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(1945-1960)**

Introduction

Russia has had an influence on the Balkan region for more than a century, ever since it was involved in the Balkan War when they helped create the Balkan League, which was opposed to the Ottoman Empire. Since then, Russia has always been influential on the Balkans, especially in Serbia and then, eventually, Yugoslavia. "Russia's public diplomacy efforts toward the former Yugoslavia are largely centered on the position of the Balkans as a backdoor into Europe, which Russia can use to gain access and influence over the EU. Russia's regional influence campaigns should be viewed as part of a much larger competition for global influence between Russia and numerous Western states and institutions" (Kulalic, 2022). Not only were the Balkan nations considered as a backdoor into Europe, their history together, which shared similar political ideologies, meant that figures such as Stalin were the driving force behind the policies that were chosen. "Stalin wanted Eastern Europe under his thumb both as a defense buffer to protect the Soviet motherland and to expand socialism. He believed that the "scientific laws" of history determined that the world would eventually become socialist. The Soviet Union had already developed a socialist system. Stalin, therefore, demanded that all the communist countries of

Eastern Europe adopt the Soviet model” (Constitutional Rights Foundation, 2023). Stalin, in this way had “forced” the whole Eastern Bloc to envision themselves with the Communist Party, and this would be true for the duration of the Cold War. Josip Broz Tito’s Yugoslavia who managed to not only escape the “Soviet model”, but also to have their own socialist agenda after the end of WWII. The rest of the Balkans were somewhat influenced by Stalin and his iron-fist rule.

It should be said that the Balkan region was one of the reasons why the Cold War started as well as the different political ideologies between the countries who were looking in the West and in the East raised the tensions between the USSR and the US. The early involvement of the USA in Greece right after World War II meant that Stalin had to interfere and find a way to support the Greek Communist party. National communism in the Balkans was also another reason why tensions rose as Albania, Romania, and Yugoslavia started their own dictatorship with leaders such as Tito opposing Stalin’s rule, while Albanian leader Enver Hoxha and Romanian leaders Gheorgiu-Dej and then later Ceausescu continued the iron-fist rule that Stalin had established. “National Communism policies based on the principle that in each country the means of attaining ultimate communist goals must be dictated by national conditions rather than by a pattern set in another country. The term, popular from the late 1940s to the 1980s, was particularly identified with assertions by Eastern European communists regarding independence from Soviet leadership or example”(Encyclopedia Britannica). The tide shifted three decades later, when Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985, as the political ideology slowly changed from communism to communism with elements of liberalism. Several genocides took place. “In the immediate post-war years of WWII, it was Russia's military presence that guaranteed "loyalty." However, military influence had its limits: for example, nuclear weapons were useless as practical tools to control unruly allies. To police the Eastern Bloc, Moscow tried to use the

forces of the Bloc itself, harnessed through the Warsaw Pact. Nominally an alliance against Western enemies, its two most important campaigns were aimed against dissidents inside the Pact itself. Even in these cases, Moscow placed little trust in satellite troops: Russian troops did the hard work. Only Russian forces took part in the invasion of Hungary in 1956, however, these troops had been stationed in the country since the end of WWII. During the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, Poland, East Germany, Hungary, and Bulgaria sent token forces, perhaps five divisions in all: the lion's share fell to 23 Russian divisions. Romania not only refused to take part in the 1968 invasion but denounced what the Russians were doing; so did Yugoslavia and Albania, the latter two countries which has already had an independent policy away from Moscow for many years (Sowards, 2009). The Soviet influence was seen throughout their foreign policies that were designed to develop communism and increase trade within the Balkan region where geopolitical influence was aimed to maintain relationships further from the West.

II. Central Question

This paper will look into how Russia's foreign policy politically, economically, and culturally affected all of the nations in the Balkan region during the first years of the Cold War. I will further look into the differences and similarities between Russia's interests and geopolitics in the context of the different disagreements in the region of the Balkans that concerned the Soviet Union, such as the Balkan Pact (1953), the Cyprus Agreement (1960) or the Warsaw Pact (1955), which will be discussed later. The focus will be on how the different leaders of the Soviet Union (Joseph Stalin and Nikita Khrushchev) changed the landscape of the relations between the nations in the Balkans, and how their different policies changed the trajectory of the nations' economies and politics. After WWII, the Soviet Union was seen as the second-strongest

nation in the world, slightly below the United States, and throughout the first years of the Cold War, the Soviet Union was trying their best to compete with that was seen as a superpower of a nation. The Balkans seemed to be the better region for the Soviet Union to influence, and this paper will illustrate precisely these dynamics.

III. Beginnings of the Cold War Dynamics' Influence on the Balkans: Yugoslav-Soviet Relations

It goes without saying that Yugoslavia as a nation was the most important piece of the puzzle in Russia's foreign policy during the Cold War. In the first years after the end of WWII, Josip Broz Tito, who was the leader of Yugoslavia, tried to build a Yugoslav-led Balkan federation through a system that would build treaties with the rest of its neighboring states as they were looking to fight the Western powers and continue the ideology of "national communism." Tito thought that by creating this force which would include a common currency and joint economic enterprises, he would receive help from Russia to pay for and aid in Yugoslavia's industrial expansion and agricultural improvements. What made Yugoslavia's connection with the USSR stronger was the ideology that both federations shared against Nazi Germany. Despite misunderstandings, they became allies during the war, and one could assume that Tito was one of Stalin's greatest allies. That could also be seen in the Yugoslav constitution that Tito reformed to be similar to the one Stalin had in the USSR. Tito, however, realized that Stalin wanted control of all the nations in the region as he refused to let Yugoslavia become subservient to the USSR. "Stalin blocked Tito's plans, citing the need for a post-war period of recovery, but in fact Stalin expected Communist Yugoslavia to subordinate itself completely to the needs of the Soviet Union. Tito on the other hand placed Yugoslav needs first (at least those

needs expressed by the Yugoslav Communist Party). Having survived the Germans and defeated the Chetniks, the Yugoslav Communists had no intention of subordinating themselves to the Russians. Tito saw himself as Stalin's equal: he headed a self-confident party that had won a war, and he “expected to be treated as a partner and not a puppet” (Sowards, 2009). Stalin tried and failed in the recapturing of the Yugoslav leadership and that would hinder the policies that were made between the two nations. To Tito, internal power, rationality, and national interest held primary importance compared to what the Soviet Union could give them if they gave up their Yugoslav nationalism.

Stalin had underestimated Tito's power within Yugoslavia. Tito's police force was unlike that in any other Eastern Communist state, as it was never controlled by Moscow but by Belgrade. “After June 28, 1948, Yugoslavia became a non-aligned country. Tito's policy of nonalignment must be judged as a colossal triumph. From the viewpoint of a nation made up of a variety of ethnic and national groups, Tito's decision that Yugoslavia follows a foreign policy primarily based on nonalignment was a domestically and internationally beneficial decision, as “it gave the Yugoslav state and Tito immense international stature... it appealed to a broad coalition of groups within the Yugoslav state” (Anderson, 2010). Throughout the crisis of 1948 and until the death of Stalin in 1953, Moscow's presence could be felt in Yugoslavia with the hope of conveying the Communist world, especially all of the countries in the Eastern Bloc in hope to create a whole Communist bloc. However, it was now clear that the Yugoslav Communist Party would not fall into the disgrace of other countries in the communist, and Tito would look in the direction of the West for economic assistance.

