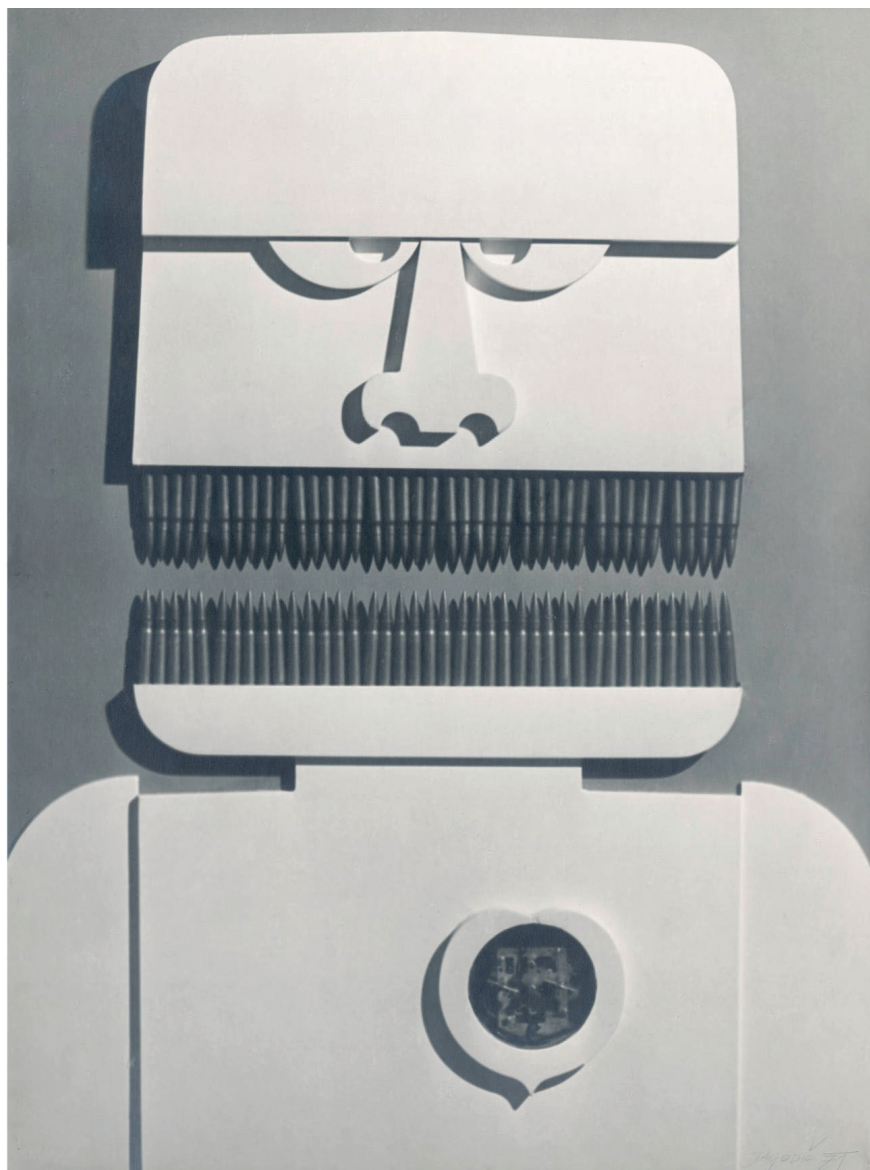


Peace Policies and Practices in Yugoslavia and Beyond



PEACE, UNCONDITIONAL!

Edited by
Sanja Petrović Todosijević and Martin Pogačar

Published by
Institute for Recent History of Serbia
Založba ZRC, Institute of Culture and Memory Studies ZRC SAZU

Series “Zbornici radova”, Volume No. 31

Series “Kulturni spomin”, Volume No. 12
Editor **Tanja Petrović**

For the Publishers
Vladan Jovanović, Oto Luthar

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ISBN 978-86-7005-208-6

The publication of this volume was made possible with the support of the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation of the Republic of Serbia.
The publication was made possible by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency's research programme “Historical Interpretations of the 20th Century” (J6-0347).

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UNCONDITIONAL!



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in Yugoslavia and Beyond

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Sanja Petrović Todosijević and Martin Pogačar

Belgrade, Ljubljana
2025

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Natalija Dimić Lompar*

Entering the Cold War “Struggle for Peace”: Yugoslavia and the International Forum for Peace, 1951–1954**

Abstract This paper deals with the history of the short-lived International Forum for Peace, an international organisation initiated by the Yugoslav National Committee for the Defence of Peace in late 1951, which ceased to exist by 1954. It places the history of this organisation in the context of the early Cold War and traces the Yugoslav attempts to use the “struggle for peace” to navigate the opposing Cold War agendas, reimagine its foreign political positions after the break with the Cominform, and find its own place in the increasingly divided world. The paper is based on the primary sources from the Archives of Yugoslavia, published archival collections and relevant secondary sources.

Keywords International Forum for Peace, Yugoslav National Committee for the Defence of Peace, struggle for peace, Yugoslavia, Cominform, World Peace Council.

Introduction

The International Forum for Peace (IFP)

is neither an organisation, nor a federation of organisations, nor a political party, nor a new sect or a new pacifist “international”. It aspires to be just what its name denotes: a forum, a platform to be used for informal discussion on how to achieve peace in the world and how to develop a peaceful and friendly cooperation among the peoples of the world,

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** The article was written as the result of research at the Institute for Recent History of Serbia financed by the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovations of the Republic of Serbia in accordance with the contract on execution and financing of research activity of the Institute for Recent History of Serbia in 2025, no. 451-03-136/2025-03/200016.



Stane Jagodič, *Homo sapiens*, photomontage, 1992

wrote the Forum's President Moša Pijade¹ in October 1953, several months prior to its formal disbanding.²

Until 1948, the Yugoslav leaders were convinced that the main guarantor for ensuring a just and lasting peace, one of the most important values in the post-war world, was a strong and stable Soviet Union. The Cominform Resolution against the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY)³ of June 1948 plunged the Yugoslav leadership into a crisis, initiating not only an existential struggle but also a process of reimagining and recreating Yugoslavia's place and role in international relations. Following the split between Tito and Stalin, the Yugoslavs were caught in crossfire between the allegations coming from the East that Yugoslavia was preparing for an aggressive war and the Western attempts to use the Yugoslav break with Moscow to expose and unmask the Soviet-sponsored world peace movement. During these turbulent years, Yugoslavia navigated between the opposing Cold War agendas, aiming to find its place in an increasingly divided world. The "struggle for peace", which was the central tenet of Soviet foreign political rhetoric at the time, became a platform for Soviet-Yugoslav conflict, but also for Yugoslavia's reinvention of its foreign political positions.

This paper aims to shed light on an often-neglected aspect of Yugoslavia's activities during the crucial years in which it broke with the Soviet Union and embarked on a road that would lead it to become one of the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement. It focuses on the history of the short-lived International Forum for Peace, an organisation initiated by the Nacionalni komitet Jugoslavije za odbranu mira (Yugoslav National Committee for the Defence of Peace, YNC) in late 1951.⁴ The activities of the YNC, founded in September 1949, initially aimed at countering the Soviet accusations and breaking the isolation in which the country had found itself. However, during the early 1950s, it outgrew this role. By initiating the International Forum for Peace, the YNC (and the Yugoslav government that stood behind it) strove to overcome this purely defensive position and become an active actor in world politics. Historian Stanislav Stojanović argued that the international peace movement initiated at the Zagreb Conference on Peace and International Cooperation in October 1951 represented the forerunner of the Yugoslav policy of non-alignment.⁵ Although the IFP project ultimately proved unsuccessful, it enabled the Yugoslavs to create

a network of contacts across continents, in countries with different social and political systems. Furthermore, some of the concepts the Yugoslav side tried to put forward as the IFP's common platform would become the guiding principles of its non-aligned foreign policy in the years to come.

The Soviet "struggle for peace" and the emergence of the Yugoslav National Committee

At the first founding conference of the Information Bureau of the Communist and Workers' Parties (Cominform), which took place in September 1947 in Poland, the Soviet Union's leading ideologue and propagandist, Andrei Zhdanov, read his famous report, in which he laid out the "two-camp theory".⁶ According to Zhdanov's theory, the world was divided into two camps, "the imperialist and anti-democratic camp" and "the anti-imperialist and democratic camp". The fundamental aim of the first one, led by the USA, was, in Zhdanov's words, to "prepare a new imperialist war". The other camp, with the USSR spearheading it, rallied anti-imperialist and anti-fascist forces to ensure a "just and democratic peace".⁷ Largely established in response to the recently announced Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan⁸, the Cominform was envisioned as a permanent body responsible for coordination among the communist parties. Its headquarters, as well as the editorial board of its newly established press organ, *For a Lasting Peace, for a People's Democracy*, were initially located in Belgrade. The Cominform meeting heralded the beginning of the Soviet peace campaigns.⁹

The association between socialism and peace had its ideological underpinnings. In the Marxist view, socialism would replace the capitalist imperialist system, which was inherently conducive to war. Peace became a part of Bolshevik rhetoric as early as 1917 with the slogan "Peace, Land and Bread" and continued to be a prominent motif in the

1 Moša Pijade was a prewar Yugoslav Communist and one of the leading party intellectuals. He spent most of the interwar years in prison, using his time in jail to translate *Capital* and other important Marxist works into Serbian. During the war, he was a member of the highest Partisan leadership. After the war, he was a member of the Politburo and held various high-ranking positions within state institutions and mass organisations.

2 Moša Pijade, "Discussion on Conditions for Ensuring Peace," *Review of International Affairs* IV, no. 20 (16 October 1953): 3.

3 In 1952, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia was renamed the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY).

4 Both the International Forum for Peace and the Yugoslav National Committee for the Defence of Peace have been largely neglected in historiography. Only recently, Saša Ilić published a paper dealing with an aspect of the YNC's activities – specifically, its relations with the American Friends Service Committee in the early 1950s. See: Saša Ilić, "Kvekeri o Jugoslaviji 1950," *Historijska traganja* 22 (2023): 123–152.

5 Stanislav Stojanović, "Titov koncept socijalističke spoljne politike," *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 12, no. 2 (1980): 132.

6 Between 1934 and 1948, Andrei Aleksandrovich Zhdanov was the Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In this capacity, he was responsible for developing Soviet cultural policy, which after the Second World War became known as Zhdanovism or Zhdanovshchina.

7 "Minutes of the First Conference, Session VI, 25 September 1947, Comrade Zhdanov's report," in *The Cominform: Minutes of the Three Conferences 1947/1948/1949*, ed. Giuliano Procacci (Milano: Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, 1994), 226–229.

8 The US President Harry Truman's address to Congress of March 1947 is usually referred to as the beginning of the Truman Doctrine, an American foreign political strategy of containing communism in the world. In his address, Truman announced the US's readiness to support free peoples primarily through economic and financial aid. Fearing that economic hardships could lead to political instability and susceptibility to communism, in June 1947, Secretary of State George Marshall gave an address at Harvard University, offering American aid for European recovery and reconstruction. Under the Marshall Plan (officially the European Recovery Program), which was enacted in early 1948, the USA transferred \$13.3 billion to Western Europe.

