.

³⁶ Foreign Relations of United States, 1947, The American Republics, Volume VIII, The ambassador in Yugoslavia (Cannon) to the Secretary of State, 725.60H/10-1147: Telegram, Belgrade 11. 10. 1947, 513 (https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v08/pg_513, accessed 26. 3. 2021).

³⁷ Foreign Relations of United States, 1947, The American Republics, Volume VIII, The ambassador in Chile (Bowers) to the Secretary of State, 825.5045/10-1347: Telegram, Santiago 13. 10. 1947, 506, (<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v08/d454>, accessed 27. 3. 2021).

Ambassador John Leche believed that González Videla and the government were not thinking clearly. He believed their anticommunism was real and they were giving in to Cold War paranoia. He even translated some of the published documents containing accusations against the Yugoslavs and sent them to London with the conclusion that they did not look at all subversive.³⁸ However, Czechoslovak representatives in Santiago were of the opinion that, based on what the Chilean government had presented, Jakaša had perhaps made some inappropriate statements, but there was no real evidence of bad acts.³⁹

Based on research conducted thus far it seems there is no evidence that Yugoslav diplomats were in any way engaged with the unrest in Chile nor was what the Chilean government had presented at all conclusive. However, one should not lose sight of the fact that during this period there were examples of Yugoslav officials working abroad against the legal regimes of countries they were staying in, as was the case with Ambassador Marijan Stilinović in Argentina⁴⁰ and Yugoslav diplomats in Egypt.⁴¹ As for the US's disruptive role, there is no concrete evidence for this either. Some earlier historiographic works have pointed to increased American sales of coal to Chile during those months. In a more recent analysis, historian James Lockhart considered others' earlier findings and concluded it was much more likely that González Videla and Ambassador Bowens had been pressuring the State Department rather than the other way round. The ambassador had done this before and had often identified with the the Chilean government's position.⁴² Based on all that has been presented here, and without excluding some influence from the US and the revolutionary activities of some Yugoslav diplomats and immigrants, it seems clear that the main reason for the rupture in diplomatic relations between Chile and Yugoslavia was the internal political situation President González Videla and the government were facing in the fall of 1947.

3. Leading Yugoslav newspapers and the rupture in Yugoslav–Chilean diplomatic relations

The press in the second Yugoslavia was free according to the 1946 Press Law, but this was not the case in practice. It was run by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, which gave directives regarding when and where they could write, and about what and whom. According to an analysis by Ljubodrag Dimić, until 1948 management of the press included censorship because Agitprop read and edited every article. Later, editors and the press were asked to 'follow the spirit of the party line'.⁴³ It is thus clear that the Yugoslav press also went along with Yugoslav policy toward Chile, and so, for the most part, articles about the country supported the government's stance.

The Yugoslav public was informed of the rupture in diplomatic relations with Chile on October 11 in *Borba* and *Politika*, the most prominent daily newspapers. Both

³⁸ Lockhart 2019: 117–118.

³⁹ Garay Vera, Soto, 2013: 91.

⁴⁰ Stilinović had encouraged Yugoslav emigrants to take action against Perón's 'profascist bourgeois government', and made space at the embassy in Buenos Aires available to them for meetings. Simić 2021: 56–57.

⁴¹ Životić 2006: 158–159.

⁴² Lockhart 2019: 114–115.

⁴³ Dimić 1988: 148–149.

newspapers ran a statement issued by Tanjug, the state news agency, without additional comment. Interestingly, instead of being announced on the front page, it was published in *Politika* on the third page and in *Borba* on the fifth page. It appears the intention behind this was to not give any particular attention to the event, even though it also connected to the general situation involving American relations with Yugoslavia and with the USSR.

In the following days, the main Yugoslav newspapers did not publish much regarding the rupture in diplomatic relations with Chile. On October 16, *Borba* carried writing from the Albanian newspaper *Bashkimi*, which saw the Chilean government's actions against Yugoslavia as 'a part of an imperialistic campaign against democratic countries.' The article clearly stated that behind all of it, as 'the sworn enemy of international cooperation, peace, and democracy', was the US, meaning Wall Street.⁴⁴ After a few days, *Politika* also highlighted American influence by using a statement from Salvador Ocampo, a Chilean senator from the opposition, saying that the Chilean people were 'for the most part progressive', but the alliance between González Videla's government and 'American imperialism' had delivered them into 'the hands of reactionary forces'.⁴⁵ In this period, the Yugoslav press did not directly attack the US, which was in line with the statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Instead, it used articles and statements from the foreign press to convey this position.