USSR's relations with Yugoslavia improved when Nikita Khrushchev (1953-1964) was in power, as at the time, they had recognized Yugoslavia as more of an ally rather than a

communist power that they could later control. Khrushchev's goals were quite obvious, as he first wanted to defuse the conflict, which had started in 1948, and seek Yugoslavia's help in the early stages of the Cold War. In the meeting with Tito in Yugoslavia, Khrushchev established that he saw Yugoslavia as the USSR's partner rather than a territory they could attain. In his infamous meeting with Tito, Khrushchev said that, "We note with pleasure that the views of the USSR and Yugoslavia are similar on most international issues. The unity of views and actions of the USSR and Yugoslavia on international matters is paramount to world politics. This unity contributes to the development of the principle of peaceful coexistence in relations among all states" (Zeri i Popullit, 1963). That arranged meeting between Khrushchev and Tito felt long overdue, and it had a sense of urgency. One reason is because the agreement was eagerly accepted on both sides, being that Nikita Khrushchev wanted to make his first major appearance in the world stage, while consolidating his win and his presence as the successor of Stalin. On the other hand, Tito and Yugoslavia were looking for an improvement in relations with the Soviet Union, as they believed that the Soviets could be the right partner that would aid them further economically. It is also important to mention that for the first time the Soviet Union, a superpower, was bowing their heads to a small country. The first round of Yugoslav-Soviet talks took place on May 27th 1955, just a day after his arrival in Belgrade. The meeting was held in the Dom Garde (The House of the Guards), a hall inside the Presidential Guard compound. "Tito decided to speak first. In his opening address, he mentioned the 'misunderstandings of the past' only in passing, expressing hope that they would be overcome if addressed openly in direct talks. Tito's conciliatory tone suggested that he had decided to brush aside Khrushchev's airport speech and focus on the success of the talks that could consolidate Yugoslav-Soviet normalization. In the first sentence of his introductory speech, Khrushchev emphasized that the Soviet delegation was

authorized by the Government of the USSR and the Central Committee of the CPSU to discuss any question with the Yugoslavs. The necessity to assert their credentials revealed Khrushchev and his colleagues' awareness that they lacked Stalin's authority. The Belgrade meeting was Khrushchev's first important international outing and venture outside the USSR (Rajak, 2004). Tito then presented Yugoslavia's outlook regarding international issues, mostly concerning relations with the US and West, and most importantly the Balkan Pact. This was important to the Soviets as they were also involved in the Balkan Pact with Turkey and Greece, which will be discussed later in this paper. Tito went on to minimize the military aspect in the alliance that they had in Turkey and Greece, meaning that he was ready to remove any factor that could stall the relationships with the Soviets. It was clear that even though the leaders were not seeing eye to eye when it came to political ideologies, the establishment in the process of normalization between the two nations was in full force.

By June 2nd 1955, the last day of the visit of Khrushchev and the Soviet delegation in Belgrade, the Belgrade Declaration was signed. Khrushchev and the delegation had accepted the terms of the declaration with minor changes in the make of it as they were eager to show the West that they as well had allies. The Belgrade Declaration was written on three main points. The first point regulated the general international rules that were set between the two nations, which was set out to be Tito's request for aid and protection from the West. The second point declared that respect for sovereignty, independence, integrity and equality should govern the relations between the states. The point emphasized Tito's willpower to keep and protect the national communism that was already set in motion, as he expressed that different political systems could and should co-exist in peace. It also promoted mutual respect and non-interference into affairs that Yugoslavia had with other nations, whether that be political, economic or even

ideological. The third point of the declaration rejected any form of aggression or attempt of it between the two nations, meaning that the Soviets couldn't impose any political ideology in the nation or any action that would be seen as negative by the Yugoslavs. "Tito and his associates hoped that a document stipulating principles on which relations between the two states would be conducted, once publicly accepted and signed by the Soviets would prevent future 'misunderstandings' and confrontation between the two countries. They expected it to guarantee the continuity of the improvement of relations and lead to the establishment of fully normalized Yugoslav-Soviet relations" (Rajak, 2004). For the first time, a world-wide known superpower of a nation would lower their head to a relatively small nation in comparison, such as Yugoslavia.

However, paradise didn't last long. Tito's visit to the USSR in June of 1956 ironically brought about the deterioration of Yugoslav-Soviet relations. In the first meeting between them in Russia, Tito spoke to Khrushchev about the international position of Yugoslavia. He explained that since re-entering a relationship with the Soviets, the relations were improving with Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Romania, but not with Bulgaria, Greece, and specifically Albania. When talking about Albania, Tito was said to be bitter about their relationship and insisted that the restoration of relations was practically impossible because Hoxha believed that the Kosovo region belonged to them and that it was ethnically Albanian. On the other hand, when talking about the United States, discussions between Tito and Khrushchev grew sour as Tito emphasized that Yugoslavia's good relations with the West and with the Social-Democratic parties were not aimed at harming the Soviet Union. Tito then made the comparison between the US and the Eastern bloc nations as he was explaining that these relations only help to develop the nation, and more thoroughly helped develop the Soviet Union without a need for a close internal affair between the West and Yugoslavia. Additionally, Tito added that communism was struggling in

most of the Eastern European states of 1955. “In Tito’s opinion, this was due to the fact that unlike Yugoslavia, where Socialism was inaugurated through an indigenous revolution, circumstances in Eastern European countries ‘were different.’ He concluded that “the essential thing is not to deviate from the Socialist road.” Tito however, insisted that on the question of “how [Socialism] should be built and in what form is something still to be discussed and agreed upon.” At this point, Khrushchev concluded the meeting.” (Rajak, 2004). It was evident that Tito wanted to make it clear to Khrushchev and to the board that Yugoslavia is not out of the Socialist front but that they are outside of the Eastern bloc. Not sure if Tito was aware of what he kept repeating, Khrushchev would suggest an ultimatum in their fourth meeting.

The final round of Yugoslav- Soviet talks took place on June 20th 1955, fifteen days after the first round. The Declaration of Belgrade was brought up as the Soviet representatives were dissatisfied with the existing documents, pointing at the three main issues that were first agreed upon. Furthermore, the Yugoslavs had rejected the text prepared regarding the education regarding the theory of “scientific Socialism,” while also rejecting the Soviet proposal that the Declaration should include a support for the Communist parties towards the anti-colonial movement. The disagreement and the firm stance from both sides concerning the ideological issue brought a proposal from the Yugoslav side that the ties with the Russians be stopped at a bilateral level. They wished to avoid from becoming another “Eastern European” state and insisted on the need of staying apart from the Communist parties in the Soviet Bloc. The Yugoslav leadership refused to acknowledge the Soviet system as the official form of socialism, and Tito, who had already planned a meeting with Nehru and Nasser for the Suez Canal, was eager to return from Moscow with his independence intact. With that being said, throughout the entire time that Yugoslavia had relations with the Soviet Union from 1947, it was clear as

daylight that Tito would not turn over his nation's independence to the Soviet Union, even though that there was a potential of helping the nation economically or internationally. The constant disagreements and work "behind the back" such as the discussions with the West or in the Middle East made the Soviet Union look towards other nations in the Balkans, such as Turkey and Greece, which will be discussed later in the paper.

IV. Albanian- Soviet Relations at the Time

In order to understand the beginning of the relations between Albania and the Soviet Union, first, one has to understand the situation that Albania was in following WWII. Following the Second World War, Albania became a vassal state under Yugoslavia, which was then ruled by Josip Broz Tito, who had greatly contributed to making Enver Hoxha the leader of Albania. Additionally, in the post-war plans between the two nations there was the idea of a Balkan Federation, which would include Bulgaria and was projected to be built around 1947. However, the Yugoslav- Albanian collaboration was short-lived, as the Albanian leadership of old nationalist resentment towards Yugoslavia for the regions of Kosovo and parts of North Macedonia made it impossible for the two nations to work as one. On the one hand, Albania was right as these regions were occupied by ethnic Albanians, while on the other hand, the Yugoslavs not only saw them as part of their economy and politics but also as regions that were colonized and helped by them to flourish within their powers. "Fortunately for the Albanian leaders, Tito's ambition for hegemony in the Balkans clashed with the reality of Soviet hegemony over the Communist camp. What saved Tirana from possible Yugoslav annexation was the intervention of Joseph V. Stalin in 1948 that, for reasons not concerning Albania's security, expelled Yugoslavia from the Cominform. Thereafter, the Albanian leaders perceived and portrayed

Yugoslavia as the greatest threat to Albania's national security and to their rule and began a crusade against what they called Yugoslav revisionism. Subsequently, Albania tied its fate to that of the Soviet Union. Consequently, Stalin, together with his ruling style, became the Albanian leaders' non-negotiable model of communism" (Marku, 2020).

