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Yugoslavia and the crisis of Petru Groza government (August 1945 – January 1946)**

For the most part of World War II, Yugoslavia and Romania were on the opposite sides although formally they were not at war, despite the decades-long, or even centuries-long tradition of alliance. The circumstances which contributed to that were the situation in Europe created with the rise of Hitler's Third Reich, followed by the outbreak of the war and especially the occupation of Yugoslavia in April 1941, as well as the German attack on the USSR in June of the same year, in which Romania also took part. Having suffered severe material and human losses on the front, in the summer of 1944, due to the advances of the Red Army, it became clear that the war was entering its final phase which was not unfolding in its favour, and following the coup d'état staged by King Michael, Romania abandoned the alliance with Germany and turned against it.

After the coup d'état in Romania on 23rd August 1944 and its switch to the side of the Allies and after the liberation of the largest part of Serbia in the autumn of that same year, Romania and Yugoslavia (then as the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia) both reached their common border on the Danube. However, both countries were only nominally restored in their pre-war forms, while in fact a process of social and economic transformation was launched in both of them under the influence of the USSR which would turn the two neighbouring countries into 'people's democracies' within the following several years, with single-party systems and a new role within the Soviet interest zone¹. In line with its new

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¹ See more about it in: Branko Petranović, Sava Dautović, *Jugoslavija, velike sile i balkanske zemlje, 1945-1948. Iskustvo "narodne demokratije" kao partijske države*, Beograd, 1994; Marija Obradović, "*Narodna demokratija" u Jugoslaviji 1945-1952*, Beograd, Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 1995; Şerban Rădulescu-Zoner, Daniela Buşe, Beatrice Marinescu, *Instaurarea totalitarismului comunist în România*, Bucureşti, Cavallioti, 2002; Gheorghe I. Ioniţa, *Istoria românilor – de la 23 august 1944 până în prezent*, Bucureşti, Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti, 2001; Dennis Deletant, *Romania under Communist Rule*, Bucharest, Civic Academy Foundation, 2006; Андреј Милин, Миодраг

orientation, Romania took the first steps with the aim of coming closer to Yugoslavia soon after the coup d'état of 23rd August 1944. On 3rd September already, Marshal Tito got the information from Moscow that the Romanian Ministry of the Interior issued a statement denying the legitimacy of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), because it was an 'artificial creation of Hitler's regime'2. Such an attitude of the Romanian authorities was of crucial importance, since it was exactly the Romanian recognition of that puppet state that was the reason of breaking off diplomatic relations in 19413. The final confirmation of this stance of Romania was signing the Armistice Agreement between Allies and Romania on 12th September, by which Romania pledged to break diplomatic relations with Germany and its satellites, including the Independent State of Croatia⁴. On 1st October already, in his capacity of President of the National Committee for the Liberation of Yugoslavia NCLY, i.e. the interim government. Tito appointed Nikola Petrović – a member of the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ), which functioned as an interim National Assembly, as the interim representative of Yugoslav interests in Romania⁵. However, it was clear from the activities of Nikola Petrović and his successor, Nikola Grulović, who replaced him in Bucharest quite soon, that the attitude of Yugoslavia towards both Romanian governments, first the one of General Sănătescu, and then the one of General Rădescu did not live up to Romanian expectations. Although their task was to represent their country before the Romanian authorities, the first Yugoslav representatives in Bucharest did not meet any of Romanian officials until the end of 1944, having focused on contacts with the Allied Control Commission, which was dominated by the Soviets⁶. The reason behind such an attitude was the opinion of Tito and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ/CPY) that those governments were too close to the Antonescu regime, since they inherited the administration, army and diplomacy from him without any significant changes. Only with the appointment of Petru Groza as Romanian Prime Minister, the attitude of Yugoslav authorities towards Romania would change importantly.

The government of Petru Groza, leader of the Ploughmen's Front, was sworn in on 6th March 1945, under Soviet pressure and following two weeks of unrest and riots in Bucharest. King Michael accepted it only after the promise of

Милин, Цветко Михајлов, *Срби у Румунији за време комунизма. Звучни архив и приручник о страдању*, Темишвар, Савез Срба у Румунији, 2011.

² Archives of Yugoslavia (hereinafter: AJ), Office of Marchal of Yugoslavia (KMJ) fonds, I – 3-b/527, Dispatch of Moša Pijade to Marshal Tito, no. 181, 3. 9. 1944.

³ AJ, Government of Kingdom of Yugoslavia in Emmigration fonds (103), folder 60, file 280, Report of Report of Avakumović, Ambassador to Bucharest, to Dr Momčilo Ninčić, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, no number, 29th May 1941, 1.

⁴ AJ, KMJ, I – 3-b/534, Armistice Agreement between Allies and Romania, 2.

⁵ AJ, KMJ, I – 3-b/529, Power of Attorney of NCLY for Nikola Petrović, Belgrade, 01/10/1944.

⁶ Владимир Љ. Цветковић, Обнова дипломатских односа Југославије и Румуније после Другог светског рата, у: "Токови историје", (2022), бр. 1, р. 136 – 137.

return of the Northern Transylvania to Romania. The government was politically diverse, although under control of the majority People's Democratic Front, dominated by the Romanian Communist Party (PCR)⁷. From that moment on, under the influence of USSR, a process of social and economic transformation began in Romania, similar to the one that had already started in Yugoslavia. This process was going to transform the two neighbouring countries into countries of 'people's democracy', with single-party systems and a new role within the Soviet interest zone⁸. In this process, which met much stronger resistance in Romania than in Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia openly provided support to the Romanian Communist Party in their ascent to power. This support was sometimes direct and sometimes indirect, as in the case of supporting the government of Petru Groza, which was accepted as a transitional formulation in the achievement of the final goal.

