

Petar Dragišić

Walking a Tightrope: Tito's Regional Ambitions and the Cominform Resolution

One of the major consequences of the Second World War in the Balkans was the formation of a powerful and highly ambitious regime in Belgrade. Tito skillfully capitalized on the turmoil in the region and the opportunity to create a multiethnic socialist state between Kranjska Gora and Gevgelia arose from the rivalry between the anti-Hitler powers – the Soviet Union and the Western Allies. The power of Tito's regime rested on the potent Communist Party of Yugoslavia and an impressive army which, at the end of the Second World War, numbered around 800,000 soldiers.¹ Tito's growing self-confidence soon turned into megalomania which affected almost all countries neighboring Yugoslavia. Tito attempted to extend his influence in the region in two ways – by territorial claims against Yugoslav neighbors as well as by strengthening the ties with the communist parties in the region. In addition, while pursuing this high-risk strategy, the regime in Belgrade took advantage of the existence of substantial Yugoslav ethnic groups in the neighboring countries. The long-term goal was an enlarged Yugoslavia (at the expense of Yugoslav neighbors) and Yugoslav leadership in Southeast Europe, which jeopardized the interests of both the Soviet Union and the Anglo-Americans.

The complexity of Tito's strategy was influenced chiefly by the geopolitical Cold War dynamic in the region of Southeast Europe. Given the Yugoslav affiliation to the Soviet sphere of influence, which was cemented by the Soviet-Yugoslav Treaty of friendship, mutual assistance and post-war cooperation concluded in Moscow on 11 April 1945,² a clear pro-Soviet orientation of the communist establishment in Belgrade in the immediate postwar years put Tito's regime in an awkward position. On the one hand, being a part of the Soviet sphere of influence, Yugoslavia was confronted with

1 Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918-1988 II*, p. 435.

2 *Jugoslovensko-sovjetski odnosi 1945-1956*, pp. 15-17.

determined attempts of Moscow to restrain its political, ideological and economic sovereignty.³ On the other hand, Yugoslav pro-Soviet orientation from 1945 to 1948 brought the regime in Belgrade into direct confrontation with Washington and London. A clear example of these tensions were Yugoslav attacks on two American transport planes C-47 in Slovenia in August 1946.⁴ The distrust of the Yugoslav regime by the two protagonists of the Cold War – the Soviet Union and the Anglo-Americans – was a major obstacle to Yugoslavia's highly ambitious plans in the region.

The targets of Yugoslav expansionism in the region from 1943 to 1948 were Italy, Austria, Albania, Greece and Bulgaria. The Yugoslav regime tried to expand eastwards both through the project of a Yugoslav-Bulgarian federation as well as by annexing the Bulgarian portion of Macedonia (Pirin Macedonia). However, in early 1945, the federation project failed due to opposition by the Western members of the anti-Hitler coalition – the United Kingdom and the USA, who feared that a mighty communist state, stretching from Trieste to the Black Sea, could upset the equilibrium in the Balkans and consequently jeopardize the Western (British and American) supremacy in Greece. The leading British diplomats – Anthony Eden and Orme Sargent – were convinced that the creation of a South Slavic federation, i.e. the Yugoslav-Bulgarian federation, would significantly strengthen the Soviet strategic position in the Balkans. In a bid to avoid conflict with his former Western partners, Stalin, who in all likelihood launched this ambitious project, put the whole thing on ice. Anyway, the plan was impeded by the dispute between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria over the structure of the South Slavic federation since Belgrade opposed the dual composition of the Yugoslav-Bulgarian federation (Yugoslavia + Bulgaria), preferred by Sofia. Instead, the Yugoslav regime insisted on including Bulgaria into the existing Yugoslav federal system as a seventh federal unit.⁵

Therefore, in the spring of 1948, the Yugoslav regime sabotaged the unification with Bulgaria. The Yugoslav communist establishment categorically rejected Stalin's new plan for the creation of a Yugoslav-Bulgarian federation, insisting on Yugoslav sovereignty and independence and fearing that Bulgaria could act as a Soviet Trojan horse in the enlarged South Slavic federation. Belgrade officially vetoed Stalin's initiative at the Politburo session held on 1 March 1948.⁶

