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"Unrealised Nordic Dream". Milovan Đilas and the Scandinavian Socialists

Abstract: At the beginning of 1950s, Yugoslavia faced the ideological problem of "justifying" its complicated foreign policy position, due to its conflict with the Eastern Bloc and the growing need for the cooperation with the West. While trying to solve this issue, Yugoslav leadership started establishing contacts and cooperation with the Western European Left. The aim of this paper is to present one episode of Milovan Đilas's foreign policy activities related to the establishment of the first steps for cooperation between Yugoslav communists and a representative of Scandinavian socialists in the period of 1952–1954.

Key words: Milovan Đilas, Scandinavian socialists, Yugoslav communists, Yugoslavia, Scandinavia

After the Informbiro (Cominform) Resolution in 1948, Yugoslavia was in a difficult international situation. The complexity of the situation was reflected in the fact that Yugoslavia, as a socialistic country, could no longer rely on aid and support from the East (the USSR and its satellites), but neither could it start cooperation with the capitalist West, first due to ideological reasons, since such an activity would mean an indubitable

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compromise within the international labour movement. That is why the Yugoslav political confrontation with the East, as the conflict was escalating, directed its government more intensely towards searching for an “alternative” cooperation in the foreign policy field, and which, it was obvious, should have been sought on the opposite side of the world already divided into blocs. The West European Left was an important “link” for the Yugoslav undertaking in the period of establishing political connections with the West. The importance of cooperation with the West European Left is reflected in the practical, political and ideological sphere.

The visits of Western political representatives to Yugoslavia, as well as the visits of Yugoslav political officials to Western countries, were important for the introduction and connection of the Yugoslav government with the West.¹ The Yugoslav side consciously initiated such meetings and visits, since each political contact and connection in the West was precious support for the current policy. Even though the contacts with some of the representatives of the Western European movements and left parties had already existed, and some individuals had visited Yugoslavia (even before 1948),² more serious activities began in 1950.

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- 1 See: Ljubodrag Dimić, *Jugoslavija i Hladni rat. Ogledi o spoljnoj politici Josipa Broza Tita (1944–1974)*, (Beograd: Arhipelag, 2014) [*Yugoslavia and the Cold War. Essays on the Foreign Policy of Josip Broz Tito 1944–1974*, (Belgrade: Arhipelag, 2014)]; Dragan Bogetić, *Jugoslavija i Zapad 1952–1955. Jugoslovensko približavanje NATO-u* (Beograd: Službeni list SRJ, 2000) [*Yugoslavia and the West 1952–1955. Yugoslav Rapprochement to NATO*, (Belgrade: Službeni list SRJ, 2000)]; Darko Bekić, *Jugoslavija u Hladnom ratu. Odnosi s velikim silama 1949–1955 [Yugoslavia in the Cold War. Relations with the Superpowers]*, (Zagreb: Globus, 1988); Волтер Лакер, *Историја Европе, 1945–1992*, (Београд: Клио, 1999), [Walter Laqueur, *Europe in Our Time, a History 1945–1992*, (Belgrade: Clio, 1999)]; *Spoljna politika Jugoslavije 1950–1961*, urednik S. Selinić, (Beograd: INIS, 2008), [*Foreign Policy of Yugoslavia 1950–1961*, edited by S. Selinić (Belgrade: IRHS, 2008)]; *Velike sile i male države u hladnom ratu 1945–1955. Slučaj Jugoslavije*, urednik Lj. Dimić, (Beograd: Filozofski fakultet, Arhiv SCG, INIS, 2008), [*Superpowers and Small Countries in the Cold War 1945–1955. The Case of Yugoslavia*, edited by Lj. Dimić (Belgrade: Faculty of Philosophy, Archive of SCG, IRHS, 2008)]; *Југославија у Хладном рату*, уредник А. Животић, (Београд: ИНИС, 2010), [*Yugoslavia in the Cold War*, edited by A. Životić, (Belgrade: IRHS, 2010)]; D. Bogetić, “Jugoslovensko približavanje Zapadu u vreme sukoba sa Kominformom”, *Istorija XX veka* [“Yugoslav Rapprochement to the West during the Conflict with the Cominform”, *History of the XX Century*] 1/1998, 61–67; Milovan Đilas, *Vlast i pobuna*, (Beograd: Književne novine, 1991) [*Power and Rebellion*, (Belgrade: Književne novine, 1991)].
- 2 See: Archives of Yugoslavia (AY), Cabinet of Marshal of Yugoslavia (CMY), 1-2-a/120, Marshal Tito Receives British Labour Delegates and Secretary in the British Government G. Henry, S Bing and G. Word Snows (Belgrade), 6 September 1946, 1–4; AY, CMY, 1-2-a/121, Marshal Tito Receives British Labour Delegate Conny Zilliakus, (Belgrade), 7 September 1946, 1–4; AY, CMY, 1-2-a/122, Marshal Tito Receives British Labour Delegate John Platts-Mills (Belgrade), 8 January 1947,

Among the Western European Left, the British Labour Party was the most important, as well as the French Socialists (SFIO), German Social-Democratic Party (SDP), etc. Scandinavian socialist also had an important position, especially the Swedish and Norwegian party. Milovan Đilas, the president of the Commission for International Relations of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CC CPY), was given the task of establishing aforementioned contacts.