They made their position toward the Chilean government and the US completely clear on October 24 after the USSR and Czechoslovakia broke off diplomatic relations with Chile. The leading Yugoslav newspapers stated in detail what had happened to the Yugoslav diplomats in Chile and Argentina and responded to the charges leveled against them. On the front page under the headline, 'Provocation of Dollar Satellites', *Politika* made accusations right from the start against the US and the governments in South America that were politically and economically dependent on the Americans. It pointed to a premeditated plan because the operation had been carried out incredibly quickly. Also published on the front page was a facsimile of a document that had been taken from Jakaša in Chile and published in the local press. It was a typed, unsigned private letter Jakaša had sent to his wife. Along with private messages, it also contained a portion referring to his alleged involvement in organizing the Chilean miners' strikes, which was all 'firmly in line with M.T.'s plan'. It was immediately clear it was a forgery because some basic words had been misspelled. It was especially striking that the letter was unsigned. The conclusion from the beginning was that an incriminating section had been added to one of Jakaša's handwritten letters, and the person consulted regarding its insertion had not spoken his mother tongue in a long time and had pretty much forgotten it.⁴⁶ This 'evidence' presented by the Chilean government, in and of itself, was a rather convincing argument for the Yugoslavs to persuade their own public that these were fabricated charges.

In addition to this letter was a statement published by the Soviet news agency TASS that accused 'exponents of fascism in the Chilean government' of working for the benefit of their 'international masters' and against the will of their own people, to whom they would

⁴⁴ *Borba*, 16 October 1947, 4.

⁴⁵ *Politika*, 19 October 1947, 2.

⁴⁶ *Politika*, 24 October 1947, 1.

have to answer. They of course rejected the ‘absurd’ accusations of Soviet participation in organizing the miners’ strikes in Chile, but they also condemned the use of military force to suppress them.⁴⁷ There was no direct reference to the US in the statement. Nevertheless, on October 13, after the Yugoslav diplomats had been expelled and the Soviet embassy in Santiago had been fired on, Dmitrije Aleksandrovitch Zhukov, the Soviet ambassador to Chile, unofficially made accusations against the US when speaking about these events, saying that these were ‘interesting days’ for the American embassy.⁴⁸ After diplomatic relations were severed, the Soviet embassy was emptied more than once, and it is interesting to note that one part of its 28 staff members left Chile via Argentina by way of transportation organized by the Yugoslav government for Yugoslav emigrants.⁴⁹

This article was based on the same material connected to the case of Jakaša and Cunja. Just like *Politika*, *Borba* also published an article with the heading ‘Method of a Provocateur’. In comparison to *Politika*’s article, there were only stylistic differences between the lede and the conclusion. Otherwise, the content was essentially identical. *Borba* did not publish the facsimile of the document but did mention its content and pointed out how illogical it was. In the end, the conclusion was that ‘servants in Chile had been assisting the intentions of their bosses in Washington’.⁵⁰

Following the same system, a few days later a longer article was published that referred to the new situation and analyzed US influence in Latin American countries. The headline in *Politika* read, ‘Latin American Countries—Imperialist Tools for Provocations Against Peace and Cooperation among Nations’. It discussed these countries’ complete economic dependence on ‘monopolistic trusts and American rulers’. Further on in the article, figures related to investments of American capital into Latin American countries were analyzed, along with some examples of attempts to constrain independent organizing. In the end, the conclusion was that all of these maneuvers were in fact meant to create an ‘imperialist bloc against the Soviet Union and the countries that had freed themselves from Anglo-American imperialist control through their peoples’ heroic struggles’.⁵¹ An article in *Borba* entitled ‘Wall Street and its Mercenaries in Latin America’ also considered Latin American economic dependence on the US but used different examples from those presented in the *Politika* article, which had run the day before. It reached the same conclusion, which was that orders coming from Wall Street had been carried out, and this would ultimately lead to ‘the further enslavement of the Latin American nations’.⁵² Standing in opposition to them were the allegedly ‘free and democratic states’ of the future Eastern Bloc.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*