Albania became dependent on the Soviet Union right after the end of WWII, which would also be the start of its communist rule. Eager to gain Stalin's trust, Albania's leader Enver Hoxha, who had recently gained the position of dictator, based Albania's fiscal system on the one that Stalin had established. Soviet-Albanian relations remained warm even after Stalin's death, despite Albania becoming an economic liability under the Soviet influence. The reason is that Albania was still an underdeveloped state and needed time and resources to catch up with its Eastern European neighbors. "Albania conducted all its foreign trade with Soviet European countries in 1949, 1950, and 1951 and over half its trade with the Soviet Union itself. Together with its satellites, the Soviet Union underwrote shortfalls in Albania's balance of payments with long-term grants" (Zickel and Iwaskiw, 1994). Under Khrushchev, however, the relations between the two countries changed slightly as Enver Hoxha maintained that the dictatorship of the proletariat would be the best way to develop the country. However, Khrushchev's "unique Marxist-Leninist" ideology meant that he had gotten rid of policies established by Stalin while sponsoring relationships with the West, which, to Hoxha's eyes, was unacceptable. "Hoxha and Shehu (Hoxha's right-hand man and the prime minister of Albania) mistrusted Nikita Khrushchev's programs of "peaceful coexistence" and "different roads to socialism" because they appeared to pose the threat that Yugoslavia might try to take control of Albania" (Zickel and Iwaskiw, 1994). The Soviet Union had also refused to provide the economic aid that Hoxha had requested for developing the nation's heavy industry, adding to the idea that neither side liked

each other. Furthermore, Hoxha refused Khrushchev's repeated appeals to make Yugoslavia seem like a partner to the USSR rather than be in their control. They instead tightened their grip on their country's domestic life and advanced the propaganda war with Yugoslavia. Hoxha kept being persistent about how Tito's fascism kept leaking into his true intentions in the genocide that was being planned for the ethnic Albanian Kosovars in Kosovo.

For a short period, Khrushchev visited Albania in the summer of 1959 to discuss how their politics were conducted, and Hoxha believed that there was potential to strengthen Soviet relations with Albania as to balance the moves that were taken with Tito. The Soviet decision to build a Warsaw Pact naval base in the city of Vlora (located in South Albania), which Hoxha enforced as per Stalin's request pre-death, supported the relations' potential. "At a time when Khrushchev had accused Tito of intervention in Hungary, Hoxha believed that the Warsaw Pact naval base in Albania would provide clear and definitive protection for Albania against any Yugoslav interference or deter any possible expansionist ambitions that Belgrade may have retained. On the other hand, the existence of such a military base in Vlora could have also become a boomerang for Hoxha, in providing the means for a direct Soviet intervention to overthrow him" (Marku, 2020). However, the potential appeared flat-footed as Khrushchev told Hoxha that he should have a more "socialistic" outlook towards the relations with Yugoslavia and that Albania should invest in agriculture rather than heavy industry. The case seemed to be that Khrushchev favored the Yugoslav side rather than the Albanian one. Hoxha was also alarmed at the idea that Moscow might prefer another dictator who would be less of an "iron-fist ruler." So he understood that the relations with the USSR had to be slowed down and that Khrushchev would negatively influence all Albanians. This happened at the same time that he was trying to move away from Stalinist influence.

In turn, Albania struck a foreign policy deal with Mao's China in 1960. The process of estrangement between Tirana and Moscow took a dramatic turn in 1960-1961 in the Sino-Soviet split, and with Beijing being the only "Stalinistic" nation left, Albania had become the only European country to have a foreign deal with China. Enver Hoxha and the communist party had maximized the benefits deriving from the emerging Sino-Soviet conflict and left at a crucial time. Emerging from the Sino-Soviet conflict came with its own concerns for the Albanians, as the Soviet Union was not going to take it easy on them. Among the European socialist countries, and among the world's Communist parties, Albania was the only country that did not support the Soviet Union. To the Soviets this was a problem, because not only was Albania creating a precedent for the other nations in the Balkans, but it also involved other nations further in the East which they were trying to be allies with. To persuade Albania in changing their mind, Khrushchev sent Yuri Andropov (Former General Secretary of the CPSU) to Tirana to speak with Hysni Kapo (Former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania). Andropov told Kapo that "Khrushchev is very concerned about Albania's consideration in the disputes with China, and that he wants to know which side they are going to reside with." Kapo had told Andropov that the Soviets should've known Albania's position and that they have made it known what Albania's relations are. Albania's stubborn position of not officially supporting any side was frustrating the Soviet leadership, and a meeting was supposed to be taken a day after Kapo and Andropov had first held talks. "Khrushchev exacerbated the situation when he exposed publicly his frustration and disappointment with the Albanian position. Khrushchev spoke at the end of the meeting, and when attacking China, he turned towards Kapo, wondering aloud "[do you share my view] or not, comrade Kapo?" Kapo, who had been instructed to respond firmly, promptly took the floor, trying to calm Khrushchev by saying "please, I just have expressed the view of our party." A

quarrel followed with Khrushchev suggesting provocatively that “[since] I don’t get to understand the Chinese comrades, perhaps we should send you [Albanians].” Kapo replied in a polemical manner that he considered this an accusation against his party. Khrushchev responded with a menacing tone, “then I want to express the point of view of our party. We have taken note of your standing, but you do not want to take note of ours instead.” Therefore, the meeting on the Sino-Soviet disputes resulted into a Soviet-Albanian quarrel” (Marku, 2020).

In the end, Kapo affirmed the need for a conference between the Communist parties, as the suspension would only harm the foreign affairs of Albania with China. The Moscow Conference was held in November 1960, which was filled with intense contacts between Tirana, Moscow and Beijing. In fact, even going back to the fact that there were Soviet troops stationed in Vlora with powerful weapons, Hoxha had to be careful with the decision that he was going to take. Furthermore, Albania had begun to struggle economically, and with the Soviets refusing their economic requests, the Albanians looked to their Chinese allies for support. The leaders in Beijing agreed to provide fifty thousand tons of grain, which ironically enough had been purchased from the Soviet Union. The Soviet rejection was a hard blow for Albania, as Hoxha had claimed that he had been told by the Soviets that “the grain Albania needed was nothing but the amount the mice eat in Soviet warehouses.” Additionally, in Moscow the Albania delegation was left unnoticed for more than two months before the Soviets decided to receive them, signaling the power that the Soviet Union had and the dependency that Albania had on them. Most of the contact between the two sides reflected the tension between Moscow and Tirana. “In October 1960 a highly ranked official at the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs referred to in the document as Pisarev, told the Albanian ambassador in Moscow in no uncertain terms that “you are against the CPSU and against Khrushchev.” In Moscow, Albanian army generals met in mid-

October to discuss Soviet military assistance. The Soviet minister of defense, Rodion Malinovskii, stated that the “Albanian people are going away from the friendship [with the Soviet Union] because of some personal standings, which leads to the individual cult [of Hoxha]” (Marku, 2020). From the Soviet viewpoint, the possibility that Albania would discontinue the relationship with them was becoming more realistic, so a Soviet search for a breach within the Albanian government was taken. Within the Albanian government, the majority of the officials were educated in the Soviet Union, including the Premier Mehmet Shehu, the Minister of Defense Beqir Balluku, the Politburo members of Ramiz Alia (future successor of Enver Hoxha), Liri Belishova and nearly all of the commanders in the army.

Ever since the relationship was established between Albania and the Soviet Union, the Albanian people had been taught to appreciate the Soviet Union and love it as if it was their fatherland in the revolution, so to Hoxha, the continuous intervention from the Soviet Union now was a difficult situation to manage. By June of 1960, Hoxha had purged Belishova, the most pro-Soviet of the Politburo, even though she had never seriously opposed Hoxha’s disputes with Moscow. By August of the same year, the CPSU had invited the CCP for bilateral talks, with Hoxha refusing to visit Moscow due to concerns for his own safety, especially with the removal of a trusted Politburo member out of the Albanian government. In October 1960, Chinese and Albanian teams on the Editorial Board of the Moscow Conference, headed by Deng Xiaoping and Hysni Kapo met twice in Moscow with the clear purpose of revealing their standing and the actions taken with the Soviet Union. In that meeting, Deng further inflamed Albania’s relations with Moscow, as he was trying to find the best way to maximize the benefits for China. “He first told Kapo that ‘your ideas [on all the issues] are correct’ and encouraged him to ‘speak out openly during the conference’. Then, during their meeting on 23 October 1960, Deng first

deemed impossible any conciliation with Khrushchev, and then spoke of the talks he claimed to have had with Khrushchev regarding Albania. Khrushchev, according to Deng, had affirmed that “to Albania we have given everything and now they spit on us.” Finally for Deng “it is clear that yours [Albania’s] and our [China’s] party’s divergences with the Soviet Union are the same.” By this time Albania had accumulated a number of documents that Beijing had relayed, and on the other hand, the CCP was also informed of the Albanian position on each and all issues of dispute” (Marku, 2020).