The debacle of the Yugoslav concept of the Yugoslav-Bulgarian federation did not discourage the regime in Belgrade from seeking to extend its influence beyond the Yugoslav-Bulgarian border. Therefore, the establishments in Belgrade and Skoplje, including their highest representatives – Josip Broz Tito, Lazar Koliševski, Dimitar Vlahov – vehemently demanded the annexation of the Bulgarian part of Macedonia (Pirin

3 Dedijer, *Izgnubljena bitka*, pp. 103-141.

4 Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat*, p. 14; Jakovina, *Socijalizam na američkoj pšenici*, p. 16.

5 Dragišić, *Jugoslovensko-bugarski odnosi*, pp. 59-80; Hatschikjan, *Tradition und Neuorientierung*, pp. 110-115; Лалков, *От надеждата към разочарование*, 1994.

6 Dragišić, *Jugoslovensko-bugarski odnosi*, pp. 141-148; Petranović, *Zapisnici sa sednica Politburoa*, pp. 242-244.

Macedonia), i.e. the unification of Pirin and Vardar Macedonia within the Yugoslav federation. Although Sofia was reluctant to meet this Yugoslav demand, the Bulgarian leadership made some concessions to Belgrade and Skoplje by endorsing the process of *macedonization* of Pirin Macedonia.⁷ The Yugoslav claims to Pirin Macedonia were fiercely opposed by the Foreign Office, who feared the consequences of the unification of Pirin and Vardar Macedonia for the future status of the Greek part of Macedonia.⁸

The Yugoslav policy towards Greece, i.e. its role in the civil war in Greece, was an inseparable part of the Macedonian question. Since Yugoslavia provided considerable support for the Democratic Army of Greece and the Greek Communist Party in the Greek Civil War (despite the dispute over the Macedonian issue, due to Yugoslav territorial claims over Aegean Macedonia), in the late 1940s, the two countries were in a state of undeclared war. The Yugoslav attitude towards the government in Athens was extremely hostile. On the other hand, the relations between Belgrade and Skopje on the one hand and Greek communists on the other were burdened by Yugoslavia's overt claims over Greek/Aegean Macedonia. In September 1946, one of the most prominent leaders of Vardar Macedonia, Dimitar Vlahov, claimed in his article in the Yugoslav daily *Politika* that the population of Pirin and Aegean Macedonia aspired to unification with Vardar Macedonia within socialist Yugoslavia. Furthermore, by March 1946 the Communist Party of Macedonia (Vardar Macedonia), had founded branches of the People's Front in almost all towns and villages of Aegean Macedonia. Still, in spite of the disagreements between Yugoslav and Greek communists in Aegean Macedonia, the Yugoslav regime strongly supported the Democratic Army of Greece. According to Yugoslav sources, Yugoslavia provided Greek communists with, among other things, 35,000 to 100,000 rifles, 3,500 to 7,000 machine guns and 7,000 anti-tank weapons.⁹

After the Second World War, Yugoslav room for maneuver in Greece was significantly reduced by two global players – the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom. Given the importance of Greece for the British strategy in the region, London was determined not to allow a Yugoslav annexation of Aegean Macedonia.¹⁰ Furthermore, in early 1948, the Kremlin urged the Yugoslavs to stop interfering in the Greek Civil War, i.e. supporting the guerrillas of the Democratic Army of Greece. In a conversation with Milovan Đilas and Edvard Kardelj in January 1948, Stalin signaled his determination to avoid conflict with London and Washington by leaving Greek communists in the lurch.¹¹

7 Мичев, *Македонският въпрос*, pp. 124-251; Broz, *Govori i članci II*, p. 52; Влахов, *Одабрани говори и статии*, p. 357.

8 Ristović, *Britanska balkanska politika*, pp. 72-87.

9 On Yugoslav role in the civil war in Greece, see: Ristović, *Na pragu Hladnog rata*; Ristović, *Jugoslavija i građanski rat*, pp. 71-85.