A positive attitude of Yugoslavia towards Groza's government was obvious even before the August crisis. In the beginning of May, reporting to Tito about Groza's wish to meet him, Yugoslav representative Grulović assessed Groza's government as the most popular of all the governments formed after the armistice had been signed. He underlined its activities on cleansing the state apparatus from fascist elements, on punishing war crimes, and numerous social actions taken, by which it became very close to Yugoslavia in its concept. Grulović emphasised that if Belgrade was planning to establish relationships with Romania, it had to be done with Groza's government in particular. The events that followed clearly demonstrated that official Belgrade shared Grulović's opinion: in May already, talks started on drafting a trade agreement between Yugoslavia and Romania. The first talks with the Romanian authorities on regulating mutual trade took place then but they failed to yield any results, primarily due to political reasons, because of the internal situation in Romania, in particular, because of the notorious dichotomy within the government of the People's Democratic Front. This dichotomy inside the Romanian government, which existed between the Romanian Communist Party and the Ploughmen's Front on the one side, and the Liberal and the Social-Democratic Party on the other side, was often manifested, and so was the case with the developing of trade relations with Yugoslavia. In this particular case, the bone of contention was the fact that Yugoslavia and Romania did not

⁷ Ричард Џ. Кремптон, *Балкан после Другог светског рата*, Београд, Клио, 2003, р. 114-117; Ion Bulei, *Brève histoire de la Roumanie*, Bucharest, Meronia, 2005, p. 186-187; Bernard Lory, *L'Europe balkanique de 1945 à nos jours*, Paris, Ellipses, 1996, p. 27; *A History of Romania*, ed. by Kurt W. Treptow, Iaşi, The Center for Romanian Studies, The Romanian Cultural Foundation, 1996, p. 513-514; Овидију Печикан, *Историја Румуна̂*, Београд, Бесједа, Клио, 2015; Gheorghe I. Ioniţa, *op. cit.*, p. 76-78; Ioan Scurtu, Gheorghe Buzatu, *Istoria românilor în secolul XX (1918-1948)*, Bucureşti, Paideia, 1999, p. 492.

⁸ See more about it in: Branko Petranović, Sava Dautović, op. cit.; Branko Petranović, Istorija Jugoslavije 1918-1988, III: Socijalistička Jugoslavija 1945-1988, Beograd, Nolit, 1988; Marija Obradović, op. cit.; Şerban Rădulescu-Zoner, Daniela Buşe, Beatrice Marinescu, op. cit.; Gheorghe I. Ioniţa, op. cit.; Dennis Deletant, op. cit.; Андреј Милин, Миодраг Милин, Цветко Михајлов, op. cit.

have diplomatic relations at that moment. Namely, Nikola Grulović met Gheorghe Tătărescu, the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs on 25th May, with the intention of learning more details on the recently signed trade agreement between Romania and the USSR, and also to deliver a list of goods which Yugoslavia wanted to import from Romania, and which were not included in the agreement with the USSR. On that occasion, Tătărescu was very determined and brisk, stating that Romania did not wish to establish trade relations with Yugoslavia before establishing normal diplomatic relations⁹. Grulović was puzzled by that, since before the meeting with Tătărescu, he had met Prime Minister Petru Groza on the same day, together with a couple of other members of the government, whose attitude was exactly the opposite of Tătărescu's – they were all in favour of developing and broadening the trade volume between Yugoslavia and Romania without delay, regardless of the non-existence of diplomatic relations¹⁰.

The issue of establishing trade relations with Yugoslavia in the end of May and the beginning of June 1945 seemed to have been very important for the Romanian government which endeavored to somehow pull out the country – which had ended the war defeated, and which did not have a peace treaty with the winning countries at that moment, from diplomatic isolation. However, it seems that there was no accord within the government on how to do that. Apparently, Tătărescu believed that by conditioning the trade cooperation he could force Yugoslavia into establishing diplomatic relations with Romania before Romania signed a peace treaty with the Allies, while the other members of the government most probably favoured the option of reaching the goal in small steps. Two weeks later, Stoicu, General Secretary of Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, invited Grulović for talks and confirmed the information Grulović had heard earlier that the Romanian government had recently discussed the need of Romania aiding the renewal of the neighbouring Yugoslavia by facilitating purchasing and import of necessary goods – for a start, 500 tons of salt which Yugoslavia could pay in lei¹¹. Grulović assumed that the issue had been agreed upon almost unanimously because Stoicu later informed him that Romania was investing every effort in order to receive an approval from the Allies for establishing relations with Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia and asked Yugoslavia to support those Romanian efforts, while Romania would on the other hand, until that was fulfilled, strive to develop the trade relations with Yugoslavia as much as possible¹². This meant that the faction within the Romanian government that saw the trade relations as means of easier

⁹ Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia (hereinafter: DAMSPS), Strictly Confidential Archives (SPA), 1945-1946, folder 11, file 11, Report of Nikola Grulović, Representative of DFY in Bucharest, to Vladimir Velebit, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of DFY, 15/06/1945, p. 1.

¹⁰ Ihidem.

¹¹ DAMSPS, Political Archives (PA), 1945, folder 27, Letter of Head of Political Department of the 1st Regional Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of DFY, Confidential, no. 1624, 28th June 1945, p. 1.

¹² Ibidem.

and faster establishing of diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia prevailed over the faction that was against such a view.