The Moscow Conference of November 1960 was the final step for Hoxha to end the relations with the Soviet Union. Eighty-one Communist and workers’ parties met at the conference, and after thinking of all the consequences that came with the ending of the alliance with the Soviet Union, Hoxha was ready to face Khrushchev. Hoxha understood that the split with Khrushchev, displayed in front of hundreds of world Communist party leaders, meant that Albania were creating a name for themselves and could become a precedent for the future of the Eastern Bloc. Hoxha claimed to defend Marxism from revisionism, an act that Hoxha knew would increase his integrity and even his appeal within the Albanian population. Hoxha also made it clear to China, who had come as the protector of Albania that he was determined to oppose the Soviet Union, and was therefore a reliable European partner for Beijing’s quest against Moscow. The Albanian delegation had finally arrived in Moscow and they had met with the Soviet leaders three times with the last meeting being on November 12th 1960 with Khrushchev. According to the Albanian reports, in the first meeting between the two nations, the Soviets had asked them what it would take to improve the relations. Hoxha reminded them of all the incidents that happened during the summer which included: the Soviet attempt to undermine Albania’s leadership unity, the comments on political dissidents and the constant pressure in the

Vlora military base between Albanian and Soviet soldiers and officials. Hoxha demanded that the Soviets should accept the issues that they had caused and not to repeat such actions in the future, definitely bold requests from a small nation towards what was seen as a super-power nation in the world. The Soviets rejected the Albanian demands and affirmed that in Albania “an anti-Soviet spirit has been put into place.” It was the meeting between Hoxha and Khrushchev, on November 12, that better revealed the real divide between Tirana and Moscow.

The meeting is known in history as the one that marked the complete deterioration of the relations between the two nations. After a formal greeting, Khrushchev told Hoxha that he didn't understand what had happened since his visit to Albania in 1959, to which Hoxha reminded him of the disagreements that they had even before that, specifically about Yugoslavia. Khrushchev responded by saying that this was the first time that he heard Hoxha ever speak about Yugoslavia, and then proceeded by saying that it is not a principal issue. To Hoxha it was a principal issue, one which Khrushchev had neglected to understand for a long time. Hoxha then blamed Khrushchev for the deterioration of their relations, but Khrushchev realized that the two sides hadn't seen eye-to-eye even before Bucharest, where Hoxha and Khrushchev first held talks. Khrushchev then accused Hoxha of intentionally removing Belishova, whom he called a strong Stalinistic woman. The leaders then moved to the much more tense topic of the Soviet officials based in Vlora. Khrushchev told Hoxha, “if you want we can remove our base” and retold how Albania's membership in the Warsaw Pact had been opposed by Molotov, who questioned why the Soviet Union should even fight for Albania. The Albanian officials eventually left the meeting and it made sense why they would do so. In their perspective, Albania's real dissent with Moscow was on the issues regarding Albania's national security, a possible conflict with its neighbors would leave them to a harsh defeat and would make them

part of Yugoslavia, which Hoxha despised. Furthermore, this situation would question Hoxha's legitimacy as a leader, a factor important to him as he saw himself as powerful man like Stalin. Hoxha was in Moscow with the intent to defy the Soviet Union, eventually becoming the only leader of a Warsaw Pact member country to do so after the failed Hungarian upheaval.

After their return from Moscow, Albanian leaders were officially invited back in December 1960, in order to close the agreements that had been left for further negotiations. This time however, the Soviets did not hold back their real intentions, stating that "the economic issues are directly related to the normalization of our relations, which under present conditions should be discussed at the highest level of the parties and governments" (Marku, 2020). Hoxha rejected their invitation, and he was ready to finalize a foreign policy deal, where Albania would only trade with China. Throughout 1961, the talks started to slow down tremendously being that Hoxha was not going to budge, and Khrushchev had bigger fish to fry, with the Berlin Crisis and with the situation in Cuba growing into a military collaboration between Havana and Moscow, which lead to the famous missile crisis the following year. Hoxha realized that the Soviet Union could hardly afford any other crisis in addition to all the other conflicts that they had with the West. Furthermore, Albania was the smallest, and poorest, of the communist countries of Eastern Europe whilst still having the most radical leadership. At that point, Albania had become more of a hassle than a benefit to the Soviets, and time had come for both nations to stop all relations with each other. Finally, by December 1961, the Soviet Union interrupted all diplomatic relations with Albania.

V. Greek-Soviet Relations at the Time

During the duration of the Cold War, Greece was seen by the USSR and the Eastern Bloc as involved more with the Western countries, however, the case seems to be that people forgot about the relations that both nations had in the beginning of the Cold War. The post-war situation in Cyprus and the Soviet support in the United Nations gives us a better understanding of why the Soviet Union struck a foreign policy deal with Greece. Furthermore, it shows why Nikita Khrushchev understood that they could be a stepping stone into influencing more nations that were part of the United Nations. The ideology of post-war politics in Cyprus was formed by the three major political actors: the Progressive Party of Working People of Cyprus (AKEL), the Church of Cyprus and the right-wing Cypriot National Party (KEC). KEC was then soon replaced by the National Organization of Cypriot Fighters (EOKA), which was a highly politicized movement of Greek Cypriots. The right-wing's main objective was the unification of Cyprus with Greece, and in 1950 Makarios III (who eventually became the first President of the independent Republic of Cyprus in 1960) was elected Archbishop of Cyprus, showed that over 95% of Greek Cypriots were in favor of Enosis (unification). This meant that nationalism became a decisive factor in Cyprus and influenced the interaction and the adamancy that the nation now had in its relations with Great Britain. Makarios believed the Cyprus issue could only be resolved by uniting with Greece and putting pressure on Great Britain.

Greek-Soviet post-war relations only normalized in 1953, a few months after Stalin's death. The Soviet government at the time sent the experienced diplomat Mikhail Grigoryevich Sergeev to Greece as an ambassador to enhance the Soviet image in the state. The Soviet Foreign Ministry regularly held meetings with the officials in Greece in order to positively develop the relations between the states, where topics such as economic and cultural ties were the main

focus. “It is noteworthy that the Greek embassy in Moscow informed the Greek MFA that in August 1954 the Soviet newspaper “Krasnaya Zvezda” (Red Star), which was the official newspaper of the Soviet Ministry of Defense, had criticized Great Britain for its refusal to give independence to the Cypriots. According to the Soviet newspaper, the British plans to maintain Cyprus as a strategic military base and to transfer its troops there from the Suez Canal was the main reason for the British intransigence” (Tasoulas, 2021). M.G. Sergeev met with Makarios in Athens and gave him guarantees of Soviet support in the United Nations in favor of self-determination.