9 Vladimir Dobrenko, "Conspiracy of Peace: The Cold War, the International Peace Movement, and the Soviet Peace Campaign, 1946–1956" (PhD diss., The London School of Economics and Political Science, 2016), 63.

following decades. Yet, it was not until the late 1940s that the “struggle for peace” became the central feature of Soviet foreign political rhetoric, as well as of its self-image. This “struggle” presupposed a strong Soviet Union capable of halting the “agitators of war” as a guarantor of enduring global peace and stability.¹⁰ According to historian Vladimir Dobrenko, during the first Cold War decade, the “struggle for peace” stood at the centre of Soviet cultural diplomacy and soft power.¹¹ After 1947, the USSR would launch a series of “peace campaigns” aimed at political and cultural infiltration abroad.¹²

The audiences of Soviet “peace campaigns” of the early Cold War were threefold – the Soviet citizens, Eastern European countries and Western European public. As historian Timothy Johnston argues, peace campaigns served as a platform through which the Kremlin leaders communicated a new Cold War vision of the world, and their success lay in the fact that they provided individuals both in the Soviet Union and abroad with an opportunity to inscribe different meanings into the word peace.¹³ In war-ravaged Europe, peace was a powerful slogan, as no one would oppose the ideal of a lasting peace. Therefore, it also became a propaganda tool in the Soviet hands for winning over the European and global population. During the early Cold War, peace (in the East) and freedom (in the West) became the central tenets of cultural battles the two conflicted sides were waging. In their endeavours to win over hearts and minds, both Moscow and Washington especially targeted intellectuals, scientists and artists who had the power to influence the opinions of the wider public.

In August 1948, the World Congress of Intellectuals for Peace convened in Wrocław. Officially organised by Polish and French communists, with around 500 delegates from 46 countries, including Yugoslavia, it served the purpose of altering the perceptions of the USSR in the West.¹⁴ A permanent International Liaison Committee

of Intellectuals for Peace was established in Paris and tasked with organising the First World Peace Congress in the city of love the following spring.¹⁵ The Wrocław Congress also called for organising a conference of intellectuals for peace in the USA.¹⁶ In March 1949, the Scientific and Cultural Conference for World Peace, backed by the USSR, took place in the Waldorf Astoria hotel in New York.¹⁷ The Yugoslav writer Jovan Popović, one of four Yugoslav delegates, gave a speech at the Conference. Only a month later, amidst growing Cominform pressure on Yugoslavia, he emphasised in an article published in the Yugoslav literary journal *Književne novine* that the unity of socialist peace-loving countries demonstrated in New York was the most powerful weapon in the struggle for peace.¹⁸ At that time, the Yugoslavs were still hoping to overcome the conflict with the Soviets.

Although the New York Conference proved unsuccessful, it drew the attention of the US authorities and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), which took on the task of countering what they saw as a Soviet-sponsored faux peace movement.¹⁹ They organised the International Day of Resistance to Dictatorship and War, a counter-conference aimed at undermining the First World Peace Congress. However, this proved similarly futile.²⁰ The Congress took place in April 1949 in Paris, gathering around 2,000 delegates from 72 countries.²¹ Simultaneously, around 275 delegates who had been denied French entry visas convened in Prague.²² Many prominent communist and left-wing intellectuals took part in the First World Peace Congress sessions. Pablo Picasso drew his famous Dove of Peace, which would become the symbol of the Communist-dominated post-war peace movement that was taking shape in Paris. The World Committee of Partisans for Peace (renamed the World Peace Council, WPC, in 1950) was established, with the Nobel Prize laureate and French High Commissioner for Atomic Energy Jean Frédéric Joliot-Curie as its first

10 Timothy Johnston, “Peace or Pacifism? The ‘Soviet Struggle for Peace in All the World,’ 1948–54,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 86, no. 2, The Relaunch of the Soviet Project (Apr., 2008): 259–263; Geoffrey Roberts, “Averting Armageddon: The Communist Peace Movement, 1948–1956,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 325.

11 Dobrenko, “Conspiracy of Peace,” 47.

12 Ibid., 63.

13 Johnston, “Peace or Pacifism,” 260.

14 The Soviet delegation in Wrocław was represented by the head of the Soviet Writers’ Union, Alexander Fadeev, and the prominent Soviet writer and journalist Ilya Ehrenburg. Among the attendees in Wrocław were also many distinguished individuals from the West: the American writer Howard Fast, the American painter and cartoonist William Gropper, the British writer and journalist Edward Crankshaw, the French philosopher Julien Benda, the French poet Louis Aragon, the French artist Fernand Léger, the German playwright Bertold Brecht, the German writer Anna Seghers, the British scientist and the first president of the UNESCO Julian Huxley, the British writer and philosopher Aldous Huxley, the Spanish artist Pablo Picasso, the Brazilian writer Jorge Amado, the Italian poet Salvatore Quasimodo, the Hungarian philosopher György Lukács, the British historian A. J. P. Taylor, the British journalist and editor of the *New Statesman* Kingsley Martin, the Irish chemist J. D. Bernal, the British biologist John B. S. Haldane, the Danish writer Martin Andersen-Nexo, the Portuguese writer Alves Redol, the American baritone Aubrey Pankey, the French novelist and journalist Dominique Desanti, the French scientist and women’s right activist Eugénie Cotton. See: Dobrenko, “Conspiracy of Peace,” 65; Roberts, “Averting Armageddon,” 323–324. The delegation from Yugoslavia included Aleksandar Belić, Andrija Štampar, Ivo Andrić, Čedomir Minderović, Antun Barac, Oskar Danon, and Matej Bor; see: Archives of Yugoslavia (AJ), Jugoslovenska liga za mir (Yugoslav League for Peace, fond no. 719), 15, Izveštaj, 19 April 1952.

15 Roberts, “Averting Armageddon,” 324; Vladimir Dobrenko, “The Soviet ‘Struggle for Peace,’ the United Nations, and the Korean War,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 26, no. 1 (Winter 2024): 31.

16 Dobrenko, “Conspiracy of Peace,” 67.

17 Франсис Стонор Саундерс, *Хладни рат у култури: ЦИА у свету уметности и књижевности* (Београд: Досије студио, 2013), 53–62.

18 Alongside Popović, the delegation from Yugoslavia included Krešimir Baranović, Aleksandar Vučo and Bogdanov. See: “Kongres američkih javnih radnika za odbranu mira,” *Književne novine*, 29 March 1949, 1; Jovan Popović, “Praški apsurd,” *Književne novine*, 26 April 1949, 2.

19 Саундерс, *Хладни рат у култури*, 71.

20 Peter Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Struggle for the Mind of Postwar Europe* (New York: Free Press, Collier Macmillan, 1989), 7.

21 The First World Peace Congress was graced or sponsored by even more prominent individuals than the Wrocław conference, gathering delegates from all parts of the world. Besides representatives of European countries, attendees came from North and South America, the Middle East, the Far East, Southeast Asia, and Africa, including countries still under colonial rule. However, almost 60% of attendees were communists, and the Congress failed to attract considerable non-communist support. See: Dobrenko, “Conspiracy of Peace,” 70–71; Roberts, “Averting Armageddon,” 325.

22 Roberts, “Averting Armageddon,” 325.

president.²³ Following the first World Peace Congress, national peace committees were established in countries that had sent delegates to Paris.²⁴ The Yugoslav National Committee for the Defence of Peace was founded on 10 September 1949, before the International Day for the Struggle for Peace, which the World Committee had scheduled for 2 October 1949.²⁵ Officially an independent organisation of peace-loving individuals, its Executive Committee, which included 23 representatives from cultural and mass organisations, gathered the crème de la crème of Yugoslavia's pro-communist cultural and intellectual scene.²⁶

Although the World Committee of Partisans for Peace claimed independence from Moscow, it was soon dragged into the emerging split between Stalin and Tito. The first signs were apparent already during the First World Peace Congress. In Paris, Yugoslavia was represented by eight delegates, including the future president of the Yugoslav National Committee, Josip Vidmar, and the Secretary General of the Yugoslav Writers' Union, Čedomir Minderović, who became members and representatives of Yugoslavia within the World Committee of Partisans for Peace. However, another eight Yugoslavs who had been denied entry visas to France applied for visas to the Embassy of Czechoslovakia in Belgrade to attend the parallel congress in Prague. After some back and forth, they were eventually granted entry visas, but too late to be able to participate in the Prague sessions. Instead, a group of eight Cominform émigrés represented Yugoslavia in Prague.²⁷ This was the first clear sign that the Soviet grip on the World Committee aimed at isolating the Communist Party of Yugoslavia as tightening. Furthermore, it demonstrated the intrinsic contradictions within the World Committee – its aim to display independence from Moscow and its susceptibility and subjection to Soviet domination.

By the late summer of 1949, the Yugoslavs had accepted that their hopes for smoothing out the differences with Moscow had been in vain. With the Yugoslav Foreign Minister Edvard Kardelj's speech during the General Debate of the Fourth UN General Assembly session in late September, the Yugoslav diplomacy internationalised the split.²⁸ Accusing the discrepancy between USSR's words and deeds by saying that "It was not possible to speak of peace, and, at the same

time, utter the threats which the Soviet Union had uttered against Yugoslavia", Kardelj essentially attacked the credibility of the Soviet "struggle for peace".²⁹

The Soviets responded to these attacks. At its meeting in Rome in October 1949, the Executive Bureau of the World Committee of Partisans for Peace condemned the Yugoslav regime and broke off with the Yugoslav National Committee, which was accused of serving Tito's "war policy" and becoming "an instrument in the hands of the imperialists who want war".³⁰ Members of the Yugoslav delegation to Rome (Josip Vidmar, Čedomir Minderović and Miša Pavićević) were not allowed to enter the building where the meeting was taking place.³¹ A month later, at its Third Conference in November 1949, the Cominform passed a resolution entitled "The Communist Party of Yugoslavia in the Power of Murderers and Spies". Whereas the first Cominform Resolution against the CPY of June 1948 claimed that the "Tito-Ranković clique" had betrayed socialism and adopted bourgeois nationalism, the second noted its transition from bourgeois nationalism to outright fascism. The 1949 Resolution stated that the present rulers of Yugoslavia had "lined up completely with the imperialist circles against the entire camp of socialism and democracy", becoming "direct accomplices of the instigators of a new war".³²

Once the "truth" about Tito being an agent of Western imperialists was cemented in the Cominform Resolution, the struggle against his regime in Yugoslavia was framed as an integral part of an anti-imperialist struggle for peace. Initially, the Soviets did not aim to alienate Yugoslavia as a whole but rather to incite an overthrow of the Yugoslav party leadership and instate a new one, appealing to the "sound forces" within the CPY, but to no avail. Yet, some Yugoslav communists who had sided with the Soviets in the split managed to flee the country. They became part of the Yugoslav Cominform Emigration, which the USSR strove to organise and use against the Tito regime. The most prominent among them was the army general Pero Popivoda. The Soviets promoted Popivoda and his associates as "the genuine Yugoslavian defenders of peace, who are struggling against the Tito-Ranković gang of fascist murderers serving Anglo-American warmongers".³³ In his article published in the World Peace Council's journal *Peace Supporters*, Popivoda argued, "the Yugoslavian nations understand very well that their struggle against the fascist clique of Tito-Ranković is a part of the noble struggle of all progressive forces in all countries for a lasting and durable peace".³⁴

23 The World Peace Council is still an active organisation. Its member organisations from the ex-Yugoslav space include the Belgrade Forum for the World of Equals and the Croatia Anti-Fascist Committee. See: <https://www.wpc-in.org/members-wpc> (accessed 20 August 2024).