Political contacts with the Swedish Social-Democratic Party (Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti – SAP), were established in the mid-1951. The relationships were developing without any difficulties, so that the visit of a SAP representative to Yugoslavia³ was arranged in spring of the following year. However, contrary to other Western European Left parties, a strong theoretical dispute with the representatives of Yugoslav communists characterized the relationship with the SAP.

The proposal for the visit of a SAP representative to Yugoslavia was made by the Yugoslav side. At the meeting of a Yugoslav representative with the SAP secretary Sven Aspling⁴ and SAP secretary for the international affairs Kaj Björk in Stockholm in March 1952,⁵ it was decided that a Swedish socialist and journalist Kaj Björk⁶ would pay a visit to Yugoslavia in April. The goal of this visit was to introduce the Yugoslav society and political system to the SAP representative. Yugoslavia was

1–3; AY, CMY, 1-2-a/124, Marshal Tito Receives Group of British Parliamentarians, Labour Delegate (Belgrade), 6 October 1947, 1–11; AY, CMY, 1-2-a/128, Marshal Tito Receives Member of the British Parliament Conny Zilliakus, (Belgrade), 4 September 1949; AY, CMY, 1-2-a/130, Marshal Tito Receives Former delegate of the British Parliament Conny Zilliakus by (Belgrade), 30 April 1950.

3 AY, 507/IX, Central Committee of League of Communists of Yugoslavia (CC LCY), Commission for the International Relations and Correspondence (CIRC), Sweden, 125/II-14, Record of the Conversation with the Secretary of the Swedish Social-Democratic Party Sven Aspling, on 26 January 1952; AY, 507/IX, CC LCY, CIRC, Sweden, 125/II-14, Record of the Phone Conversation with Sven Aspling.

4 Sven Gustav Aspling (1912–2000), Swedish socialist politician and journalist. Born in Filipstad. Before WWII, he worked as a journalist in the Swedish daily *Värmlands Folkblad*. Organizational Secretary of the Swedish Social-Democratic Party (SAP) from 1946 and a general secretary from 1948. He was a representative of the SAP in the Swedish parliament (1956–1985) and the Minister of Social Affairs (1962–1976). He died in Stockholm in 2000.

5 AY, 507/IX, CC LCY, CIRC, Sweden, 125/II-14, Record of the Conversation with Sven Aspling and Kaj Björk, 5 March 1952.

6 Kaj Ake Björk (1918–), a Swedish socialist politician, diplomat and journalist. Born in Goteborg. He was a Secretary for International Affairs in the Swedish Social-Democratic party (1947–1955). He edited social-democratic newspapers *Tiden* and *Ny Tid*. He was a delegate in the upper chamber of the Swedish Parliament (1965–1973), a SAP representative in the Socialist International and a Swedish ambassador in China. He lives in Goteborg.

completely unknown to the Swedish socialists, and while arranging the visit, Björk defined his fields of interests and issues to be discussed with the representatives of Yugoslav communists. Björk primarily wanted “to obtain a general picture of Yugoslavia” and “to discuss the Yugoslav foreign policy position”. He then added that, “as for the theoretical issues, he was especially interested in a discussion about socialism and democracy” and the Yugoslav experience in those matters, that he wanted to be introduced to “the work of mass organizations and the press”, and that he wanted to pay a visit to an industrial facility.⁷ Kaj Björk stayed in Yugoslavia for two weeks, from 8 to 22 April 1952, and on the day he arrived, he dined with Milovan Đilas, Rodoljub Čolaković and Vladimir Dedijer.⁸ During his stay, Björk was enabled to stay in several cities (Belgrade, Sarajevo, Zenica, Zagreb, Rijeka, Ljubljana and Bled) and thus visit some industrial facilities and meet a number of prominent individuals.⁹

During the aforementioned visit to Yugoslavia, Kaj Björk had an opportunity to speak with some of the party leaders. A month-long theoretical discussion with Rodoljub Čolaković had started on that occasion and developed later on, which opened a number of issues primarily from the area of theory, ideology and political practice, on which Yugoslav communists and Swedish social-democrats profoundly disagreed. The basic issue that was discussed, and generally the problem that was the “point of misunderstanding” was the question of parliamentary democracy and the single-party system. They had a great influence both on the official political cooperation of the two parties, and the state cooperation of Sweden and Yugoslavia in that period, since the SAP leadership made it perfectly clear to the Yugoslavs “that we in principle tend to cooperate only with foreign parties that share our basic attitude towards political democracy and are members of the Socialist International”.¹⁰ However, this did not mean that communication and “exchange of experience”, even through unofficial cooperation ceased to exist; quite the contrary, the connections and contacts deepened in the following months, and the friendship between the two parties was cherished and emphasized.

7 AY, 507/IX, CCLCY, CIRC, Sweden, 125/II-14, Record of Kaj Björk's Arrival, a Representative of the Swedish Social-Democratic Party.

8 AY, 507/IX, CCLCY, CIRC, Sweden, 125/II-14, Agenda of Kaj Björk's Stay in Yugoslavia, 1.

9 Read more: AY, 507/IX, CCLCY, CIRC, Sweden, 125/II-14, Material on Kaj Björk's stay in Yugoslavia from 8 to 20 April 1952 and the Correspondence between CPY and SAP.