In mid-June, a secret meeting between Tito and Groza was organised. The purpose of this meeting was to overcome the mistrust which arose after the banned Slovene congress in Timisoara in the beginning of May 1945, which Romania viewed as a step towards achievement of Yugoslav aspirations to annexation of a part of the Romanian Banat. Although it is neither possible to find any stenographic notes nor any other document from this meeting in the Yugoslav archival materials which would directly corroborate that the meeting did take place, there is a lot of indirect evidence, both on Yugoslav and on Romanian side about it. On 25th May 1945, Nikola Grulović talked to Groza about his meeting with Tito and learned that Groza had asked the Soviets for their consent in that regard¹³. Two weeks later. Groza told Grulović he had the consent of the Soviets received from General Susaikow from ACC. They advised him that the meeting should be held in 'complete secrecy', in the border zone, so that if information thereof leaked into the public, explanation could be offered that the meeting had occurred by chance, during a regular inspection¹⁴. On the occasion of marking the two-year anniversary of the Faculty of Medicine in Timisoara in July 1947, Petru Groza himself said: 'Two years ago, I went to Yugoslavia to have talks with Marshal Tito. Belgrade had been in ruins then, so I was not able to recognise it a few weeks ago'15. It can be concluded from that address that he had been to Belgrade, most probably in July 1945. The above-mentioned time of his visit in 1945 also coincides with the rumors that went around in Bucharest at the time, on how Groza was planning a secret visit to Belgrade with one or two of his ministers in order to have talks with Tito. Cortlandt V. R. Schuyler, American representative at the Allied Control Commission in Bucharest also wrote a note about it 16. Finally, Groza's youngest daughter, Mia, left a testimony according to which, in July 1945, she accompanied her father on his trip from Deva via Novi Sad to Pančevo, where he had a meeting with Tito in a castle surrounded by a large park. Impressed by Tito's appearance in an elegantly tailored uniform, Mia Groza said that her farther and Tito had discussed the issue of Banat all day and all night and that they had finally agreed that Banat should belong to Romania¹⁷.

Finally, on 13th August, the Romanian initiative for renewal of diplomatic relationships was accepted. Yugoslavia did not hurry with establishing diplomatic relations with Romania, bearing in mind the previously acquired impression that the Soviets did not want Romania to establish diplomatic relations with other

¹⁵ DAMSPS, PA, 1947, Romania, file 103, dossier 1, Report of FPRY Ambassador Dane Medaković on political situation in Romania in the month of July, Bucharest, 31/07/1947, p. 6-7.

¹³ DAMSPS, Strictly Confidential Archives (SPA), 1945-1946, file 11, dossier 16, Report of Nikola Grulović sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Democratic Federal Yugoslavia (DFY), Strictly confidential, no. 11, Bucharest, 15/06/1945, 1.

¹⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁶ Dorin-Liviu Bîtfoi, *Petru Groza, ultimul burghez. O biografie*, București, Compania, 2004, p. 338.

¹⁷ Ibidem.

countries on its own at the moment that the Soviets did not find suitable. Therefore, the formal start of the process of establishing diplomatic relations between Yugoslavia and Romania happened on the initiative of Bucharest, only after diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Romania had been established. The official proposal was communicated in person by Gheorghe Tătărescu to Nikola Grulović. Tătărescu pointed out that his government concluded that, right after the establishment of diplomatic relations with the USSR, the same should also be done with Yugoslavia. Substantiating the proposal, Tătărescu said that establishing diplomatic relations was self-explanatory, since Yugoslavia and Romania were neighbouring countries 'that had never had any conflicts in the past', as well as that such a step suited the Romanian foreign policy which, now relying on the USSR, was intending to follow the 'old tracks' 18. Obviously, he had in mind the foreign policy of Romania in the period between the two world wars as well as the place and role of Romania and Yugoslavia in the so-called Versailles order, since he indicated a course which went from Belgrade via Bucharest to Moscow, and from there turning via Warsaw and Prague all the way to Paris as the course of the future Romanian foreign policy¹⁹. Conceived like this, the Romanian foreign policy of Tătărescu's was rather his wish than a policy based on reality, which he apparently did not understand well, starting with his own position in the government of Groza, continuing with the status of Romania and the importance of France, which were not the same after the war as they had been before the war, all the way to the failure in understanding the foreign policy conceptions of the USSR. Finally, Tătărescu also failed to realise that the course of the Yugoslav foreign policy ended in Moscow, without turning towards Paris. The best illustration of this was the swift and short answer of Yugoslavia to the Romanian proposal: 'tell the Romanian government to address us with their proposal through the USSR²⁰. This didn't mean that Yugoslavia did not wish to renew the diplomatic relations with Romania, but rather that it did not want to bypass Moscow. Two weeks later, Belgrade asked Romania to send a note via Yugoslav embassy in Moscow and promised a prompt answer²¹. This explanation was sent because the information from Bucharest was late, so the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was not aware that Grulović had already talked to Tătărescu on 27th August, and that Tătărescu told Grulović that Romania had received a consent from the Soviets for establishing diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia, as well as that he would immediately send a

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¹⁸ DAMSPS, PA, 1945, Romania, folder 27, file 25, Dispatch of the DFY Representative Office in Bucharest to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of DFY, Confidential, no. 2447, Bucharest, 13/08/1945.
¹⁹ *Ihidem*

²⁰ DAMSPS, PA, 1945, Romania, folder 27, file 25, Encrypted telegram of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of DFY to the DFY Representative Office in Bucharest, Confidential, no. 3206, Belgrade, 16/08/1945.

²¹ DAMSPS, SPA, 1945-1946, folder 11, file 16, Telegram of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of DFY to the DFY Representative Office in Bucharest, Strictly Confidential, no. 121, Belgrade, 30/08/1945.

note with that request, through the Soviet government²². Upon the return from Moscow, which a delegation of the Romanian government had visited in the meanwhile, Prime Minister Petru Groza received a visit from Grulović, whom he said that it was going to be decided at the government session on 19th September who the ambassador to Belgrade was going to be and that he was going to inform him about it immediately²³. However, the future Romanian ambassador to Belgrade was not appointed even one month later. According to the information of the Yugoslav embassy in Moscow, the reason behind it was the refusal of King Michael to sign any document of the government, including the one on appointment of an ambassador to Yugoslavia²⁴. The process of renewal of diplomatic relations between Yugoslavia and Romania was thus stalled for a while, due to the complicated internal political relations in Romania, i.e. due to the conflict between the King and the government.

