

Abstract

One may say that the situation in Poland and Yugoslavia after World War II had plenty of similarities. Such an opinion is only partially true. We can agree that the new political systems were introduced by force in both countries and kept against the will of societies only by established wide-range security forces. Economical systems were based on the Soviet model with the dominant role of the heavy industry. In both countries we can observe introduction of low-efficiency great state collective farms as part of the public sector.

The break between Tito and Stalin in 1949 has changed the Yugoslavian situation dramatically. The oppression against suspected for cooperating and spying on behalf of the Soviets has increased. The Yugoslavian government decided for modifications of the system with a leading role of the market socialism. As a result enterprises in Yugoslavia theoretically ruled by their workers had to compete together domestically and internationally.

Relations between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union had direct influence on the Polish policy towards Yugoslavia. Both sides recognized each other in April 1945 and both sides renewed Embassies on May 5th, 1945. The peak points of those early relations were visits: Tito in Poland in March 1946 and Bierut in Yugoslavia in October 1946. Economically bilateral cooperation was unprofitable for Poland as prices many of Yugoslavian products were much higher than of those available on the free market. According to the Polish government this was the price necessary to pay to keep Yugoslavia within the Eastern and Central European socialist bloc. We should underline that the problem of overpriced Yugoslavian goods was still present in the sixties and seventies. Undoubtedly it had influence on the level of cooperation but yet again it was politically rational to use economical cooperation as a tool to increase the network of links between Yugoslavia and other socialist countries.

The Tito-Stalin split was the main reason for the following freezing relations between Warsaw and Belgrade. Polish publications of those times had a specified language of hatred blaming Tito and his companions for spying on behalf of western governments especially the United States. Officially political relations didn't exist. Even after Stalin's death in March

1953 Polish diplomacy was still under pressure of the USSR. First steps in the normalization process were taken in 1954 but wider opening was possible after N. Khrushchev's visit in Belgrade in May 1955. Second half of this year can be seen as a turning point in Polish-Yugoslav relations. Benefits were clearly visible for both sides and the rapid increase of trade was one of the main results.

Yet again in May 1958 political relations were pushed to the limits. The new doctrine presented on 7th Congress of the League of Yugoslav Communist had become the source of concern for leaders of the communist bloc. The right to define its own way of development of the socialist economy had a crucial role in Yugoslavian policy. Although the political climate could be seen as tensed, the economical and cultural relations suffered only partially this time and sessions of Polish-Yugoslav Commerce Chamber and other bodies were held typically on schedule.

The crisis in Polish-Yugoslav political relations was temporary and gradually passed in the beginning of sixties. Furthermore, economical relations were even deepened by launching cooperation in the automotive industry. Both countries based this sector of economy on licences bought from FIAT and the exchange of semi-finished products together with the extend of production series was profitable for Kragujevac's Crvena Zastava and FSO in Warsaw. Yugoslavia was also an important part of Poland's foreign policy as a supporter of disarmament and establishment of zone free of nuclear weapons in Europe.

Yet again Soviet policies had unanticipated consequences in Polish-Yugoslav relations. The intervention of five communist countries in Czechoslovakia in August 1968 was seen as threat to Yugoslavia and Poland as a participant of the invasion was showed in most of Yugoslavia's press as an aggressor. What is important this period of hostility lasted only a year and Andriej Gromyko's visit in Belgrade in September 1969 and the delegation of members of Polish Parliament two months later created a new era in bilateral relations.

Seventies were the peak period in the history of relations between Poland and Yugoslavia. Leaders of both countries played an important part in European policies. Yugoslavia led by Tito was one of the most important countries of the non-alignment bloc and Gierek's Poland had enormous growth in the economy for nearly a decade. What must be said the first half of the seventies was much more intense in political contacts on the highest level. Tito's visits in Poland (1972, 1975) and Gierek's in Yugoslavia

(1973, 1978) together with prime ministers Jaroszewicz (1971), Bijedić (1973) and Djuranović (1977) were the signs of the steady and friendly relations.

Warm personal relations between Tito and Gierek which were clearly visible during meetings and effected the party and government bureaucratic apparatus actions often making negotiations between both sides much easier. Economic cooperation was seen as an important part of relations and in the seventies usually it had about 25 % of whole bilateral trade. Countless hours were spent on talks about the increase of cooperation but they were successful only in automotive, agricultural machines and electronics. Although Yugoslavs suggested that cooperation in ship-building could be profitable for both sides Polish shipyards had sufficient production capacities not saying they were more advanced. Undoubtedly unexploited potential mutual production of goods was one of the most important issues facing the both economies. Approximately 2 percent of whole Poland's trade during seventies was made with Yugoslavia and it was equal to trade with Bulgaria but 2 times lower than with Czechoslovakia. In case of Yugoslavia it was only 3 percent. First half of the decade was a disadvantage for Poland as balance was slightly negative, but in 1975 the tendencies have changed and the second half was much more profitable for Poland with the highest level of nearly 70 million USD *in plus* in 1978.

Reassuring Polish - Yugoslav bilateral relations played an important role for both sides but available resources were never exploited efficiently. Normalization in 1970 was a key to warm relations lasting next two decades. First half of decade can be seen as the peak in bilateral relations after World War 2. Undoubtedly the changes in the Polish Central Committee after Gomulka's fall were one of the most important factors. Both Gierek and Tito played a key and influential role and there was some pressure on members of both communist parties to keep regular bilateral contacts. During the second half of the decade Yugoslavia was deeply involved in non-alignment movements trying to keep its international position which resulted in loosening ties between Tito and Gierek. Poland's international policy was focused on relations with West Germany, France and USA as the possible sources of new credits. However the importance of relations was underlined by choosing Poland as a first country to visit by prime minister Veselin Djuranović in October 1977. Gierek's visit on Brioni in June 1978 was short because of Tito's illness and at the same time it was the last such summit. Internal economic problems and foreign debts have dominated the last 2 years of the seventies in Poland and Yugoslavia.

Although officially economic cooperation was a priority the results were insufficient. High prices of Yugoslavian products were not acceptable for the Polish government enterprises and reduced possible levels of trade. Tendency to keep the cash flow statement in balance reduced the size of the trade making it insignificant for both countries.

This dissertation is based mostly on Polish sources with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives as a primary source and the Central Archives of Modern Records as a secondary. Nearly 140 publications in English were cited to widen horizons and compare various points of view – most of them were published by leading universities in Europe – The United Kingdom especially – and in the United States. Further research should be done on the confrontation Polish point of view on relations between Warsaw and Belgrade presented in dissertation with the Yugoslavian one.