The entry of Greece and Turkey into NATO in 1952, however, did not halt the USSR’s desire to dominate the Balkans, but the Cyprus Agreement kept the USSR’s relations strong with Greece. The Kremlin and the states of Eastern Europe supported the Greek claim to unify Cyprus with Greece, which was seen as the motherland by the Soviet and the Greek themselves. The Cyprus issue could help to dissolve the mutual mistrust since both countries could help to dissolve the mistrust that they had towards each other. The Greek claims for Cyprus’ independence were supported by the USSR, driven by the anti-imperialist and anti-colonial principles against Great Britain, one of the region's main rivals. In turn, these decisions between the West and the East created strong pro-Soviet feelings amongst the Greek population at a time when its NATO allies opposed the Greek claims in the UNGA. In 1954, the decision that was evident from the results in the US General Assembly (UNGA) was shocking, as the delegates of the USSR and its supporting states were in favor of making Cyprus a part of Greece. On the other hand, the allies in the United Nations for Greece voted against it and the US abstained, making the Greek government doubt the support the US was supposed to give. The Cyprus issue did not play a primary role in Greek-Soviet relations, as Moscow did not perceive it as a bilateral

matter, with both sides trying to exploit one another to shift the situation in their favor. On the Greek side of the relations, the government treated the relations with the Soviets as pressure on NATO, while the Soviet Union tried to improve its political position in the Eastern Mediterranean, as it had done with the rest of the Balkans. Until the end of 1955, Moscow sought to extend its influence in Greece and fight the United States propaganda and for this reason, the Soviet Foreign Ministry sought to identify potential British-American contradictions in Greece in order to use them for proper interests. In other words, the position of the USSR and Greece on the Cyprus issues were similar, although their goals did not match. Consequently, Greek diplomacy's initiatives at the UN were supported by the Soviet Union in order to exploit the crack between the relations of Greece and Great Britain. The Cyprus question seemed significant, as it worsened not only the relations between Greece with Great Britain but also the United States and the relations with Turkey.

“However, in 1955 the Tripartite Conference on Cyprus, the anti-Greek pogrom in Istanbul and Western opposition to the adding of a Cyprus item in the UNGA agenda left many Greeks disappointed with Western policy, thus opening up opportunities both for the Greek Left to advocate a non-aligned policy, and for Soviet diplomacy. In the years that followed, the Kremlin sought to convince the Greek public of its good intentions” (Tasoulas, 2021).

After the conference, the case seemed to be that the relations between Greece and the Soviet Union were only getting better, as the USSR created a new policy in which they would pursue the relaxation of international tensions, which would mean that the two countries would start trading. “On June 28, 1956, the Soviet Foreign Minister D.T. Shepilov arrived in Athens for an unofficial visit. The Greek government agreed to accept Shepilov considering that Greece had normalized its diplomatic relations with the USSR. It understood the importance of Shepilov's

visit in connection with the Middle East agenda and the Cyprus issue. The note by the Greek Foreign Minister Averoff to the Greek Prime Minister Karamanlis with his remarks on the Greek-Soviet relations precisely reflected the Greek intentions. Averoff underlined to Karamanlis that Shepilov's visit coincided with Khrushchev's reforms in his country ” (Tasoulas, 2021). Greece, being a small country compared to the Soviet Union, could not ignore the fact that the USSR was evolving rapidly in both economic and military terms, and to them, this relationship created opportunities that would benefit their own economy. Shepilov stressed that the USSR was building its relations with Greece based on the principles of peaceful coexistence, mutual respect for integrity, and non-interference in national politics. According to Shepilov, despite the glaring differences in the political ideology, the USSR did not desire to complicate the relations between Greece and its allies, knowing well that it could spike up the already tense relations between themselves and the United States. The Soviet government desired further development of bilateral trade and cultural ties, similar to what they were doing with Yugoslavia, with their main goal being to eliminate distrust and achieve mutual understanding between the two nations. Averoff acknowledged the rise in bilateral relations, expressing his appreciation for the Soviet Union's support in the Cyprus issue and also the United Nations General Assembly. Shepilov's visit was timed to perfection as both countries sought expansion of economic relations, but secretly Athens seemed reluctant to expand political cooperation with Moscow. It became clear to the Greek leaders that the Soviet policy-makers were not addressing the Cyprus issue as much as they had initially promised in the Greek-Soviet agenda. Shepilov's logic in the talks was clearly based on the pride of the Soviet government, which could never accept any settlement that would include the installation of a British military base on the island.

However, positive talks continued between the two nations, and that could be noticed in the 12th session of the UNGA in December 1957. The USSR opposed Great Britain openly, arguing that their policy had turned Cyprus into a military base against the Arabs, and that it was used more as a threatening mechanism rather than what they had proposed. These developments indicated the Cyprus issue's role in Greek-Soviet relations. Furthermore, the Karamanlis government could not agree with the United States' decision to support Great Britain and did not consider the overwhelming belief of the Cypriot Greek population. The US feared that Greece's pro-Western course might be challenged if the Greeks decided to strengthen their relations even more with the USSR. It should be known that Athens never intended to leave its pro-Western-European course, but the Soviet policy towards the Cyprus issue and the Soviet counterproposal for their support had created strong insecurities in Athens regarding relations with its allies. Fast forward to May 1958, Khrushchev publicly reconfirmed the Soviet support regarding the Cyprus issue by stating in the Greek newspaper "To Vima" that his country was against the remnants of the colonization system and that the Cypriots had the right to control their own future independently. At the same time, Khrushchev severely criticized NATO as an aggressive mechanism contributing to the island's division and its people. "In August 1958, the British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan officially visited Greece to promote the so-called Macmillan Plan on the Cyprus issue. Macmillan had forwarded his plan to Karamanlis already from June. Karamanlis strongly opposed it and even stated to the US Ambassador in Athens James W. Riddleberger, that Greece's position in NATO could have been challenged if the British had continued to promote it. Eventually, Greece, Turkey, and Archbishop Makarios of Cyprus rejected the Macmillan Plan" (Tasoulas, 2021). Khrushchev supported the rejection and argued that the peace-loving Greece could get benefits by siding with the USSR in the United Nations

who had already supported the Greek claims. Greece was now facing a serious security issue, and at the same time its relations with its allies were at their lowest level. Karamanlis, however, took advantage of Khrushchev's proposal and applied counterpressure on NATO. Karamanlis had made it clear to Macmillan that the Soviets had serious ambitions in Cyprus and were ready to realize them by using the Greek national aspirations on the island. What came as a shock was the turn of events that took place in the beginning of the year 1959. The Cyprus issue had finally settled outside the UN framework by the Zürich and London Agreements of 11 and 19 February 1959. The Agreements held that Cyprus was recognized as an independent country by August 16, 1960, and the Soviet government immediately welcomed the declaration of independence of Cyprus as a defeat of British imperialism. Great Britain, however, had installed two military bases on the island and had come to the agreement that the guarantor powers of the Republic of Cyprus would fall to them, Turkey and Greece, as they had retained the right to intervene in the internal affairs to the new state.

On the one hand, the Cyprus issue was indeed evidence to prove that the Soviet Union were powerful enough to crack down through the UN, which at the time seemed highly unlikely because of the power that the West had. On the other hand, the Karamanlis government understood that the anti-communist ideology was more important to establish in the country, and by gaining at least a third of the power in Cyprus they had achieved what they wanted initially and understood that the foreign affairs with the Soviets would eventually harm them more than the relationships with the overwhelming West.

VI. Soviet-Turkish Relations at the Time

Between 1945 and 1952, official Soviet-Turkish relations were at a low point; however, the Soviet Union's effect on Turkish foreign policy was at its highest. With the formation of a

new government in 1943 with Saracoğlu at the helm, Turkish communists had the chance to create their anti-Soviet propaganda as they saw fascism as the better option. However, the Soviet demands in 1945 and the infamous meeting between Molotov and Sarper that took place on June 7, 1945, shifted Turkish foreign policy. “According to the instructions given to Sarper by the Foreign Ministry, Sarper could sign an alliance with the Soviet Government, and an article emphasized that “in the event of war, land and/or sea forces of the enemies of the Soviet Union would not be passed through Turkey” could be put into the agreement of an alliance. Other important instructions were to not discuss the Montreux Convention in bilateral talks with the Soviet Union, and in the case of agreeing on an alliance, a reserve in favor of Great Britain must have been inserted – to follow the balance of power policy”(Ulgul, 2010). The Soviet demands in the meeting between Molotov and Sarper went beyond the expectation, and Turkey was not ready to make them a reality. Molotov presented three requests to the Soviet Government: 1) the reduction to Russia of Turkish districts of Kars, Artvin, and Ardahan; 2) the granting of bases in the Straits to Russia; 3) the revision of the Montreux Convention. These demands were hard to accept from the Turkish side as the United States had opposed the major changes concerning the Straits, while Great Britain had made the consequences of the Montreux Convention visible to both the USSR and Turkey. The Montreux Convention of 1936 guaranteed freedom of passage to all civilians that could pass the Strait of the Dardanelles, and depending on the Turkish authorities, any type of warship that must advance through the Strait or the Black Sea had to have the acceptance from the authorities. Turkey's pressure from the US and Great Britain to allow the Soviet Union warships or ships, in general, made the request even harder to accept. Demands on the Turkish lands were also hard to accept, as the Turkish government had predicted that it could become a dangerous precedent for provoking and justifying another war. Sarper (the

foreign minister of Turkey) was aware of the danger that a discussion with the Soviet Union representative meant for their other Western allies, so the demand concerning the lands was immediately taken off. “Similarly, the request for bases was the red line for the Turkish Government. After the annulment of the 1925 Agreement, in his conversation with Steinhardt, Sureyya Anderiman, the secretary to Turkish President Inonu, stated that if no demands were made by the Soviet Government to infringe Turkish sovereignty “such as a request for bases on Turkish territory,” the negotiation of a new treaty would encounter no obstacles from the Turkish Government⁸⁵. In conclusion, it can be said that the Soviet Government hit three out of three Turkish fears by their demands” (Ulgul, 2010).