Yugoslav support was evident especially during the crisis in relations between King Michael and the government of Petru Groza. In fact, this was an attempt of King Michael to prevent the process of sovietisation of Romania which was advancing faster under Groza's government than before. Encouraged by the Potsdam Declaration, according to which Romania was envisaged to establish a democratic government before signing the peace treaty and before being admitted into the United Nations, the King relied on the fact that the Western Allies did not recognise Groza's government due to the method in which it was established and due to its composition. In mid-August 1945, the King invited Groza to offer his resignation, but Groza refused it²⁵. The King asked the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom for support, but he did not get it. Therefore, he went on strike of a kind, having retreated to Sinaia and refusing to have contacts with Groza and to sign decrees.

However, the communication breakdown between King Michael and the government of Petru Groza, and the crisis it created, slowed the normalisation of relationships between Yugoslavia and Romania. On the other hand, it also created an opportunity for the Yugoslav side to support Groza's government more openly. Yugoslav authorities were informed in detail about the course of the crisis and about the events in Romania, starting with 19th August and the official announcement of the USA and the UK that they did not recognise Groza's government and that they were not going to negotiate with it at the peace conference, continuing with the King's meetings with Groza when he was trying to force his resignation, all the way to the King's communiqué to the USA, the UK,

²⁵ Р. Џ. Кремптон, *ор. сіt.*, р. 120.

²² DAMSPS, PA, 1945, Romania, folder 27, file 25, Telegram of Nikola Grulović to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of DFY, Confidential, no. 3881, Bucharest, 02/09/1945.

²³ DAMSPS, SPA, 1945-1946, folder 11, file 16, Telegram of Nikola Grulović to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of DFY, no number, Bucharest, 18/09/1945.

²⁴ DAMSPS, PA, 1945, Romania, folder 27, file 26, Telegram of the DFY Embassy in Moscow to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of DFY, Confidential, no. 5249, Moscow, 20/10/1945.

and the USSR from whom he demanded support for establishing a new government²⁶. Interestingly, despite the authorities having been well-informed, the Yugoslav public was left without any information. After the news on establishing diplomatic relations between Romania and the USSR, the leading Belgrade newspapers, such as the "Politika" and the "Borba", did not write a single word about the events in Romania up until the visit of Petru Groza to Moscow in the beginning of September 1945. From that moment on, the Yugoslav press started publishing information on a daily basis, about Groza and Tătărescu's stay in Moscow, on Groza's meeting with Stalin; they reported on official press releases of the Romanian government about the visit, and published announcements of the People's Democratic Front²⁷. The Belgrade press paid special attention to the results of Groza's visit to Moscow, reporting on the accounts of both Romanian and Soviet press that emphasised the importance of the achieved arrangements. Although it concluded that there was no change in the relationships between King Michael and Groza after the Moscow visit, Yugoslav diplomats estimated that the government's position improved, especially with the general public²⁸. What contributed most to such a public opinion was the provision of food from the USSR as well as mitigating of the severe reparations of Romania to the USSR.

A similar pattern is noticeable with regard to the riots organised on the occasion of King's birthday on 8th November, by the so-called historical parties of Maniu and Brătianu, that lead to bloodshed with numerous victims. Already on the next day, 9th November, Grulović talked to Groza, who characterised the event as an attempt of a coup against the current authorities, organised by Maniu and Brătianu, aided from abroad²⁹. That Grulović accepted this version of the event is visible from his detailed report to Belgrade, written one week later, in which he indicated the officers and soldiers close to the Legionary Movement as the main culprits for the conflict, as well as the members of the British and American military mission, who were present at the riots, instigating those who attended the protest to commit acts of violence³⁰. Communists, Jews and labourers, who 'happened to be there minding their own business', were indicated as victims. Yugoslavia had no dilemma about it: the riots of 8th November were fascist, anti-Soviet, anti-Semitic, and directed against democratisation of the country. Articles

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²⁶ DAMSPS, SPA, 1945-1946, folder 11, file 16, Report of Nikola Grulović to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of DFY, Strictly Confidential, no. 21, Buchaurest, 03/09/1945, p. 1-4.

²⁷ 'Generalissimo Stalin Received Prime Minister and Members of Romanian Government', "Politika", 06/09/1945; 'Statement by Romanian Prime Minister', "Politika", 06/09/1945; 'Communiqué of Romanian Council of Ministers on Situation in Country', "Politika", 07/09/1945; 'Declaration of Romanian People's Democratic Front', "Politika", 08/09/1945.

²⁸ DAMSPS, PA, 1945, Romania, folder 27, file 10, Report of Nikola Grulović to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of DFY, Confidential, no. 4845, Bucharest, 28/09/1945, p. 1.

²⁹ DAMSPS, PA, 1945, Romania, folder 27, file 10, Report of Nikola Grulović to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of DFY, Confidential, no. 5980, Bucharest, 11/11/1945, p. 1 -2.

³⁰ DAMSPS, PA, 1945, Romania, folder 27, file 10, Report of Nikola Grulović to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of DFY, Confidential, no. 6566, Bucharest, 15/11/1945, p. 1-2.

in the press, that started writing about the events with a delay of a few days – similarly to the manner demonstrated at the beginning of the crisis of Groza's government, reveal that such a view of the events was accepted by the competent Yugoslav authorities. The "Politika" wrote about the events on 13th November, reporting on the official announcement of the Romanian Ministry of the Interior³¹, while the "Borba" wrote about the massive riots only on 17th November, on the occasion of the funeral of the victims, when calls for a ban of the political parties led by Maniu and Brătianu were heard³².