10 Barker, *British Policy*, pp. 200-201.

11 Đilas, *Razgovori sa Staljinom*, pp. 116-117.

During the Second World War, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia helped the establishment of the Albanian Communist Party tremendously. Consequently, by 1948, Tito's Yugoslavia was closely supervising the building of socialism in Albania, steadily extending its influence in Tirana. The Yugoslav influence in Albania was exercised chiefly by a colony of Yugoslav experts, entrusted with overseeing the various aspects of political, ideological and economic development in postwar Albania.¹² In addition, Yugoslav dominance in Albania was increased by a number of agreements between Belgrade and Tirana. In 1946, Enver Hoxha visited Yugoslavia in order to meet Tito and sign the bilateral Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance. Several months later, Albania and Yugoslavia signed the Agreement on a Customs Union. Furthermore, by November 1946, Belgrade and Tirana had concluded another 18 agreements on various issues of bilateral economic relations.¹³ By 1948, Yugoslavia strongly supported Albania by providing Albanians with food, weapons, as well as with industrial and technical equipment, among other things.¹⁴

Certainly, Yugoslav support for Albania in the immediate postwar years was not motivated by altruism of the Yugoslav leaders but by their intention to absorb Albania, namely to include it into the Yugoslav sphere of influence. According to the controversial book by Enver Hoxha "The Titoites", at Hoxha's meeting with Josip Broz Tito in Yugoslavia in 1946, the Yugoslav prime minister and Party leader indicated Yugoslav intentions to include Albania in the Balkan federation, which was supposed to have been led by Belgrade. According to Hoxha's book, the Yugoslav leader regarded this step as a precondition for a major concession to Tirana – ceding Kosovo to Albania.¹⁵ At a meeting with Stalin in April 1947, Edvard Kardelj reiterated this Yugoslav position, underlining Yugoslav readiness to fulfill Albanian aspirations in Kosovo in case of further strengthening of ties between Belgrade and Tirana.¹⁶

The available sources suggest that in 1946 the influence of the Soviet Union on Albanian politics and economy was rather insignificant in comparison to that of Yugoslavia. In the autumn of 1946, Moscow intensified its presence in Tirana, in particular by strengthening its military and economic support of Albania, as well as by increasing the number of Soviet military and economic experts in Hoxha's domain.¹⁷ A year later, Hoxha's visit to the Soviet Union intensified the rivalry between Moscow and Belgrade in Albania, thus deepening the distrust between Tito and Stalin. After the meeting between Hoxha and Stalin in July 1947, the Soviet Union extended its influence in Tirana, deliberately suppressing the Yugoslav presence south of Prokletije. The Soviets were

12 Životić, *Jugoslavija, Albanija i velike sile*, pp. 143-170.

13 Hadalin, *Boj za Albanijo*, pp. 136-145.

14 Životić, *Jugoslavija, Albanija i velike sile*, pp. 143-247; Petranović, *Balkanska federacija 1943-1948*, pp. 142-143.

15 Petranović, *Balkanska federacija*, p. 157.

16 Životić, *Jugoslavija, Albanija i velike sile*, p. 248.

17 *Ibid.*, pp. 193, 247.

clearly determined to restrain Yugoslav interference in Albanian affairs and establish overwhelming dominance in this important geopolitical region.¹⁸ This explains Stalin's fierce criticism of Yugoslavia's decision to deploy a division in Albania in early 1948.¹⁹ The Soviet-Yugoslav dispute over Albania demonstrated profound mutual distrust and contributed significantly to the head-on collision between Moscow and Belgrade in the spring and summer of 1948.