10 AY, 507/IX, CCLCY, CIRC, Sweden, 125/II-14, Letter of Sven Aspling, general secretary of the Swedish Social-Democratic Party to the Commission for International Affairs of CC CPY, 12 May 1952.

This has been confirmed by the documents which clearly showed that the Swedish Social-Democratic Party was concerned with maintaining mutual contacts and connections with the Yugoslav communists, regardless of the fact that such a practice, for reasons "of principle" and ideological consideration for other parties (the members of the Socialist International), should not have been formalized. In his letter, addressed to the Foreign Policy Commission CC CPY, on 12 May 1952, Kaj Björk expressed the desire (besides official detachment from direct political cooperation for the aforementioned reasons), "to share information that are of mutual interest" and proposed the theoretical discussion that should have been led in the Swedish social-democratic weekly *Tiden* (the editor in chief was Björk), and in "a Yugoslav weekly".¹¹ A positive reply from the Yugoslav side soon arrived in the letter written by Milovan Đilas, on behalf of Foreign Policy Commission of CC CPY on 13 June, addressed to the SAP secretary Sven Aspling. Having understood the political conditions that prevented "direct cooperation", Đilas accepted the theoretical discussion, emphasizing that "it is a very convenient form to explain and introduce the attitudes and aspects of some of the most important issues of the labour movement, and to comprehend political democracy", and he finished the letter with the following words: "the CPY has never, and certainly not today, stood on non-democratic positions, neither when it comes to its internal life, nor to the development of its country, and the fact that it was necessary for Yugoslavia to take a revolutionary path, has not proved yet that such a path has to be completed by the establishment of non-democratic social forms, like in the USSR. Both the internal and international positions of Yugoslavia are completely different from the one in the USSR twenty or more years ago. However, those are precisely the issues that can be illuminated both for you and us only through a discussion".¹² Thus, the challenge for a theoretical discussion was accepted, and Rodoljub Čolaković (with whom Kaj Björk had already started the discussion during his stay in Yugoslavia)¹³ was officially appointed as an interlocutor on the Yugoslav side. The topic of the discussion was "socialism and democracy", and in the following several months of its duration, it revealed the profound differences between Yugoslav communists and Swedish Social-Democrats in the matters of democracy and the multi-

11 AY, 507/IX, CCLCY, CIRC, Sweden, 125/II-14, Kaj Björk's Letter to Janez Stanovnik, 12 May 1952.

12 AY, 507/IX, CCLCY, CIRC, Sweden, 125/II-14, Milovan Đilas's Letter to Sven Aspling, General Secretary of the Swedish Social-Democratic Party.

13 AY, 507/IX, CCLCY, CIRC, Sweden, 125/II-14, Vladimir Dedijer's Letter to Kaj Björk.

party parliamentary system of the western type (i.e. the possibility for it to be established in Yugoslavia).¹⁴

Due to the lack of sources (primarily archival material), we cannot precisely offer a general picture of the cooperation with the Norwegian socialists, i.e. Norwegian Labour Party (Arbeiderpartiet – AP). However, it can be determined from the limited sources that the cooperation with the AP was fairly dynamic, and that the activities in that area were present from 1951, when the contacts were established. The AP delegation stayed in Yugoslavia in the same year, and in the following period, Yugoslav and Norwegian journalists paid mutual visits and strengthened the cooperation. The report of the Commission for International Relations (December 1953), stated that “contrary to other parties in the Scandinavian countries, as well as many others, this party has been most persistent in their contacts with us”.¹⁵ The review of the cooperation with Norwegian socialists is important for our topic because of an invitation addressed to Milovan Đilas in mid 1953 to visit Norway, and the proposal of AP to, while on the journey, visit both Denmark and Sweden. Some details of the proposal to Milovan Đilas can be ascertained in the notes from the conversation with Haakon Lie,¹⁶ secretary of the AP. The document shows that the visit would follow an invitation of the AP, and its goal was “contact and mutual exchange of opinions with the party leadership, the representatives of the government and labour organizations, etc.” The visit should have had a private character. Lie considered it useful for Đilas to visit both Denmark and Sweden. Thus, it was arranged for Đilas’s visit to last for about 7 days, and together with Denmark and Sweden about 12 days. Meanwhile, Đilas, besides meeting with the AP leadership and the representatives of the government and labour organizations, would have the opportunity to visit industrial facilities and factories. The Scandinavian parties would bear all costs, while Đilas would bear only the costs of the arrival and return. The general secretary of the AP emphasized the importance of the visit to Scandinavia as a whole. There was an attempt, during the conversation, to indirectly associate this with the

14 Read more: AY, 507/IX, CCLCY, CIRC, Sweden, 125/II-16, Contribution to the Topic “Socialism and Democracy Published in Sweden and Yugoslavia as Agreed with LCY and SAP.

15 AY, 507/IX, CCLCY, CIRC, Working Groups of the Commission, S/a-19, On Previous Relations with the Socialists, (from the beginning – including 1953) 31 December 1953, 4–5.