The solution to this crisis, which had shaken Romania for several months already, was found out of the country, with an agreement of the great powers. The ministers of foreign affairs of the USSR, the USA, and the UK agreed in Moscow on 26th December 1945 that the Romanian crisis should be resolved by introducing one minister from each Maniu's and Brătianu's political party into the government³³. Following an agreement with King Michael, Haţieganu and Romniceanu joined the government on 7th January 1946, by which the conflict between the King and Groza was ended, and his government was subsequently officially recognised by the Western Allies, in the beginning of February. In accordance with the official Yugoslav standpoint, the Moscow conference, at which the method of resolving the crisis was agreed on, was considered a great success of Petru Groza and democratic forces. In other words, the victory of Groza's option was regarded in Belgrade as a confirmation of correctness of the Yugoslav position.

Over almost five months of the crisis, Yugoslavia was striving to support the government of Petru Groza in many ways, both in political and in economic field. At the height of the crisis, a Romanian delegation arrived in Belgrade for negotiations on a trade agreement. The negotiations started on 20th November and ended by signing of the Trade Agreement on 15th December 1945. Two months before, in the beginning of October, the Romanian side was already sending the first lists of products which could have been considered for the exchange. Romania was ready to export oil and oil derivatives to Yugoslavia, including various types of oil, paraffin, Vaseline, bitumen, aluminum sulfate, ammonium nitrate, compressed ammonium, plaster, wood, charcoal, salt, and cellulose, and it was expecting to get the following goods from Yugoslavia in return: tannin, iron ore, scrap iron, copper, lead, zinc, antimony, aluminum, magnesite, chromium, hops, various types of leather, tobacco and cigarette paper³⁴. Negotiations followed in Belgrade, where Nikola Petrović, Yugoslav Minister of Trade and Supplies, and

³¹ 'Press release of Ministry of Interior of Romania on criminal activities of legionary elements in Romania', in "Politika", 13/11/1945.

³² 'At the funeral of the victims of fascists in Bucharest, 500.000 citizens asked for a ban of Maniu and Brătianu's party and arrest of its leaders', in "Borba", 17/11/1945.

³³ Р. Ц. Кремптон, *op. cit.*, 121; I. Bulei, *op. cit.*, 187-188; В. Lory, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

³⁴ DAMSPS, PA, 1945, fasc. 27, From the report of the DFY representative in Bucharest of 10th October 1945, Confidential, no. 7873, p. 2.

Constantin Agiu, Romanian Undersecretary of State, signed the Agreement on Exchange of Goods and Payment between the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (FPRY) and Romania on 15th December 1945³⁵. The Agreement was signed with the expiry date of 30th September 1946, and a possibility of its extension. It specified types, quantity, and prices of goods, which were determined as goods desirable for mutual exchange³⁶. The part of the Agreement which considered the payment arrangements between the two countries stipulated that all payments be made via central banks of the two countries, in particular by means of special collective accounts, in Swiss Francs³⁷. This solution applied only to the payments from the exchange of goods while for other payments, the two governments agreed to start negotiations within a month and reach an agreement on non-commodity payments by 31st January 1946 at the latest38. In addition to their principal purpose, the negotiations and reaching the accord on the Trade Agreement between Yugoslavia and Romania also served a purpose of a specific kind of support to Petru Groza due to the fact that the Yugoslav side provided huge publicity to these events. Already on 21st November, the Belgrade daily "Politika" published an article over half a page on the start of negotiations, highlighting the words of Andrija Hebrang, Yugoslav Minister of Economy, that it was the first official contact between the two countries after the break of diplomatic relations in 1941, which was a proof that there were no controversial issues between the government of Petru Groza and Marshal Tito³⁹. In order to emphasise the support to Groza's government even more, he added that the peoples of Yugoslavia were following with great enthusiasm the 'struggle of young Romanian democracy against the remnants of fascism and reactionary powers', as well as that people in Yugoslavia 'are cheering your every success and your every victory over the dark powers of the past which are doing everything in their power to prevent the rebirth and renewal of Romania'. The head of the Romanian delegation, Constantin Agiu, pointed out that the Romanian people could only watch with sadness as German forces crossed over Romania in order to attack Yugoslavia, because the anti-people regime of Antonescu was in power then. In contrast with those times, now both countries had governments, as he put it, 'of wide-ranging democratic concentration' which would endeavour to expand the cooperation. He also called the current negotiations, the negotiations of two friendly peoples and not of two

³⁵ AJ, Ministry of Trade and Supplies of DFY fonds (50), folder 64-138, Agreement on Exchange of Goods and Payment concluded between the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia and Romania, 15th December 1945; Interestingly, Yugoslavia is referred to under its official name – FPRY in the text of the Agreement and in all the accompanying documents, both in Serbian and in French, while Romania is referred to only as Romania, without the term of reference: 'Kingdom'.

³⁶ AJ, Ministry of Foreign Trade of DFY fonds (9), folder 6, Overview of Trade Agreements, no number and date, p. 2.

³⁷ AJ, p. 50-64-138, Agreement on Exchange of Goods and Payment concluded between the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia and Romania, 15th December 1945, Art. 7 and 8.

³⁸ *Ibidem*. Art. 15.

³⁹ 'Yugoslav-Romanian Commerce Talks Started in Belgrade Yesterday', in "Politika", 21/11/1945.

merchants⁴⁰. Once the negotiations were completed and when the Trade Agreement was signed, the Yugoslav press reported about it⁴¹.

In the field of politics, through its representative office in Bucharest, Yugoslavia maintained intensive diplomatic contacts with Groza and other members of his government. In the situation when Groza's government was isolated even from its own sovereign, such contacts were even more important. Yugoslavia was ready to go a step further in its support to Groza's government. Although Romania had not signed a peace treaty with the Allies at the time of King Michael's strike of its own kind, Yugoslavia was negotiating an establishment of diplomatic relationships with it. It was ready to go so far in its support, that it even agreed to send an ambassador to Bucharest without presenting credentials, since King Michael refused to sign any government documents or decrees at the time. The resolution of the crisis in January 1946 made that move unnecessary. Nevertheless, the readiness for such an unusual step in diplomatic practice remains an indicator of how far Yugoslavia was ready to go in its support to the government of Petru Groza.