24 Phillip Deery, "The Dove Flies East: Whitehall, Warsaw and the 1950 World Peace Congress," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 48, no. 4 (2002): 450–51.

25 On 25 February 1949, the Writers' Union of Yugoslavia announced the creation of the National Committee of Intellectuals for the Defence of Peace (Nacionalni komitet intelektualaca za odbranu mira). This Committee was tasked with choosing the delegates for the first World Peace Congress in Paris. It also made up the core of what would become the Yugoslav National Committee for the Defence of Peace. See: AJ, 719, 1, Delovodni protokol za 1949–1950–1951–1952, Nacionalni komitet Jugoslavije za odbranu mira, br. 1.

26 The YNC's Presidency and Executive Council's members were, among others, Ivo Andrić, Miroslav Krleža, Isidora Sekulić, Branko Ćopić, Ervin Šinko, Avdo Humo, Milo Milutinović, Krešimir Baranović, Vladimir Dedijer, Mitra Mitrović, Andrija Štampar and Čedomir Minderović. Its president was Josip Vidmar. See: Ilić, "Kvekeri o Jugoslaviji 1950," 127–128; AJ, 719, 15, Izveštaj, 19. April 1952.

27 Jovan Popović, "Praški apsurd," *Književne novine*, 26 April 1949, 1–2.

28 Jadranka Jovanović, *Jugoslavija u Organizaciji ujedinjenih nacija (1945–1953)* (Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 1985), 41–44.

29 Edvard Kardelj's Speech, UN General Assembly, 4th Session (1949), General Debate, 228th Plenary Meeting, 26 September 1949, 68, accessed 18 August 2024, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/nl4/909/98/pdf/nl490998.pdf>.

30 "Protest Nacionalnog komiteta Jugoslavije za odbranu mira Svetskom komitetu pristalica mira," *Književne novine*, 25 October 1949, 1; Günter Wernicke, "The Unity of Peace and Socialism? The World Peace Council on a Cold War Tightrope between the Peace Struggle and Intrasystemic Communist Conflicts," *Peace & Change* 26, no. 3 (July 2001): 334; Wernicke, "The Communist-Led World Peace Council and the Western Peace Movements," 269.

31 AJ, 719, 15, Izveštaj, 19 April 1952.

32 "The Communist Party of Yugoslavia in the Power of Murderers and Spies (Resolution of the Information Bureau)," in *The Cominform*, 963.

33 Dobrenko, "Conspiracy of Peace," 93.

34 Ibid., 93–94.

Yet not all members of the World Committee of Partisans for Peace shared this view. For example, the West German peace committee argued, "Europe's peace ... is too fragile to be placed at risk by a political-military penal expedition against Tito, whatever historical justification it draws on".³⁵ However, the Soviet anti-Yugoslav campaign that had permeated the World Committee demonstrated clearly how Moscow attempted to use the peace movement for its foreign political interests. Furthermore, at the time of the severest tensions between Moscow and Washington, when the Soviet Union strove to secure its positions in Eastern Europe and communist parties were undergoing a process of strengthening internal discipline, Moscow was unwilling to tolerate any deviations in the issues it deemed important – and the Yugoslav issue was one of them. Therefore, when in March 1950, John Rogge, a prominent American liberal and the vice-chairman of the World Committee, openly expressed a pro-Yugoslav stance at the Committee's meeting, the Soviet delegates first did everything in their power to isolate him from the other members of the American delegation and bar him from giving speeches.³⁶ Rogge was accused of being "a paid agent of Titoist gangsters".³⁷ During the summer, Rogge submitted a resolution to the World Committee, urging it to invite the Yugoslav National Committee to the forthcoming Second World Peace Congress. His proposal fell on deaf ears. After his speech at the Congress in Warsaw, which marked his definitive break with the Soviet-style of Communism, *Pravda* labelled him a "tool of Titoism".³⁸

For its part, the State Department was ostensibly disturbed with the Soviet "peace offensive", describing it as the "potentially most effective means of rallying non-communist foreign support". In December 1949, Washington prepared recommendations for countering this threat. They included, among other things, juxtaposing Soviet statements on peace with the "news relating to intensification of Soviet pressures and Soviet threats of force aimed at destroying the political independence of Yugoslavia". Accordingly, one of the recommendations was to report exhaustively on the splintering processes taking place in communist parties because of the Yugoslav-Soviet split, especially on cases of prominent communist intellectuals who had consequently become disillusioned with the USSR.³⁹ In other words, both superpowers were prepared to use the Yugoslav case in their endeavours to win over hearts and minds, especially West European leftists and left-leaning intellectuals. During the following months, it became clear that the Yugoslav regime would not concede to being an object in the struggle between the East and West but was prepared to take an active part in winning over left-oriented politicians, intellectuals and the general public for its cause.

35 Wernicke, "The Unity of Peace and Socialism?" 334.

36 Dobrenko, "Conspiracy of Peace," 94–95.

37 Ibid., 96.

38 For more on John Rogge, see: Phillip Deery, "A Divided Soul? The Cold War Odyssey of O. John Rogge," *Cold War History* 6, no. 2 (May 2006): 191.

39 Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1949, Eastern Europe, The Soviet Union, vol. V, Draft Paper Prepared in the Department of State, 9 December 1949, accessed 18 August 2024, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1949v05/d516>.

The Yugoslav "struggle for peace": The activities of the Yugoslav National Committee, 1950–51

The newly created Yugoslav National Committee for the Defence of Peace found itself under heavy propaganda attacks from the outset. These attacks were an integral part of the Soviet policy aimed at isolating the Yugoslav regime on all levels. Facing a blockade from their former allies in the East and still strained relations with the West, the Yugoslavs resorted to the United Nations. The principles expressed in the UN Charter formed the very basis of Yugoslavia's foreign political program after 1949.⁴⁰ The Yugoslav diplomacy was nominally committed to these principles from the end of Second World War, but until 1948, they considered the Soviet Union to be the best safeguard against their violation. After 1948–9, the consistent struggle for these principles became the most effective bulwark against the pressures coming from Moscow (or other great powers), serving as the basis and beacon of Yugoslavia's foreign political activities and its attitude towards the "struggle for peace".⁴¹ For example, an article from January 1950 entitled "Struggle for Peace – A Yugoslav View" ("Borba za mir – Jedno jugoslovensko gledište") underscored that the principles of equality of nations and the right to self-determination, enshrined in the UN Charter, laid the best grounds for a true "struggle for peace". At the same time, it attacked the Soviet Union for violating these principles, thereby endangering world peace.⁴² As the "struggle for peace" was becoming the central feature of Soviet foreign policy, it also became a platform for Belgrade to counter Soviet accusations against the Yugoslav regime, to appeal to the international public, to rethink its foreign policy and, more broadly, its role in international relations. This new foreign policy orientation presupposed the country's opening towards the West. Special emphasis was placed on establishing ties with the Western European socialist and social democratic, i.e. non-communist left.⁴³ The entire diplomatic apparatus, the CPY and Yugoslav mass organisations were mobilised to work toward these aims. From mid-1950, the Yugoslav National Committee for the Defence of Peace acquired a new role in the context of Yugoslavia's reinvented foreign policy.

40 The principles of the UN Charter included equal rights of nations and states, the right to self-determination, maintenance of peace and security, the sovereign equality of all members, settling disputes by peaceful means, restraint from the use of force against territorial integrity or independence of any state, and non-interference. See: the full text of the United Nations Charter: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>, accessed 18 August 2024.

41 Jovanović, *Jugoslavija u Organizaciji ujedinjenih nacija*, 42–49.

42 AJ, 719, 14, A. B., "Борба за мир – Једно југословенско гледиште," *Тридесет дана*, Год. VIII, бр. 48, јануар 1950, 1–6.

43 On the Yugoslav cooperation with the Western European left, see: Александар В. Милетић, *Преломна времена: Милован Ђилас и западноевропска социјалистичка и социјалдемократска левица 1950–1954* (Београд: Институт за новију историју Србије, 2019); Никола Мijatov, *Milovan Đilas i evropski socijalisti 1950–1958* (Београд: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2019).

On 17 July 1950, the first Congress of the Yugoslav National Committee for the Defence of Peace took place in Belgrade.⁴⁴ The Congress adopted a statute and two resolutions. Drawing explicitly on the UN Charter, it called for the equality of nations and states, the settlement of disputes by peaceful means and the right to independence, warning against economic sanctions and discrimination, policies based on spheres of interest, bloc division, the arms race and the use of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. Furthermore, it called for the liberation of dependent and semi-dependent nations, focusing on Asian and African nations.⁴⁵ It also directly attacked Soviet foreign policy, exposing its interference in the activities of the World Peace Council.⁴⁶ To counter Soviet claims that Yugoslavia was preparing for an “imperialist war”, the Congress adopted another resolution – an appeal to all peace movements, organisations and peace-loving individuals to visit Yugoslavia and witness for themselves that no foreign military bases or preparations for aggression were taking place in the country.⁴⁷

This appeal was in line with the Yugoslav authorities’ efforts to break through the isolation of the country. A number of prominent individuals reacted positively to the Yugoslav appeal by sending letters of support.⁴⁸ As early as September, the London-based National Peace Council and the American Friends Service Committee responded to the Yugoslav appeal by dispatching delegations to Yugoslavia. Both submitted favourable reports, dispelling Cominform accusations against the CPY.⁴⁹ During the following months, the number of foreign (Western) delegations visiting Yugoslavia grew.⁵⁰

The Yugoslav National Committee for the defence of Peace played a role in establishing contacts with Western organisations and individuals and countering Soviet propaganda attacks. However, by late 1950, it also took an active part in anti-Soviet propaganda. A public plenary session of the Yugoslav National Committee was held on 12 November 1950 in Belgrade. The moment seemed propitious, as the Second World Peace Congress was supposed to open in Sheffield the following day.⁵¹ The Yugoslav speakers at

the plenary session openly attacked Soviet foreign policy and the activities of the World Peace Council.⁵² The YNC Secretary Miroslav Vitorović pointed to the “monstrous fact” that the World Peace Council not only kept silent about the Cominform pressures on Yugoslavia, but also took part in “warmongering propaganda” against Belgrade, betraying thereby the genuine wish for peace of the millions of people it represented.⁵³ By convening a public plenary session on the eve of the Second World Peace Congress, the Yugoslav National Committee strove to weaken its impact. It soon became clear that besides waging a propaganda war with the Soviet Union, the Yugoslav National Committee would try to offer an alternative to the World Peace Council.⁵⁴

The Zagreb Conference on Peace and International Cooperation

During the spring of 1951, the idea of convening an international peace conference was taking shape in Yugoslavia.⁵⁵ The organisers wanted to invite peace organisations to send their representatives, including members of political parties, but not political parties as such, and were especially interested in attracting prominent individuals (politicians, intellectuals and artists), whose presence would ensure maximum prestige for the conference.⁵⁶ To that aim, they made use of their personal contacts, as well as diplomatic channels. The first positive responses gave them the confidence to announce that the Conference on Peace and International Cooperation would take place in Zagreb on 23–27 October 1951.⁵⁷ The invitation proposed a six-point agenda: the tendency towards domination and lack of respect for the equality of nations as one of the fundamental reasons behind the danger of war; the condemnation of all aggressive acts and pressures; the reduction of armaments; the struggle for the principles of the UN Charter; assistance to underdeveloped countries and the free development of economic cooperation and cultural cooperation among nations based on mutual respect.⁵⁸

44 For an insight into the atmosphere surrounding the Congress, see: Isidora Sekulić, “Posle kongresa Komiteta za mir u našoj zemlji,” *Književne novine* III, no. 30, 25 July 1950, 1.