⁴⁸ Foreign Relations of United States, 1947, The American Republics, Volume VIII, The ambassador in Chile (Bowers) to the Secretary of State., 701.6125/10–1347: Restricted No. 15, 666, Santiago 13. 10. 1947, 507, (<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v08/d455>, accessed 27. 3. 2021). However, proceedings before a Chilean court concerning the shooting were suspended in January due to a lack of evidence that would identify the perpetrators, and because the Soviets had chosen to not participate in the proceedings after diplomatic relations were severed.

⁴⁹ Simić 2020: 803.

⁵⁰ *Borba*, 24 October 1947, 5.

⁵¹ *Politika*, 26 October 1947, 1.

⁵² *Borba*, 27 October 1947, 2.

Over the next few days, there were more articles emphasizing the US's responsibility for the Chilean government's behavior, along with other Latin American governments. Citing TASS, writings from the Cuban newspaper *Hoy* were also published, which claimed that US Secretary of State George Marshall had personally met with delegates from Cuba, Brazil, and Chile in secret to demand they break off diplomatic relations with the USSR. Allegedly, Marshall had refrained from making the same demands of Mexico and Argentina because he was worried they would refuse due to their trade relations with the USSR.⁵³ All of this was meant to further convince readers in Yugoslavia of the validity of the official position regarding the crisis surrounding the severance of Yugoslav-Chilean diplomatic relations.

The Yugoslav delegation in Buenos Aires reported that *Protest*, a newspaper published by a group of emigrants connected to the Royalist movement and headed by former *chargé d'affaires* in Buenos Aires Filip Dominiković, had also joined the campaign after the Yugoslav representatives had been expelled from Chile. One edition of the newspaper was dedicated almost entirely to this issue, and it regarded the representatives of socialist Yugoslavia as being 'slandorous and boorish toward our country and representatives'.⁵⁴ Yugoslav representatives complained that Chetnik elements were using the opportunity to take over the association at the Yugoslav Cultural Center in the Magallanes region in southern Chile.⁵⁵

4. From severance to reestablishment of diplomatic relations

When Yugoslav-Chilean relations were severed, the issue of who would advocate for Yugoslav interests in Chile needed to be resolved. As expected, this right was first offered to the USSR and then to Czechoslovakia, but this became moot when Chile broke off diplomatic relations with both countries. The same was true for any other country considered to be in the Soviet camp. The next choice was Norway or Sweden, but these also fell through for various reasons. Sweden turned the offer down because, at the time, it was representing Japan, Hungary, and Romania, while Norway did not have a permanent representative in Santiago. In the end, the choice fell to Switzerland under the condition that the Yugoslav delegation in Buenos Aires would be regularly consulted regarding issues related to visas, passports, and the repatriation of Yugoslav citizens. Switzerland agreed to this. However, there was no response from the Chilean government until the middle of 1948.⁵⁶

Considering that there had been no progress in relations between the two countries, Secretary Popović was sent from Buenos Aires to Santiago to liquidate the mission there. When he returned, he brought with him a bag containing accounting records and confidential archives from 1936–1947, along with all confidential registries. The bag itself weighed around 75 kilograms and had to be transported in the baggage area of the plane since Popović could not bring it with him in the cabin. After his arrival in Buenos Aires, the secretary realized that his luggage had not arrived with him and was being held in Santiago.

⁵³ *Politika*, 1 November 1947, 3.

⁵⁴ AJ, 25–66, Izvještaj iz Argentine, undated, mostly likely from the end of 1947

⁵⁵ DAMSP, PA, 1949, Argentina, f. 6, d. 9, s. 49700, Iseljavanje našeg naroda u Južnu Ameriku, 17.

⁵⁶ DAMSP, PA, 1948, Male zemlje, f. 159, d. 4, s. 423800, 'Zabeleška: Zaštita naših građana u republici Čile'.