Yugoslav regional imperialism prior to the Cominform Resolution did not target the *people's democracies* in Yugoslavia's neighborhood exclusively. Two Western capitalist neighbors of Yugoslavia – Austria and Italy – were also affected by the grandiose plans of the Yugoslav establishment. The Yugoslavs revealed their lofty aspirations in Carinthia and Venezia Giulia even before the formal constitution of the communist regime in Belgrade. In his notable speech on the Croatian island of Vis in September 1944, the Yugoslav war leader Josip Broz Tito declared Yugoslavia's intentions of increasing its territory at the expense of Austria and Italy. Moreover, the president of the National Liberation Committee (NKOJ) made the Yugoslav *modus operandi* public in Carinthia and Venezia Giulia using the existence of Slovene minorities in these border regions as a pretext for Yugoslav territorial claims against Austria and Italy.²⁰

The relations between Yugoslavia and Austria in the second half of the 1940s were considerably contaminated by Yugoslav territorial claims against Austria. Several weeks before World War II ended, the new Yugoslav government officially made claims over the southern provinces of Austria populated by ethnic Slovenes. The regime in Belgrade attempted to take advantage of a confused situation in Austria in early May 1945 and confront them with a *fait accompli*. Still, the Yugoslav brief occupation of parts of Carinthia (including Klagenfurt) proved to be futile, given the strong antagonism of London and Washington towards Yugoslav ambitions in Carinthia. Faced with resolute opposition from the British and American governments, Tito had no other choice but to withdraw the troops of the Yugoslav Army from Austria.²¹

The fiasco of Yugoslavia's brief occupation of Carinthia compelled Belgrade and Ljubljana to change their position on the Carinthian question. In 1947 and 1948, the Yugoslav regime lobbied hard for its territorial claims in Carinthia at the international conferences before the signing of the Austrian State Treaty (*Staatsvertrag*). Yugoslav demands were firmly rejected by the three Western participants in negotiations on the peace treaty with Austria – the UK, the USA and France.²²

18 Ibid., pp. 247-277; Borozan, *Jugoslavija i Albanija*, p. 301; Đilas, *Razgovori sa Staljinom*, p. 88.

19 Đilas, *Razgovori sa Staljinom*, p. 115.

20 Broz, *Govori i članci I*, p. 219.

21 On Yugoslav territorial claims against Austria after the Second World War, see: Suppan, *Die Kärntner Frage*, pp. 187-235; Suppan, *Jugoslawien und der österreichische Staatsvertrag*, pp. 431-475; Pleterski, *Avstrija in njeni Slovenci*; Nečak, *Koroški Slovenci v drugi avstrijski republiki*; Dragišić, *Odnosi Jugoslavije i Austrije*.

22 *Memorandum vlade Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije*; Stourzh, *Um Einheit und Freiheit*, pp. 59-161; Dragišić, *Odnosi Jugoslavije i Austrije*, pp. 48-82.

Yugoslav attempts to take advantage of its military dominance in the region also failed in Venezia Giulia. Like in Carinthia, Yugoslavia's adventure in northwestern Italy was short-lived. The temporary Yugoslav occupation of Trieste, Gorizia and Monfalcone ended in early June 1945 owing to vehement opposition from the Western allies to Yugoslav claims in Venezia Giulia. Still, the defeat of Yugoslavia in the dispute over Trieste was not total. Though the main goal of Belgrade and Ljubljana in Italy, namely the annexation of Trieste, was not achieved, in 1954 Yugoslavia increased its territory by absorbing Zone B of the Free Territory of Trieste. The compromise between Belgrade and Rome, confirmed by the Memorandum of Understanding of London, was a direct consequence of the new geopolitical position of Yugoslavia after the Tito-Stalin split. The intention of Washington and London was to satisfy both sides – the loyal NATO member (Italy) and their potential ally in the Balkans (Yugoslavia).²³

The tensions between Moscow and Belgrade culminated in the Cominform Resolution, which displayed Stalin's deep dissatisfaction with the political and ideological facets of the Yugoslav road to socialism in the immediate postwar years. The document approved by the communist parties of the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Romania, France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary focused chiefly on the ideological "deformation" of the Yugoslav socialist system. The Information Bureau accused the establishment in Belgrade, among other things, of "departing from the positions of the working class," "breaking with the Marxist theory of classes and class struggle," as well as of "growing capitalist elements" in Yugoslavia. The Information Bureau (i.e. Moscow) directed its criticism chiefly at the Yugoslav policy in the countryside. The Communist Party of Yugoslavia was blamed for "pursuing an incorrect policy in the countryside by ignoring the class differentiation in the countryside, and by regarding the individual peasantry as a single entity, contrary to Marxist-Leninist doctrine of classes and class struggle." Furthermore, the Yugoslavs were criticized for "pursuing an unfriendly policy toward the Soviet Union and the CPSU(b)."²⁴