45 AJ, 719, 9, Statut Nacionalnog komiteta Jugoslavije za odbranu mira, 17 July 1950; “Резолуција претседништва Националног комитета и претставника свих друштвених организација и људи који се баве јавним радом,” *Борба*, 18 July 1950, 1–2.

46 “Резолуција претседништва Националног комитета и претставника свих друштвених организација и људи који се баве јавним радом,” *Борба*, 18 July 1950, 1–2.

47 “Конгрес позива покрете и поједине борце за мир да пошаљу претставнике у Југославију,” *Борба*, 18 July 1950, 2.

48 Among others, Edgar Snow, Henry Pratt Fairchild, Upton Sinclair, Jack Tanner, Jean Cassou, John Rogge, Konni Zilliacus, Luj Adamić, and Etbin Kristan. See: AJ, 719, 1, Stenografske beleške javnog plenarnog zasedanja Nacionalnog komiteta Jugoslavije za odbranu mira održanog 12. novembra 1950. u Beogradu.

49 *Yugoslavia and Peace: A Study of Cominform Accusations. Report of the N.P.C. Delegation to Yugoslavia September 1950*, London: National Peace Council, 1950 (in AJ, 719, 7); Ilić, “Kvekeri o Jugoslaviji.”

50 Ilić, “Kvekeri o Jugoslaviji,” 130–131; Милетић, *Преломна времена*.

51 The Second World Peace Congress eventually took place in Warsaw instead of Sheffield, as the British Government put pressure on the delegates, denying entry visas to most. See: Deery, “The Dove Flies East.”

52 For excerpts from the speeches see: “Пленум Националног комитета Југославије за одбрану мира,” *Борба*, 12 November 1950, 1–2.

53 AJ, 719, 1, Stenografske beleške javnog plenarnog zasedanja Nacionalnog komiteta Jugoslavije za odbranu mira održanog 12. novembra 1950. godine u Beogradu.

54 AJ, 719, 9, Zapisnik sa sastanka članova Nacionalnog komiteta Jugoslavije za odbranu mira, 10 November 1950.

55 The decision to organise a conference in Zagreb between 1 and 4 September was reached on 7 May 1951, at the YNC Plenum. It was later rescheduled for 23–27 October. AJ, 719, 15, Izveštaj, 19. April 1952; AJ, 719, 16, Telegram, 14. May 1951.

56 AJ, 719, 16, Telegram, 14 May 1951.

57 The Zagreb conference was first supposed to take place at the beginning of September but was soon postponed to late October. The reason was at least twofold. On one hand, the British National Council for Peace had announced that their conference would be held in September, and on the other, Eleanor Roosevelt said that she could attend if the conference was in October.

58 AJ, 719, 3, *Zagrebački skup za mir i međunarodnu saradnju 23–27. oktobar 1951*, Izdanje Privremenog međunarodnog komiteta za inicijativu i vezu.

Soon, however, various obstacles arose. According to the information Belgrade had received from its representatives abroad during the summer of 1951, the list of prominent individuals who had accepted the invitation to Zagreb included, among others, the Italian novelist and leftist Ignazio Silone, the French writer, art critic and anti-fascist Jean Cassou, the American author, socialist and Pulitzer Prize winner Upton Sinclair, the American journalist and editor of the progressive monthly *The Nation* Freda Kirchway, and the former First Lady of the United States, a prominent human rights activist and the US delegate to the United Nations Eleanor Roosevelt.⁵⁹ All of them, however, later declined participation. Apart from Roosevelt, who followed the State Department's stance that her role as the US delegate to the UN was incompatible with her potential attendance of the Yugoslav conference, the others were, in the Yugoslav view, influenced by the changing international situation and the misconception that a compromise with the Soviet Union was possible.⁶⁰

There were other difficulties as well. In the meantime, the UK general elections were scheduled for 25 October 1951, meaning that some potential British attendees could not make it.⁶¹ Furthermore, Cominform pressure dissuaded some potential participants from travelling to Zagreb. For example, the Norwegian essayist and playwright Helge Krog cancelled his trip just before the Conference, even though the Yugoslavs had covered his travel expenses. Yugoslav diplomatic representatives to Oslo concluded that, although Krog cited health reasons, he had succumbed to Soviet pressure.⁶² The Swedish author and socialist Stig Carlson, who also initially confirmed his participation at the Conference, later admitted that he had changed his mind due to the pressures exerted upon him by the Cominform's followers in Sweden.⁶³ The French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre⁶⁴ allegedly decided not to participate in the Zagreb conference, fearing that the Yugoslavs would succumb to American influence.⁶⁵ Although other rumours suggested that Sartre took offence that his partner, the philosopher and feminist activist Simone de Beauvoir, had not been invited,⁶⁶ the Yugoslavs were more inclined to believe that he and other prominent French leftists were persuaded by an organised Cominform propaganda campaign not to travel to Yugoslavia.⁶⁷

59 AJ, 719, 13, Telegram Direkcije za informacije Privrednoj delegaciji u Bonu, 16 June 1951.

60 AJ, 719, 13, Marija Vilfan, Privrednoj delegaciji FNRJ u Bonu, 25 July 1951.

61 AJ, 719, 13, Ambasada FNRJ u Londonu, Nacionalnom komitetu za odbranu mira, 14 October 1951.

62 AJ, 719, 6, Izveštaj Poslanstva FNRJ u Oslu, 29 October 1951.

63 AJ, 719, 6, Zabeleška našeg savetnika u Stokholmu o razgovoru sa Stig Karlsonom, 22 December 1951.

64 Although not a party member, in the early 1950s, Jean-Paul Sartre was close to communism. Both in Wrocław in 1948 and in Paris in 1949, the Soviet delegates attacked Sartre for his anti-Soviet statements. However, he later joined the WPC and took part in the congresses in Vienna, Berlin and Helsinki between 1951 and 1955. See: Dobrenko, "Conspiracy of Peace," 65, 89; David Lethbridge, "Constructing Peace by Freedom: Jean-Paul Sartre, Four Short Speeches on the Peace Movement, 1952–1955," *Sartre Studies International* 18 no. 1 (2012): 1–18.

65 AJ, 719, 22, Telegram Komiteta za mir Ambasadi Pariz, 4 October 1951.

66 AJ, 719, 22, Zabeleška o razgovoru Francisa Trebinjca sa Leo Hamonom, senatorom i ekonomistom Francuske, 15 October 1951.

67 AJ, 719, 22, Telegram Price, 18 October 1951.

On the other hand, the Yugoslavs believed that the Italian essayist and left-wing politician Ignazio Silone⁶⁸ had refused to participate in the Zagreb conference because the Congress for Cultural Freedom was opposed to it.⁶⁹ In the Yugoslav opinion, the reason lay in the fact that the YNC did not invite the Congress for Cultural Freedom to send its representatives to Zagreb "because there are people in this organisation we have nothing in common with, such as for example [Arthur] Koestler".⁷⁰ German theologian, evangelical pastor and an anti-fascist icon Martin Niemöller, who attended the Zagreb conference, told the Yugoslavs that he had received warnings from both Moscow and Washington not to travel to Zagreb.⁷¹ The Soviets and the Americans both clearly had reservations towards the Zagreb conference. However, the Yugoslav decision not to invite any participants from Eastern Europe left the Soviets with no other way of influencing the conference except continuing anti-Yugoslav propaganda and trying to directly dissuade the "big names" of the European left from participating. On the other hand, with delegates from the USA directly present at the conference, Washington had an opportunity to influence the course of the Zagreb meeting from within.

With Yugoslavia becoming increasingly interesting for US diplomacy and efforts to undermine Soviet influence in Europe, the activities of the Yugoslav peace committee gained relevance for the US "counter-peace-offensive" in the early 1950s. Many in the West considered the forthcoming Zagreb conference a partisan meeting and were therefore sceptical towards it. Nevertheless, the American Central Intelligence Agency kept a close eye on the preparations for the Conference. According to a CIA analysis, the conference was intended to be "an imposing rally against the pseudo-pacific aims of the Soviets", representing "the most ambitious Yugoslav step in Tito's political warfare campaign against Moscow".⁷²

68 Ignazio Silone was one of the most prominent Italian intellectuals in the 20th century. He was one of the founders of the Communist Party of Italy, with which he broke in the early 1930s. He spent most of the years of Fascist rule in Italy in exile, first in the Soviet Union and then in Switzerland, where he mostly devoted his time to writing. During the war, he worked closely with Allen Dulles and the Office of Strategic Services. After the war, Silone returned to Italy. He wrote a contribution for *The God that Failed* and became a member of the Congress for Cultural Freedom. It remains uncertain whether he was aware that the Congress was funded by the CIA. See: "Ignazio Silone," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed 27 August 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ignazio-Silone>; Саундерс, *Хладни рат у култури*, 77–78.

69 The Congress for Cultural Freedom was an anti-communist, CIA-funded cultural organisation founded in 1950 in West Berlin. It targeted left-oriented intellectuals, aiming to distance them from Moscow. The Congress organised conferences and art exhibitions, published journals, etc. For more on the Congress for Cultural Freedom, see: Saunders, *Hladni rat u kulturi*; Peter Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy*.

70 AJ, 719, 3, Stenografske beleške sastanka Izvršnog odbora Nacionalnog komiteta Jugoslavije za mir, 12 November 1951.

71 AJ, 719, 3, Martin Niemöller.

72 CIA, CREST, General CIA Records, CIA-RDP79T01146A000200470001-9, Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Current Intelligence, Daily Digest, 22 June 1951.