Finally, over the crisis months, Yugoslavia intensified activities in the field and in the press directed at promotion of the traditional Yugoslav-Romanian friendship, as another form of support to the Romanian government. Yugoslavia was sending its official representatives to conventions of Serbs in Romania that supported Groza's government, while representatives of the Yugoslav government participated in conventions of Romanians in Banat. Nikola Petrović, who was just appointed Minister of Trade and Supplies in the Federal Government of Yugoslavia, although he had assumed the duty of a diplomatic representative of Yugoslavia in Romania only a few weeks before that, addressed the local Romanian population at the pre-election rally in Alibunar in mid-October 1945. Addressing the attendees in the Romanian language and referring to the traditional friendship, Petrović emphasised the wide extent of rights given to the Romanians in Yugoslavia after World War II, including the envisaged establishment of a Romanian-language eight-year grammar school in Vršac⁴².

As part of the efforts towards highlighting the friendship between the Yugoslav peoples and the Romanian people as much as possible, the Red Star Football Club was sent to Romania to play several friendly matches there. In Bucharest, the Red Star played matches against the best selection of Bucharest footballers and against the best selection of players from the country, while several days later, it had scheduled matches against Victoria FC in Timisoara as well as against the Romanian national team⁴³. Another event that illustrates the

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¹⁰ Ihidem

⁴¹ 'Agreement on Exchange of Goods between the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia and Romania signed', in "Politika", 16/12/1945.

⁴² 'Rally of Romanians in Alibunar where brotherhood and equality among the peoples of Yugoslavia was demonstrated', in "Politika", 17/10/1945.

⁴³ 'Success of Red Star Football Club in Romania', in "Borba", 02/10/1945.

determination of Yugoslav authorities to support the government of Petru Groza in any possible way was when Archpriest Milan Smiljanić, Minister of Agriculture in the Federal Government of Serbia, was sent to Bucharest in mid-October, to represent the Serbian Orthodox Church at the Congress of Orthodox Priests of Romania, although he was not occupying any position in the hierarchy of the Serbian Orthodox Church and despite the fact that the Serbian and the Romanian Orthodox Churches were in the status of broken relations due to the Romanian acknowledgement of the so-called Croatian Orthodox Church. The Congress, attended by both the Romanian Patriarch Nicodim and Petru Groza, was convened with the intention of openly inviting the Romanian clergy to cooperate with Groza's government. Archpriest Smiljanić, as a 'representative' of the Serbian Orthodox Church reiterated the same invitation⁴⁴.

The attitude of Yugoslavia towards Romania after World War II was before all determined by the positions of the two countries during the war that ended recently but also by the clear affiliation of Yugoslavia to the Soviet sphere of influence, which could not be said in the Romanian case. Unlike Yugoslavia, at the end of the war, Romania was on the threshold of a process of joining the future 'Soviet Bloc', which did not unfold without resistance from the Romanian part, in spite of the fact that it was occupied by the Red Army. Obviously, tending to the needs of the Soviet foreign policy, Yugoslavia treated the respective Romanian governments of General Sănătescu and General Rădescu, in which the Soviets did not have a prevailing influence, almost with ignorance. Only with the establishment of the government of Petru Groza, in which the Romanian Communist Party was calling the shots, Yugoslavia started to take active steps towards improving relations with Romania. This would especially become obvious during the crisis of the government of Petru Groza, from August 1945 to January 1946. Aware that it was a critical point, Yugoslavia invested every effort in diplomatic, political, and economic field, as well as in the sphere of propaganda, to support Groza's government. Yugoslavia saw it as a necessary interim solution, towards the establishment of a single-party 'democracy', which Yugoslavia itself had already turned into, followed by joining the 'Socialist Bloc' in which Yugoslavia, led by Tito, was considered one of the most loval Stalin's allies.

⁴⁴ 'Congress of Orthodox priests in Romania attended by delegates of the Serbian Orthodox Church', in "Borba", 31/10/1945.

Yugoslavia and the crisis of Petru Groza government (August 1945 – January 1946)

Abstract

This paper has been written based on the Yugoslav archival sources and relevant Serbian/Yugoslav and Romanian literature. It represents an attempt of reconstruction of Yugoslav policy towards Romania at the time of the Romanian internal crisis and the breakdown of communication between the King and the government. The emphasis was given to the Yugoslav support embodied in the readiness to cooperate with the government of Petru Groza in political, diplomatic, and economic fields despite the fact that diplomatic relations had not been established between the two countries by then.

Keywords: Yugoslavia; Romania; Yugoslav-Romanian relations; Josip Broz Tito; Petru Groza; sovietisation.

ABREVIERI

AARMSI = Analele Academiei Române, Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice

AARMSL = Analele Academiei Române, Memoriile Secțiunii Literare

AARPAD = "Analele Academiei Române", seria II, Bucuresti, 1879-1916

AA.SS. = Acta Sanctorum, ed. Bollandisti, III^a edizione, Parigi 1863-1870

AB = Arhivele Basarabiei

ACNSAS = Arhivele Consiliului National pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității

AE = L'Année Epigraphique, Paris AIR = Arhiva Istorică a României

AIIAC = Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie Cluj

AIIAI = Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie "A. D. Xenopol", Iași

AIIC = Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Cluj

AIINC = Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Națională, Cluj
AIIX = Anuarul Institutului de Istorie "A. D. Xenopol", Iași
ALIL = Anuarul de Lingvistică și Istorie Literară, Iași
ALMA = Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi. Genève.

