

SITREP: VISIT TO BELGRADE MARCH 13-20 1991*14 Leas*
CONFIDENTIAL

Object: to promote the Serbo-Croatian edition of the "Rape of Serbia" in order to keep up the pressure to rehabilitate Mihailović and the Loyalist-Cetnik movement and to show up the Titoist "Big Lie".

B.I.G.Z. first suggested delaying the visit owing to the demonstrations and casualties in the streets on Saturday 9th March and the continuing tension. Having purchased and paid for APEX tickets, we insisted on going. Chickening-out is not my style in any case. However, the first promotion in Belgrade due on 15th had to be cancelled because meetings were forbidden and no location was available. This turned out to be a blessing in disguise because our first promotion meeting took place in Valjevo instead on 16th; it was an outstanding success, an amazing emotional experience, and it gave us confidence and the tune for the following promotions.

Arriving on Wednesday evening 15th we were met by a car from B.I.G.Z. and a gaggle of ex-Loyalist-Cetniks competing to take us in to town. They had been tipped off by Dušan Jovanović from Los Angeles. They were members of the Ravna Gorski pokred, a group about 2,000 strong ex-Loyalist survivors who are trying to become legalised as a political party but have not yet been recognised. Their nature - ex-Loyalists and veterans - rather limits their political potential and current significance because they are mostly in their seventies. The ones who met us with three cars, about 8 or 10 in all, had all suffered imprisonment by Tito for between 7 and 16 years and had then been released; but most of them had then to go to Germany in order to get work. So we found ourselves conversing in German - which was a little ironical but extremely convenient since they accompanied us to all the meetings and helped us in every possible way. They appeared to me to be entirely genuine in their simple aim to have Mihailović and the Loyalists recognised as genuine patriots; and that this is really their sole raison d'être. Of course they are fanatically anti-communist and suspicious of communists and ex-communists posing as something else. So an I. The suggestion that they are an extremist group seems to be very far fetched. I don't think they have any thought-through views about subjects like relations with Croatia and Kosovo, Federalism or Serbian hegemony, etc. They are just a bunch of hard-done-by old soldiers wanting to be appreciated and to be together and to get back to old decent standards of government behaviour, as far as is possible. Like us, above all they hate the Big Lie of the despots and their lackeys and dupes. They also constitute most of the surviving Loyalists, the great mass of whom were slaughtered, other than those who managed to escape and get to Canada, Australia, U.K., France or South America. The Ravna Gorski group accompanied us to Valjevo to a second meeting in Kragujevac and to the Belgrade meeting later. They were extremely helpful and friendly - if rather disorganised.

The meeting in Valjevo was formally organised by the Liberal party. Vučetić is the head in Valjevo. He is an impressive, cultured, quietly strong individual. Liberal in their sense is absolutely not what we understand in the West i.e. progressive and above all permissive. With them it stands for 100% market economy and I would expect that it is the very opposite of permissive in the sloppy western sense. It is very aggressively anti-communist. It stands for the specific rehabilitation of Mihailović. I sense that it is more measured in its Serbian nationalism than Drašković's Reform

party. The little I saw appealed to me as thoroughly decent and right in line with my own uncompromising right wing views.