16 Haakon Steen Lie (1905–2009), a Norwegian socialist politician. Born in Christiania (today’s Oslo). At the beginning of the 1920s, he joined the Norwegian Labour Party (AP). During WWII he was an active member of the Norwegian Resistance Movement. After the war he performed the duties of a general secretary of the AP (1945–1969). He died in Oslo in 2009.

potential change of the Norwegian and Danish foreign policy course towards the Atlantic Treaty, i.e. the potential creation of the alliance of the Scandinavian countries on the basis of neutrality, which Lie denied as the possibility of future politics of Norway, as well as other Scandinavian countries.¹⁷ Beside the need for the AP and CPY to come together, some of the political benefits of this visit were especially emphasized in a telegram sent from Oslo to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in August 1953. Having received a recommendation from the AP leadership, the Yugoslav embassy "highly recommended to comrade Đilas" to accept the invitation for the visit to the Scandinavian countries, "all the more so as Norwegian Labour Party is now the Executive of the Social International".¹⁸

So, in the last few months before Milovan Đilas was dismissed, the agreement on his visit to Sweden and Norway had been reached. The proposal was offered by the Yugoslav side (via the Commission for the International Affairs and Vladimir Dedijer), but originally it had referred to the Swedish Social-Democratic Party (SAP). The motive was a recent theoretical discussion led by Rodoljub Čolaković, a member of CC LCY and Kaj Björk, the AP secretary for foreign affairs.¹⁹ Since the invitation

17 Diplomatic Archives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Serbia (DAMFARS), Political Archive (PA), 1953, Norway, f. 64, no. 415178, The Record of the Conversation of Consul P. Popović with the General Secretary of the Norwegian Labour Party, Haakon Lie in Oslo on September 1953. In the annual report of the Yugoslav embassy in Oslo from December 1953, a special part referred to the cooperation with the Norwegian Labour party and LCY in which Đilas's visit to Norway was the most important topic: "As to the continuation of the cooperation on the mutual introduction of the Norwegian Labour Party and the League of Communist of Yugoslavia, which actively started in 1951 when the delegation of the Labour Party and trade union visited our country, this year the initiative for comrade Đilas to visit Norway and possibly Sweden and Denmark at the beginning of the following year, came from the Labour Party... The visit would be of purely private character, and its goal would be to establish closer contacts between the AP and the LCY and possible talks on issues of mutual interest. According to the proposal, which comrade Đilas accepted, comrade Đilas with two or three members of the League would spend about 10 days in Norway, coming into contact with the party and political individuals and public officials, as well as with the representative of the workers' and other organizations, and would visit some important Norwegian industrial centers". - DAMFARS, PA, 1953, Norway, f. 64, no. 417481, Annual Report of the SFRJ Embassy in Oslo for 1953, 24 December 1953, 5.

18 DAMFARS, PA, 1953, Norway, f. 64, no. 411769, Telegram from Oslo to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 27 August 1953.

19 In the conversation with the Yugoslav ambassador in Sweden, Vladimir Dedijer, commenting on the dispute Čolaković – Björk and its disadvantages, proposed that, for the sake of better acquaintance, Milovan Đilas pay a visit to the Scandinavian countries, and hold a lecture similar to the one delivered in London in January 1951. - AY, 507/IX, CCLCY, CIRC, Sweden, 125/II-18, The Record of the Conversation of Comrades Dedijer and Stojaković with Dr. Darko Černej, Our Ambassador in Sweden

from the Norwegian Labour Party was in the meantime issued to Milovan Đilas to pay a visit to Norway (which has already been mentioned), the Norwegians suggested that Milovan Đilas visit Sweden and Denmark as well, while on the way to their country (as their socialist's guest).²⁰ Having been informed about Norwegian Labour Party proposal, Sven Aspling, the SAP secretary, responded positively to the Norwegian proposal in a letter addressed to Milovan Đilas on 28 December 1952 and officially invited Đilas to visit Sweden together with Norway.²¹ This was the last invitation issued to Milovan Đilas as a Yugoslav official to visit a foreign country. The visit should have been realized in February 1954. However, due to Milovan Đilas's dismissal, it never took place.

Officially, Sven Aspling's invitation was handed to Milovan Đilas on 5 January 1954 by Jödahl, the Swedish ambassador in Belgrade. On that day, Milovan Đilas, as a Yugoslav official, had his last meeting with a foreign representative.²² In 45 minute long talks during which Đilas and Jödahl touched discussed various current issues, the last manifestation of his views before a foreign representative, prior to his dismissal from the government could be perceived. This document proves that the Swedish were undoubtedly aware of Milovan Đilas's position and that they followed his critical writings. As it was indicated in the report on the talks, at the beginning the Swedish representative, having congratulated Milovan Đilas on his recent election for the President of the Federal Assembly²³ and the establishment of the details for the visit, said "that it might be dangerous for him, a Swedish socialist, to declare that comrade Đilas's articles confirm Swedish methods. The Swedish observe every problem practically and do not feel the need to don every single political step with the veil of ideology. He then added that the articles were very interesting. When he arrived in FPRY, some foreign diplomats told him that he had arrived too late, since the most important period of the development of Yugoslavia had already passed. However, he is not of such opinion."²⁴ These words of the Swedish representative clearly showed

Held in the Commission for the International Affairs on 8 July 1953.