The Yugoslav delegate to the UN, Aleš Bebler, who resided in New York at the time, was responsible for securing attendees from the USA. Before the conference, he reported that the “group around [Sidney] Hook”⁷³ had attempted to secure invitations for Denis de Rougemont⁷⁴, Arthur Koestler,⁷⁵ Melvin Lasky⁷⁶ and James Burnham⁷⁷ to attend the Zagreb conference as representatives of the Congress for Cultural Freedom.⁷⁸ At the same time, Bebler warned that Burnham was “an ex-communist, now a Lovestone-type of person”,⁷⁹ thereby probably indicating his ties to the CIA.⁸⁰ In fact, when the idea about convening a conference in Zagreb emerged, Sidney Hook and John Rogge were among the first to whom the Yugoslavs turned for support in attracting prominent individuals to attend. Already in April 1951, Aleš Bebler reported to Belgrade that Hook insisted on inviting Arthur Koestler, a suggestion to which, according to Bebler, “we gave the cold shoulder”.⁸¹ In late August, however, in light of the unsatisfactory response from the potential US delegates, the Deputy Director of the Yugoslav government’s Direkcija za

informacije (Information Directorate) and Secretary General of the Zagreb conference, Marija Vilfan, stated that the reason was that “the group of Trotskyists gathered around the *New Leader*”⁸² initially managed the whole action”, which put off most prominent liberal attendees.⁸³ Nevertheless, the editor of *Der Monat*, a Berlin-based CIA-funded journal, Melvin Lasky, asked the Yugoslav authorities to observe the Zagreb conference as a foreign correspondent.⁸⁴ He left a generally favourable account of the Conference in an article published in *Preuves*, another CIA-funded journal, praising freedom of discussion and expressing his disapproval of neutralist and anti-American tendencies of certain participants.⁸⁵

The American attitude towards the activities of the YNC was undoubtedly more favourable than the Soviet. For example, prior to confirming his participation at the Zagreb conference, the president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, John E. Johnson, enquired with the State Department’s John Campbell and CIA’s Allen Dulles whether he should accept the invitation.⁸⁶ Their feedback must have been positive, given that Johnson took part in the Zagreb conference. The American view of the conference was perhaps most accurately formulated in the CIA analysis, which stated, “If delegates of the caliber of Mrs. Roosevelt actually do attend, the Congress can provide a powerful Western propaganda weapon to counteract the current Soviet Peace Appeal”.⁸⁷ Precisely the absence of big names such as Mrs. Roosevelt proved to be the chief shortcoming of the Zagreb conference. However, Washington still did not want to be out of the loop. According to Yugoslav sources, the US consul to Zagreb attended all sessions. Furthermore, several delegates from the USA conferred with the American diplomats during the conference, which influenced their stances on certain issues.⁸⁸ In other words, Washington not only closely observed the preparations and the course of the Zagreb conference, but also actively tried to influence its outcomes from within.

During the preparations for the Zagreb conference, the Yugoslavs mainly focused on securing participants from Western Europe and the United States. Having the subsequent

73 Sidney Hook was an American philosopher. A pre-war Marxist, he became disillusioned with the USSR during the 1930s. During the Cold War, Hook was a prominent anti-communist and one of the founders of the CIA-funded Congress for Cultural Freedom. In the early 1950s, he was a member of the editorial team of the socialist journal *The New Leader*; Michael Warner, “Origins of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, 1949–50,” *Studies in Intelligence* 38 (CIA in-house journal, 2007): 89–98.

74 Denis de Rougemont was a Swiss writer and cultural theorist. He worked as a *Voice of America* speaker and administrator in French during the Second World War. In 1950, he became the President of the Congress for Cultural Freedom Executive Committee. He was one of the leaders of the Union of European Federalists. De Rougemont founded the Centre Européen de la Culture (The European Cultural Centre) in Geneva, which also promoted European federalism. According to Frances Stonor Saunders, this endeavour was secretly funded by the CIA, although De Rougemont later denied any knowledge of it. See: Саундерс, *Хладни рат у култури*, 92.

75 Arthur Koestler was a Budapest-born author and journalist. A pre-war communist, he became disillusioned with the USSR during the late 1930s. At the time, he cooperated closely with Willy Münzenberg. In 1940, he published his famous anti-totalitarian novel *Darkness at Noon*. After the war, Koestler was secretly employed by the Foreign Office’s anti-communist Information Research Department (IRD). He was the *spiritus movens* and one of the contributors to *The God that Failed*, a collection of essays published in 1949 and penned by six authors disillusioned with communism. Koestler was active within the Congress for Cultural Freedom and was instrumental in CIA attempts to win over the Western European non-communist left. See: Саундерс, *Хладни рат у култури*, 65–70.

76 Melvin Lasky was an American journalist and anti-communist leftist. He cooperated with Sol Levitas within the editorial team of the anti-Stalinist journal *The New Leader*. In 1948, Lasky founded the monthly journal *Der Monat* in Berlin, which aimed at creating a bridge between American and German intellectuals and supporting US foreign political interests in Germany and Europe. It was initially funded from the Marshall Plan funds and later by the CIA. Lasky was later the editor of the *Encounter*, another journal financed by the CIA through the Congress for Cultural Freedom. See: Саундерс, *Хладни рат у култури*, 39–41.

77 James Burnham was an American philosopher and political theorist. During the 1930s, he was one of the prominent Trotskyist activists in the USA. During the Second World War, Burnham worked for the Office of Strategic Services. He was one of the founders of the Congress for Cultural Freedom and a CIA consultant. According to Saunders, in 1953, he played a crucial role in the CIA Operation Ajax aimed at overthrowing Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh and strengthening the shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. See: Саундерс, *Хладни рат у култури*, 88; Peter Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy*.

78 AJ, 719, 13, Telegram Beblera Komitetu za mir, 17 October 1951.

79 Jay Lovestone was an American activist and pre-war communist who became disillusioned with the Soviet Union during the Great Purge. After the war, he was active within the American Federation of Labor (AFL), especially tasked with organising and supporting “free” trade unions in Europe and Latin America to remain independent from Moscow. In this capacity, he cooperated closely with the CIA. See: Ted Morgan, *A Covert Life: Jay Lovestone: Communist, Anti-Communist, and Spymaster* (New York: Random House, 1999).

80 AJ, 719, 13, Telegram Beblera Komitetu za mir, 17 October 1951.

81 AJ, 836, 1-4-d/10, Telegram Beblera MIP-u, Kardelju, Đilasu, Dedijeru, 28 April 1951.

82 *The New Leader* was an American socialist and anti-communist journal. In the early 1950s, its editor, Sol Levitas, a Russian émigré who cooperated with Trotsky and Bukharin and had strong ties to the American intelligence circles, secured CIA funding for *The New Leader*. The members of the journal’s editorial team also included Melvin Lasky during the Second World War and Sidney Hook after the war. See: Саундерс, *Хладни рат у култури*, 147–148; Michael Warner, “Origins of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, 1949–50.”

83 AJ, 836, 1-4-d/10, Marija Vilfan, pregled stanja, 22 August 1951.

84 AJ, 719, 13, Telegram Vojne misije FNRJ u Berlinu Direkciji za informacije, 27 September 1951.

85 Melvin Lesky, “Une occasion manqué,” *Preuves*, 10 (December 1951): 23–25, in: AJ, 719, 23.

86 CIA, CREST, General CIA Records, CIA-RDP80R01731R003100030016-2, Letter to Mr. Allen Dulles from Joe [Joseph E. Johnson], 14 August 1951.

87 CIA, CREST, General CIA Records, CIA-RDP79T01146A000200490001-7, Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Current Intelligence, Daily Digest, 25 June 1951.

88 AJ, 719, 3, O. A. de Lima; AJ, 719, 3, Gilbert Harrison.

course of the Yugoslav foreign policy in mind, it is important to note that delegates from India and Burma, as well as from the French colonies (Morocco, Cameroon, Algeria and Madagascar), also took part in the Zagreb conference. Contacts with representatives from the French colonies went mainly through Paris. In early September 1951, Marija Vilfan reminded the Yugoslav diplomats in France that the participation of “colonial peoples” was of utmost importance.⁸⁹ The Yugoslav side was aware that the presence of delegates from countries still under colonial rule could trigger a reaction from the French attendees. Indeed, in mid-October, the French delegate Léo Hamon underscored that the participation of delegates from the French colonies posed “quite an inconvenience”.⁹⁰ Furthermore, after the Conference’s opening, some of the French participants protested that the French colonies were formally listed as countries.⁹¹ On the other hand, the Yugoslav ambassador to Paris reported to Belgrade before the Conference that the delegates from the French colonies did not intend to create any tensions in Zagreb regarding the colonial issue, but that they expected the right to decolonisation to be included in the final act.⁹² At their last meeting prior to the Conference, the YNC members agreed that, as delegates from Africa were coming to Zagreb, it was necessary to define the Yugoslav stance towards the issue of colonial and semi-colonial nations.⁹³ Despite the awareness of the possible difficulties this issue could create in relations with the French, the final resolution of the Zagreb conference included the recognition of the right to self-determination for all colonial peoples.⁹⁴

After thorough yet challenging preparations, the Conference on Peace and International Cooperation took place in Zagreb between 23 and 27 October 1951.⁹⁵ It attracted around 160 participants from 23 countries and liberation movements.⁹⁶ The Conference adopted a resolution, calling for the respect of the sovereign rights and equality of all states, condemnation of aggressive acts and pressures, recognition of the right of self-determination for all colonial peoples, perfecting of the UN to make it a more effective means for the attainment of world peace and recognition of the right for non-bloc nations to pursue an independent foreign policy.⁹⁷ The Cominform media attacked the Zagreb conference, labelling it “a sortie against the movement of partisans for peace”,

“a rally of war propagandists” organised by “Belgrade provocateurs and their American teachers”.⁹⁸ However, they concluded that the conference was a failure, as the “Belgrade fascists” only gathered “an insignificant group of half-hearted fascists”, “renegades” and “unknown individuals”.⁹⁹ On the other hand, a CIA report stated that “the performance fell far short of the expectations”, which was due “in large part to the conspicuous absence of distinguished Western personalities”.¹⁰⁰

In public, the Yugoslavs framed the conference as a major success. Behind closed doors, however, different opinions were voiced. Although Marija Vilfan thought that the fact that the participants were mostly politicians meant that the parties and organisations they represented *de facto* approved of the conference, other members of the YNC Executive Committee were visibly dissatisfied with the fact that prominent individuals like Ignazio Silone, Jean-Paul Sartre, Eleonore Roosevelt or Julian Huxley had not attended. In the words of the Serbian poet and former Ambassador to Paris, Marko Ristić, it was “a great pity that we did not have prominent individuals” in Zagreb, as an intellectual had far more star power than a second-grade politician.¹⁰¹ This absence was even more concerning as the Zagreb conference was not meant to be an isolated event, but a step towards creating a much broader project – the International Forum for Peace.

The International Forum for Peace

The Zagreb conference was “a historically important moment”, underlined the Serbian writer Milan Bogdanović. “During the Conference, the attendees unanimously and enthusiastically decided that it should serve as a starting point for a permanent action for peace”.¹⁰² One of the outcomes of the Zagreb conference was the creation of the Provisional International Committee for Initiative and Liaison. At the first meeting of its Secretariat in January 1952 in Paris, the Provisional Committee was renamed the International Forum for Peace with two bureaus, in Paris and Belgrade.¹⁰³

89 AJ, 719, 22, Telegram Marije Vilfan, Ambasadi FNRJ Pariz, 10 September 1951.

90 AJ, 719, 22, Zabeleška o razgovoru Francisa Trebinjca sa Leo Hamonom, senatorom i ekonomistom Francuske, 15 October 1951.