On the Saturday we started with a book-signing in a Belgrade book shop. This had been advertised previously on the Radio. Then we went in a convoy of Ravna Gorski members to a large spread in a restaurant near Valjevo. We then visited Vojvoda Misić's house and got to the book promotion meeting at 1900 hrs. The meeting was in the priest's home by the church. It had also been advertised in advance and a large room was packed right out as were the hallways and corridors served by microphone. The meeting was hosted by the young local priest together with two older priests one of whom was Dean of the Belgrade seminar, a man of immense learning and culture, an author of many books, a very significant political figure and the possessor of a magnificent face - Anastasie Jevtic. His politics were evidently very Serbian nationalist and, of course, above all anti-communist. The young priest made a speech of welcome; then Djuretic talked at length; then Vuletic very well and clearly; then Jevtic. His speech was politically strong anti Big Lie, anti-communist stuff, magnificent, and the whole meeting, which was in ecstatic fervour already, was lifted into the heavens. I delivered a few paragraphs in Serbian and the roof nearly came off; and then made a short explanation of why I wrote the Rape and what our cause was all about. There were questions and more speeches by Djuretic and the priests. There had been a good, rather embarrassingly flattering introduction by the B.I.G.Z. man, Dragoslav Bokan, before my speech and, of course, we ended by signing books. The atmosphere was fantastic, absolutely no dissenting voices. They were evidently all immensely grateful for the book and for the stand we are taking to kill the Big Lie, to erase the sordid communist inspired "received wisdom", and to rehabilitate the patriotic Loyalist resistance. After the meeting, apart from signing, I had to submit myself to a lot of kissing and other expressions of gratitude. We went off to a dinner afterwards and got back to Belgrade totally exhausted at after one a.m. The keynote of this first meeting was the role of the priests who were very much in the lead together with Vuletic and, of course, throughout, Djuretic (the original revisionist historian). Djuretic attended all three meetings. He regards himself as my sponsor and closest colleague in the revisionist struggle. He wrote a foreword for the book.

Prior to the Valjevo meeting we went to B.I.G.Z. for a cocktail on the Thursday. There was a formal presentation to me of the first copy of the book just off the press by Rapaic the Managing Director. There were only B.I.G.Z. people at that stage present as it was still not clear that we could have a promotion in Belgrade. Nevertheless arrangements were made to send books to Valjevo and Kragujevac. Although they covered it up very well B.I.G.Z. were clearly a bit apprehensive about it all on the Thursday. They gave me a young man Dragoslav Bokan - who has the title of Marketing Manager - and who says that he is going to concentrate 100% of his time on marketing the book. He certainly did a good job of marketing me during the next week. He is young blood and well known, with experience in America and management training. Young Turk might be a better description. He too is forming a political party in his spare time. The party will be very right wing, rather thoughtful and philosophical, Roger Scruton style but primarily designed for the youth who are very politically minded and clear in their thinking. He had been on the streets with the students the previous Saturday and Sunday and claimed to have greatly enjoyed the fighting and to be a judo expert.

with his provocative questions ruthlessly. The meeting then finally came alive. The agent provocateur finally stalked out to a chorus of boo's. After that it became another great meeting. There were some 400 there.

But then came the shock. There were no books! They hadn't come and no one knew why. So we had to tell the people to get them from booksellers with the discount advertised for the meeting. Oh dear! Oh dear! I'm old and cranky but I am convinced that in my business days those sort of things would simply not have happened. Certainly not in my organisation they wouldn't. Yet everywhere my book has been sold there has been a chapter of such problems. Around the world the Rape must have had many more reviews (at least 40) than most books but it's frequently quite unavailable at point of purchase. Employees and book-clerks just don't seem to have any spirit of urgency anymore. It transpired subsequently that B.I.G.Z. had estimated sales of 50 at Valjevo and 75 at Kragujevac but every book had been snapped up in Valjevo. So there were none for Kragujevac. But - I ask myself - surely they could have rung up and got some more. Oh no! It was Sunday! So we lose maybe 200 - 250 potential sales because no-one could contemplate getting into a car, going to Belgrade, finding the key of the works and getting some books. Oh golly no. Not in 1994. That doesn't happen today in a communist economy nor in a market economy. Maybe in Tito's days they would have shot someone. (There's something to be said for his system after all - but not much!)

B.I.G.Z. were being conservative because the official price is equivalent to \$100 a book. For various reasons books are immensely costly. They gave up to 40% discount for books bought in a promotion. But it's still \$60 compared to £30 in the west. The rate of exchange is artificial and due for devaluation.