- 20 AY, 507/IX, CCLCY, CIRC, Sweden, 125/II-18, Vladimir Dedijer's Telegram, 3 October 1953.
- 21 AY, 507/IX, CCLCY, CIRC, Sweden, 125/II-18, Letter from Sven Aspling to Milovan Đilas, 28 December 1953.
- 22 AY, 507/IX, CCLCY, CIRC, Sweden, 125/II-18, Record of the Meeting of Comrade Đilas with the Swedish Ambassador Mr. Jödahl, 5 January 1954 (from 11:00 to 11:45).
- 23 On 25 December 1953, Milovan Đilas was unanimously elected President of the Federal Assembly of the SFRJ (SFRY).
- 24 AY, 507/IX, CCLCY, CIRC, Sweden, 125/II-18, Record of the Meeting of Comrade Đilas with the Swedish Ambassador Mr. Jödahl, 5 January 1954 (from 1. to 11:45), 1.

that foreign representatives were (however, Jödahl did not say who those "foreign diplomats" were) actively following the development of the political situation in Yugoslavia, and therefore the activities of Đilas himself, and that they noticed the end of a political "course" that was marked by the democratization of society, "the most interesting period of the development of Yugoslavia", and which was abruptly interrupted in the last few months. The end of Đilas's public political activities, which were a symbol and embodiment of the democratic reforms, was thus implicitly announced. Đilas's "era" was definitely over, although his articles were "fairly interesting" to the Swedish representative.

We will also point out Jödahl's remark that Sweden strictly separated ideological issues from the "practical", i.e. political ones, where Đilas opposed him with his attitude that "the theory and practice are inseparable", and that "the lack of theory represents one of the greatest weakness of the Western socialist parties."²⁵ Djilas than mentioned the theoretical dispute between Čolaković and Björk, believing that, although the dispute itself "was not of great interest for him", Björk dominated over Čolaković, regardless of the fact that "the latter was closer to him".²⁶ Đilas also emphasized that, at that moment, a new form of patriotism was being created, i.e. "national unity" quite different from the Soviet one, which was "a great-Russian and pure bureaucratic creation", and that "this process had not been understood by the West".²⁷ At the end of the conversation, Đilas told the Swedish representative that "he personally felt best in 1949 when we were 'arguing' with the Russians. Now the things are developing slowly" adding that "the battle against the bureaucratism is not over yet. It might be over ideologically but not politically and practically."²⁸ It was more than clear to which foreign policy course Đilas actually adhered to, where he "placed" himself politically and ideologically with his activities throughout the previous years, that is, what the normalization of the relations with the USSR could possibly mean to him and a possible major shift in the foreign policy.

It could be noticed, from the talks Milovan Đilas had with Jödahl, the Swedish ambassador in Belgrade, that, at least when it came to Swedish diplomats, that Đilas's articles were "registered" as part of an overall

25 Ibid., 2.

26 Ibid.

27 Speaking about it, Đilas attempted to clarify to Jödahl the notion of the national unity: "Consider Trieste, for example, the West believed that only the Slovenians had been interested in the issue. However, it proved that both Serbian and Macedonian farmers, etc. were interested in it. There is no more danger of the nationalism that we have experienced it in the past". - Ibid.

28 Ibid., 5-6.

movement of democratic society reforms (“the articles are fairly interesting”), although “some foreign diplomats” noticed that in the last months those reforms had been abruptly stopped (“the most interesting period of the development in Yugoslavia has already passed”).²⁹ Since he presumably had already sensed the course of events, Jödahl interviewed Đilas carefully. When asked “if his articles encountered considerable opposition”, Đilas replied that “they encountered some opposition, but not a very serious one”, and that “some comrades considered the articles were published prematurely”, adding that “the articles are not of general theoretical importance.” Also, when replying to a Jödahl’s remark, as stated in the document, Đilas “confessed that his articles have had a political goal and that he is a politician.” Having received such an answer, the Swedish minister repeated to Đilas, who wanted to proceed with theoretical explanation of his attitude, “the weak interest of the Swedish socialist party in theoretical questions”.³⁰ Đilas then steered the conversation back to his articles, when Jödahl remarked that his latest articles had been “written in lighter style”.³¹ This suggests that the Swedish delegate inconspicuously but actively followed Đilas’s writings. Before ending the conversation, Jödahl added that he “heard some rumours” that Đilas had abandoned his old ideas.³² All this indicated that the Swedish diplomatic representatives in Yugoslavia actively but unobtrusively followed Đilas’s activity, and therefore the course of events that would officially start the “Đilas affair” in a few days to come.

Đilas finished the talks with the Swedish minister before noon. In the evening of the very same day, the members of the national security service picked Đilas up from a cinema and took him to Ranković and Kardelj for an interview, thus, the “affair” unofficially started.