Although the author(s) of the Cominform Resolution did not refer to Yugoslav foreign policy, there is no doubt that Tito's policy towards the neighboring countries significantly contributed to the deterioration of relations between Moscow and Belgrade. In March 1948, in an instruction to Mikhail Andreyevich Suslov, the International Department of the CC CPSU accused the Yugoslav leaders of trying to assume a leading role in the Balkans as well as in the region of Podunavlje. In addition, the attitude of Yugoslav communists towards other "fraternal" communist parties was characterized as "anti-Marxist".²⁵ Ivo Banac interpreted Stalin's conversation with Kardelj and Đilas in

23 On the Trieste question after the Second World War, see: Cattaruzza, *L'Italia e il confine orientale*; Novak, *Trieste 1941-1954*; Milkčić, *Tršćanska kriza*; Dimitrijević-Bogetić, *Tršćanska kriza*; Bucarelli, La "questione jugoslava".

24 Farrell, *Jugoslavia and the Soviet Union*, pp. 75-81.

25 *Jugoslovensko-sovjetski odnosi 1945-1956*, pp. 272-273.

February 1948 as a discussion on "Yugoslav independent and combative foreign policy" and Yugoslav "readiness to assert its militant alternative to the USSR in Eastern Europe, especially among the Balkan communist parties."²⁶

The conflict with Moscow in 1948 represented a serious blow to Yugoslav ambitions in the region by putting Tito on the defensive. Consequently, Tito gave up his dream of Yugoslav predominance in the Balkans and focused on protecting Yugoslav borders, both from Soviet satellite countries and from the two NATO members in the region – Italy and Greece.

The Yugoslav conflict with Moscow represented a watershed in the Yugoslav-Bulgarian relations. Since the Bulgarian communist establishment sided with Soviets, the Yugoslav-Soviet dispute had a strongly negative impact on the relations between Belgrade and Sofia. In the summer of 1948, the regime in Sofia decided to stop the *macedonization* of Pirin Macedonia endorsed at the 10th plenary session of the Bulgarian Workers Party in 1946. Countless incidents on the border between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, repression against Yugoslav citizens in Bulgaria, and vice versa, were regular occurrences in Yugoslav-Bulgarian relations until Stalin's death in 1953.²⁷

Yugoslav relations with Albania after the Cominform Resolution followed the same pattern. After his conversation with Stalin in July 1947, Enver Hoxha gradually started distancing himself from Yugoslavia and strengthening his ties with the Soviet Union. When the conflict between Tito and Stalin occurred in the spring of 1948, Hoxha promptly sided with Moscow. Before Stalin's death, Albania actively took part in the Soviet campaign against the communist establishment in Belgrade.²⁸

After the Cominform Resolution in 1948, Tito's position on the civil war in Greece was shaped by two factors. Firstly, faced with a threat from the East (Moscow), Tito was determined to avoid a clash with the key players in the West in case of a prolonged support for the Democratic Army of Greece. Secondly, the partnership between Belgrade and the Greek Communist Party deteriorated since Zachariadis complied with the Cominform Resolution on Yugoslavia. Consequently, Belgrade left its Greek comrades in the lurch and closed the Yugoslav-Greek border.²⁹

Tito's policy towards Yugoslavia's western neighbors after the Tito-Stalin split was also a complete fiasco. At the Paris Conference of Foreign Ministers in June 1949, the Soviets (Andrey Vyshinsky) withdrew their support for Yugoslav territorial claims in Carinthia, paving the way for the Paris Compromise, which guaranteed the territorial integrity of Austria.³⁰

26 Banac, *With Stalin against Tito*, pp. 40-41.

27 Мичев, *Македонският вџпрос*, pp. 385-487; Dragišić, *Jugoslovensko-bugarski odnosi*, pp. 171-250.