The third promotion in Belgrade was fantastic. I approached it with some trepidation. All promotions were advertised on the radio and TV so everybody knew about it. There has been such massive publicity for the book that everybody seems to know my name in Belgrade and I was convinced that the expected communist counter-attack would come in in Belgrade. The intelligentsia were all there and I had been so aggressive about communism, or rather despotism, and "the Big Lie" that I felt they had to respond. So we cut down the numbers on the platform, got the good interpreter, suggested to Djuretic he keep it a bit shorter and included another Professor Protic (Milorad, I think, not Milan, whom I met and liked but who couldn't come because of a sick child). Protic was clear, concise and magnificent. Djuretic performed very well too and Sokan made an excellent introduction of me and the book. Then I found I had a packed meeting like putty in my hands. But this time the questions were highly intelligent and searching without being provocative. They really wanted to know the why's and wherefores of our betrayal of Mihailovic and the details and the innuendos. They went through the conspiracy theories and whether Churchill sold out Yugoslavia to save Greece. They were totally convinced of the correctness of the theme of the Rape. It was the finer details which absorbed them.

It was superb and I loved it - and I think they loved me. Once again we had an interruption, this time from an anti-British drunk who launched (not without justification) into a rebid attack on all things British in general and on everything Churchill did - or was suspected of doing - in particular. He was obviously a man with a

obviously a communist from his phraseology - wrote a rude letter to Duga which, fortunately, they printed. This gave me an opportunity to reply and draw further attention to the book. "Borba" also published a correspondent's antagonistic letter to which they printed my reply. Archie Jack is adding an addendum since the letter contained crazy allegations about Brigadier Armstrong. Also it's most desirable that other names appear in "Borba" supporting the cause. less?

Mrs. Roganovic attended the Belgrade meeting and was so impressed that she urged me to come and shake hands with the editor of the weekly "Borba". This we did on our last day and he promptly told her to do another full page interview for that Saturday. This duly appeared together with photographs and took up a whole page.

"Borba" also brought up again the idea of a round table meeting with the protagonists for and against the "received wisdom". They want Wheeler and Deakin and myself and others, and, perhaps, Pavlowitch as arbiter, to argue it all out for them to cover, if they can get someone to finance a conference in some hotel. In the meantime they repeated that they would welcome any new angles or interesting contributions. In principle, I just have to write and they'll publish. They'll also publish the other side without discrimination because they are determined to present an even-handed forum. Nevertheless I get the strong impression that our new viewpoint, and above all freedom of speech, which we exemplify, appeals strongly to them. Mrs. Verna Roganovic is awaiting Archie Jack's letter and will be sending a questionnaire for an interview with Peter Solly-Flood.

The biggest joke was Politika, the Government paper, who sent a courier round to B.I.G.E. and asked for a photograph of me in order to print an "interview" basing it on the answers I gave to questions in the public meetings and in talking subsequently informally to members of the public. Amongst them - unknown to me - there had been a Politika girl. She was an ex "Borba" employee and wanted to do "Borba" down who were claiming their interview was exclusive. That Politika wanted to be on the "Nagel bit" bandwagon was indicative and entertaining because they are a straightforward Government paper.

The students' protest demonstration took place on the Saturday before we arrived. They were demanding totally free press and the sacking of the four top TV executives who, they claimed, were only putting over the government viewpoint and who had enormously influenced the elections in Milošević's favour. After the Saturday casualties the demonstrators piled on the pressure and demanded the release of Vuk Draskovic, the Serbian Reform movement leader, who had been arrested, and the sacking of the interior minister. The government gave ground, released Draskovic and sacked the four TV executives. Subsequently the interior minister resigned and many other media managers offered their resignations. Milošević then met face to face with the students and listened to their viewpoints. Milošević had been manipulating the ethnic problems - and the media - in an attempt to find some excuse to justify bringing in martial law and reimposing authoritarian rule and censorship in order to preserve the position and the power and privileges of the old gang. But there was doubt about the allegiance of the conscript army and noises from the west helped put on the brakes. On the hard right left (?) there are the old Tito generals including Manula, previously Defence Minister, who was recently invited to London and who preached to the R.U.S.I. about the reimposition of Titoist values. This group

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corruption and wasteful despotism of the regime; that without an unobtrusive but ruthless and efficient secret police the regime could not have survived; and that the Yugoslav human rights record was one of the worst in Eastern Europe even after the West in general and London in particular was lionising Tito as a "good" communist. The West, and London in particular, could also regret Tito's massive quarter million massacres in 1944-1946 instead of trying to fudge the figures like in Wheeler's recent letter to the Telegraph (March 19, 1991) which gives 40,000 in Spring 1945!