The very next day after publishing the Executive Committee (EC) CC LCY report and the public pursue of “the Đilas case”, the Norwegian press wrote about the case in a “sensationalist way”, according to the telegram from the Yugoslav representative citing the article from the Norwegian Labour Party newspaper *Arbeider Bladet*, with the title “Political Dispute: the Vice-President Milovan Đilas Exposed to Sharp Criticism” and with subtitle “The First Idealist of the Country Acted Against the Central Leadership and the Party”. The telegram also stated that the caption under Đilas’s picture read “Milovan Đilas Before the Fall!”³³ The last foreign representative Đilas had talked with, the aforementioned min-

29 Ibid., 1.

30 Ibid., 2–3.

31 Ibid., 3.

32 Ibid., 5.

33 DAMFARS, PA, 1954, Yugoslavia, f. 45, no. 4460, Telegram to the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs from Oslo, 11 January 1954.

ister Jödahl, demanded a meeting with some of the Yugoslav diplomatic representatives. Thus, on 13 January, Jödahl got in touch with Miroslav Kreačić, a Yugoslav diplomat and consul of the embassy in Stockholm. Kreačić's records of the conversation showed that the Swedish delegate was bewildered by the course of events, and that he said on that occasion that "he received the assignment via telegram to urgently send reports on the whole case, and that it is very difficult for him since he does not have enough elements". Kreačić avoided the detailed discussion on the issue, referring the interlocutor to the scheduled party plenum during which "the issue would be resolved". On the other hand, the Swedish delegate did not vehemently insist on it, which Kreačić recorded: "He did not force the discussion and out of the particular questions, he asked only if the EC report meant that the Marshal did not agree with Đilas's attitudes. When I confirmed, he added that it was obvious that, in our country, such issues were resolved in a completely different way than in the USSR". Jödahl added that he had had a meeting with Dedijer as well and that, on Jödahl's statement "that he hoped there would be no change regarding the visit to Sweden and Norway", Dedijer replied "So do I".³⁴

In the meantime, the Norwegian press, especially the social-democratically oriented one, proceeded with writing about "the Đilas case". The newspapers began publishing more and more analytical texts on Milovan Đilas and his critical writings. In the telegram sent to the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs by the Yugoslav embassy in Oslo on 14 January 1954, it was stated that "in last three days the whole Norwegian press is writing a lot about comrade Đilas's articles and the report of the CC. On 12 January the aforementioned *Arbeider Bladet*, the Labour Party newspaper, published three analytical articles, one of which was titled "From Dictatorship to Democracy", and which gave an overview of the events at the Sixth Congress and Đilas's biography. According to the information from the telegram, the article stated that "Đilas is more progressive than the official party line", but with the assessment that "nothing dramatic will happen".³⁵ The Stockholm delegation informed SFA on 19 January that the Swedish press had conveyed the news about the CC CPY plenum (January 16–17) on the first pages of the agency news, and that it dealt "mostly with Tito's speech". The press was also mentioned, but poorly, publishing "combinations regarding Đilas's visit to Scandinavia".³⁶

34 DAMFARS, PA, 1954, Yugoslavia, f. 45, no. 4441, Record of the Conversation with the Swedish Ambassador Jödahl on 13 January 1954.

35 DAMFARS, PA, 1954, Yugoslavia, f. 45, no. 4460, Telegram to the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs from Oslo 14 January.

36 DAMFARS, PA, 1954, Yugoslavia, f. 45, no. 4634, Telegram to the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs from Stockholm, 19 January 1954.

According to the information in the telegram sent to SFA from Stockholm on 20 January, a Swedish social-democrat Kaj Björk, previously informed about Đilas's dismissal, stated in the conversation with a certain Yugoslav diplomat that "he completely understood that Đilas had gone too far" and that his ideas were "too demanding and premature". Björk also expressed his doubts on Đilas's visit to Scandinavia. The same telegram also stated that the General Secretary of Swedish Social-Democrats, Sven Aspling, "told the internal circle of social-democrats that he grieved for what had happened because he appreciated Đilas as a 'great democrat' and because 'he was preparing to use the visit to have an open discussion about all issues'. The unsigned author of the telegram considered that Đilas should have replied to the invitation."³⁷

Since he was dismissed from the government in the meantime, Đilas cancelled his journey to the Scandinavian countries. He did so in a letter addressed to Kaj Björk on 20 January 1954. With confused and chaotic handwriting, which obviously revealed his current psychological state, Đilas wrote: "I am very grateful for the kindness of the leadership of your party who invited me as a representative of the Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia (SAWPY) to visit your country and share opinions with the leadership of your party. However, as you might be informed from the press, my personal position in the SAWPY has considerably changed recently. The opinion that I would hold in the arranged contacts would no longer have the support of the SAWPY, because my views are different from theirs. Hence it is rather understandable why my arranged visit must be cancelled."³⁸ Đilas handed this letter to Maria Vilfan, requesting it to be delivered to delegate Jödahl, who should have sent it to Björk. In regards to this, the meeting of the Commission for International Affairs was summoned on 20 January 1954, where it was decided that Đilas's letter should be delivered to the Swedish delegate and to "have a talk with him".³⁹ The next day, Vilfan immediately met with Jödahl and conveyed to him that "Đilas's case" would not affect the further cooperation with Scandinavian social-democratic parties and that the Commission for the International Relations of the SAWPY was writing directly to their secretary to inform him that

37 DAMFARS, PA, 1954, Yugoslavia, f. 45, no. 41557, Telegram to the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs from Stockholm (unsigned), 20 January.