After refusing all demands by Molotov, Sarper reported the impressions he had regarding the meeting to not only the Turkish government, but also to the US and Great Britain. During the war, there were rumors that Stalin had offered lands in Northern Syria to Turkey in return for “some benefits” in the future. The belief from the Western allies was that there was a fourth demand that Molotov had never stated. It was believed that Molotov wanted either the removal of the Anglo-Turkish alliance or a modification of the political regime so that the Turkish Government might be changed, as it had happened with other nations in the Balkans, such as Romania or Bulgaria. In the dynamic period in 1945, right after the end of WWII, the Soviet government had undoubtedly aimed at establishing communist rule in Turkey, as this way, they would be able to control the foreign and domestic policies of Turkey. A strategic move from Stalin was to boost democracy and free elections in the Balkan region right after the end of the War. At the time, the communist party was the strongest as it provided defense for the masses and a “fair system” where everyone would be treated the same. As the communist party was winning in every nation in the Balkans, the agrarian characteristic of Turkish workers would ease

the way for the Turkish government to not turn into the hands of the Soviet Union. The Turkish government was seen as “fascist” by the Balkan nations, and that was enforced by the conversation that was held between Nurullah Esat Sumer, the Acting Foreign Minister of Turkey, and the Bulgarian Minister Antonoff, who explained that “the Turkish government is suffering because of the lack in confidence that the Soviet Union had in the present Turkish Government.” The solution to it would be the replacement of the current leader Saracoglu, which would lead to the next phase in the relations between the Soviet Union and Turkey.

During 1953-1960, Soviet-Turkish relations peaked while the Russian effect stalled. The Soviet policies and demands were put to the side as Turkey was committed to the belief that they could only be protected by the Western nations, however that didn't stop them from believing that they could achieve the power or authority similar to the one they had in the late Ottoman Empire, as they wanted more land in the regions close to it. “Moreover, after the economic conditions in Turkey deteriorated after 1954, Turkey fomented the crises in the Middle East to draw attention to themselves as well as warrant economic aid from and draw the United States to the area by closing their ears to Soviet “peace attacks,” threats and sometimes even leading crises until the very last minute, such as the crisis in Syria in 1957. Because of this, Turkey maintained inflexible policies against the Soviet Union and her Middle Eastern allies, amongst who were Syria and Egypt especially.

Turkey also eagerly volunteered to take part in Western initiatives such as the Balkan Pact and Baghdad Pact in correlation with the “containment policy” of the United States and as a predecessor of the Ottoman Empire, which had ruled these areas for centuries” (Ulgu, 2010). Additionally, during this period, the Turkish Government conflicted with many fundamental policies that they had defended since the beginning of their republic. For starters, the dilemma

about Egypt's sovereignty regarding the Suez Channel and the Soviet-Egypt relations contradicted Turkey's own Strait policy because Egypt's president at the time, Nasser had nationalized the Channel, taking out the prioritization of it from England and France to themselves. In this case, Turkey, previously seen as a more powerful and important nation, was not allowed to nationalize their own Strait, while in their eyes, a much smaller country could. But as noted before, even though the Russian effect stalled, the relations between the two nations peaked, and that was mainly because of the death of Stalin, who in Turkey was seen as another Hitler and the appointment of Khrushchev as the leader.

The Middle East conflicts opened the way for the Soviet Union to develop its foreign policy with Turkey, as a mix of "peace attacks" and threats and more were sent to the Middle Eastern states by the help of the Russians. This benefited the Soviet Union as this way, they could decline the Western relations with the Middle Eastern countries who were supplying them with their rich supply of minerals and oil. After 1955, the Khrushchev government followed a similar method to discourage the trade between the Turks and the US, and the rest of the Western Nations. The Soviet government encouraged the Turks to fight for the independence of their own minerals and, most importantly, of the Strait that they rightfully owned.

What brought the end to the relations between the Soviet Union and Turkey was a mixture of factors, including the second Balkan Pact and Turkey's relations going closer to the Western Nation after 1956, when Turkey was getting more invested in NATO even though they first joined in 1952. The second Balkan Pact of 1954 was an initiative from the Turkish government to organize the region into what they deemed fair, and it was strategized as an aid to Yugoslavia for protection against the Bolsheviks. As noted before, relations between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia started to slow down after 1948, and with that, Yugoslavia looked to the

West for protection. To the Western bloc, the pact was important as this way, the relations between Italy-Greece and Turkey could be prevented, and the Soviet influence would be removed. However, being that Yugoslavia was still a socialist state, they didn't want to pursue any other relations with the West except the defense that they were providing. That meant that Yugoslavia was an unsafe country to make a pact with, and this was seen when they "broke" the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation only nine months after it was established. As Khrushchev made his first appearance in Yugoslavia, beginning his détente policy, which was subsequently fully developed under Brezhnev, Turkey was adhering to the bloc pact that they had initially made, and they were not open to dissolving the strict policy in the event of peace approaches from the Soviet Union. The "attack from the inside," as I would like to describe it, meant that Turkey had to forfeit earlier in the Middle East what they wanted, and it created an unbalanced relationship with Yugoslavia.

"The first disagreements between Yugoslavia and Turkey emerged at the first meeting of the Standing Council in March 1955. These arguments were on the importance of the pact in lessening international tensions and whether or not there was more hope for the solution of disagreements between the Soviet Union and the Western states. Yugoslavia was convinced that it was not necessary to place importance on military issues under preexisting conditions. Turkey, on the other hand, was discreet in their handling of the new Soviet policies and paid more attention to the military issues. These differing attitudes can be deciphered by considering each side towards the pact. To Yugoslavia, the Soviet threat was their reason for the establishment of the pact, and in 1955 this threat disappeared" (Ulgu, 2010). Furthermore, with Yugoslavia not needing the pact anymore, the Cyprus problem between Turkey and Greece became more evident as Turkey was losing its powers on all fronts. Violent demonstrations against Greek

heritage in Istanbul in 1955 followed the emergence of the union between Greece and Cyprus. The Turkish Cypriot community that had grown stronger after WWII was against the Greek nationalism of Greek Cypriots, but with Great Britain supporting the choice of Greek Cypriots and Cyprus being in the side of Greece as well, Turkey had lost its authoritarian power there as well. As noted above as well, at this time, the Soviet Union was more supportive of Greece as well as they understood that with Turkey, it would have been a harder task to retrieve the authoritative power of Cyprus or at least a part of it. The friendly relations between the Soviet Union and Turkey during the interwar period are explained only by the relatively weak position of the Soviet Union in international relations. When the Soviet Union understood that Yugoslavia was not going to bow its head to its rule, they went on to Turkey which affected not only their own foreign policy but Turkey's too, as they kept tabs on the different crises in the Middle East with the Suez Channel, with the different unreasonable requests from Molotov and of course the change of sides in the Cyprus problem.