91 AJ, 719, 23, Zabeleška Bratislave Stamenković, 24 October 1951.

92 AJ, 719, 22, Telegram Price, 16 October 1951.

93 AJ, 719, 18, Stenografske beleške savetovanja članova Nacionalnog komiteta Jugoslavije za mir, 16 October 1951.

94 *Zagrebački skup za mir i međunarodnu saradnju 23–27. oktobar 1951*, Izdanje Privremenog međunarodnog komiteta za inicijativu i vezu.

95 For more information on the preparations for the conference, see documents in: AJ, 719, 9.

96 The delegates came from Algeria, Austria, Belgium, Burma, Great Britain, Czechoslovakia, Greece, the Netherlands, France, India, Italy, Yugoslavia, Canada, Mexico, West Germany, Norway, USA, Switzerland, the Free Territory of Trieste. There were also representatives from countries still under colonial rule, namely Cameroon, Madagascar, and Morocco, and a delegation of Spanish republican émigrés.

97 *Zagrebački skup za mir i međunarodnu saradnju 23–27. oktobar 1951*, Izdanje Privremenog međunarodnog komiteta za inicijativu i vezu.

98 AJ, 719, 16, Osnovni momenti u odjecima štampe i radija na Zagrebački skup; Б. Грибанов, *Банда Тутто – орудие американско-английских поджигателей войны* (Москва: Госполитиздат, 1952), 127.

99 Грибанов, *Банда Тутто*, 127.

100 CIA, CREST, General CIA Records, CIA-RDP79T01146A000500140001-2, Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Current Intelligence, Daily Digest, 30 October 1951.

101 AJ, 719, 3, Stenografske beleške sastanka Izvršnog odbora Nacionalnog komiteta Jugoslavije za mir, 12 November 1951.

102 Milan Bogdanović, “Zagrebački skup za mir i međunarodnu saradnju,” *Književne novine* IV, no. 43 (10 November 1951): 1.

103 The chief of the Paris office became the Yugoslav reporter of *Borba* Mile Vitorović, who was assisted by members of the Secretariat who resided in Paris – Léo Hamon, Léon Boutbien and Ahmed Alaoui. AJ, 719, 3, Rezime odluka sastanka Sekretarijata u Parizu 26. i 27. januara 1952.

From the outset, this new organisation was marked by various dilemmas related to its very character. The idea about creating an international committee had been born prior to the conference, yet the Yugoslavs thought that they should not be the ones to propose it formally in Zagreb.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, the Yugoslavs had *de facto* initiated the creation of the Forum, and Moša Pijade was the first president of its Secretariat. During the roughly two and a half years of its activity, the Forum changed its aims, ambitions and even structure several times. Initially conceived as an international body that would coordinate activities of individuals and organisations for peace, it gradually transformed into a “forum” for discussing matters related to peace and peaceful cooperation.¹⁰⁵ At the beginning, the idea was to gather leftist and “progressive forces”, members of socialist and social-democratic parties, as well as certain religious organisations. However, there was no room for “unconditional pacifists, neutralists and alike”, as opposition to the use of force for defensive purposes clashed with the imperatives of the Yugoslav policy in the early 1950s.¹⁰⁶

The Yugoslavs insisted that their aim was not to form a new movement, let alone a new international, but to launch a lasting initiative for peace.¹⁰⁷ In practice, however, the initial plan that each of the Provisional Committee members was to work towards creating a national committee in his/her respective country strongly resembled the structure of the World Peace Council. Nevertheless, it soon became clear that it was not possible to create a representative national committee in most countries. Even in countries like France, where a national committee was established, it did not enjoy any significant support, and in the Yugoslav view, the whole action was a fiasco.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, further activities mainly strove to secure the support of prominent individuals and cooperation with already existing organisations. The Yugoslav diplomats played a key role in these endeavours, as well as special envoys who, like Vladimir Dedijer, travelled to Western Europe and the USA to, among other things, secure the support of prominent individuals for the Forum’s activities.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, the Yugoslav diplomatic missions abroad sometimes served as a liaison between the IFP members and its Secretariat.¹¹⁰

104 AJ, 719, 13, Marija Vilfan, Stalnoj komisiji pri OUN, 20 September 1951.

105 AJ, 719, 6, Kratak pregled rada Međunarodnog foruma za mir, 14 May 1954.

106 AJ, 719, 6, Moša Pijade, Poslanstvu FNRJ u Buenos Ajresu, 23 March 1952.

107 In November 1951, Dedijer warned that the Temporary International Committee should not be referred to as a movement, warning that it might otherwise seem that Yugoslavia was attempting to create an international under its command. AJ, 719, 6, Telegram Dedijera, 7 November 1951.

108 AJ, 719, 6, Pismo Francisa Trebinjca Mariji Vilfan, 7 December 1951; AJ, 719, 6, Telegram Price MIP-u, 12 December 1950.

109 In late November 1951, Vladimir Dedijer reported from Paris that he had had a lengthy conversation with Eleanor Roosevelt and that meetings with the British labour politician Aneurin Bevan and the Belgian socialist Joseph Bracops were scheduled for the following week. He visited West Germany in early 1952. Moša Pijade appealed to the Yugoslav ambassador in Bonn, Mladen Iveković, to suggest to Dedijer that, after Germany, he should travel to London and persuade the Labour Party leaders to appoint one of their representatives to the IFP Secretariat. Later that year, Dedijer travelled to the USA, spending four days at Eleanor Roosevelt’s house. Her support for the IFP was one of the topics he was instructed to address. AJ, 719, 6, Telegram Dedijera, Pariz, 25 November 1951; AJ, 719, 6, Telegram M. Pijade Ivekoviću, 8 March 1952; AJ, 719, 6, Pismo V. Dedijera “čiči”, 9 August 1952.

110 For example, the communication between the Austrian professor Hans Thirring, a member of the IFP Secretariat, and the Forum’s president Moša Pijade went through the Yugoslav embassy in Vienna, because of the censorship over post in the Soviet sector of the city where Hans Thirring lived. AJ, 719, 6, Šifrovani telegram Matesa Poslanstvu Beč, 21 March 1952.

Yet, the Yugoslavs also intended to stay in the shadows to avoid implying that the IFP was a Yugoslav organisation. In an interview given to an Indian journalist shortly after the Zagreb conference, Tito claimed that the peace movement born in Zagreb was “neither inspired nor dictated by the government, but by progressive individuals whose stances are identical with ours”.¹¹¹ When confronted with the question of whether the Yugoslav government had directly participated in the movement, Tito denied this, saying, “Well, it would not be a free movement, then. We do not think that the purpose of this movement should be simply to save us from aggression, because, if peace is secured, so is our independence”.¹¹² Despite their instrumental role in attracting new supporters, Yugoslav diplomatic representatives were instructed to act discreetly so as not to compromise the Forum.¹¹³ In practice, however, the Yugoslav members of the Forum, as representatives of the YNC, were the only ones who had direct government backing, as both the Yugoslav National Committee and the International Forum for Peace were government-sponsored projects. The Yugoslav National Committee covered the lion’s share of the Forum’s expenses, including the monthly rent for the Paris office, cleaning fees, travel and hotel expenses for most members attending the Secretariat meetings, translation services, postal fees, etc.¹¹⁴ Therefore, it is no wonder that the Yugoslavs attempted to influence and control the IFP’s activities.

The first significant initiative of the newly established Forum was to organise an international conference on peaceful coexistence and economic assistance to developing countries in New Delhi.¹¹⁵ The proposed venue clearly demonstrated a gradual change of focus from Europe to the decolonised world.¹¹⁶ The Yugoslavs took on the task of securing the Indian government’s permission. However, in March 1952, the Indian diplomatic representative to Rome officially conveyed to the Yugoslav ambassador, Vladimir Velebit, the Indian government’s regret that they could not host the conference due to inadequate accommodation facilities. Velebit, however, was convinced that the fear of the USSR was the true underlying reason.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, at the same time, the IFP member Giorgio

111 “Одговори на питања уредника индиског социјалистичког листа *Навшакти*, 9 November 1951,” in *Josip Broz Tito: govori i članci VI* (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1959), 282.

112 Ibid.

113 AJ, 719, 6, Marija Vilfan, Poslanstvu FNRJ Brisel, 10 November 1951. For example, the Yugoslav ambassador to Rome, Mladen Iveković, was criticised for organising a reception for the Italian delegates after the Zagreb conference, as it created the impression that the conference was a government-sponsored activity. AJ, 719, 6, Telegram Dedijera, 7 November 1951.

114 See: AJ, 719, 23, subfolder “Blagajna”.

115 AJ, 719, 3, Rezime odluka sastanka Sekretarijata u Parizu 26. i 27. januara 1952.

116 By early 1952, Belgrade decided to pursue a course of rapprochement and opening up to the non-aligned world. According to an instruction Foreign Minister Kardelj gave to the Yugoslav ambassador to New Delhi, Jože Vilfan, India was considered one of the potentially most important foreign political partners at the time. See: Jovan Čavoški, *Distant Countries, Closest Allies: Josip Broz Tito and Jawaharlal Nehru and the Rise of Global Nonalignment* (New Delhi: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, 2015), 10.

117 AJ, 719, 6, Telegram Velebita, Rim, MIP-u, za Pijade, 17 March 1952.

Parri¹¹⁸ stated that, considering the “current tensions”, it was “inopportune” to hold the planned meeting of the IFP Secretariat in Rome.¹¹⁹

The negative answer from New Delhi resulted in a change of plans. Instead of staging a world congress in India, at its July 1952 meeting, the IFP Secretariat issued a manifesto, calling for peaceful coexistence as a first step towards world peace. They appealed to all IFP members to organise regional conferences on peaceful coexistence that would serve as preparatory meetings for a world congress.¹²⁰ Topics to be discussed at these conferences included the fundamental differences that divided the world, current conflicts and coexistence, the relationship between similarities among regimes and their coexistence, economic problems of coexistence and aid to developing countries, political and psychological aspects of coexistence, national sovereignty and coexistence, the role of the UN in securing peaceful coexistence, the role of armament in ensuring collective security and coexistence, guarantees for securing coexistence and the consequences of successful or unsuccessful solution to the issue of peaceful coexistence. It is important to note that as preconditions for peaceful coexistence in the world, the manifesto explicitly mentioned the right of every nation to an independent and sovereign state, the solution of the colonial problem and economic assistance to developing countries.¹²¹

At its meeting in October 1952, the Yugoslav National Committee for the Defence of Peace discussed the IFP manifesto and suggested compiling studies and reports on various aspects of peaceful coexistence for the proposed regional conference, reflecting the principles outlined in the manifesto. To that aim, they engaged Yugoslav academic institutes, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, jurists’ and economists’ unions etc. Although the Committee members agreed that Yugoslavia was the best example of peaceful coexistence, the reports were to be “wider” in their scope and contents to avoid the impression that the purpose of the whole action was merely Yugoslav propaganda.¹²² The Yugoslav institutions prepared materials on various aspects of peaceful coexistence, including coexistence in the field of culture, coexistence and the UN, coexistence and the issue of armament, ongoing conflicts and coexistence, differences that divide today’s world and economic problems of coexistence.¹²³ Therefore, by late 1952, Yugoslav institutions became deeply involved in the theoretical elaboration of peaceful coexistence, which would become one of the guiding principles of Yugoslavia’s foreign policy and one of the main pillars of non-alignment.