38 AY, 507/IX, CCLCY, CIRC, Sweden, 125/II-18, Milovan Đilas's Letter to Kaj Björk, 20 January 1954.

39 AY, 507/IX, CCLCY, CIRC, Working Groups of the Commission, S/a-19, Report on the Meeting of the Commission for the International Relations of SFRY Held on 20 January 1954, 2.

the cooperation would continue.⁴⁰ A letter from the Commission to the SAP leadership was soon to follow, in which the reasons for cancelling Đilas's journey were fully explained (or better to say clarified). The letter stated that "For a long time, comrade Đilas did not concur with the leading people from our League (LCY) in particular purely theoretical issues... it was discussed with him, but no one called him to account for it, nor intended to do so. It followed immediately after he had transferred to the field of practical politics, to the issues on whose resolution depended not only the development of socialism in Yugoslavia, but also, to a great extent, its existence as an independent country. Those were primarily issues of organizational character and issues dealing with the form of Yugoslav democratic development. Đilas proposed different resolutions on these issues at the Sixth Congress and thus opposed the decisions of the Congress."⁴¹ Further on, Đilas's "abstract" theoretical stand, which was not in accordance with the political reality and which harmed "the power of socialism", was emphasized in the letter.⁴² Then, Đilas was accused of "violation of party discipline",⁴³ disloyalty to the party leadership and personal arrogance, and his attitudes were qualified as "dangerous to unity", LCY, SAWPY and the country.⁴⁴ At the end, it was stated that "Nevertheless, Đilas was not expelled from the League of Communists, due to the fact that he confessed before his comrades' criticism that his views had been harmful for the country and its socialistic development."⁴⁵ The letter was finished with wishes for further cooperation.

Đilas's fall had repercussions in Scandinavian socialist circles. As an example, we point out the Swedish social-democratic newspaper *Morgon-Tidningen*, of 4 February 1954, which devoted its editorial to "the Đilas case", under the title of "Intermezzo Đilas" At the beginning of the text, Đilas was presented to readers in the following way: "Milovan Đilas, a 43 year old veteran of Tito's heroic time, had reasons for express-

40 AY, 507/IX, CCLCY, CIRC, Sweden, 125/II-18, Record of the Conversation of Comrade Maria Vilfin with the Swedish Minister Jödahl on 21 January 1954.

41 AY, 507/IX, CCLCY, CIRC, Sweden, 125/II-18, Letter of the Commission for the International Relations to the Swedish Social-Democratic Party Leadership, 1.

42 Ibid.

43 There is an eye-catching sentence here which is related to the previous statements that Đilas could express his views at the highest party forums, which was later crossed out by hand. The statement goes as following: He did not want that, as he did not want to stop publishing his own articles when the attention was drawn to the harmful consequences his articles can have." - Ibid., 2.

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid., p. 2-3.

ing his opinion with more discomfort. He was elected the President of Parliament last year, and, burdened with his leading position, he is now dismissed from all duties in the government, expelled from the Parliament, withdrawn from the position of the most probable Tito's successor. He only seems to have the rank of a colonel general, assigned to him during the battle in the Bosnian Mountains".⁴⁶ The insightful editorialist of *Morgon-Tidningen* further attempted to analyze the whole "case" in layers. Referring to the writings of Yugoslav party newspapers, the author of this text perceived Đilas's fall as following: "When one reads the documents of the "Đilas Affair", which were published by *Borba*, the mouthpiece of the Yugoslav Communist Party, one cannot but have the impression that Đilas's fall is not in the forefront of a private individual's issue. Not in the way for this free-minded Montenegrin to be deemed as a leader of an opposition that jeopardizes the regime and must be rendered innocuous. No, the standpoint remained that Đilas is presented as a remorseful leader for all communist regimes, who, to his misfortune, got depressed having encountered his own propaganda that has buried him".⁴⁷ Evaluating the context of Đilas's criticism in regard to the official policy, the author emphasized slight "absurdity" of his political position: "What Đilas published in his articles in *Borba*... is actually a trenchant from of what has been presented as more or less official clarification of last year's brave change of the political course in the country".⁴⁸ According to this author, Đilas jeopardized the strong (Sovietized) bureaucratic apparatus with his critical activities, which led to his dismissal, since many people "saw the cessation of relations with the USSR with vacillation and followed Tito only out of loyalty to the party (...) Suddenly it became clear that they personally faced retreat (...) In such a situation Tito had only one possibility if he wanted to retain power: to return to the previous political position. He sacrificed Đilas as a symbol of his loyalty to the people who brought him to power".⁴⁹ However, he did not give any chance to the Yugoslav leadership to return to the Soviet positions, writing that "Tito precisely knows what the fate of an infidel is, and knows that Moscow will consider him as one" and that "tactics" are possible in the political sense, but in ideological sense, it is a completely different matter", and "is out of question": The Yugoslav path does not go to the East but to the West – but not as quickly as Đilas (and Tito as well) de-

46 AY, 507/IX, CC LCY, CIRC, Sweden, 125/II-18, *Morgon Tidningen*, 4. II 1954, "Intermezzo Đilas", 1.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid., 2.

ceived themselves; it is not half-hearted work and the veering is bound to happen, what the recently finished episode has just proved".⁵⁰ At the end of the editorial, the author wondered whether Tito would deprive Đilas, whom he called a "failed successor", of his political role "for a long time".