28 Hadalin, *Boj za Albanijo*, pp. 202-234; Životić, *Jugoslavija, Albanija i velike sile*, pp. 295-356; Komatina, *Enver Hodža i jugoslovensko-albanski odnosi*, pp. 83-95.

29 See note 9 above.

30 Dragišić, *Odnosi Jugoslavije i Austrije*, pp. 68-74.

The Cominform Resolution and the Yugoslav clash with Moscow also significantly impacted the solution of the Trieste question. The conflict with Stalin and the Soviet satellites moved Yugoslavia closer to the West, thus removing the Cold War component from the Yugoslav-Italian relations. Consequently, London and Washington backed a compromise solution (the Memorandum of London) which confirmed the partition of the Free Territory of Trieste (Territorio libero di Trieste), de facto resolving the Yugoslav-Italian postwar border dispute.

Any comparison of Tito's original goals in his policy in the region with the final result of his strategy inevitably leads to the conclusion that his regional policy ended in failure. Already in the final phase of the Second World War, Tito made it abundantly clear that his ambitions went beyond the restoration of pre-war Yugoslavia. Misguided by his excessive confidence³¹ Tito set extremely ambitious goals. In October 1943, in a letter to Svetozar Vukmanović Tempo, Tito pointed out that Yugoslavia should be the political and military leader of the Balkans.³² Several weeks later, in a Proclamation of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, Milovan Đilas argued for the creation of a South Slavic federation "from Trieste to the Black Sea."³³ This mammoth federation was to include Bulgaria and, in all likelihood, Albania, which explains massive Yugoslav support for Albania until 1948. Furthermore, Tito made territorial claims over Carinthia and parts of Venezia Giulia. In February 1944, in a cable to the Communist Party of Slovenia, Edvard Kardelj highlighted that Yugoslavia and its Communist Party represented a center for all communist movements "in this part of Europe."³⁴

The Tito-Stalin split of 1948 had a major impact on Yugoslav strategy in the region. Since the regional *people's democracies* sided with the Soviets in their conflict with Belgrade and taking into account the tensions in the relations with Austria and Italy because of Yugoslav territorial claims in the Alps-Adria region, Tito was compelled to fight for his very survival. Consequently, the Yugoslav regime abandoned its ambitious plans in the region and launched a policy of reconciliation with its neighbors. In the first half of the 1950s, Yugoslavia improved its relations with Austria, Italy, Greece and, following the death of Stalin, with the Soviet satellite states in the region – Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, and even Albania.³⁵

31 In April 1945, Georgi Dimitrov portrayed Josip Broz Tito in his diary as flippant and arrogant: "General impression: *underestimation* of the complexity of the situation and the impending difficulties, *too arrogant*, heavy dose of conceit and sure signs of *dizziness with success*. To hear him talk, of course, you would think everything was under control . . ." *The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov*, p. 367.

32 Petranović, *Balkanska federacija*, pp. 66-67.

33 *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74. "Zato nova Jugoslavija postaje žarište otpora ne samo svih jugoslovenskih naroda, nego i ostalih naroda Balkanskog poluostrva: ona je postala primer za sve potlačene narode Evrope. Stvaraju se uslovi za ostvarenje (...) bratske federativne zajednice južnoslovenskih naroda od Trsta do Crnog mora."

34 *Ibid.*, p. 139.

35 Cvetković, *Pogled iza gvozdena zavese*, pp. 35-336.

Still, the legacy of Yugoslav disputes with its neighbors prior to the Cominform Resolution, coupled with the global Cold War dynamic (since all Yugoslav neighbors, with the exception of Austria, acted as proxies of two super powers – the USA and the USSR) hampered the full normalization of Yugoslavia's relations with its neighbors. Moreover, all other neighboring states represented a potential threat to Yugoslavia, and the proximity of Soviet troops and American tactical and strategic nuclear weapons were a matter of grave concern for Tito's regime.