At the same time, the International Forum for Peace reached out to its members and the newly established contacts in Western Europe, North America, Southeast Asia and the Middle East, asking them to organise regional conferences on peaceful coexistence.¹²⁴ As per usual, the main channel of communication went through Yugoslav diplomatic representatives, who were advised to establish ties with prominent individuals and organisations and get them in touch with the IFP soon after to avoid the impression that the conferences were being organised by the Yugoslav government. The Yugoslavs attempted to find suitable local representatives who would be entrusted with organising the conference in their country or region. Yet, they also insisted on being fully informed and did not refrain from pulling strings behind the scenes.¹²⁵

In North and South America, the attempts to arouse interest in a regional conference proved unsuccessful. However, in Europe, Southeast Asia and the Middle East, there seemed to be some progress. The first to respond was Western Europe. As early as November 1952, a pastor of the Reformist Church of the Netherlands and President of the United Action for Peace (ANVA), Johannes Hugenholtz, proposed that the regional conference for Western Europe take place in The Hague the following spring.¹²⁶ The members of the IFP Secretariat accepted this offer, and the conference was scheduled for May/June 1953. They also agreed that Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey would take part in the Western European conference.¹²⁷ Yugoslav ambassador to Paris, Srđa Prica, duly informed Belgrade about the ongoing preparations in early 1953. In late February, he warned Pijade that the French member of the Secretariat, Leon Boutbien, planned to get in touch with John Paul David “from the American propaganda kitchen *Paix et Liberté*”.¹²⁸ This remark clearly showed that the Yugoslavs were still wary about a potential CIA infiltration into what they essentially saw as their project, and at the same time saw no contradictions with the fact that by that time the Yugoslav government had received extensive financial assistance from the USA as an incentive to stay independent from Moscow. On the other hand, they attempted to prevent the pacifists opposed to defensive measures from participating in the Hague conference, as their views were at odds with the Yugoslav stances and interests, and their agenda always bore a potential risk that the USSR was behind them.¹²⁹

124 See: AJ, 719, 3.

125 AJ, 719, 6, Napomene, undated.

126 AJ, 719, 6, Telegram Jakšića, Hag, MIP-u, Moši Pijade, 13 November 1952.

127 AJ, 719, 6, Pismo Price MIP-u, Pariz, 12 January 1953.

128 AJ, 719, 6, Telegram Price Matesu, drugu Pijade, 27 February 1953. *Paix et Liberté* was a French anti-communist movement led by Jean-Paul David, which operated during the 1950s. It was a member organisation of a broader anti-communist network called Comité européen Paix et Liberté and Comité international Paix et Liberté, succeeded in 1956 by the newly-established Comité international d'Information et d'Action Sociale (CIAS) with Jean-Paul David as its first leader. These organisations were funded by governments, private organisations, donors, as well as by the CIA and FBI. See: Torben Gülstorff, “Warming Up a Cooling War: An Introductory Guide on the CIAS and Other Globally Operating Anti-communist Networks at the Beginning of the Cold War Decade of Détente,” Cold War International History Project, Working Paper #75, February 2015.

129 AJ, 719, 6, Moša Pijade, Ambasadi FNRJ Pariz, 9 April 1953.

118 Giorgio Parri was the son of the former Italian prime minister and senator Ferruccio Parri. Giorgio Parri visited Yugoslavia in 1950 and was a member of the Italian delegation at the Zagreb Conference. AJ, 719, 3, Giorgio Parri.

119 AJ, 719, 6, Telegram Velebita, Rim, MIP-u, za Pijade, 17 March 1952.

120 AJ, 719, 6, Decisions taken at the third regular meeting of the IFP Secretariat and adopted unanimously (Paris, 26 and 27 July 1952).

121 AJ, 719, 3, Manifest međunarodnog foruma za mir, 26/27. jula 1952, “Međunarodni forum za mir govori vam u ime slobodnih ljudi celog sveta.”

122 AJ, 719, 3, Zaključci sa sastanka potkomiteta Nacionalnog komiteta, održanog 25 October 1952; AJ, 719, 3, Beleška sa sastanka članova Komisije Nacionalnog komiteta Jugoslavije za odbranu mira održanog 25 October 1952.

123 See the materials in: AJ, 719, 3.

Both cases clearly demonstrated that the Yugoslavs strove to influence and control the IPF's activities and the outcome of the planned conference, despite nominally trying to create an independent organisation rather than a Yugoslav-sponsored project. Moreover, this reflects a genuine striving to pursue an independent foreign policy and to find a new ideological identity in an increasingly divided and complex world.

During the preparations for the Hague conference, Belgrade attempted to secure the support of Western European socialists and the Socialist International. LCY's relations with socialists and social democrats had been developing since 1950, and by 1953, they had reached an enviable level, especially with the British Labour Party. However, despite many attempts, the IPF failed to attract any representative Labour politicians to join its Secretariat. In the spring of 1953, the Yugoslavs reached out to prominent socialist politicians such as the Dutch social democrat Marinus van der Goes van Naters, the leader of the Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière (French Section of the Workers' International, SFIO), Guy Mollet, and the Labour Party General Secretary and chairman of the Socialist International, Morgan Phillips, who had been sympathetic to the Yugoslav cause, aiming to secure the Socialist International's backing. However, they replied that it was "inopportune" for the International to discuss and recommend to its participants to attend the Hague conference, suggesting that the IPF send invitations directly to respective socialist parties.¹³⁰ Despite all these efforts and considerable financial expenses,¹³¹ in late April, the president of the IPF's Secretariat, Moša Pijade, concluded that the planned conference lacked more substantial support from the European socialists. Furthermore, the applications they had received so far pointed to "a danger" that the conference "could be overwhelmed by pacifists and alike". He therefore stated his opinion that the Hague conference should be postponed indefinitely and a new meeting of the Secretariat scheduled for 12 June.¹³²

In other parts of the world, preparations took a somewhat different course. In 1952, the Beirut-based intellectual Dr Clovis Maksoud offered his help with organising a Middle Eastern regional conference in March 1953. Despite initial optimism, the organisers soon encountered obstacles. As the main problem, Belgrade identified the fact that, although Maksoud had established contacts with individuals from Jordan, Iraq, Egypt and Iran, they were mainly socialists and, as such, represented the opposition in their own countries. The Yugoslavs feared that organising such a conference could sour their relations with the governments of these Arab countries. They therefore proposed that Maksoud be invited to Belgrade for consultations, hoping to persuade him to conjoin his Middle Eastern congress with the one that was taking shape in India to create a pan-Asian conference.¹³³

The first Yugoslav ties with the Southeast Asian countries date back to the period prior to the Tito-Stalin split. At that time, however, contacts were nurtured mainly with communists from the region.¹³⁴ During the early 1950s, new channels opened up. On one hand, Yugoslav delegates to the UN started cooperating more closely with the representatives from India, Burma, Indonesia and Egypt, as they held similar stances towards international problems.¹³⁵ On the other hand, in line with its opening towards cooperation with Western European socialists, the CPY established its first contacts with the Asian socialists. Cooperation went furthest with the Burmese socialists, as the Burma Socialist Party was the dominant party within the then-ruling alliance.¹³⁶ During the summer of 1952, a large civil-military delegation from Burma visited Yugoslavia. At about the same time, a delegation of Indian socialists paid a visit to Yugoslavia.¹³⁷ In August of the same year, a Burmese diplomat in Belgrade raised the question of the Yugoslav participation at the first Asian Socialist Conference (ASC) in Rangoon scheduled for 1953.¹³⁸ It was an unprecedented opportunity for the Yugoslavs to advance their cooperation with the Asian socialists.

Two months later, in a conversation with Moša Pijade, Indian and Indonesian socialists expressed their interest in organising IPF's regional conference in India.¹³⁹ The International Forum for Peace had two main channels of communication with the Indian representatives. One was through a prominent Indian socialist politician named Ram Manohar Lohia, who was also a member of the IPF's Secretariat. From 1951, the IPF's liaison to Southeast Asia was also Marija Vilfan, who lived in New Delhi while her husband, Jože Vilfan, served as the Yugoslav ambassador. In October 1952, she informed Belgrade that the Indian socialist Asoka Mehta had expressed interest in the regional conference but that, in his opinion, a conference of a broader scope was rather unrealistic due to financial constraints. Instead, he suggested organising a meeting of politicians and economists from the region that would mainly deal with the issues of underdevelopment. Mehta further proposed that Yugoslavia send a representative to the forthcoming Asian Socialist Conference in Rangoon in order to establish ties with other Asian socialists, and that while in Rangoon, the Yugoslav observer would work in parallel on organising a regional

¹³⁰ AJ, 719, 6, Telegram Price Moši Pijade, 14 January 1953; AJ, 719, 6, Moša Pijade, Ambasadi FNRJ Pariz, 9 April 1953.

¹³¹ The Yugoslav National Committee transferred money on several occasions to the Yugoslav diplomatic representation in The Hague for the expenses of organising the regional conference. See: AJ, 719, 23, Nalog blagajni Nacionalnog komiteta Jugoslavije za odbranu mira, 30 November 1952; AJ, 719, 23, Nalog blagajni Nacionalnog komiteta Jugoslavije za odbranu mira, 30 March 1953.

¹³² AJ, 719, 6, Telegram Moše Pijade Ambasadi FNRJ Pariz, 29 April 1953.

¹³³ AJ, 719, 6, Poslanstvo FNRJ u Siriji, M. Javorski, Predsedniku Međunarodnog foruma za mir, drugu Moši Pijade, 4 April 1953.

¹³⁴ See: Jovan Čavoški, "Overstepping the Balkan boundaries: The lesser-known history of Yugoslavia's early relations with Asian countries (new evidence from Yugoslav/Serbian archives)," *Cold War History* 11, no. 4 (November 2011): 557–577.

¹³⁵ Драган Богетић, Љубодраг Димић, *Београдска конференција несврстаних земаља 1–6. септембра 1961. Прилог историју Трећег света* (Београд: Завод за уџбенике и наставна средства, 2013), 139.

¹³⁶ For more on the relations between Burma and Yugoslavia in the early 1950s, see: Jovan Čavoški, "Arming Nonalignment: Yugoslavia's Relations with Burma and the Cold War in Asia, 1950–1955," *Cold War International History Project Working Paper No. 61* (April 2010).

¹³⁷ Jovan Čavoški, *Distant Countries, Closest Allies*, 11.

¹³⁸ Aleksandar V. Miletić, "The Role of Milovan Đilas at the Asian Socialist Conference in Rangoon, 1953," *Tokovi istorije* no. 3 (2020): 124.