After an official protest, Popović was informed that there had been a mistake, and his luggage would be sent on the next flight. It did arrive as promised, but the bag had obviously been opened and repacked, although nothing seemed to be missing. It is interesting to note that Popović had considered burning everything in the archives in Santiago out of fear of it all being seized by the Chilean government. But he nevertheless decided that he would manage to move it all without incident.⁵⁷ The Yugoslav ministry of foreign affairs sent instructions to Minister Pirc that he should 'strongly admonish' Popović for his oversight regarding the transportation of confidential mail, which he did. Minister Simić was especially insistent that this case should serve as an example to other officials.⁵⁸ It seems, however, that Pirc himself believed the secretary had done all he could, given the circumstances. The Yugoslavs had no evidence at all that the Chilean police had been behind this specific incident.

In the absence of other options, Yugoslav immigrants tried on their own initiative to find a solution through direct talks with the Chilean foreign affairs ministry. In November 1948 they were seen by Foreign Minister Germán Riesco.⁵⁹ Riesco's answer to their request for consular relations to be reinstated was: 'Belgrade will send a communist who will value propaganda over consular affairs'. As a solution, the immigrants later suggested the possibility that a future consulate could be chosen from among them, which seemed more acceptable to the Chilean minister. However, these negotiations led to nothing because the Yugoslav foreign ministry wanted a clear signal that Chile wanted to establish consular relations before they would even consider the issue.⁶⁰

It is important to mention that the Informbiro period did not have the same effect on Yugoslav emigrants as it did for those in Argentina. This was influenced by the number of communists among them. As previously mentioned, the largest number of immigrants in Chile of Yugoslav descent were businessmen, and it was even stated that they accepted the resolution 'without much protest and even with great personal pleasure'.⁶¹ Thus the Yugoslav immigrants in Chile remained rather homogeneously the opposite of those in Argentina, for whom the split in the Yugoslav colony lasted for almost a decade. A joint celebration of November 29 state holiday was not held until the 1950s.⁶²

Relations between Yugoslavia and Chile were reestablished on November 2, 1950, three years after they had been severed. This was a consequence of the dispute between Yugoslavia and the Cominform countries, which pushed the Yugoslav leadership to change its policy toward the West, and for the US and countries under its influence to change their perception of Yugoslavia. Chilean President González Videla continued with his firm anticommunist stance, but after the dispute between Yugoslavia and Cominform, he made an

⁵⁷ DAMSP, PA, 1948, Male zemlje, f. 159, d. 4, s. 422341, 'Predmet: Put druga Popovića u Čile' od 5. 8. 1948.

⁵⁸ DAMSP, PA, 1948, Male zemlje, f. 159, d. 4, s. 422341, Šifrovano pismo od 31. 8. 1948.

⁵⁹ Germán Riesco (Germán Ignacio Riesco Errázuriz, 1888–1958) was a Chilean politician and son of the president of Chile (Germán Riesco Errázuriz, 1854–1916). He served as the minister of war and navy (1919–1920) and the foreign affair minister (1948–1950).

⁶⁰ DAMSP, PA, 1948, Male zemlje, f. 159, d. 4, s. 425338, 'Naši iseljenici u Čileu poduzeli korake za uspostavljanje konzularnih odnosa između FNRI i Republike Čile' od 24. 1. 1949.

⁶¹ DAMSP, PA, 1949, Argentina, f. 6, d. 9, s. 49700, Iseljavanje našeg naroda u Južnu Ameriku, 20.

⁶² For more on this, see: Simić 2021: 132–142.

exception. He resolved to renew diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia and began the initiative the Yugoslav diplomats had been waiting for. González Videla argued that Tito had thrown off the yoke of Stalin, changed course, and rejected open Soviet interference, of which he himself had become a victim'. Thus, as he himself had said, he wanted to show that 'ideology is not an obstacle for cooperation between nations if they have mutual respect for one another'. Ricardo Boizard, a trusted and prominent journalist and former parliamentarian, was appointed as the Chilean diplomatic representative in Belgrade.⁶³ Renestablishing relations was in accordance with Yugoslavia's policy at the time of openness toward western countries as means of breaking through the isolation imposed by the Soviet bloc.