Considering Tito's intentions in the region in the aftermath of the Second World War and the final result of his policy one can describe the outcome of the Yugoslav conflict with Stalin in 1948 not as Tito's glorious victory, but rather as his defeat or a Pyrrhic victory at best, which permanently reduced his room for maneuver in the region. The clash with Stalin in 1948 was his *salto mortale*, which made him a prisoner in an extremely hostile environment. Consequently, Tito had to give up the idea of being a regional geopolitical player. Instead, eager to achieve his ambitious objectives, he picked an alternative chessboard outside the Balkans, namely in the Global South. In the 1960s and 1970s Tito was perceived as a global leader, in regard to his position in the Non-Aligned movement. At the same time, paradoxically, Tito's role in the home region was rather passive, focusing on his struggle for survival.

Sources and literature

- Banac, Ivo, *With Stalin against Tito. Cominformist Splits in Yugoslav Communism*. Cornell University Press, 1988.
- Barker, Elisabeth, *British Policy in South-East Europe in the Second World War*. The Macmillan Press LTD, 1976.
- Borozan, Đorđe, Jugoslavija i Albanija – prva poratna iskustva. *Balkan posle Drugog svetskog rata*. Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 1996, pp. 287-305.
- Broz, Josip Tito, *Govori i članci II*. Zagreb: Naprijed, 1959.
- Bucarelli, Massimo, *La "questione jugoslava" nella politica estera dell'Italia repubblicana (1945-1999)*. Aracne editrice, 2008.
- Cattaruzza, Marina, *L'Italia e il confine orientale 1866-2006*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007.
- Cvetković, Vladimir, *Pogled iza gvozdene zavese. Jugoslovenska politika prema zemljama narodne demokratije u susedstvu 1953-1958*. Beograd: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2013.
- Dedijer, Vladimir, *Izgnubljena bitka J.V. Staljina*. Sarajevo: Svijetlost, 1969.
- Dimitrijević, Bojan i Dragan Bogetić, *Tršćanska kriza 1945-1954. Vojno-politički aspekti*. Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2009.
- Dragišić, Petar, *Jugoslovensko-bugarski odnosi 1944-1949*. Beograd: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2007.
- Dragišić, Petar, *Odnosi Jugoslavije i Austrije 1945-1955*. Beograd: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2013.
- Đilas, Milovan, *Razgovori sa Staljinom*. Beograd: Književne novine, 1990.