AM = Arheologia Moldovei, Iasi

AMAE = Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe

AmAnthr = American Anthropologist, New Series, Published by Wiley on behalf of the

American Anthropological Association

AMM = Acta Moldaviae Meridionalis, Vaslui

AMMB = Arhiva Mitropoliei Moldovei si Bucovinei, Iasi

AMN = Acta Musei Napocensis

AMR = Arhivele Militare Române

AMS = Anuarul Muzeului din Suceava

ANB = Arhivele Nationale, Bucuresti

ANC = Arhivele Naţionale. Serviciul Judeţean Cluj

ANDMB = Arhivele Naționale. Direcția Municipiului București ANG = Arhivele Naționale. Serviciul Județean Galați

ANI = Arhivele Naționale, Iași

ANIC = Arhivele Naţionale Istorice Centrale
ANR-Cluj = Arhivele Naţionale, Cluj-Napoca
ANR-Sibiu = Arhivele Naţionale, Sibiu

ANR-Sibiu = Arhivele Naționale, Sibiu ANRM = Arhivele Naționale ale Republicii Moldova, Chișinău

ANRW = Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt, Berlin-New York

ANSMB = Arhivele Naționale. Serviciul Municipiului București

ANV = Arhivele Nationale, Vaslui

AO = Arhivele Olteniei AP = Analele Putnei

APH = Acta Poloniae Historica, Varșovia

AqLeg = Aquila Legionis. Cuadernos de Estudios sobre el Ejército Romano, Salamanca

AR = Arhiva Românească ArchM = Archiva Moldaviae, Iași ArhGen = Arhiva Genealogică

"Arhiva" = "Arhiva". Organul Societății Științifice și Literare, Iași

ArhMold = Arheologia Moldovei

ASRR = Arhiva Societății Române de Radiodifuziune

AŞUI = Analele Ştiinţifice ale Universităţii "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", Iaşi

ATS = Ancient Textile Series, Oxbow Books, Oxford și Oakville AUAIC = Arhiva Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" din Iași

AUB = Analele Universității "București"

BA = Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Roma, Città Nuova Editrice

BAR = Biblioteca Academiei Române

BArchB = Bundesarchiv Berlin

BAR int. ser. = British Archaeological Reports, International Series

BBRF= Buletinul Bibliotecii Române din FreiburgBCIR= Buletinul Comisiei Istorice a RomânieiBCMI= Buletinul Comisiei Monumentelor IstoriceBCU-Iași= Biblioteca Centrală Universitară, Iași

BE = Bulletin Epigraphique

BF = Byzantinische Forschungen, Amsterdam

BJ = Bonner Jahrbücher, Bonn
BMI = Buletinul Monumentelor Istorice

BMIM = București. Materiale de istorie și muzeografie

BNB = Biblioteca Națională București

BNJ = Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher

BOR = Biserica Ortodoxă Română

BS = Balkan Studies

BSNR = Buletinul Societății Numismatice Române

ByzSlav = Byzantinoslavica CA = Cercetări arheologice

CAI = Caiete de Antropologie Istorică

CartNova = La ciudad de Carthago Nova 3: La documentación epigráfica, Murcia

CB = Cahiers balkaniques

CC = Codrul Cosminului, Suceava (ambele serii)

CCAR = Cronica cercetărilor arheologice din România, CIMEC, București

CCh = Corpus Christianorum, Turnhout CChSG = Corpus Christianorum. Series Graeca

CCSL = Corpus Christianorum Series Latina, Turnhout, Brepols

CDM = Catalogul documentelor moldovenești din Arhivele Centrale de Stat,

București, vol. I-V; supl. I.

CDTR = Catalogul documentelor Țării Românești din Arhivele Statului, București,

vol. II-VIII, 1974-2006

Chiron = Chiron: Mitteilungen der Kommission für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik des

Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, 1971

CI = Cercetări istorice (ambele serii)

CIL = Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, Berlin

CL = Cercetări literare

CLRE = Consuls of the Later Roman Empire, eds. R. S. Bagnall, A. Cameron, S. R.

Schwartz, K. A. Worp, Atlanta, 1987

CN = Cercetări Numismatice

CNA = Cronica Numismatică și Arheologică, București

CSCO = Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Louvain

CSEA= Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiae Aquileiensis, Roma, Città Nuova EditriceCSEL= Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, Wien, De GruyterCSPAMI= Centrul de Studii și Păstrare a Arhivelor Militare Centrale, Pitești

CT = Columna lui Traian, Bucuresti

CTh = Codex Theodosianus. Theodosiani, Libri XVI cum constitutionibus

Sirmondianis, I, edidit adsumpto apparatu P. Kruegeri, Th. Mommsen,

Hildesheim, 1970-1971

Cv.L = Convorbiri literare (ambele serii)

"Dacia", N.S. = Dacia. Nouvelle Série, Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire ancienne, București

DANIC = Direcția Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale

DGAS = Direcția Generală a Arhivelor Statului

DI = Diplomatarium Italicum

DIR = Documente privind istoria României

DIRRI = Documente privind Istoria României. Războiul pentru Independență

DOP = Dumbarton Oaks Papers
DTN = Din trecutul nostru, Chişinău
DRH = Documenta Romaniae Historica

EB = Études Balkaniques

EBPB = Études byzantines et post-byzantines

EDCS = Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss-Slaby (http://www.manfredclauss.de/)
EDR = Epigraphic Database Roma (http://www.edr-edr.it/default/index.php)

EpigrAnat = Epigraphica Anatolica, Münster

ERAsturias = F. Diego Santos, *Epigrafia Romana de Asturias*, Oviedo, 1959.