VII. The Romanian Example

Romania presents an interesting example of communism in its quest to resist Russian influence. By the end of WWII, the Soviet Union already had control over Romania, and by 1947 the Communist Party had become the official party of the nation, as the king had been exiled. The dispute between Tito and Stalin in 1948 was the first step to Romania's loyalty to its Soviet leaders. Gheorghe Gheorgiu-Dej used the moment to eliminate all of his political opponents and then became the party leader for the new "Romanian Workers Party." Gheorghe Gheorgiu-Dej had gained full control over the party by May of 1952, but the joy was cut short when the news of Stalin's death reached Bucharest in 1953. On the one hand, Stalin's death was

a reason of relief for Gheorgiu-Dej as he was going to be able to rule Romania in his own way, but on the other hand any changes that followed his death would cause distress. “In terms of Romanian foreign policy as a result of the Kremlin power struggle for Stalin’s succession, two major changes occurred to which Gheorghiu-Dej had to adapt: Soviet efforts to overcome tensions and animosities in their policy towards the West and the alleged “New Course” in the Soviet policy towards the satellites” (Stanciu, 2013). Gheorgiu- Dej was called to go to Moscow like all the other leaders of the Communist Eastern Bloc as the “New Course” was being discussed and set into place. He endured harsh criticism for his policy in heavy industrialization, and moreover he was not in the position to mention that the heavy industrialization had been imposed by the Soviets themselves— just like how they had planned the “New Course.” Gheorgiu- Dej understood the consequences of his actions and most importantly his words and he had to accept the culpability in light of the criticism of his policies without blaming Stalin or anybody else.

While Tito sought to sever connections with Russia and the USSR, Gheorgiu- Dej took down the opposite path by embracing the Russian culture and political ideology. “The leading figures of Romanian literature, history and culture were censored and suppressed, and Russian language and literature studies flourished under state sponsorship. Romanian history books were rewritten to emphasize Slavic influences and Romanian scientists credited Russians in extravagant claims. Russian became a required course in all schools in 1948” (Sowards, 2009). Similar to Albania, Romania wanted to impress the Soviet leaders; however, the same trend as the one seen with Hoxha was happening with Gheorgiu-Dej. The Romanian leader reconsidered the foreign policy that was put with the Soviet Union, especially on the quest for détente. The Soviet quest for détente with the West soon gained a theoretical framework with the emergence

of the concept “peaceful co-existence”, and by December 1955, at the second party Congress, Gheorgiu-Dej used the notion to explain Romania’s foreign policy. The striving for détente, which was a part of Khrushchev’s main policies, was promptly transmitted to all the satellites, in order to establish the issues of foreign policy amongst the Communist nations. Gheorgiu-Dej took advantage of the situation and made a quick turn as soon as he returned from Moscow.

“Many Romanian diplomats were recalled for consultations in a large meeting bringing together the party leadership and leading MFA officials. Most ambassadors and ministers were to present the ministry with detailed reports concerning their activities abroad, Romania’s relations with the country to which they were accredited, proposals for further developing relations, and so on. On 18 January 1956, accompanied by other Politburo members, Gheorgiu-Dej met with Preoteasa (Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania) and influential diplomats and discussed Romania’s foreign policy in the past years and its future development” (Stanciu, 2013).

Gheorgiu-Dej’s speech progressed on the notion that Romania had to develop its own foreign policy as an independent state with independent interests. He emphasized that the Romanian diplomats had to overcome the Soviet isolation and establish contacts abroad, especially in the West. Gheorgiu-Dej understood that the best way in developing the nation was by playing both sides of the coin with a nationalistic view of their own country. The first signs of a change in Romanian diplomacy had already appeared by 1955, when Romania joined the UN. Significant changes in attitude and a somewhat coherent policy towards the West started in 1956. Gheorgiu-Dej understood that since power in Romania belonged to him during the span of these two years, so did the responsibility for every action that he took in denying Khrushchev’s anti-Stalin initiative. Gheorgiu-Dej rejected Khrushchev’s de-Stalinization policies as he wanted to prevent Khrushchev’s allies from being influential in the Romanian government. Gheorgiu-Dej took the

government's main roles by announcing that he had become the prime minister and the first secretary of the state. The Romanian leader, however, was aware that this plan would take a while, so he kept supporting the Soviet Union in all of their endeavors, which would be seen in the support that he gave to the Red Army in 1956 in the Hungarian Revolution which was then discontinued in 1958. The 1956 Hungarian revolution was proof that de-Stalinization was dangerous and that strengthened Gheorgiu-Dej's resolve to consolidate his regime and keep away from the dangerous Soviet reforms. Going back to Gheorgiu-Dej's plan, after Khrushchev's reorganization of Comecon, every state ruled by the Soviet Union was told to cultivate whatever primary resource they had in agriculture; however, the Romanian leader chose not to follow that plan knowing that it would only benefit other Communist states like Czechoslovakia and Poland. Romania wanted to develop its economy within its own powers, but the rest of the socialist states constantly rejected that notion. Above all, Romania actively pursued trade relations and economic co-operation that limited its dependence on the Soviet Union for technology and raw materials. "But discretion stood as one of the salient features of Romania's foreign policy: although Gheorgiu-Dej's foreign initiatives looked to consolidate his regime in the face of Soviet pressures and dependence, they were all hidden behind the theory of peaceful co-existence or masked as reactions to Soviet initiatives. For example, in 1958, another one of Khrushchev's numerous peace proposals called for developing economic relations as a bridge across the Iron Curtain, a facilitator of political contacts and trust building" (Stanciu, 2013). In this way, Romania's effort towards developing economic relations in the West did not seem out of the ordinary. Basically, improved economic relations with the West and international visibility were seen as counterbalances to Soviet domination. Romanian efforts employed for improving relations with the West intensified significantly from 1958 onwards. The political and

ideological confrontation of the early Cold War determined a quasi-complete isolation in Romania's foreign policy. To ensure regime control of foreign policy, Gheorgiu-Dej requested purges to remove most career diplomats, replacing them with party-controlled officials. As the regime mistrusted the outside world as contacts were undesirable, the most relevant criterion for the selection of diplomats was their loyalty to the regime.

Gheorgiu-Dej understood that by criticizing Khrushchev's orders, he would achieve three objectives that would bring political power to himself and away from the Soviet Union. He would detach Romania from the "socialist" movement that Khrushchev had adopted after Stalin, and through that way he would get support from Russia's rivals both in the West and undoubtedly represented by Communist China. This way, the Romanian leader could present himself as an advocate of nationalism and Romanian communism that kept Russia guessing on what his next move was. The same trend seen in Albania was also seen in Romania, as both leaders still wanted to keep their authoritarian rule. Coincidentally, like Albania, they saw Mao Tse-tung's iron fist rule as the right partnership to continue their reign as the leaders of their country. These moves would be the start for both Albania and Romania to keep the dictatorship in their own country while moving away from the USSR.

VIII. Bulgarian-Soviet relations

Beginning in the summer of 1948, Bulgaria underwent an ideological purification in with what is known as the "Moscow Doctrine", developed during World War II. This "doctrine" reserved for the Soviet Union the exclusive right to make people's revolutions. Other than Yugoslavia, which had a strong leader like Tito, this doctrine worked on most of the other Balkan nations, including Albania and Romania, as discussed above, and in this case Bulgaria too. "After Nikola Petrov's execution on September 23, 1947, the Agrarian Party, of which he

was the leader, was dissolved, and its members were forbidden to participate in political life. Consequently, the country's strongest and most popular political party was uprooted. The Dimitrov Constitution, adopted on December 4, 1947, and based on the “principle of the People’s Democracy” provided, in Dimitrov’s own words, for “complete destruction of all remnants of the capitalist system of exploitation” (Vulnich, 1951). By the beginning of 1949, all bourgeois parties had been removed, and all principal bourgeois leaders were put away, including Nikola Petrov, Kosta Lulchev, Krustiu Pastuhov, Dimiter Gichev, etc. It is fair to say that communist rule was in full effect by 1949, as in that same year Marshal Nikolai Bulganin, a Soviet deputy Premier, speaking in Sofia, warned that anything that weakened the ties of friendship between the “democratic countries” and the Soviet Union or deviated from the Lenin-Stalin principles was treason. However, in the beginning, the People’s Party, the leader of Bulgaria made the notion that the “People’s Democracy” would not be the Soviet Republic. Bulganin initially explained that the state would be run by the overwhelming majority and not the Communist Party, as it would protect “the property acquired by labor,” grounds that were not given in the reign of the bourgeoisie. These new rules laid out by the leader were not accepted by the Communists of the Kremlin, who let it be known that the defense of private property is a violation of a basic principle of Communism. Additionally, a systemic campaign was launched toward re-orientation and re-education of the Communist leaders outside the Soviet Union. At the time, the focus was on Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, which were diverging from the ideology.