If the Serbs see that London hankers after Titoism - and the Sunday Telegraph interview with Maclean and the appointment of Wheeler as official historian and his Titoist effusions in "Serbs" give them good reason so to believe - then they have to ask themselves what hope have they, alone and unsupported, of getting rid of the evil Titoist despotism embodied today by Milosevic and his mafia gang.

One of the main problems arises from the fact that the opposition is divided and there is no outstanding alternative leader as a substitute for Milosevic. Djuretic, who has been a staunch opponent of the communists throughout, is slightly modifying his line now because the public is becoming so anti-communist he feels there is a danger of putting the axe in the corner and forcing them to bite. As is evident in all east European economies there arises a great problem if all the communists disappear since no one else knows what buttons to press. However, finding a solution to these sort of problems is impossible if lies about what really happened in the past continue to be told. The truth about the past and about the mistakes have to be recognized if anything sensible is to be constructed in the future. The greatest evil of communism was its use of the lie and, precisely because it is based on lies and because no one believes them anymore, communism has to be totally discarded. Furthermore, communism as an ideology has to be shown up. There is no such thing. There never really was. There is just despotism. And all the big communist were just self-seeking despots. And that appealed to their self seeking leaders who didn't go for the ideological fudge but who loved the trappings.

In this context it is not surprising that my book and visit have been seized on as a ray of hope and light. But it is vital that more be done OFFICIALLY. If London really tried intelligently to influence the Yugoslav situation it could achieve something. Vase Ivanovic has suggested this too in a letter to the Telegraph. But the U.K. can do nothing unless and until it drops the old Titoist cast and admits its error. If it did the reaction would be electric.

By the time this is typed, after I get back to Ireland, and circulated - probably three weeks - the situation may well have developed and changed. But the background thinking is I'm sure valid and will remain.

In all my talks I speak of despotism rather than communism and the word was seized on appreciatively (as has been my term "Loyalists"). Those who have suffered - and those still suffering - in the Eastern European countries know full well that the rule by the Nomenklatura, or mafia call them what you will, has nothing to do with ideology. Ideology was trotted out as a rationale but it is all a question of power and privilege. Who does what and to whom. Sadam Hussein, Stalin, Hitler, Tito, Ceausescu and their successors, possibly now including Gorbachev, are all the same, they just want power and privilege and for 50 years down the line they can not get it sabotaged somewhere along the line!

Two or three years ago it was still sacrilege to suggest in London that Tito and Tito's despotism were other than "good and glorious things". As I relate in the Rope of Serbia a senior member of the Special Forces club demanded that the portrait of "that Traitor" Mihailovic be taken down from the club wall. Evidently he did not realise what an ass he was making of himself. The Telegraph group and the Times, those bastions of the establishment, ensured over the years that the Titosites had a ready platform to go on propagating their ludicrous cant and repeating their *unwarranted attacks against* Mihailovic and the Loyalists. Fitzroy Maclean, who made quite clear in the recent lengthy interview with Maureen Cleave in the Sunday Telegraph that he regarded himself as Tito's sponsor and remained close friends with him until Tito's death, told an historian Thomas M. Barker a short time ago that had anyone bothered to ask him in London in the Spring of 1945 he would have told them that the Fifth Corps "Grab bag of captives" faced certain death. In his Maureen Cleave interview he didn't tell us how this squared with his continued friendship with Tito and his continued insistence that support of Tito had been a good thing. He also did not tell us how this squared with his acceptance of Tito's help in passing a law so that he could purchase "two tiny venetian renaissance palaces" on Korçala when other foreigners did not have such privileges.

But now at last light is showing at the end of the tunnel. The attached cuttings from the Telegraph group show that our bombardment of them by letters is at last getting through and that they are beginning to understand the truth about the Tito myth. We must persevere.

But there is no half way house in regard to Yugoslav history. No claims that it was all very unfortunate and that probably "under the circumstances" the right decision was made can be valid. Wrong