In the telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in Stockholm addressed to the Secretary of Foreign Affairs on 8 February it was reported that Sven Aspling, the general secretary of the Swedish Social-Democrats and Kaj Björk, a secretary for foreign relations, "show a lot understanding for the resolution of "the Đilas case". Regarding Đilas's planned visit to the Scandinavian countries, it was reported that "there was no pressure to realize the visit by sending other officials, because unless they were the highest ranking ones it would be considered that the less important ones were sent. We consider that we should wait for a while."⁵¹

Planning the visit to the Scandinavian countries was Đilas's last foreign policy activity before his was dethroned. Three days after the Third Plenum, on 20 January 1954, the Commission for the Internal Relations of the SAWPY was summoned, the main topic was "the Đilas case" in the context of the current activities.⁵² Out of four agenda items, three were devoted to Milovan Đilas, and other issues were under the item "Varia". Firstly, Đilas's and Dedijer's journey to the Scandinavian countries was reconsidered. This issue was assessed as important (especially for Norway as the initiator of the visit), because it affected the relations with the three Scandinavian countries (Bebler even conveyed that the Danes had felt insulted due to the cancellation of Đilas's visit). In the end, the resolution on the continuation of the cooperation was adopted, regardless of the Đilas's case and his absence, but without imposing that issue on the Scandinavians.⁵³

Immediately after his was dethroned, Đilas would write his personal and emotional essay, titled "The Nordic Dream", in which he expressed his personal experience of the overall situation of his decline from power, and the title itself would be a reminder of his last planned foreign policy activity in which he did not participate.

50 Ibid., 2–3.

51 DAMFARS, PA, 1954, Yugoslavia, f. 45, no. 41557, Telegram to the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs from Stockholm, 8 February 1954.

52 AY, 507/IX, CCLCY, CIRC, Working groups of the Commission, S/a-19, Report on the Meeting of the Commission of the International Relations Held on 20 January 1954.

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Резиме

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„Неостварени нордијски сан“: Милован Ђилас и скандинавски социјалисти

Апстракт: Почетком 50-их година Југославија се, услед сукоба са „источним блоком“ и све веће потребе за политичком сарадњом са Западом, суочавала са идеолошким проблемом „правдања“ свог компликованог спољнополитичког положаја. У покушају решавања овог питања, југословенско руководство је успоставило контакте и сарадњу са западноевропском левицом. Овај рад сагледава једну епизоду у спољнополитичкој делатности Милована Ђиласа која се односи на прве кораке сарадње југословенских комуниста и представника скандинавских социјалиста, у периоду 1952–1954.

Кључне речи: Милован Ђилас, скандинавски социјалисти, југословенски комунисти, Југославија, Скандинавија

Југославија се после сукоба са СССР-ом нашла у незавидној политичкој и идеолошкој позицији. Југословенском руководству је велики проблем представљала чињеница идеолошке „компромитације“ због сарадње једне социјалистичке земље са капиталистичким Западом. Стога се морало прибећи тражењу идеолошке „алтернативе“ за сарадњу са Западом. Тако се као повљно решење наметнула сарадња са западноевропском левицом. Сарадња КПЈ и партија левце са Запада отпочела је 1950. и врло брзо забележила завидан успех. Успостављене су везе са Лабуристичком партијом Велике Британије, Социјалдемократском партијом Немачке, француским социјалистима и др. Главни руководилац ових процеса био је Милован Ђилас, у својству председника Спољнополитичке комисије Централног комитета КПЈ. Партије западноевропске левце са којима је успостављена сарадња биле су и партије скандинавских социјалиста, пре свих шведска и норвешка. Везе Ђиласа са скандинавским социјалистима трају од 1952. до 1954. године, до момента

када је дошло до његовог пада са власти. Односе са скандинавским социјалистима обележила је, пре свега, снажна теоретска полемика, али и потреба за упознавањем руководства са друштвом, политичким системом и другим аспектима живота у другој земљи. Тако је дошло до посета представника скандинавских партија Југославији. У идеолошком погледу, разлика између југословенских комуниста и скандинавских социјалиста огледала се у различитом схватању питања демократије, зато је Ђилас подржао иницијативу за покретање теоретске дискусије која ће се једно време водити између шведског социјалдемократе Каја Бјорка и Родољуба Чолаковића. Средином 1953. руководство Радничке партије Норвешке упутило је позив Миловану Ђиласу да посети Норвешку и упозна се са политичким и друштвеним приликама. У томе је југословенско руководство видело шансу за продубљивање међудржавне сарадње са скандинавским земљама, па је југословенска дипломатија иницирала продубљивање контаката са другим партијама како би Ђилас посетио и остале земље Скандинавије. Тако је утаночено да он фебруара 1954. посети Норвешку, Шведску и Данску. Званичан позив Шведске социјалдемократске партије му је уручен преко шведског посланика у Београду Јудала, 5. јануара 1954. Био је ово уједно и последњи позив из иностранства Миловану Ђиласу као југословенском функционеру да посети неку страну земљу. Међутим, после његовог смењивања јануара 1954, посета је привремено одложена, како би се Ђиласу нашла адекватна замена. Смена је имала буран одјек у скандинавској штампи, као и у социјалистичким партијама. Ситуација је решена тако што је представницима скандинавских партија објашњена Ђиласова „негативна“ улога, а сарадња неометано настављена.