Relations between the two countries improved during the 1950s, particularly regarding party connections, which began to develop significantly, especially after Veljko Vlahović's visit in 1954.⁶⁴ That same year, a Yugoslav trade delegation headed by Jakov Blažević, a member of the government, visited Chile when a trade agreement was signed. The next year, representatives of the Socialist Party of Chile visited Yugoslavia. In the following years, some Chilean ministers and senators also spent some time in Belgrade. The high point of relations between the two countries officially came in 1958 when the diplomatic mission was declared an embassy.⁶⁵ Interestingly, during the 1960s the Yugoslav foreign office made allegations that the US had been behind the rupture in Chilean-Yugoslav relations.⁶⁶

Translated by *Elizabeth Salmore*

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⁶³ Garay Vera, Soto 2013: 188.

⁶⁴ At that time, he was president of the Commission of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia for International Affairs. The visit was part of a tour initiated by an invitation from the Socialist Party of Chile, during which, in addition to Chile and Argentina, he also visited Uruguay, Bolivia, and Brazil. Argentine historian Agustín Cosovschi considers Vlahović's visit to Latin America to be a turning point in Yugoslav activity in this part of the world, which afterward became stronger and more organized. Cosovschi 2020: 5–6.

⁶⁵ For a brief overview of the most important events connected to relations between the two countries, see: Naše teme 1966: 312–315.

⁶⁶ AJ, KPR I-2/17 (3-4), Informativni materijal o Čileu.

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**ДИПЛОМАТСКИ ОДНОСИ ЈУГОСЛАВИЈЕ И ЧИЛЕА 1947–1950.
ОД ПРЕКИДА ДО ОБНОВЕ**

Резиме

Прекид дипломатских односа између Чилеа и Југославије десио се 10. октобра 1947. Њему је претходило протеривање двојице југословенских дипломата из Чилеа, Далибора Јакаше, секретара посланства у Буенос Ајресу и Андреја Цуње, отправника послова у Сантјагу. Они су оптужени да су учествовали у организацији штрајкова рудара са циљем да изазову нестабилност у држави и саботирају производњу, да су организовали и убацивали комунистичке агенте у Чиле са циљем угрожавања безбедности целе Западне хемисфере. Десетак дана касније дипломатски односи прекинути су и са Совјетским Савезом и Чехословачком под сличним оптужбама. Све социјалистичке земље су у својим саопштењима индиректно оптужиле САД да стоји иза потеза чилеанске владе.

Може се закључити да правих доказа за ангажованост југословенских дипломата у немирима у Чилеу нема, нити да су они које је представила чилеанска влада довољно убедљиви. С друге стране не треба губити из вида да су постојали примери рада југословенских службеника у иностранству у том периоду против легалних режима у земљама у којима су боравили. И што се тиче наредбодавне улоге САД ни ту нема конкретних доказа. У једној новијој анализи закључује се да је реалније да су Стејт департмент притискали председник Чилеа Гонзалес Видела и амерички амбасадор Боуенс него да је било обратно. На основу свега презентованог можемо се сложити да је главни разлог прекида дипломатских односа Чилеа и Југославије био у унутрашњеполитичкој ситуацији са којом се у јесен 1947. суочио Гонзалес Видела и влада, притом не искључујући делимичан утицај САД, као и револуционарне активности неких југословенских дипломата и исељеника.

Југословенска штампа у почетку се није превише бавила овом темом и држала се званичног саопштења МИП-а. Након што су и СССР и Чехословачка прекинули односе са Чилеом кренуле су оптужбе на рачун САД и анализиран њихов утицај у Латинској Америци. Дипломатски односи Чилеа и Југославије обновљени су тек након три године новембра 1950. што је била директна последица сукоба Југославије са СССР и државама под његовим утицајем и њеног отварања према Западу. Након тога у наредним годинама долази до успона односа, посета партијских, привредних и државних делегација.

Кључне речи: Југославија, Чиле, Хладни рат, спољна политика, дипломатски односи, антикомунизам.