- Farrell, R. Barry, *Jugoslavia and the Soviet Union 1948–1956: An Analysis with Documents*. The Shoe String Press, 1956.
- Hadalin, Jurij, *Boj za Albanijo: propad jugoslovanske širitve na Balkan*. Ljubljana: Institut za novejšo zgodovino, 2011.
- Hatschikjan, Magarditsch, *Tradition und Neuorientierung in der bulgarischen Außenpolitik 1944–1948*. München, 1988.
- Jakovina, Tvrtko, *Socijalizam na američkoj pšenici*. Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 2002.
- Jugoslovensko-sovjetski odnosi 1945–1956. Zbornik dokumenata*. Beograd: Ministarstvo spoljnih poslova, 2010.
- Komatina, Milorad, *Enver Hodža i jugoslovensko-albanski odnosi*. Beograd: Službeni list SRJ, 1995.
- ЛАЛКОВ, МИЛЧО, *От надеждата към разочарование. Идеята за федерация в Европейския югоизток 1944–1948г.* София, 1994.
- Lorraine, M. Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat: The United States, Yugoslavia, and the Cold War, 1945–1960*. The Pennsylvania State University Press/Univeristy Park Pennsylvania, 1997.
- Memorandum vlade Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije o slovenačkoj Koruškoj, pograničnim slovenačkim delovima Štajerske i Gradišćanskim Hrvatima*. Beograd, 1947.
- Мичев, Добрин, *Македонският въпрос и българо-югославските отношения 9 септември 1944–1949*. София, 1994.
- Milkić, Miljan, *Tršćanska kriza u vojno-političkim odnosima Jugoslavije sa velikim silama 1943–1947*. Beograd: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2012.
- Nećak, Dušan, *Koroški Slovenci v drugi avstrijski republiki 1945–1976*. Ljubljana, 1985.
- Novak, Bogdan, *Trieste 1941–1954. La lotta politica, etnica e ideologica*. Ugo Mursia Editore, 2013.
- Petranović, Branko, *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918–1988 II (Narodnooslobodilački rat i revolucija 1941–1945)*. Beograd: Nolit, 1988.
- Petranović, Branko, *Balkanska federacija 1943–1948*. Beograd: Zaslou, 1991.
- Petranović, Branko (ed.), *Zapisnici sa sednica Politbiroa Centralnog komiteta KPJ (11. jun 1945– 7. jul 1948)*. Beograd: Arhiv Jugoslavije, 1995.
- Pleterski, Janko, *Avstrija in njeni Slovenci 1945–1976*. Ljubljana, 2000.
- Ristović, Milan, *Britanska balkanska politika i jugoslovensko-bugarski pregovori (novembar 1944 – mart 1945)*. *Istorija 20. veka* 1, 1985, pp. 72–87.
- Ristović, Milan, *Jugoslavija i građanski rat u Grčkoj (1945–1950)*. *Balkan posle Drugog svetskog rata*. Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 1996, pp. 71–85.
- Ristović, Milan, *Na pragu Hladnog rata. Jugoslavija i građanski rat u Grčkoj (1945–1949)*. Beograd: Filozofski fakultet, 2016.
- Stourzh, Gerald, *Um Einheit und Freiheit. Staatsvertrag, Neutralität und das Ende der Ost-West-Besetzung Österreichs 1945–1955*. Wien, 1998.
- Suppan, Arnold, *Die Kärntner Frage in den österreichisch-jugoslawischen Beziehungen 1945–1955. Das gemeinsame Kärnten-Skupna Koroška*. Klagenfurt, 1991, pp. 187–235.
- Suppan, Arnold, *Jugoslawien und der österreichische Staatsvertrag. Der österreichische Staatsvertrag: Internationale Strategie, rechtliche Relevanz, nationale Identität*. Wien, 2005, pp. 431–475.
- Влахов, Димитар, *Одабрани говори и статии 1924–1947*. Скопје, 1948.
- Životić, Aleksandar, *Jugoslavija, Albanija i velike sile (1945–1961)*. Beograd: Arhipelag, 2011.

Summary

Petar Dragišić

Walking a Tightrope: Tito's Regional Ambitions and the Cominform Resolution

In the aftermath of the Second World War Tito's National Liberation Army emerged as the most powerful military force in the Southeast European region. Consequently, the newly established communist regime in Yugoslavia endeavored to capitalize on its strength, the weakness of the Yugoslav neighbors as well as on the favorable geopolitical conditions. In the first post-war years Tito's regime focused its efforts on expanding the territory of Yugoslavia and extending its influence in the neighboring countries (the Trieste crisis, the project of South Slavic federation, the support for the communist "Democratic Army of Greece", the territorial claims against Austria, etc.). Nevertheless, the conflict with Moscow in 1948 represented a serious blow to the Yugoslav power putting Tito on the defensive. Consequently, Tito gave up his ambitious projects in the Balkans and focused on protecting Yugoslav borders. Given the presence of both global Cold War coalitions on its borders Yugoslavia was constrained to play a demanding simultaneous game in the Balkan minefield. The paper focuses on the relations of Tito's Yugoslavia with its neighbors and the regional strategies of Tito's regime from the final stage of the Second World War and the subsequent establishing of the communist regime in Belgrade to the initial phase of the Tito-Stalin split in 1948/1949. The research will test the hypothesis that the Yugoslav relations with its neighbors were shaped by a blend of global (Cold War bipolarity) and regional (minority issues, pre-war territorial disputes...) factors. The research will focus on principal objectives of Tito's policy towards the Yugoslav neighbors in the first post-war years. In this regard the paper will pay particular attention to the impact of the Tito-Stalin split on the Yugoslav neighborhood policy in 1948/1949. The research is based on an analysis of archive sources (from the Archive of Yugoslavia and the Diplomatic Archive of Serbia), contemporary press articles, published documents and secondary sources.