

DOCUMENT 8 DJILAS ON STALIN

Milovan Djilas became a member of the Politburo of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in 1940, and when Germany occupied Yugoslavia in 1941 he joined the Partisans led by Tito. He headed a military mission to Moscow in 1944 and visited the Soviet capital again the following year. Note his assessment of Stalin's attitude to revolution.

Stalin presented his views on the distinctive nature of the war that was being waged: 'This war is not as in the past; whoever occupies a territory also imposes on it his own social system. Everyone imposes his own system as far as his army has power to do so. It cannot be otherwise.'

He also pointed out, without going into long explanations, the meaning of his pan-Slavic policy. 'If the Slavs keep united and maintain solidarity, no one in the future will be able to move a finger. Not even a finger!' he repeated, emphasizing his thought by cleaving the air with his forefinger.

Someone expressed doubt that the Germans would be able to recuperate within fifty years. But Stalin was of a different opinion. 'No, they will recover, and very quickly. It is a highly developed industrial country with an extremely skilled and numerous working class and technical intelligentsia. Give them twelve to fifteen years and they'll be on their feet again. And this is why the unity of the Slavs is important. But even apart from this, if the unity of the Slavs exists, no one will dare move a finger.'

At one point he got up, hitched up his trousers as though he was about to wrestle or to box, and cried out emotionally, 'The war will soon be over. We shall recover in fifteen to twenty years, and then we'll have another go at it.'

There was something terrible in his words: a horrible war was still going on. Yet there was something impressive, too, about his realization of the paths he had to take, the inevitability that faced the world in which he lived and the movement that he headed. ...

It is time something was said about Stalin's attitude to revolutions, and thus to the Yugoslav revolution. Because Moscow had always refrained at the crucial moment from supporting the Chinese, Spanish, and in many ways even the Yugoslav revolutions, the view prevailed, not without reason, that Stalin was generally against revolutions. This is, however, not entirely correct. His opposition was only conditional, and arose only when the revolution went beyond the interests of the Soviet state. He felt instinctively

that the creation of revolutionary centres outside Moscow could endanger its supremacy in world Communism, and of course that is what actually happened. That is why he helped revolutions only up to a certain point – as long as he could control them – but he was always ready to leave them in the lurch whenever they slipped out of his grasp. I maintain that not even today is there any essential change in this respect in the policy of the Soviet Government.

In his own country Stalin had subjected all activities to his views and to his personality, so he could not behave differently outside. Having identified domestic progress and freedom with the interests and privileges of a political party, he could not act in foreign affairs other than as a dictator. And like everyone else he must be judged by his actual deeds. He became himself the slave of the despotism, the bureaucracy, the narrowness, and the servility that he imposed on his country.

It is indeed true that no one can destroy another's freedom without losing his own.

Milovan Djilas [42], pp. 90–1, 103.

DOCUMENT 9 POLAND AT YALTA

Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin discussed Poland at length at the Yalta Conference (6–11 February 1945). The crucial question was the composition of the Polish government. The declaration of 11 February 1945 appeared to concede much of what the West wanted. In the months which followed Churchill and Roosevelt/Truman argued bitterly with Stalin over the interpretation of this declaration.

6 February 1945

Marshal Stalin then gave the following summary of his views on the Polish question: Mr Churchill had said that for Great Britain the Polish question was one of honor and that he understood, but for the Russians it was a question both of honor and security. It was one of honor because Russia had many past grievances against Poland and desired to see them eliminated. It was a question of strategic security not only because Poland was a bordering country but because throughout history Poland had been the corridor for attack on Russia. We have to mention that during the last thirty years Germany twice has passed through this corridor. The reason for this was that Poland was weak. Russia wants a strong, independent and democratic Poland. ... It is not only a question of honor for Russia, but one of life and death. ...

11 February 1945

The following Declaration on Poland was agreed by the Conference:

'A new situation has been created in Poland as a result of her complete liberation by the Red Army. This calls for the establishment of a Polish Provisional Government which can be more broadly based than was possible before the recent liberation of the Western part of Poland. The Provisional Government which is now functioning in Poland should therefore be reorganized on a broader democratic basis with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and from Poles abroad. This new Government should then be called the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity. ...

This Polish Provisional Government of National Unity shall be pledged to the holding of free and unfettered elections as soon as possible on the basis of universal suffrage and secret ballot. In these elections all democratic and anti-Nazi parties shall have the right to take part and to put forward candidates. ...

The three Heads of Government consider that the Eastern frontier of Poland should follow the Curzon Line with digressions from it in some regions of five to eight kilometres in favour of Poland. They recognize that Poland must receive substantial accessions of territory in the North and West. They feel that the opinion of the New Polish Provisional Government of National Unity should be sought in due course on the extent of these accessions and that the final delimitation of the Western frontier of Poland should thereafter await the Peace Conference.'

US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, The Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945*, reprinted in LaFeber [94], pp. 89, 93.

DOCUMENT 19 CHURCHILL'S IRON CURTAIN SPEECH
(5 MARCH 1946)

Winston Churchill, now Leader of the Opposition, was alarmed at the course of the Cold War and, in the presence of President Truman, called for a partnership between Great Britain and the United States to halt the Soviet colossus. Churchill was ahead of his time, however. Only a year later did his ideas become acceptable.

From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of central and eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest, and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in the Soviet sphere and all are subject, in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and increasing measure of control from Moscow. Athens, alone, with its immortal glories, is free to decide its future at an election under British, American, and French observation. ...

However, in a great number of countries, far from the Russian frontiers and throughout the world, Communist fifth columns are established and work in complete unity and absolute obedience to the directions they receive from the Communist center. Except in the British Commonwealth, and in the United States, where communism is in its infancy, the Communist parties or fifth columns constitute a growing challenge and peril to Christian civilization. ...

On the other hand, I repulse the idea that a new war is inevitable, still more that it is imminent. It is because I am so sure that our fortunes are in our own hands and that we hold the power to save the future, that I feel

the duty to speak out now that I have an occasion to do so. I do not believe that Soviet Russia desires war. What they desire is the fruits of war and the indefinite expansion of their power and doctrines. ...

From what I have seen of our Russian friends and allies during the war, I am convinced that there is nothing they admire so much as strength, and there is nothing for which they have less respect than for military weakness. For that reason the old doctrine of a balance of power is unsound. We cannot afford, if we can help it, to work on narrow margins, offering temptations to a trial of strength. If the western democracies stand together in strict adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter, their influence for furthering these principles will be immense and no one is likely to molest them. If, however, they become divided or falter in their duty, and if these all-important years are allowed to slip away, then indeed catastrophe may overwhelm us all.

Congressional Record, 79th Congress, 2nd Session, A1146-7.

DOCUMENT 20 STALIN'S REPLY TO CHURCHILL'S SPEECH

Stalin's trenchant response to Churchill revealed his belief in Anglo-American collusion against the Soviet Union, his fear of Germany, and his conviction that eastern and south-eastern Europe was so vital to Soviet security that Soviet influence there should be seen as natural.

Question: What is your opinion of Mr Churchill's latest speech in the United States of America?

Answer: I regard it as a dangerous move, calculated to sow the seeds of dissension among the Allied states and impede their collaboration.

Question: Can it be considered that Mr Churchill's speech is prejudicial to the cause of peace and security?

Answer: Yes, unquestionably. As a matter of fact, Mr Churchill now takes the stand of the warmongers, and in this Mr Churchill is not alone. He has friends not only in Britain but in the United States of America as well.

A point to be noted is that in this respect Mr Churchill and his friends bear a striking resemblance to Hitler and his friends. Hitler began his work of unleashing war by proclaiming a race theory, declaring that only German-speaking people constituted a superior nation. Mr Churchill sets out to unleash war with a race theory, asserting that only English-speaking nations are superior nations, who are called upon to decide the destinies of the entire world. The German race theory led Hitler and his friends to the conclusion that the Germans, as the only superior nation, should rule over other nations. The English race theory leads Mr Churchill and his friends to the conclusion that the English-speaking nations, as the only superior nations, should rule over the rest of the nations of the world. ...

The following circumstances should not be forgotten. The Germans made their invasion of the USSR through Finland, Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Hungary. The Germans were able to make their invasion through these countries because, at the time, governments hostile to the Soviet Union existed in these countries. As a result of the German invasion the Soviet Union has lost irretrievably in the fighting against the Germans, and also through the German occupation and the deportation of Soviet citizens to German servitude, a total of about seven million people. In other words, the Soviet Union's loss of life has been several times greater than that of Britain and the United States of America put together. Possibly in some quarters an inclination is felt to forget about these colossal sacrifices of the Soviet people which secured the liberation of Europe from the Hitlerite yoke. But the Soviet Union cannot forget about them. And so what can there be surprising about the fact that the Soviet Union, anxious for its future safety, is trying to see to it that governments loyal in their attitude to the Soviet Union should exist in these countries? How can anyone, who has not taken leave of his senses, describe these peaceful aspirations of the Soviet Union as expansionist tendencies on the part of our state?

Pravda, 13 March 1946

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