With the changing conditions and the pressure that the Soviet government had exercised, Dimitrov re-defined the Bulgarian People’s Democracy in December 1948. The state system had turned from the “overwhelming majority of the people” to the “leadership of the working class which serves the proletarian dictatorship.” With that, Bulgaria had become a Soviet-type republic

that was fully dependent on the Soviet Republics, which corresponded with the “Moscow Doctrine” that Albania and Romania had gone through as well. After Yugoslavia’s defection from the Soviet-type republics in 1948, it became necessary for Soviet leaders to maintain a closer control over Bulgaria’s political and economic affairs. Bulgaria, in comparison to Yugoslavia, didn’t have the political power to accomplish that independence, especially considering the fact that they were one of the countries which the Red Army had entered. Furthermore, their geographical position made it much more difficult for them to rebel against Stalinism, and they were also heavily reliant on the Soviet Union for diplomatic and economic support. “On April 14, 1949, Georgi Dimitrov, Prime Minister and internationally eminent Communist, was granted sick leave and sent to the Soviet Union for medical treatment. The event evoked much speculation because many reports suggested that Dimitrov shared Tito's views. On April 17, the vacancy created by Dimitrov's absence was temporarily filled by Vasil Kolarov, Vice President of the Ministerial Council and Foreign Minister” (Vucinich, 1951). Bulgaria’s Lenin, as Dimitrov was called, died only months later, with Vasil Kolarov, the second most important member of the old guard, elected president on July 20, 1949. There were shifts and purges of the government throughout the first months of Kolarov as the leader, however Kremlin’s determination to establish direct control over the Bulgarian party and state kept growing. The Soviet foreign policy saw the opportunity to create a developing Bulgaria with the addition of the “Five Year Plan,” which lasted from 1948-1953. For starters, the socialist construction of the economic sector was the blueprint of the plan that was drawn in Moscow, which drastically changed after Dimitrov’s death. The Soviet Union had failed to deliver the machines needed for working heavy industry, which was agreed upon in the initial trade pacts between the two nations. During the same time, valuable Bulgarian raw materials were exported

to the Soviet Union, meaning that the only value Bulgaria now had was its agriculture. It is also important to mention that the bulk of Bulgaria's foreign trade was channeled to the Soviet Union and the Communist countries of Eastern Europe. It was estimated that about 80 percent of the trade was with the Soviet Union. As part of the five-year plan, on February 17, 1950, a new trade treaty was signed between the two countries, which would provide the Soviet Union with tobacco, rose oil, and various ores in exchange for finished goods, petroleum products, medicine, machinery, and cotton. Additionally, the retail trade within the nation of Bulgaria had completely shifted as more kulaks were submitting their private property and businesses to the state.

“On June 3, 1950, a decree was issued by which the state and cooperative enterprises took over all wholesale trade and 86 percent of retail trade. The decree created a special office under the Council of Ministers to manage and develop internal trade. Private retail trade had been reduced from 57 percent in 1947 to 14 percent in 1949” (Vulnich, 1951). Going back to the failure of the economic sector, the government had admitted its fault to it, or so it was said. The government blamed the kulaks (wealthy peasants) for sabotage because they had initially refused to facilitate the collection of crop harvesting. The government related this story to the consecutive crop failures and the difficulties in fathering the deliveries to the state, and the resolution was put into place. This resulted from complaints among party members who agreed that wealthy kulaks should not keep their crops for their own benefit. The resolution to this problem was the accelerated collectivization of farms in the face of resentment that the party members had for the kulaks. This way, the propaganda was laid that the government was not only helping the nation in general, it was also aiding and providing opportunities for poorer classes of peasants.

Despite Bulgaria's glaring problems in the first year of the Five-Year Plan, 1949 was seen as a success and exceeded expectations by twenty-eight percent. By the second year of the plan, considerable progress had been made in the mechanization of agriculture. "In 1949, there were 2,124,250 acres of land plowed by tractors and 575,500 acres harvested by machines. There were in 1950 eight machine and tractor schools, of which two were for women. According to official figures of May 1950, cooperative farms had risen to 1,713, with 212,366 members and 1.837,935 acres of land. By December 1, 1950, the number of cooperative farms rose to 2,570, comprising 5,250,000 acres of land" (Vulnich, 1951). Additionally, electricity had become much easier to secure, as several new power plants and electric power systems had either been built or were nearing completion. For example, by December 1950, the nitrogen plant had promised to be the largest Bulgarian industrial establishment, and the Soviet authorities had reported increasing the supply of all construction materials, meaning that there would be clear market progress in the overall production of much-needed materials. "Industrial production is said to have increased in 1949 over 1939 by 2.5 times. The greatest progress had been made in metallurgy (22 times), machine building (3.5) and chemical industry (3.5)" (Vulnich, 1951).

Another sector that was affected by the five-year plan was the social sector, specifically the educational system. The educational system had been re-organized according to socialist needs, meaning the aim to educate train the young generations for the "socialist intelligentsia" and the skilled personnel needed for the socialist construction of the state. The Soviet Union aided Bulgaria in opening more institutions of all kinds around the nation, like elementary and secondary schools, and, most importantly, universities. At the time, the general secondary schools had around 200,000 students, and by 1950, approximately 40,000 students were enrolled in higher educational institutions. It was clear that direct Soviet control had been gradually and

systematically extended over all the phases of the country's life, and with limited independence of action, it became impossible for any other ideology or choice from the population. Anyone who stood against it was removed, and totalitarianism and centralization were intensified in full accordance with what the Soviets had ordered. "Bulgaria had now become the principal Soviet base of operations in the Balkans" (Vulnich, 1951).

Conclusion

What this study reveals is, in my view, the power that the Soviet Union had at the end of the second World War and it shows that Stalin and Khrushchev wanted to establish themselves as the leaders of the whole of Eastern Europe, including the Balkans. Where coercive power didn't work, the legitimate authority and the presence of a super-nation such as the Soviet Union made nations that were part of the United Nations to re-evaluate the importance of being with the West compared to what the Soviet Union had potentially promised. Furthermore, what is interesting about the landscape of the Communist bloc at the time is the numerous 'What If' questions that surface. For example, what if Yugoslavia had surrendered their political ideology and their power to the Soviet Union, how powerful would the Soviet Union have had become and would they have had enough resources and army to eventually take over parts of the West? What if Greece decided to make the Cyprus Issue more of a concern and question the United States' and Great Britain's "true intentions"? The Cypriot Greek majority and Greece were looking for the unification between the two nations, but Greece only ended up having a third of the control in Cyprus. If the Greek-Soviet relations kept getting better, would that have led a dangerous precedent for the rest of the nations in the United Nations? Moreover, what if Hoxha and Gheorgiu-Dej didn't have the nationalistic and in some fashion personalistic view to run their nation as they did during those challenging times? Albania was the poorest and the smallest

nation in Eastern Europe, and the relationship with the Soviet Union was valuable to them, as to Albania, it was a source of reliable support and resources from their comrades. Romania was at risk as well because of the geographical position that they had, which the Soviet Union could infiltrate at all times.

Is it fair to say that these two nations left a precedent for the rest of the Eastern Bloc to understand that one can get out of a relationship with the Soviet Union, being that it happened at the heights of their power? Thankfully, one doesn't have to answer these questions, and the world is glad to not be in that position, because the potential of having half of Europe being occupied by a Communist super-nation like the Soviet Union would mean that these nations would be Communist still. Hindsight tells us a different story, because we now know that the Soviet Union wasn't as economically powerful as they had presented themselves to be. However, it is also fair to wonder that with all the geographical positioning and the resources that the Soviet Union would've had if they had occupied the Balkans, would've they ever concede to the United States in the Cold War? The Soviet Union's foreign policy politically, economically and culturally affected all of the nations in the Balkan region during the first years of the Cold War, however they were not strong enough to occupy them, and for that I am thankful for.

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