¹³⁹ AJ, 719, 6, Zabeleška o razgovoru M. S. Gokhale, sekretara Komiteta za spoljne poslove Socijalističke partije Indije, Soebadio Sastrosatomo, člana Politbiroa Socijalističke Partije Indonezije i Imam Slamet-a, člana Politbiroa Socijalističke partije Indonezije sa drugom predsednikom Mošom Pijade, 28 October 1952.

conference.¹⁴⁰ In early December, the LCY officially accepted the ASC invitation, thereby becoming the only European party represented in Rangoon.¹⁴¹ The Yugoslav delegation actively participated in the ASC sessions, especially influencing its outcomes with regard to the notion of different paths to socialism and independence from both blocs, as well as from the Socialist International.¹⁴² However, there is no evidence that during their stay in Rangoon, the Yugoslav delegates made efforts to engage Asian socialists for the IFP's regional conference on peaceful coexistence. Yugoslavia continued cooperating with the ASC during the following years. However, by the mid-1950s, the ASC slowly started losing its significance in Asian politics, as socialist parties remained in power only in Burma and Ceylon. Therefore, although cooperation with Asian socialists made an important step forward in Yugoslav policy towards Southeast Asia, the Yugoslavs also realised that more meaningful ties had to be established through governmental channels.¹⁴³

With no tangible progress in Southeast Asia and the Middle East, facing an underwhelming response in Europe, the members of the IFP Secretariat decided at their meeting in June 1953 to abandon the idea of organising regional conferences. However, the Forum was to continue its existence, as it had created a valuable network of contacts. However, its activities were to change. The new plan was much more modest and feasible. The aim was to initiate an international discussion on peace-related issues, beginning with a special issue of the Yugoslav journal *Međunarodna politika* (*Review of International Affairs*) and continuing with regular IFP brochures.¹⁴⁴ This was the only IFP activity that at least partly yielded results. A special issue of the *Review of International Affairs* dedicated to the discussion of the IFP came out in October 1953, gathering authors from Yugoslavia, Greece, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland, Italy, Austria and Canada.¹⁴⁵ In his contribution, Moša Pijade explained the reasons for postponing the regional conferences and prioritising the special issue as a “quicker and more broadly based activity”.¹⁴⁶

However, the failure of the regional conference initiative loomed heavily. Soon, the Yugoslavs started questioning whether the International Forum for Peace had any prospects at all.¹⁴⁷ The IFP had faced many challenges from its very beginnings, ranging from the lack of financial resources to an unsatisfactory level of personal engagement of its members. Furthermore, in early 1954, the Yugoslavs noticed that peace organisations were

becoming rather insignificant globally, as governments were becoming the initiators of all significant peace initiatives through international conferences, meetings and the OUN. Therefore, they saw two possible outcomes. The Forum could either “vegetate” as other peace organisations did, occasionally issuing bulletins that would reach an insignificant number of people, or “we could let the Forum as an international organisation gradually die out and focus our strength and means on other fields that better correspond to the current international situation”.¹⁴⁸ Apparently, the second option seemed more viable. On 1 July 1954, Moša Pijade dispatched a circular letter informing international recipients about the decision to cease the activities of the International Forum for Peace due to “the difficulties we were faced with and which were due to the fact that the majority of our leading members were overburdened with various responsibilities and duties in their respective countries”.¹⁴⁹ In his official letter to the YNC, Pijade was more explicit, stating that the IFP's Secretariat members concluded that the Forum's “existence had proven obsolete in light of the current circumstances”.¹⁵⁰ The administrative procedure to dissolve the Forum took a few months, and by early 1955, the International Forum for Peace definitively closed.¹⁵¹

Conclusion

When asked by an American journalist during the Zagreb conference what would be the first step for achieving and maintaining peace, Vladimir Dedijer replied,

It is a general question. I personally lost eight out of ten of my best friends in the last war. I lost my wife. We cherish peace more than anything else. But if we are attacked again, we will fight back. It is better to die like a man than live like a slave.¹⁵²

For a country like Yugoslavia, which had hardly recovered from the devastating consequences of the previous war and encountered new economic and political hardships following the split with Stalin, waging a new war was the least desired option. The Yugoslav commitment to peace was, therefore, not only ideologically but also existentially rooted. However, the decision to resist Soviet pressures led to mobilisation and preparations for a

140 AJ, 719, 6, Telegram Marije Vilfan drugu Pijadi, 25 October 1952.

141 Besides the CPY, Socialist International and Socialist Youth also sent delegations to Rangoon.

142 Jovan Čavoški, “Ideološki prijatelj iz daleka: Jugoslavija i Azijska socijalistička konferencija,” *Istorija 20. Veka* no. 1 (2019): 139–160; Aleksandar V. Miletić, “The Role of Milovan Đilas,” 117–137.

143 Čavoški, “Ideološki prijatelj iz daleka,” 156–158.

144 AJ, 719, 6, Kratka zabeleška o rezultatu VI zasedanja Sekretarijata Međunarodnog foruma za mir u Parizu 12. juna 1953.

145 *Review of International Affairs* IV, no. 20, 16 October 1953.

146 Pijade, “Discussion on Conditions for Ensuring Peace,” 3.

147 AJ, 719, 6, Izveštaj o radu Međunarodnog sekretarijata, n.d.

148 AJ, 719, 6, Kratak pregled rada Međunarodnog foruma za mir, 14 May 1954.

149 AJ, 719, 23, Circular letter from Moše Pijade, 1 July 1954.

150 AJ, 719, 23, Moša Pijade, Nacionalnom komitetu Jugoslavije za odbranu mira, 10 September 1954.

151 AJ, 719, 23, Rešenje Moše Pijade (bez datuma); AJ, 719, 23, Nalog blagajni, 17. 2. 1955.

152 “Is There an Entering Wedge for Peace?” *Round Table* no. 710, 4 November 1951, 9, in: AJ, 719, 11.

potential defensive war. To understand the Yugoslav stance towards peace, it is important to distinguish between peaceful and pacifist policies.¹⁵³ Yugoslav policy was committed to the ideal of peace, but it was not pacifist. The Yugoslavs made a distinction between just and unjust wars. Defensive wars and anti-colonial struggles were, in their view, justified. Accordingly, Yugoslavia did not opt for unconditional disarmament but rather for the right to armament for defensive purposes. In other words, the Yugoslav stances towards war and peace were largely shaped by the conditions in which the country found itself. Furthermore, they were closely tied to the general reorientation of Yugoslavia's foreign policy. From 1949, the UN fora replaced Moscow as the best safeguard against the violation of peace, and the principles enshrined in the UN Charter became the best signposts for achieving and securing world peace.

The Yugoslav National Committee for the Defence of Peace gained Importance within Yugoslav endeavours to counter Soviet accusations against Yugoslavia and break through the country's isolation. By convening the Zagreb Conference on Peace and International Cooperation in October 1951 and initiating the International Forum for Peace, it established a channel for propagating the principles of the UN Charter and the Yugoslav vision of world peace. Even though the Yugoslavs claimed that the International Forum for Peace was not meant to be an alternative to the World Peace Council, in practice, even Tito juxtaposed the two in order to define more clearly the nature of the former. In his words, whereas the only messages the WPC conveyed were "peace, peace, peace" and "defending the Soviet Union", the movement that took shape in Zagreb proposed concrete steps to secure world peace. They included the equality of nations, friendly cooperation among peoples, the right to self-governance for colonial and semi-colonial nations, economic assistance for developing nations and the resolution of international conflicts by peaceful means through the United Nations.¹⁵⁴ During the following two and a half years, as the Yugoslav regime attempted to elaborate its position of a socialist country cooperating closely with the capitalist West, peaceful coexistence would be promoted as one of the Forum's principles and the main step towards securing the peace.

In the summer of 1952, Vladimir Dedijer noticed that the International Forum for Peace still had not found "a political bone it could gnaw. [...] We have contacts but we lack a common platform, and without it, there is no serious work".¹⁵⁵ This assessment was probably true. However, some of the topics and principles developed during the early 1950s that Yugoslavia was trying to push through as the IFP's common platform would later translate into the guiding principles of Yugoslavia's policy of non-alignment. Most

importantly, they included peaceful coexistence, equality, non-interference in domestic affairs, the right to independence and sovereignty.

By the time the IFP ceased to exist, the international situation and the Yugoslav position within it had changed dramatically once again. Stalin's death in March 1953 and the gradual rapprochement between Yugoslavia and the East removed one of the main driving motives for Forum's activities. On the other hand, the heyday of peace movements as a global trend had slowly passed. However, some lessons were learned. Yugoslavia managed to find a new role in the international arena. Cooperation with the West, however, did not presuppose ideological identification. As time went by, some of the principles Yugoslavia stood for internationally went contrary to the interests of their partners in the West. That was especially true of the right to independence for colonial peoples. Furthermore, the Yugoslavs realised that there was no space for an alternative non-bloc policy in Europe. However, new avenues opened up elsewhere, far from the "Old Continent". Yet, ideologically close movements and individuals in these countries proved insufficiently strong partners. In the years to come, Yugoslavs would turn to cooperation with Asian and African governments, and the principles of the Yugoslav "struggle for peace" developed during the early 1950s would provide common ground with the leaders of the Global South.

Summary

The International Forum for Peace was an international organisation initiated by the Yugoslav National Council for the Defence of Peace in October 1951. It emerged within the context of the reorientation of Yugoslavia's foreign policy following the split with Moscow. For Belgrade, the International Forum for Peace served as a channel for propagating the foreign political principles it relied on after the break with Stalin. They included the equality of nations, right to sovereignty and independence, right to decolonisation, economic assistance to developing countries, settlement of disputes by peaceful means, strengthening of the OUN, etc. Soon, peaceful coexistence (as the first step to securing world peace) became one of the main principles the Yugoslavs were trying to put forward as the IFP's common platform. During the two and a half years of its existence, the IFP changed its structure and goals several times. In early 1952, the Forum tried to organise a world conference on peaceful coexistence and assistance to developing nations in New Delhi, but was turned down by the Indian government. In mid-1952, the IFP announced organising a series of regional conferences on peaceful coexistence, which would serve as preparatory meetings for a world congress. Although preparations for regional conferences were underway in Western Europe, the Middle East and Southeast Asia, none of them ultimately materialised. By June 1953, the Forum abandoned the idea

¹⁵³ Timothy Johnston discusses the difference between peace and pacifism, arguing that the Soviet "struggle for peace" was not a pacifist anti-war campaign but a call to activism. See: Johnston, "Peace or Pacifism."

¹⁵⁴ "Одговори на питања уредника," 281–282.

¹⁵⁵ AJ, 719, 6, Pismo V. Dedijera "čiči", 9 August 1952.

of organising regional conferences, proposing instead an international discussion on peace through periodical publications. A special issue of the Yugoslav journal *Review of International Affairs* came out in October 1953, marking the IFP's first and only successful project. In July 1954, Moša Pijade announced that the International Forum for Peace would close. By that time, Yugoslavia had already started its gradual reconciliation with the East. The "struggle for peace" had lost its appeal internationally. Furthermore, the Yugoslavs realised that cooperation with governments (especially those of the non-aligned countries) and not solely with ideologically close individuals and movements seemed more promising for the future. Nevertheless, through the International Forum for Peace, a network of contacts, mainly with socialists from various parts of the world, was created. Furthermore, some of the principles that the Yugoslavs developed within their "struggle for peace" and tried to put through as the IFP's common platform would later translate into the guiding principles of their non-aligned foreign policy.

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