Gerión = Gerión. Revista de Historia Antigua, Madrid

GB = Glasul Bisericii

GCS = Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller, Leipzig, Hinrichs, 1897-1969

GLK = Grammatici Latini Keil HEp = Hispania Epigraphica, Madrid

"Hierasus" = *Hierasus*. Anuarul Muzeului Judeţean Botoşani, Botoşani

HM = Heraldica Moldaviae, Chişinău

HU = Historia Urbana, Sibiu

HUI = Historia Universitatis Iassiensis, Iași

IDR = Inscripțiile din Dacia romană, Bucurști-Paris

IDRE = Inscriptions de la Dacie romaine. Inscriptions externes concernant l'histoire

de la Dacie, I-II, Bucarest, 1996, 2000

IGLN = Inscriptions grecques et latines de Novae, Bordeaux

IGLR = Inscripțiile grecești și latine din secolele IV-XIII descoperite în România,

Bucuresti, 1976

IILPecs = Instrumenta Inscripta Latina. Das römische Leben im Spiegel der

Kleininschriften, Pecs, 1991

ILAlg = *Inscriptions latines d'Algérie*, Paris

ILB = Inscriptiones Latinae in Bulgaria repertae. Inscriptiones inter Oescum et

Iatrum repertae, Sofia, 1989

ILD = Inscripții latine din Dacia, București ILN = Inscriptions latines de Novae, Poznan

ILLPRON = Inscriptionum Lapidarium Latinarum Provinciae Norici usque ad annum

MCMLXXXIV repertarum indices, Berlin, 1986

ILS = Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae, 1892 IMS = Inscriptiones Moesiae Superioris, Belgrad

IN = "Ioan Neculce". Buletinul Muzeului Municipal Iași

ISM = Inscripțiile din Scythia Minor grecești și latine, București, vol. I-III, 1983-1999

JGO = Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas

JL = Junimea literară

JRS = The Journal of Roman studies, London

LR = Limba română

MA = Memoria Antiquitatis, Piatra Neamţ
MCA = Materiale și cercetări arheologice

MEF = Moldova în epoca feudalismului, vol. I-XII, 1961-2012, Chișinău MEFRA = Mélanges de l'École française de Rome: Antiquité, Roma

MGH= Monumenta Germaniae Historica inde ab anno Christi quingentesimo usque ad annum millesimum et quingentesimum auspiciis societatis aperiendis fontibus rerum Germanicarum medii aevi, Berlin 1877-= Magazin istoric, Bucuresti MI= Materiale de istorie si muzeografie MIM = Mitropolia Moldovei MM= Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei MMS MN= Muzeul National, Bucuresti = Mitropolia Olteniei MO = Monitorul Oficial al României MOF= M. Navarro Caballero, Perfectissima femina. Femmes de l'elite dans Navarro l'Hispanie romaine, Bordeaux, 2017. NBA= Nuova Biblioteca Agostiniana, Roma, Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum = Nuovo Dizionario Patristico e di Antichità Cristiane, I, A-E, 2e edizione, *NDPAC* Marietti, 2006; III, P-Z, 2e edizione, Marietii, 2008 NEH= Nouvelles études d'histoire = Opțiuni istoriografice, Iași OIOPEL. = Onomasticon provinciarul Europae latinarum, vol. I-IV, Budapesta-Viena, PG= Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Graeca, ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris, 1886-1912 = Prosopographia Imperii Romani. Saec. I.II.III, editio altera, Berlin. PIRPLRE= Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, 3 vol., eds. A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale, and J. Morris, Cambridge, 1971-1992 RA= Revista arhivelor RBAR= Revista Bibliotecii Academiei Române, Bucuresti = Revista catolică RCRdI= Revista de istorie = Revue des Études Byzantines REByz RER= Revue des études roumaines RESEE = Revue des études Sud-Est européennes RHP= Die römischen Hilfstruppen in Pannonien während der Prinzipatszeit. I: Die Inschriften, Viena RHSEE = Revue historique de Sud-Est européen = Revista istorică (ambele serii) RI= Revista pentru istorie, arheologie și filologie RIAF RIB= Roman Inscriptions of Britain, Londra RIM= Revista de Istorie a Moldovei, Chisinău RIR= Revista istorică română, Bucuresti RIS = Revista de istorie socială, Iasi RITL= Revista de istorie și teorie literară = Die römischen Inschriften Ungarns, Budapesta RIU= The Romanian Journal of Modern History, Iași R.JMHRM= Revista muzeelor = Roman Military Diplomas, Londra RMDRMM= Römische Militärdiplome und Entlassungsurkunden in der Sammlung des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, Mainz RMM-MIA = Revista muzeelor și monumentelor, seria Monumente istorice și de artă RMR= Revista Medicală Română = Revue roumaine d'histoire RRHRRHA= Revue roumaine de l'histoire de l'art RRHA-BA = Revue Roumaine d'Histoire de l'Art. Série Beaux Arts

= Revista Societății istorice și arheologice bisericești, Chișinău

Rsl = Romanoslavica

RSIAB

SAHIR = Studia et Acta Historiae Iudaeorum Romaniae, București

 SAI
 = Studii şi Articole de Istorie

 SCB
 = Studii şi cercetări de bibliologie

 SCh
 = Sources Chrétiennes, Paris

 SCIA
 = Studii şi cercetări de istoria artei

 SCIM
 = Studii şi cercetări de istorie medie

SCIV/SCIVA= Studii și cercetări de istorie veche (și arheologie)SCN= Studii și Cercetări Numismatice, BucureștiSCȘI= Studii și cercetări științifice, IstorieSEER= The Slavonic and East European Review

SHA = Scriptores Historiae Augustae

SJAN = Serviciul Județean al Arhivelor Naționale

SMIC = Studii şi materiale de istorie contemporană, Bucureşti
SMIM = Studii şi materiale de istorie medie, Bucureşti
SMIMod = Studii şi materiale de istorie modernă, Bucuresti

SOF = Südost-Forschungen, München ST = Studii Teologice, Bucureşti

StAntArh = Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica, Iași

T&MBYZ = Travaux et Mémoires du Centre de recherches d'histoire et de civilisation

byzantines

ThD = Thraco-Dacica, București

TR = Transylvanian Review, Cluj-Napoca

TV = Teologie şi viaţa, Iaşi

ZPE = Zeitschrift für Papyralogie und Epigraphik
 ZSL = Zeitschrift für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde