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Strategies of persuasion

On 31 January 1946, the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia proclaimed a constitution embodying six constituent republics and five constituent peoples – Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Montenegrins, and Macedonians.[1] The Five-Year Plan, adopted on 28 April 1947, set grandiose targets for growth. Wholesale nationalization of the economy occurred by the end of 1946, including the seizing of all foreign assets. Industrial production was scheduled for 5 per cent and agriculture for a 150 per cent increase, while 200 major investment projects were planned. The Cominform blockade of Soviet credits and aid reshuffled the deck of cards on the table. The Yugoslav famine crisis turned out to be very serious and, in September 1949, the Export–Import (EXIM) Bank granted Yugoslavia's request for a $20 million credit, while the International Monetary Fund approved a $3 million drawing for Tito's government.[2]

In the following years, US assistance to Yugoslavia would cover three fundamental aspects for Yugoslav independence from the Soviets and their linking with the United States: economic aid, military assistance, and cultural influence. On 10 November 1950, the State Department announced US food relief to Yugoslavia. Before asking Congress for an official grant-aid program, the State Department decided to employ the EXIM Bank, the Marshall Plan, and Mutual Defense Aid Program funds to send $30 million for food purchases. US policymakers accentuated the humanitarian aspects of the aid while masking the self-evident strategic importance of an independent Yugoslavia. On 23 May 1951, the State Department's policy advisory staff advised to publicly dismantle every aspect of US support for Tito's regime, or put pressure on Tito for military alliances.[3] No doubt, such aid played a crucial role in the economic recovery of the Yugoslav regime. Between 1950 and 1964, the 'American assistance, broadly defined, covered sixty per cent of Yugoslavia's payment deficits on the current accounts,' and 'added perhaps two percentage points to a rate of growth in national income during the 1950s which averaged 7.5 percent.'[4] In a letter to Secretary Dean Acheson, Ambassador George Allen wrote from Belgrade in 1950: 'Such economic assistance as we have given Yugoslavia […] [supporting] its resistance to the Soviet Union and satellite pressure,' was a 'small price [to] pay for benefits already enjoyed and expected from Yugoslav independence of Kremlin dictation.' And he continued:

'This independence from the West, as well as East, is […] essential to our immediate purpose of promoting disharmony in the ranks of world Communism and thus weakening Kremlin's aggressive power.'[5] US military assistance provided Yugoslavia with the essential prerequisite to protect its borders and stabilize its national security system from possible Soviet attack. In early 1951, the Yugoslav Army's Chief of Staff, Koča Popović, arrived in the United States to secretly discuss military aid to Yugoslavia. Envisioned to enhance what Eisenhower defined as the 'South NATO wing,' the Military Assistance Pact, signed on October 1951, included the Yugoslav Army in the Mutual Defense Aid Program providing T-33A aircraft, artillery, machine guns, radars, and electronic equipment. And thanks to US Army training, the Yugoslav Army transformed itself from a guerrilla-like one to a regular one.[6]

Even Project TROY, a special report on how American information could get through the Iron Curtain and reach Russian people, contemplated Yugoslav independence as a top priority policy. Commissioned by the State Department in late 1950, and named after the legendary wooden horse operation, Project TROY brought together twenty-one scholars from MIT and Harvard, who gathered for the first time in October 1950. Submitted on 1 February 1951, the final report 'urged for the unification of political warfare' at 'our national power, political, economic,' and military levels. The section on Tito's Yugoslavia made a strong point: among all the communist-dominated countries, Tito's regime was the most successful, economically, politically and socially. Its value was manifold. First, even if Yugoslavia could not become an 'American puppet,' by welcoming Tito into the Western camp without forcing him to change his ideology, the United States would ensure a partner of strategic relevance. Second, the MIT group recognized that there were 'some indications that the Tito regime may slowly be growing less doctrinaire.' The decentralization of industry, the abolition of privileges for Party members, and admission of foreigners, stressed the report, were 'all point[ing] to a general liberalization.' While partly inaccurate and partly overestimating the chance for the regime's prompt liberalization, Project TROY emphasized how the United States should give Yugoslavia 'every possible support in developing an economic and political life independent of Russia.'[7]

The third aspect of US involvement in Yugoslavia – its public diplomacy strategy and soft-power policies – worked to increase Yugoslav orientation, especially in 'official circles,' towards 'the foreign policy objectives of the United States.'[8] The first USIE Country Plan, issued for the years 1950 to 1953, reflected these major objectives. It envisioned supporting the emergence of Yugoslavia 'as a democratic, independent member of the world community, cooperating with and adhering to the United Nations.' The Plan was predicated on the view that 'Titoism should continue to exist as a corrosive and disintegrating force within the Soviet power sphere' to 'extract the maximum political and propaganda advantage from this quarrel.' But most importantly on the cultural edge, US public diplomacy would encourage in Yugoslav people their 'democratic and independence aspirations' and their desire for 'freedoms and the material advantages of Western forms of government and society.' Such a *wedge* public diplomacy strategy incurred several criticisms from the field officers in Belgrade who thought that supporting Titoism in the short-term would not achieve democracy

in the end. The Embassy and USIS posts disagreed with the IIA on the abandonment of anti-Titoist rhetoric since it helped to 'keep alive democratic aspirations' and proved to 'the international Communist movement that Yugoslavia' had not become an US 'puppet.'[9] But the IIA policymakers remained firm in their judgements: the communist regime, except for small groups of dissidents such as peasants and former aristocracy, had no serious political alternative, and its young middle class was mostly consentient to the regime. So even if the government failed in observing basic human rights, the IIA decided on a neutralist policy and focused its propaganda in 'associating the United States […] with [favourable] trends in Yugoslavia.' Like a rope pulled in two directions, the apparent dilemma continued to worry US administrations in the following decades. On the one hand, US policy included military and economic assistance, while on the other, IIA/USIA cultural policies could 'result in […] political disaffection and contribute towards weakening the loyalty of party members.'[10] IIA and USIS uncertainty reflected the administration's hesitations towards the Yugoslav case. Because of Tito's willingness to resist Stalin and slacken his posture towards the West, the United States and its international aid agencies, like the Agency for International Development, assured the economic support needed to withstand Cominform pressure. Possible Soviet reprisal provided the United States and its allies with reasons for military assistance to Yugoslavia. But, as Lorraine Lees underscored, such an arrangement was full of tensions. In 1950, for instance, when Dean Acheson informed the Yugoslav government that recognition of the Ho Chi Minh government of North Vietnam would provocatively disrupt American public opinion and reduce extraordinary aid, Tito lost his temper. 'Yugoslavia had refused "to bow to the Soviets" or to the West and would not "beg" Washington for loans,' declared the Marshal in Titovo Užice, Serbia.[11] Indeed, Tito would never take an active role in a possible European war or Western defence system.[12] The wedge strategy would work better in the arena of political bilateral relations between the two countries, rather than for the application of NATO's military alliance network in southeastern Europe. But both Yugoslavia and the United States were capable of genuine pragmatic 'ability […] to base a foreign policy on national security requirements rather than ideological imperatives.'[13]

By 1952, Yugoslavia officially agreed, though 'grudgingly and slowly,' to American cultural penetration. The joint USIS–MSA Country Plan recognized that Yugoslav 'openness' followed the US economic and military support, and the famine-relief aid. By playing the role of 'ambassador[s] of good will,' US military items such as textbooks, lectures, specialists, trainees, journals, or CARE boxes, proved American 'genuine interests' in assisting Yugoslavia.[14] The first USIS Country Program recognized the Party activists, the youth, the non-communist officials, the rural population, the religious groups, the Army officers, the industrial workers, and the educators as the first targets of US public diplomacy in Yugoslavia. At this point, the Program envisioned the most diverse channels of persuasion such as books, magazines, newspapers, exhibitions and movies, press materials, networks of private American organizations, Voice of America radio broadcastings, and the English language teaching program.[15] With seventeen American officers and forty-one local employees in Belgrade,

Zagreb, and Novi Sad, from the early 1950s on, USIS policies shaped the contours of Yugoslav–American foreign relations while being, reciprocally, forged by Yugoslav internal ideological adjustments.

Waging public diplomacy in the 1950s

George Allen replaced William Benton at the head of the information agency in 1948, and held the post until 1949. When he departed to his ambassadorship mission to Belgrade, he was well ready to set up the USIS mission in the new, post-1948 Yugoslavia. In Belgrade, where he remained in service until 1953, he did an extraordinary job. The new margins of liberty in which the USIS now operated astonished the field officers there. In this regard, Allen recalled: 'Ample evidence that our VOA radio programme is heard comes to us daily through letters from every nook and corner of the country. America is reaching directly into homes of Yugoslavs in villages and hamlets from Slovenia to Macedonia.' And he concluded, 'we must fight armed aggression with armed might, we can only fight bad ideas with better ones. […] This is what USIE is trying to do and is doing with increasing success in Yugoslavia.'[16] The 'tremendous interest and response' in USIS activities increased exponentially. In only three months, from April to June 1952, around 50,000 Yugoslavs entered USIS Belgrade, in a city that, at the time, counted around 440,000 inhabitants.[17] Staff numbers increased accordingly: in August 1951, two Americans and eight Yugoslavs worked in Belgrade, and one was staffed at the Novi Sad library.[18] In 1953, in USIS Zagreb, total numbers increased to seventeen Americans and forty-one Yugoslavs.[19]

USIS Belgrade was in Čika Ljubina Street at n. 19 in the central pedestrian zone, at the crossroads of the historical Knez Mihaila and Čika Ljubina. It was a prominent business and university district, in the proximity of the Republican Square, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Indeed, part of the USIA strategy consisted in finding locations of easy access by public transportation and ground-floor exhibit rooms. Opened in March 1945, before World War II officially ended, the Belgrade post operated almost continuously until 1998.[20] The American Center in Zagreb was not lacking in elegance compared to the one in Belgrade. Opened in May 1953 in the aristocratic Zrinjevac green area, the old park of Zagreb's high-town, it intersected Hebrang and Braće Kavurića Street n. 13 (today Zrinjevac Street).[21] Situated within the General Consulate's building, USIS posts appeared vis-a-vis the Modern Gallery and opposite the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Owned by the US government, it consisted of 403 m^2 located on the ground floor, with ten rooms and a forty-seat reading room. By contrast, the American Belgrade Center was leased by USIS and consisted of nine rooms distributed on 290 m^2.[22] Both the centres were opened during the morning and evening, six days a week, which provided enough time for working and retired people, university students, white-collar workers, and academics, to visit.[23] As for the American Library in Novi Sad, it functioned as Belgrade's branch and not an information centre, which, nevertheless, occupied a privileged geostrategic position as the capital of

the Vojvodina autonomous region, situated in the proximity of the Rumanian and Hungarian borders.[24]

In contrast to the British Council's separate status abroad, the State Department decided to house USIS offices in whole or in part within the same building as the diplomatic mission. What mattered was the liaison between the Public Affairs Officer (PAO), leader and front runner of every mission, and the ambassador with whom he cooperated closely. The PAO confirmed or modified the Country Plan, set up the cultural policy guidelines, managed the budget, administered the staff, combined analysis and communication with a country target group, and represented the USIS towards the Yugoslav government.[25]

From 'Business is booming …' to the Trieste question

Between 1950 and 1953, many factors – both in bilateral relations and Yugoslav internal developments – repaired shattered Yugo–American relations. Truman's support of Tito's independence from Moscow was essential in drawing Yugoslavia closer to the West, as scholars agree.[26] Better bilateral relations soon resulted in less anti-Americanism, both in Yugoslav newspapers and in the Party's public declarations. The positive atmosphere immediately influenced the position of USIS in Yugoslavia. Crowds previously just staring at exhibit windows – because 'comfortable anonymity' was more 'politically safe' – suddenly began visiting the Library and taking books away, reported Bruce Buttles, the USIS PAO in Belgrade. The numbers continued to surge enormously between 1950 and 1953. A 1950 report showed that, in January, around 3,000 Belgrade citizens visited the post in Čika Ljubina and borrowed 700 books.[27] In June, there were already 4,061.[28] Their number jumped to 9,700 in October 1951 and reached 16,500 in October 1952, with almost 3,000 books circulating.[29] The number of officially registered borrowers increased from 150 in 1950, to 700 in 1952.[30] Activities inside the USIS centre were accompanied by analogous work outside. Already, in the late 1940s, USIS Belgrade inaugurated a library extension service, which provided press and publication materials to Yugoslav cultural institutions like the Academy of Sciences and Arts and the Bibliographic Institute, and to the university and its faculties of science and technology, humanities and art. Quite surprisingly, the American Library supplied Yugoslav government institutes and ministries with law materials, and industrial plants with technical bulletins, as in the case of the chemical company Hempro, the glass factory Pančevo, and the aircraft factory in Zemun. Yugoslav periodicals and newspapers regularly received USIS press material – reviews like *Tehnika Narodu!* (Technology to the People) and *Prosveta* (Education), and the famous newspapers *Republika*, *Borba*, *Politika*, but also publishing houses such as Kultura.[31]

Nevertheless, in the early 1950s the USIS program in Yugoslavia remained 'flexible and modest,' identical to those in Western Europe, only without the exchange programs. Only VOA broadcasts were comparable to those of Eastern European countries for their wide audience reach. The flourishing of the American cultural program in Yugoslavia was due less to USIS management than to Yugoslav antipathy

towards the Stalinist regime. This was acknowledged by field officers who 'carefully avoid[ed] anti-communist propaganda,' but extensively served 'much anti-Soviet material […] to the Yugoslavs.' But this did not mean life was easy for US public diplomats in Belgrade and Zagreb. As PAO Buttles remarked, Yugoslavia presented a 'cyclical atmosphere for USIS operations' that varied from active official resistance to relaxations and even cooperation.[32] As long as Yugoslavia remained a communist state, 'the free circulation of Western ideas' continued to be considered 'inimical to the maintenance of [power].' Such a pattern would perpetuate itself through the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, and submit USIS operations in Yugoslavia to 'continuous frustrations, interruptions and delays stemming from the resistance of communists inside and outside the government.' While Yugoslav officials acted with reserve, ordinary people usually expressed welcome attitudes to the US cultural representatives. In November 1952, when Bruce Buttles attended the 105th foundation anniversary of the Žika Popović People's Library in Šabac (at that time, a leading commercial town in northwest central Serbia), the audience received him with such enthusiasm 'that the master of ceremonies had to [restrain] the applause to go on with the rest.' The audience, consisting of 'students and townspeople,' was obviously 'pro-American.'[33]

The USIS Zagreb experience of the early 1950s followed Belgrade's trends. After the opening of the Brace Kavurića Library, staff reported 'stimulating and invaluable experience' and 'greater understanding' that was deepening 'the friendship between Americans and Yugoslavs.' At the time, an average daily attendance of about 1,000 people had some 100 books circulating every day. In June 1953, when the post had some 3,100 registered borrowers, the library stopped the initial program of magazine and newspaper circulation because of unexpected crowds. 1953 saw an extension service established providing the possibility for out-of-town borrowers from Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina to borrow the books by mail. Spurred on by rising activity levels, the library decided on a far-reaching program of sending letters of invitation to customary and potential borrowers, inviting them to ask for books without any postage fee, and proposing special subject lists to particularly interested borrowers. The response was immediate and wide-ranging. Since of the 250 extensive borrowers in June 1953, 150 were from Ljubljana, USIS Zagreb decided to donate more than 100 books to their university. In the early 1950s, USIS observed with satisfaction that Yugoslav users went crazy for periodicals such as *Life*, *Time*, and *Newsweek*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, *House Beautiful*, and fashion magazines.[34] In the same year, the library started serving outside its facility; this met with success when the Končar factory trade union asked USIS to provide English teaching lessons, films, recordings, periodicals, and newspapers.[35]

The year 1953 was revolutionary in Yugoslavia's relations with the world. In February, Belgrade, Ankara, and Athens agreed on the Treaty of Friendship and Assistance that would, in 1954, become the Balkan Pact. The treaty with Greece and Turkey saved Tito from the embarrassment of formal military ties with NATO, while linking with two important members of the Atlantic Pact.[36] In March 1953, Tito made his first visit to a democratic Western country, staying in London from 16 to 21 March. The visit came at an auspicious moment: Yugoslavia had just broken

diplomatic ties with the Vatican (late 1952), and its relations with Italy's De Gasperi's government was 'in a bottle' because of Trieste.[37] Stalin's death in March, and the end of the Korean War, relaxed Cold War tensions. On the international front, Tito began to look for new allies, and from 1953 onwards he engaged in long trips to Chile, Brazil, Burma, and India, trying to reinforce the non-aligned, anti-block voices in the international arena.[38] Internally, at the Sixth Congress, in 1952, the Yugoslav Communist Party changed its name to the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY), the National Front became the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Yugoslavia, and more power was given to local, now LCY, Party organizations. The 1953 constitution endorsed the partial abandonment of centralism, reinforced the autonomy of republics, and introduced self-management for many organizations, institutions, hospitals, universities, and enterprises. It was an 'historical turnover' in which 'state-owned and bureaucracy monopoly' conceded the 'larger autonomy of economic and political subjects as well as local and regional communities.'[39]

Although USIS business boomed in the early 1950s, and US–Yugoslav foreign relations were on a stable, even increasing, drift, occasional attacks, both in words and actions, reminded USIS staff in Yugoslavia that this was an ideologically and politically hostile country. In September 1951, *Omladina*, the official organ of the League of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia, became alarmed about tremendous Western infiltration in the Yugoslav press and called for anti-Western pressures on editors. On 20 February 1952, a handmade bomb was thrown at USIS Belgrade, causing fire and material damage. Almost two months later, the Belgrade authorities started an anti-USIS campaign warning YCP members against using the American reading room because of improper, 'bad influence.' Soon after, the politburo member Blagoje Nešković, who the chargé d'affaires Jacob Beam defined as the 'most intolerant communist,' visited the USIS exhibit room and scrutinized every bulletin, map, picture, and display. In the meantime, the Belgrade post acknowledged that the Yugoslav authorities had arrested, and held for twenty-four hours, a Yugoslav woman carrying a copy of the USIS *Bilten* (Radio News Bulletin). The officers interpreted the attacks as a counteraction to a favourable VOA listeners' survey carried out months before. Then, on 22 April, the Foreign Office called Beam for a talk. Jakša Petrić, director of Western Hemisphere and British Commonwealth Affairs, complained about the distribution of *Atomic Energy for War or Peace* pamphlet and 'inappropriate' USIS movies sent to Yugoslav schools.[40]

In the following months, and also in 1953, similar incidents reoccurred. In summer 1952, the Yugoslav authorities prohibited Thereza Mravintz, Zagreb's Cultural Affairs Officer (CAO), from participating in the Novi Vinodolski summer school for English teachers.[41] On 10 March 1953, Milorad Peršić, President of the Yugoslav Federation of Students' Central Committee, criticized those 'reactionary students' who used 'Western propaganda literature' and maintained 'connections with their libraries.'[42] In June, *Duga* and *Omladina*, the first a children's and the second a youth periodical, eliminated Western-supplied materials.[43] *Timok*, Zaječar's newspaper, published an attack on William King, information officer of USIS Belgrade, calling American propaganda 'aggressive,' 'cruel,' 'damaging,' 'insolent,' and 'misusing our

democracy.'[44] Similar tones appeared in *Politika*, which denoted, with heavy-handed and surly humour, USIS visitors as old, ignorant, and anti-regime.[45] Criticism came even from the highest communist ranks. In his speech in Montenegro, Djilas accused 'weaklings and men without character' of spreading 'foreign, bourgeois, anti-socialist, anti-Yugoslav ideas for foreign money.'[46]

Such occasional incidents gravely escalated with the Trieste question. On 8 October 1953, the ambassadors of the United States and United Kingdom announced the end of the military occupation of Zone A (Trieste and surroundings) that would pass to Italy. Yugoslavia reacted immediately by sending troops to its Western borders, bloody protests occurred in Trieste by both nationalities, while formal and spontaneous massive demonstrations gathered in many Yugoslav cities. A Cold War breeze returned between Belgrade and Rome, while sour and harsh anti-American narratives arose again in Yugoslav newspapers. The Trieste question became an international incident that provoked an immediate decline in USIS activities. Nada Apsen, former director of USIS Zagreb, at the time acting as a librarian, recalled: 'the demonstrators gathered around the [USIS] building yelling "Trst je naš!" (Trieste is ours!) and "Dole Papa, dole Rim i Pella skupa s njim!" (Down with the Pope, down with Rome and Pella together with them!); then they threw torches at the library, broke the exhibit windows and threw torches inside, destroying the books and shelves.'[47] Only after the London Memorandum was signed on 5 October 1954, and the new border ratified, did relations return to normality, also thanks to the softer approach of the new Italian Prime Minister Mario Scelba.[48] The Memorandum restored political acceptance of the American Libraries in Belgrade and Zagreb, which counted their damages and the toll taken. And indeed, because the program closed for a while, many funds allotted by the USIA for the fiscal year 1953 were simply returned to Washington.[49]

Resisting American 'propaganda'

> When they wanted to lay accusations against [me] because I am campaigning for Americans, because I said that Tito, now that he is with the Americans, will give a better life to the people and will come over to the West […]. I was in UDBA (security police) for three months and then brought to court. They asked me did I say that, and I said, Yes I did. We are not in 1947 when Tito was with the Russians and they would chop off my head; but we are in 1950, and Tito is with the Americans, and we are no more afraid of you, I said. So, they let me go home.
>
> Letter of a Yugoslav villager to USIS Belgrade, March 1953[50]

From their establishment in the late 1940s, USIS activities in Yugoslavia encountered varying degrees of official political opposition, but the following analysis will show that the reasons for Yugoslav bias and counteractions depended on several key factors: an anti-American attitude based on its Marxist communist ideology, the Yugoslav positioning as a neutralist, independent country in the bloc's competition,

and opposing internal policy views as to what was the 'Yugoslav way to socialism,' especially after the Sixth Congress in 1952.

After the Tito–Stalin split, Yugoslav policymakers needed time to familiarize themselves with the new circumstances where they were deprived of Soviet support, both ideological and economic. Independence remained a Yugoslav prerogative in foreign policy, but their relying on American assistance was hard to accept. As Yugoslav diplomat Cvijeto Job put it, 'Tito never "hived" on the United States, but as a realist statesman, he never threw the US card from his hands.'[51] Nonetheless, this only partially explains Yugoslav apprehension over foreign 'propaganda' during the 1950s and the 1960s. Such a preoccupation persisted despite mounting trends towards openness in Yugoslav society from the mid-1950s onwards that facilitated foreign cultural influence. Among the Yugoslav policymakers troubled by foreign 'propaganda missions,' the Yugoslav secret services or UDBA (Uprava državne bezbednosti, the State Security Administration) expressed the most severe concerns. In fact, a 1953 report emphasized: 'Such American propaganda […] is becoming a huge political problem which we as UDBA, and only with our measures, aren't able to resolve.' It continued: 'The Americans today want to penetrate every pore of our political and social life, especially […] among the youth, throughout schools, universities, organizations of the People's Front, etc. What is more, they are trying to enter the Army and our press.'[52] The State Secretariat of Foreign Affairs articulated similar views: 'The question of [foreign cultural missions in Yugoslavia] must be treated as a high policy. Every measure must be applied to its consequences. […] We think it would be better to have fewer measures, but more decisiveness to carry them out.'[53] Radina Vučetić argues that, after the 1949–50 Yugoslav conciliation with the United States, the USIS in Belgrade and Zagreb operated undisturbed.[54] Yugoslav archival records, on the other hand, reveal a vivid debate, enduring fearfulness, and test control systems that fluctuated over time. At a time when the Yugoslav regime vaunted a high level of consolidation and consent, between 1952 and 1966, several Yugoslav executive agencies struggled for years to find the right counteraction policy to limit foreign propaganda efforts.

And indeed, most of the Yugoslav reports on propaganda from the early 1950s emphasized the lack of law regulations as the 'Achilles heel' in the control of foreign propaganda. The first official attempt in that direction came in 1953 when an inter-committee, composed of members from the Foreign and Internal Affairs Secretariat, produced a report on American, British, and French missions and their 'political propaganda against our country.' The report criticized Yugoslavia's apathy and its laissez-faire attitude, and emphasized the political influence of foreign 'reading rooms and cultural centres.' The inter-committee report depicted a serious problem regarding Yugoslav schools, cultural institutions, 'and even the Army,' which collaborated with the propaganda missions by playing their movies or dispatching their magazines. The Yugoslav policymakers complained about the protests of the diplomatic corps that 'often prevented us from undertaking ulterior restraint.' They objected to the lack of reciprocity since 'for several sacks of books that we import by diplomatic mail on behalf of the Embassy, they import several wagons; for our weekly newsletters

of a few hundred copies, they issue daily bulletins in total circulation of 20,000 copies.'[55] On the other hand, mass organizations like the Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia (SAWPY)[56] and its Commission for Foreign Relations criticized the English teaching courses as 'political propaganda against our country' because they allowed foreign professors to induce Zagreb, Belgrade, and Ljubljana university students by way of 'easy and cheap leisure and jazz music.'[57]

But, contrary to mere declarative intents, UDBA acted promptly in the field to limit the dissemination of American 'propaganda.' On 31 August 1953, after the American cultural missions increased their publications' copies, the secret service intervened covertly in Yugoslav institutions to decrease subscriptions. Of 1,550 active subscriptions, they managed to eliminate around two hundred. Of course, these actions were not always successful. While 1,300 people rejected USIS materials in August 1953, another 1,500 new customers demanded USIS magazines. And despite strong field efforts, the process of combatting American propaganda in rural areas had contradictory results. In Niš, the number of receivers decreased from 200 to twelve, in Svetozarevo from 100 to ten, while elsewhere, like in Kragujevac, Čačak, and Zrenjanin it rose by more than 100 per cent. The fact that the American publications reached even the smallest Yugoslav villages – like Krupanj, Negotin, Sremska Mitrovica, and Titovo Užice, where Yugoslav newspapers did not – made the secret services extremely frustrated. In some rural districts, emphasized the report, villagers talked more 'about life in the USA and England' and felt more 'enthusiastic about the degree of Western agricultural development' than about internal Yugoslav policies. The fact that some receivers of American publications were members of the Party was unacceptable. The report also complained about USIS Zagreb publishing *Bilten* to the tune of 8,000 and the *Agricultural Bulletin* to the tune of 7,000 copies. The Americans, emphasized the UDBA, 'exploited personal contacts with journalists to insert pro-American materials in the Yugoslav press.'[58] Such concerns appeared in almost all secret service investigations. That USIS attracted 'politically very sensitive groups,' like students, professors, and intellectuals, was even more provoking. The UDBA abhorred the book donation program as a means of increasing personal contacts, and it despised the American exhibits at USIS because, according to their view, it affirmed US political and economic superiority and underscored American assistance to Yugoslavia. By attracting more than 4,000 visitors per day, these exhibits implied 'that if Yugoslavia had a similar [capitalist] system, it would enjoy all the benefits of it.'[59]

Yugoslav employees at USIS posts were victims of UDBA pressures as well. Another 1953 report defined Belgrade's PAO Buttles as the 'the biggest enemy of Yugoslavia in the American Embassy' because his employees, like Slavko and Radmila Todorović, were monarchist and anti-Yugoslav reactionaries.[60] Over the years, USIS local employees often suffered harassment, some of them were briefly jailed, while during the 'Trieste riots' they were even socially marginalized for being 'associated with the Americans.' The early Yugoslav employees in Belgrade were fierce anti-communists, looking with sympathy to the United States and with great suspicion at their own government, recalls Petar Nikolić. They belonged to the

pre-war middle and higher bourgeoisie and aristocracy; many of them had relatives shot and their property confiscated after the war. 'I remember those old ladies in elegant and somewhat aristocratic outfits coming to work with a poodle, some of them very troubled because the communists nationalized their family enterprises. A lady called Ruža Todorović was such a woman, always wearing a cocktail dress and with fresh coiffure.'[61] Working for the American Center in Belgrade or Zagreb was not an easy task in Yugoslav communist society. Employees often felt overwhelmed by work and the expanding services.[62] Some of them encountered difficulties in finding a job elsewhere. 'I wanted to leave the Library […] because the working hours were tough, but after an unsuccessful search, I gave up. And our phone was tapped until 1990,' Zdenka Nikolić, librarian in Zagreb, recalls.[63] On the other hand, USIS provided higher salaries, and female employees were sometimes granted fashionable outfits from the United States.[64]

In the early 1950s, Yugoslav policymakers defended the restrictions on foreign cultural missions, even if in a veiled manner, by affirming Yugoslav independence in internal affairs and neutrality in foreign policy. Balancing between restrictions and relaxation was part of the Yugoslav approach, and it was due to gradual liberalization trends in Yugoslav political life between 1948 and 1953. Between the Fifth and the Sixth Congress of the YCP (1948–52), the Yugoslav leadership conceived the idea of a self-managed socialist society. Slovenian leaders Edvard Kardelj and Boris Kidrič envisaged an economic reform that would strengthen the autonomy of the working councils and leave the enterprises, while remaining state-owned, to partially dispose of their profits.[65] For Boris Kidrič, 'These changes would put the enterprises in freer market competition where, exempted from state planning, they would gain profit.'[66] In the meantime, other cracks appeared following the Yugoslav abandonment of the Stalinist line. In 1951, the Fourth Central Committee Plenum condemned the 'dogmatic politics of education,' while in 1952 the Congress of Writers expanded the framework for freer 'intellectual and spiritual production.' However, by accepting the self-management conceptions, so argues Croatian historian Dušan Bilandžić, the Yugoslav leaders created a discrepancy between existing social relations built on autocratic and centralistic assumptions and the new anti-statistic and anti-bureaucracy conceptions of the LCY. And, while according to the spirit of the Sixth Congress, the Party would become an 'educator' and not 'ruler of the masses, many leaders did not know how to act, while others interpreted these trends as power-losing.'[67]

But these liberal trends evolved together with dictatorial practices of power. Between October 1953 and January 1954, one of Yugoslavia's highest Party leaders, Milovan Djilas, published nineteen articles in *Borba* arguing that a new ruling oligarchy formed by Party bureaucrats had established its power in Yugoslavia. Later his thoughts were collected in the first world-renowned Yugoslav dissident bestseller, *The New Class*, that forced him into his first, six-year-long, imprisonment.[68] The Djilas case unveiled the duality of the Yugoslav reform system that, while withdrawing from Stalinism, established an experiment that never abandoned its totalitarian and autocratic tendencies.

Eisenhower's bolder strategy and US public diplomacy

As Kenneth Osgood demonstrates, President Eisenhower significantly expanded every aspect of America's information programs, integrating them into the foreign policy process. Propaganda, media manipulation, and public relations followed Eisenhower's bolder strategy against communism, which resulted in stronger psychological warfare worldwide and, consequently, in USIS posts in Yugoslavia.[69] The President's Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, a fierce anti-communist, wanted to replace the 'static doctrine of containment' with 'roll-back' and 'liberation' for the 'captive nations' of Eastern Europe. Certainly, he was careful to caution against war because, as he declared in a 1952 *Life* article, 'We do not want a series of bloody uprisings and reprisals [in Eastern Europe].' For Dulles, Tito's peaceful separation from Moscow was an important sign. 'We can be confident that within two, five, or ten years,' he argued in the same article, 'substantial parts of the present [communist] world can peacefully regain national independence.' For this reason, Dulles continued the roadway forged by Truman's administration and worked to encourage Yugoslavia's independence from Moscow. The fact that Tito was a communist thoroughly opposed to democracy played no role.[70] During a break in the foreign ministers' meeting in Geneva, in November 1955, Dulles joined Tito at his villa on the Brioni Islands. He remained fascinated by the Marshal and the meetings only enhanced his commitment to supporting Yugoslavia.[71] In the meantime, the Eisenhower administration conceived the 'New Look,' a foreign policy strategy that consisted in a more forceful response to communist aggression and affirmation of US nuclear superiority.[72] More assertively, 'Tito *would* be enticed to join NATO,' he '*would* also be convinced to inspire, if not lead, a Titoist liberation movement in the satellites.'[73]

The 'New Look' influenced USIS strategy in Yugoslavia as well. When, in 1954, Joseph Kolarek became Belgrade's PAO, he was advised to pursue a more compelling policy. Reaching Yugoslav intellectuals, opinion makers, and Party prime leaders became a priority. Kolarek started the so-called Personal Contact File campaign in which each USIS officer, after approaching any influential communist official, would create an information card on his career, interests, attitudes, and friends. Among these, some would be chosen as *Pregled* or *Bilten* recipients, others invited to events at the post. Of course, among others, the highly ranked communists – those who knew where the political decisions were made, by whom, and why – remained the main targets of American public diplomats.[74] Thanks to the first USIA investigation at the Belgrade post of May 1954, produced by Robert Byrnes from the USIA, we know that the 'USIS program was gaining ground within Yugoslavia,' and enjoying good relations between USIS and Embassy staff. The chronic lack of housing facilities was the negative side of the permanence in Belgrade, but it regarded the capital's population as a whole and would persist for decades.[75] In January 1955, the USIA established the Inspection Staff as a successor to the former Foreign Service Inspection Corps of the State Department that would in future provide regular biennial overseas inspections.[76] However, it was only under George Allen, USIA director from 1957 to

1960, that the evaluation of USIS became a high priority. The USIS 1959 inspection, completed in both Belgrade and Zagreb by inspectors Lawrence Morris and Robert Beliveau, presented a complex and fluid situation. 'Yugoslavia must constantly resort to balancing off East against West, and which way the pendulum swings depends upon whether it is her hunger for technology or her fear of becoming a "battleground of the Cold War".' The report stressed that when American cultural material was 'satisfying Yugoslav hunger for new technologies' it was permissible, but then controls were tightened when the USIS reminded of Russian and Chinese totalitarian practices.[77] Yugoslav balancing between East and West became a centrepiece of its foreign policy, especially after Stalin died in March 1953 and the Soviets extended a hand of reconciliation. The latter led to the Soviet–Yugoslav rapprochement that culminated in the signing of the Belgrade (1955) and Moscow (1956) Declarations.[78] For Yugoslav foreign policy leaders, the mid-1950s meant a search for alternatives, so Tito shifted towards Third World nations with which he engaged in intense personal diplomacy activities. At the 1956 Brioni Conference with Nehru and Nasser, Tito explored options to bipolar bloc politics, and shaped, in the final document, the conceptual guidelines for non-alignment, namely peaceful cooperation, anti-colonialism, and disarmament.[79] Non-alignment, as Phil Tiemeyer suggests, 'allowed Yugoslavia to forge deep political ties and economic relations with similarly situated countries in the Global South,' but, more than anything, it offered Yugoslavia the opportunity to place itself at the 'world's crossroads between East, West, and South.'[80]

For USIS, this inevitably caused a sense of disorientation. As Walter Roberts, Belgrade's PAO in the early 1960s, remembers the Yugoslav Foreign Office telling him in 1960, 'They told us, "confidentially," that this was done to rein in the Soviets. I personally had no doubt they told the Soviets that they did it in order to rein in the Americans.'[81] Roberts's point correctly underscores what the 1959 investigation report mentioned as Soviet pressure. 'They have examined,' noted Morris, 'the books on the shelves of the USIS Library in Belgrade,' and protested to the Yugoslav authorities on 'dissemination in a friendly country of anti-Soviet propaganda.' USIS staff rightly felt that they had to balance between advancements and retreats, as 'we never know how far we can go.' In other words, the game was 'to determine the point at which the other will be provoked to drastic action.' The USIA's primary cultural focus was on bringing about the process of 'first true understanding, then sympathy and finally adaptation,' to weaken the Soviet position in Yugoslav society, and by US economic aid to keep the Yugoslav 'standard of living rising above that of the satellite countries' in order 'to show the Yugoslavs themselves the advantages of dealing with the West.'[82] The 1959 Country Plan, approved by the USIA in September of the same year, emphasized four major tasks: to explicitly encourage Yugoslav independence; to explain the democratic motivations of Washington's foreign policy; to demonstrate US political, economic, and cultural dynamism, and freedom; and to set out a peaceful and prosperous future assured by US scientific advancements. For the first time, the Plan foresaw the Monthly Themes, projects on which the entire USIS team had to work and shape its exhibits. The *Pregled* periodical that started in 1958 would reflect, in smiley and cheerful tones, themes related to the American way of life – from education to university;

from the benefits of the free enterprise system, the supermarkets and the advertising industry, to the mass media; from the social welfare services, to the advantages of the American bipartisan system. Even though USIA materials were poorly accepted on Yugoslav national radio and television, Inspector Morris evaluated the American program in Yugoslavia as being 'developed with vigour and imagination,' appraised the PAO attitude as assertive and the relationships with Yugoslav leaders as mostly positive. Above all, US public diplomacy was 'contributing to a gradual process of westernization in Yugoslavia' and the USIS penetrating among influential Yugoslavs and the Party's top bureaucracy.[83]

Such goals were achieved with a detailed persuasion program crafted at USIA headquarters and adapted to local audiences. The Agency pursued psychological objectives capable of influencing 'attitudes and behaviours,' in order to realize political purposes 'through the resources available at USIS.' For every country, policymakers identified Priority Target Audience Groups considered capable of influencing the country's political and social structure.[84] Basically, the USIA distinguished between three types of leaders: opinion creators, 'whose prestige causes them to influence the opinion of the group'; controllers of communication, in charge of 'a group's special channels'; and decision-makers – also defined as prime movers – those 'empowered to act for the group.' The public diplomacy actions themselves embraced three types of operations, such as direct operations focused through the mass media, indirect operations towards the communication leaders, and operations seeking to influence the leaders.[85] How did the USIS library manage to achieve this kind of influence? The 'USIS libraries,' argues Richard Arndt, 'had slow-acting influence.'[86] They were special-purpose libraries as they selected materials and designed services to reach certain reader groups. In contrast to public libraries in charge of expanding their book collection, USIS proposed true circulating libraries where new collections from Washington substituted the old ones, usually then donated to museums, universities, libraries, or cultural leaders. In such a way, ideas took individual, uncertain, everyday life paths through people capable of taking political or economic actions, or simply transmitting information. But USIS was also a community centre serving local needs that incarnated 'a visible U.S. presence and an institutional base for furthering U.S. objectives.'[87] In a way, the USIS was a multitasking centre. Besides routine library activities, the American Centers organized movie evenings and lectures, arranged thematic exhibits, produced radio broadcasts, and distributed books and leaflets. The officers in Belgrade and Zagreb organized translations of American authors, coordinated the arrival of American classical artists and jazz performers, welcomed US specialists, and searched for candidates for the exchange programs. Of course, this meant, or at least required, some personnel holding broad skill competencies, from public relations, press and publication, library, film and exhibition management, to radio programming and exchanges. Largely staffed by female librarians – in 1964, 70 per cent of USIS Zagreb employees were women – the American centres personified domesticity and 'accessibility to all.'[88]

This was especially important in Yugoslavia where the media remained under strict government control, leaving culture as a relatively free channel. USIS libraries

owned large collections of periodicals, publications, leaflets, films, and photos, as well as radio receivers, production and recording equipment, film strips and projectors. Yugoslav cultural leaders, academics, film producers, painters, writers, and students loved coming and working at USIS. As Sonja Bašić, professor emeritus of Zagreb University, recalls: 'In a certain way, we went there like on a pilgrimage, the place was so important.'[89] It 'was a vanguard home for Belgrade's intellectual circles,' confirmed Petar Nikolić, a former employee of USIS Belgrade.[90] Many, nowadays famous, Croatian cultural leaders were assiduous visitors of USIS from the 1950s onwards. Among them, the linguist Stjepko Težak; the writer and literature professor Tomislav Sabljak; the writers Branislav Glumac and Luko Paljetak; the painters Josip Vaništa and Mirko Rački, and sculptor Milena Lah; the composer Bruno Bjelinski; the film director Obrad Gluščević (whose wife Maja worked in the library), and his colleague Krsto Papić; the cinematographer Goran Trbuljak; the music critics Dražen Vrdoljak and Mladen Raukar; the lawyer Vladimir Ibler; the art historian and academic professor Vera Horvat-Pintarić; the ballet artists and married couple Ana Roje and Oskar Harmoš; the jazz musicians Boško Petrović and Dubravko Majnarić; Đurđica Barlović, the first singer of the pop group *Novi Fosili*, later a soloist; the deaf-mute mime actor Zlatko Omerbegović; the writer Igor Mandić; the well-known academic and intellectual Predrag Matvejević; professors of the English Department like Željko Bujas, author of the major English–Croatian dictionary; prominent doctors, priests, and so on. Most of them belonged to the young generation, while communist-oriented scientists rarely, if ever came to the American Center. This fundamental detail was confirmed by all the former employees of USIS Yugoslavia I spoke to: 'Some of them came only once, and fearfully asked to be cancelled from the sign-up sheet,' recalls Zdenka Nikolić.[91] The former Library director, Nada Apsen, remembers personalities such as Franjo Durst, the famous gynaecologist and professor; scientists from the Meteorological Institute; the painter Ivo Vojvodić, from Dubrovnik; the directors of Strossmayer Gallery, Ljubo Babić and Vinko Zlamalik; the political scientist Štefica Deren-Antoljak; Anton Bauer, former director of Glyptoteque Museum (the HAZU sculpture museum); Radovan Ivančević, art historian and professor; Radovan Vukadinović, professor of international law and senior fellow, in 1970–71, at the Research Institute on Communist Affairs at Columbia University; the jazz conductor, composer, and drummer Silvestar Silvije Glojnarić – and many more.[92] Vida Ognjenović, Serbian theatre director, writer, diplomat, and, in 1989, among the founders of the Democratic Party, the first opposition party in Serbia, shared the USIS experience in Belgrade, together with film director Branko Bauer, Belgrade students, and Olja Ivanjicki, a Serbian contemporary artist who, thanks to a Ford Foundation cultural exchange, brought pop art to Yugoslavia and inspired a whole generation of young artists.[93]

Certainly, USIS's success in attracting the Yugoslav cultural vanguard, academia, and intellectual leaders relied on distinctive communication approaches. Informal, interpersonal contacts with individuals played a major role, but then meetings, conferences, and lectures delivered even stronger messages of American democracy, personal freedoms, wealth, or artistic creativity. The USIS extension service – materials

distributed to the republics' executive governments, councils for science and culture, universities, high schools, cultural institutes, newspapers and publishing houses, theatres and film studios – conquered Yugoslav 'hearts and minds' outside the library perimeter. From Zagreb, USIS covered Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, while Belgrade concentrated its efforts on Serbia, Macedonia, and Montenegro. Above all, Voice of America attracted massive, delighted audiences. USIS owed its success to the way ideas were presented – in a simple but fascinating manner, centred on 'one important basic idea,' understandable to large audiences, even the less educated, and appealing to emotions and intellect. According to Washington's policymakers, USIS messages had to 'give hope for the future,' 'strengthen foreign countries' national pride,' and 'avoid giving the impression of [US] self-interest.'[94] Backed by USIA guidelines, in the field USIS spread carefully constructed cultural narratives of freedom, progress, and abundance that introduced new, politically challenging points of reference, but which ultimately, as Laura Belmonte emphasized, safeguarded US national security.[95]

Stopping American 'propaganda'

The Yugoslav authorities reacted quite convincingly to USIS's bolder strategy of the Eisenhower era. The secret services continued to survey 'hostile activities' and 'enemy propaganda,' condemning many students that were in touch with the 'foreign reading rooms.'[96] The SAWPY went even further. In 1956, the agency created an ad hoc commission to investigate the statutes of the information centres, coordinate their activities, and assess if they were pursuing Yugoslav interests. The SAWPY report acknowledged that foreign publications were not directly attacking Yugoslavia, but instead delivered 'large scale anti-communist propaganda.'[97] Soon after, the Foreign Office advisory board issued a new regulation on foreign press, publications, and books that could now be distributed in Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, and Rijeka, only by the state enterprise *Jugoslovenska knjiga*, and in numbers decided by the Secretariat of Information and the Foreign Office. Content supporting the criminal and harmful education of the young and adverse views towards Yugoslavia were forbidden.[98] A 1957 survey on *Politika*, *Borba*, and other newspapers, demonstrated that foreign press materials, including those of USIS, were spreading sensational, unaesthetic, and tasteless views, and developing feelings of 'inferiority and colonialism,' so they were strongly disapproved for use.[99]

Almost concurrently, discussions at the League of Communists of Yugoslavia's ideological commission, chaired by Veljko Micunović, a leading communist and government member, affirmed in more conciliatory tones that cultural contacts with foreign countries cannot be avoided. Yet, the commission requested that tougher restrictions should be applied and urged to create an institution that would perform as a foreign cultural centre.[100] The Belgrade Cultural Centre (Kulturni centar Beograd), founded as an information-propaganda institution to neutralize foreign propaganda activities in 1956, began to operate in 1957, and then expanded in 1958. While planned as a reading room supplying foreign periodicals, the Belgrade Center remained at an

infant stage for years – even though provided with a photo, audio, film, and art section – mostly for financial reasons, and there was little public interest since its services were charged.[101]

In 1957, USIS Belgrade had already published around 20,000 copies of *Bilten*, while the movies section retained sixty projectors and 8,000 movies. For the Yugoslav authorities, such 'long-term, intensive, and organized' propaganda needed an ideological counteraction 'to affirm our views and our praxis, to paralyze the ideological influence' from the United States (but also other Western countries and the Soviet Union).[102] The Yugoslav authorities further enhanced restrictions over foreign propaganda in late 1958. First, in September, when the Foreign Office obliged USIS publications (and those of all the other countries) to be approved by the Republic's Internal Affairs. The new provision also compelled USIS to publicize film events only by way of personal, and not mail, invitation. Lastly, the posts were forbidden to donate printing paper to Yugoslav publishing houses for the publication of American books in translation. Then, in November, further restrictions were applied. All published or imported press material had to be sent to Internal Affairs. USIS Belgrade sent two pamphlets, *The USA on Disarmament* and *The Reward of Independence*, which were both rejected. The new regulation obliged USIS to report the names of the English teaching students to the authorities, to ask for movies to be approved by the Federal Commission for Film Review, and to rent them only through the Federal or Republican Center for Cultural-Education Film (or, in case of the capital, through the Belgrade Cultural Centre). Even if many Yugoslav institutions continued to borrow directly from the American posts, the restriction nevertheless reduced such activities by more than 30 per cent.[103]

The Second Plenum of the Party's Central Committee of November 1959 accused foreign 'enemy propaganda' of operating through foreigners' visits to industrial production plants, through Yugoslav citizens on exchanges abroad, and through the foreign cultural centres.[104] Then, in late 1960, the Secretariat of Information presented a draft of the Press Law and other Views of Information to the Federal Assembly.[105] The law proposal declared that importing foreign press was free, except for materials 'explicitly destined for the Yugoslav people' and, therefore, 'propaganda.'[106] Articles 67–79 sanctioned the restrictions introduced two years earlier, including a new prescription that forbade negative criticism of one country to another, targeted specifically at American critics of the Soviet Union. Articles 100–115 obliged the foreign cultural centres to register with the Yugoslav government and administrate expenses and activities. In addition, they were prohibited from being placed within a diplomatic mission, and the control of their movie program was delegated to the Secretariat of Information, now responsible for the permissions of the movie screenings at USIS. Finally, article 52 established the criteria for censorship by prescribing that political offenses 'against the people and state' of Yugoslavia, materials 'abusing moral' and those offending 'the citizens and insulting the public order and peace,' should be censored.[107] The law was approved and became operational on 9 November 1960, with the information centres given six months to adapt and negotiate the new rearrangements with the Foreign Office.[108]

But, as I explain in the following pages, the implementation was neither completely successful, nor easy.

The Yugoslav Press Law induced the USIA to radically rethink its cultural strategy in Yugoslavia. On the one hand, USIS officers were convinced that the motivation for 'harassment' of USIS posts was Yugoslav 'hyper-sensitivity vis-à-vis Russians and Chinese,' and their way of showing 'that all countries must obey the same laws.'[109] This was certainly one reason for Yugoslav anxiety towards foreign propaganda. Another was the mounting trend of cultural imports in Yugoslavia, not only from the United States. As Francesca Rolandi shows, Italian pop melodies started conquering the Yugoslav musical arena from the late 1950s on, when the Sanremo festival became a symbol of modernity. From 1957, the authorities permitted foreign tourists to enter Yugoslavia. Soon, they relaxed the border crossings with Italy, and by the end of the decade Yugoslavs started to shop in Trieste. Western consumer products and practices, from music discs to nylon socks, erupted in Yugoslav daily life.[110] Larger cultural freedoms were recognized in the Embassy's reports. Secretary Stephen Palmer describes his conversations with painter Milica Lozanić-Petrović and vanguard sculptors Ana Bešlić and Jovan Soldatović in 1956, that proved the privileged position of Yugoslav artists to 'express themselves in the way they wish.' On the other hand, writers and filmmakers, since they produced for large audiences, were frequently censored.[111] The Seventh Party Congress of 1958 promised to 'emancipate creative arts from dogmatism' and pledged 'to exempt art and science from being used as instruments of political interests.'[112] Even *Politika* and *Borba* defended modernist art against the attacks of the 'dogmatists' and requested democracy for Yugoslav art.[113] This gradual cultural liberalization endorsed USIS work in the field. In 1958, USIS Belgrade created *Pregled* [*Horizon*], a new colourful periodical whose contents improved the engaging narratives of American freedom, democracy, and economy, and in which it looked like American citizens lived full, happy lives in a classless society and shared the economic bounty. By the end of the decade, USIS strategy certainly became subtler and more target-centred. The 1959 Country Plan defined Yugoslav students as 'the only true hope for greater democratization,' the art leaders and personalities as 'those best prepared to listen,' and the Yugoslav managerial class as those who made vital decisions, but possessed little technical knowledge and education.[114] It was clear as daylight that it was a 'battle for hearts and minds,' and no surprise that the LCY ideologues, preoccupied with surmounting liberal trends in society, put pressure on foreign propaganda, trying to limit its influence.

Waging public diplomacy in the 1960s

From the early 1960s on, USIA strategy in Yugoslavia became, more than ever, entangled in US–Yugoslav bilateral affairs, the evolving 'Yugoslav experiment' with its bolder strategy of non-alignment, and the developments of Cold War confrontation. In January 1961, John F. Kennedy became president of the United States. In his inaugural address of 20 January, he promised to defend 'freedom in its hour of maximum

danger' and 'struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself.'[115] Kennedy replaced Eisenhower's deterrent strategy over the nuclear arms threat with his 'Flexible Response' doctrine to 'extend the means available to deter undesirable shifts in the balance of power.' Considering Eisenhower's foreign policy establishment slow, bloated, and unwieldy, he resolved to 'cut back the National Security Council staff' as the main national security decision-making body, and rely on direct contacts with individual departments and task forces.[116]

Like his predecessors, Kennedy believed that American-style institutions and values, and the free market, would enable other nations to become more prosperous, modern, stable, and friendly.[117] Immediately after becoming president, he nominated journalist Edward Murrow to lead the USIA. By the time George Allen left the directorship, the Agency was in good 'shape.' The USIA had 200 posts in eighty-five countries; it employed 3,771 Americans and a further 6,881 foreign nationals, while the VOA daily audience was around fifty million. The USIA director sat on the National Security Council (NSC), attended cabinet meetings, and by 1960 was meeting the President at the White House every three weeks. Allen's leadership gave a positive shift to the Agency by maintaining excellent relations with Congress, initiating jazz ambassadors to go abroad, and pushing for broader English teaching activities.[118] Both Kennedy and Murrow had very clear ideas on how to use information abroad, and were interested in renewing the American image with television. Indeed, Murrow was familiar with its power and the impact television had on public opinion and policies. In the wake of the McCarthy purges in early 1954, as the anchorman of CBS, he initiated the *See It Now* series (remembered for their 'Good night, and good luck' closing) by which he contributed to discrediting McCarthy's tactics in rooting out communist elements within the government.[119] In Murrow's years (1961–64), the USIA played a role in major foreign policy stories such as Berlin, Cuba, and Vietnam. The agency's research department boomed under Leo Crespi, its polls found wide circulation and, every day, President Kennedy read USIA's digest of world editorials. Nonetheless, Murrow's era demonstrated growing incompatibility between USIA and VOA, since Murrow expected the broadcasts to be able to manipulate its content as policy dictated. Murrow believed the Agency should not just inform but persuade, and personally oversaw propaganda operations during the tensest Cold War moments: Operation Mongoose (a covert sabotage program of Castro's regime in Cuba), the disastrous Bay of Pigs incident, and the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962.[120] To Murrow's misfortune, executives left USIA 'out of the loop' in one of the most precarious covert actions, the landings at the Bay of Pigs. According to Nicholas Cull, 'Murrow spent much of the next three years recovering from the implications of that single decision.'[121]

Under Murrow's directorship, USIA produced the most ambitious Country Plan for Yugoslavia that predicted a radically different, leaders-oriented, cultural agenda. Approved in 1962, and released in 1963, the new USIA plan, crafted on the State Department's *Guidelines of U.S. Policy and Operations for Yugoslavia*, emphasized the USIS crucial role to link Yugoslavia to the West. USIS objectives were to 'influence the evolution of Yugoslavia's political, economic, and social institutions along

more democratic and humanistic lines and with increasing association with the West'; and 'to maintain and expand the channels of communication with the Yugoslav people and to use these channels to help them understand the United States' policies.' According to the Plan, the wedge strategy continued to be operational. Even USIS's aim was, after all, 'to assist Yugoslavia to build a firm, secure base of national independence'; to bring the United States the 'maximum benefits' from 'the divisive effects of Yugoslavia's independent status' both upon the international communist movement and upon other Soviet-dominated Eastern European governments. The Plan took a sharp leader's shift. Yugoslav leaders were 'most likely to be influenced towards a true understanding of American systems and policies,' and they could, consequently, 'influence others.' More specifically, the Plan recommended that they be persuaded to promote objective information about the United States. It envisioned that USIS would enlarge its policy of cultural contacts with Yugoslav policymakers, editors, publishers, and spokespersons. The USIS goal, stated the Plan unambiguously, was to influence Yugoslav government and intellectual leaders to adapt Tito's regime to Western values and standards.[122]

The Country Plan enlisted 2,000 Yugoslav leaders to whom the USIS would send unrestricted, 'un-sanitized' bulletins. This group included parliamentarians and assembly members (from the Federal People's Assembly, the republican assemblies, and those of the autonomous regions, Vojvodina and Kosovo); the executive councils' leaders (from the Federal Executive Council and the republican executive councils); ministries, agencies, and commission leaders (officials at the Foreign Office and Secretaries of States offices, republican secretaries and undersecretaries, and presidents and secretaries of commissions and committees at all government levels); and press and information leaders (editorial boards of newspapers, radio, and television).[123] The new plan urged the enlargement of the US Foreign Leader Program that had commenced in 1958, and realization of the Fulbright agreement whose negotiation started the same year (concluding in 1964).[124] Indeed, while the Yugoslav Press Law reduced USIS margins of freedom, it inspired a new shift towards a leader-oriented policy with greater emphasis on Yugoslav politicians, academics, intellectuals, and opinion makers that would provoke unpredictable and controversial outcomes in the decades to come.

Applying and resisting the Yugoslav Press Law

At the time USIA approved the new Country Plan for Yugoslavia, Yugoslav–American bilateral relations were at a serious impasse. Tito delivered a harsh anti-colonial speech at the UN's fifteenth General Assembly in New York, in September 1960.[125] It was a statement of non-alignment that would, in years to come, become a sort of Yugoslav recognition flag – its 'nation-building' course, as William Zimmerman put it.[126] A year after New York, in early September 1961, Tito gathered in Belgrade India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru; Indonesia's first president, Sukarno; Egypt's second president, Gamal Abdel Nasser; Ghana's first president Kwame Nkrumah; and twenty other state delegations. Opened just two weeks after the Bay of Pigs

invasion, and Soviet Yuri Gagarin's space success, the First Non-Aligned Conference in Belgrade only inflated Washington's anti-communist mood.[127] Tito's anti-Western and anti-American conference speech left Ambassador Kennan constrained. 'Tito's statements on Berlin and on the Soviet resumption of tests,' telegrammed Kennan to Washington, 'came as a deep disappointment […]. The passage on Berlin contains no word that could not have been written by Khrushchev; and that on [Soviet resumption of nuclear testing], is weaker and more pro-Soviet than even those of Nasser and Nkrumah.'[128] Kennan suggested Washington should carefully reflect 'on its implications for our treatment of conference and, in more long-term, our attitude towards the role of Yugoslavs.'[129] But then, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, and Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, Foy Kohler, especially after his reassuring meeting with Ambassador Marko Nikezić on 19 October, calmed the troubled waters, so that the pragmatic line seemed to prevail.[130]

Nonetheless, voices contrary to US softness towards Yugoslavia urged the stopping of economic aid, and anti-communist hardliners in Congress and the Senate prevailed. During the Aid Act voting of 6 June 1962, the US Senate adopted the Frank Lausche (Democrat, Ohio) amendment which restricted American economic aid to all communist countries, including Poland and Yugoslavia. On 12 June, the House's Ways and Means Committee, while considering the Kennedy administration's request for broader authority to negotiate trade agreements, reported legislation (H.R. 1818) that included a provision withdrawing most-favoured-nation (MFN) status from Poland and Yugoslavia. The bill passed the House on 28 June by a vote of 298 to 125. For Yugoslavia, this meant doubling or tripling import tariffs on Yugoslav export commodities. Foreign Secretary Popović and Ambassador Nikezić rushed to meet Rusk, who assured them that such a retreat 'was contrary to the wishes of the Administration.'[131] But the damage was done, and between 1961 and 1963 a Cold War 'breeze' descended on relations between Belgrade and Washington. In a meeting with Rusk, Veljko Mićunović, appointed Yugoslav ambassador in October, expressed 'Yugoslavia's sense of bewilderment and consternation,' and lamented the political harm to 'Yugoslavia's international reputation and prestige,'[132] especially when Yugoslavia was rising as a prominent leader of non-aligned nations. The State Department interpreted Khrushchev's most cordial visit to Tito in October 1962, and Tito's visit to Moscow in December, a result of US–Yugoslav distancing.[133]

Such bilateral relations heavily impacted USIS's activities in Yugoslavia and reinforced already existing resentment. In 1961, Belgrade's City Committee recommended applying the Yugoslav Press Law in order to 'paralyze and limit these [foreign] influences,' and prevent the 'weaknesses of Yugoslav institutions' and 'the lack of communist consciousness.'[134] Several local parties' ideological commissions, acting at Belgrade's surrounding municipalities, excitedly discussed the impact of counterpropaganda measures and the outcome of the Press Law. Savski Venac, Zvezdara, Palilula, Zemun, Stari Grad, Vračar, Novi Beograd, and Voždovac took almost universal positions, and agreed to develop systematic activities to counteract these measures. They warned against 'members of the League of Communists that […] are not able to take a proper attitude towards foreign propaganda and foreigners,'[135] and admonished those

'who continued to visit the reading rooms, receive foreign propaganda publications and participated in various competitions of foreign radio stations,' that 'strong Party measures would be taken.'[136] The local ideological commissions criticized the 'film and entertainment press for spreading a foreign way of life, mentality and traditions,'[137] and emphasized the lack of critical appraisal of young people towards foreign artists and cultural workers. They urged the representatives of *Avala-film*, *Kolo*, *Interfarm*, *Metropola*, *Jugoinvest*, *Automobil-Beograd*, and the other Belgrade enterprises to establish a more severe regulative stance to foreign visitors.[138] Finally, they insisted that all bulletins, publications, and press sent by foreign embassies or cultural posts be returned to senders, or destroyed.[139] Belgrade University's Committee expressed an equally critical attitude by instructing 'students to avoid the foreign reading rooms,'[140] and obliged foreign professors and students on exchanges, wishing to lecture at the university, to ask the Rectorate and State Secretariat for approval.[141]

But for USIS, it was not only a war of words and ideas. The ideological pressures broke out in violent acts over the posts and their users. On 19 May 1961, the Interior Affairs office of Novi Sad called a part-time USIS employee and warned that carrying *Bilten* from the train station to the reading room constituted 'a criminal act.' Ambassador Kennan, while waiting to settle the Press Law question, recommended that *Bilten* for Novi Sad be temporarily discontinued, and instructed the post to stop lending films or projectors. Meanwhile, Interior authorities in Belgrade questioned the Yugoslav CAO assistant in a two-hour interview. On 6 June, 'a local employee at the reading room in Belgrade observed individuals' from 'the Interior who have appeared from time to time in the past.' Two days later, Kennan decided to temporarily close the post, waiting for Yugoslav assurances that the 'American reading rooms' were 'not contravening Yugoslav law.'[142] This highly embarrassing situation was resolved when both parties signed an agreement on 14 June 1961.[143]

Nevertheless, tensions resurfaced again in 1962 when the Municipal Committee of Palilula strongly criticized a Belgrade professor and Party member who received US publications by mail, and whose wife was employed at the US Embassy.[144] In January 1962, the authorities stopped a telegraphist from the Belgrade train station 'because he participated in the prize contest of the American reading room.'[145] Two months later, this time in Zagreb, Danilo Pejović, a philosophy professor at Zagreb University who was a Party member, Djilas sympathizer, and former Ford grantee, was warned by UDBA to stop contacting USIS Zagreb officers, and prohibited from having luncheons with Ambassador Kennan if not via official visits. In his last conversation with Consul Joseph Godson, Pejović recalled how the Consulate telephones were 'tapped' and all 'mail inside [the] country' was opened. While Godson concluded: 'It was a sad meeting and an even sadder parting, a sharp reminder of unrelenting totalitarian police control of its citizens.'[146] In June, another incident occurred, this time when Tomislav Kuzmanović, an art student at Sarajevo University and frequent visitor of the Consulate's magazine facilities, was called to a four-hour session with the Party's faculty members. He was strictly warned against any further use of American magazines among other students because the exhibition of *House and Garden*, *Holiday*, *Look*, and *Arts* would 'make them prone to make comparisons between

life in Yugoslavia and life in the United States. Yet, while shaken by the interview, Kuzmanović 'retained sufficient courage to borrow two more art magazines.'[147] Periodic harassment persisted until early 1963 when, in January, Branko Karadjole, assistant director for the Western Hemisphere at the Internal Affairs, warned the Embassy that some *Bilten* articles on Cuba, published days before, presented 'controversial, slanted, and one-sided cold war material for broad public dissemination.' The issue was not banned, because it was the first violation of the law, but Karadjole requested more circumspection for the future.[148]

How did USIS cope with the Yugoslav Press Law and coercion on the field? On the one hand, compared to other Eastern European countries, Yugoslavia permitted a relatively wide range of freedoms for USIS. But among all the foreign missions, USIS was the most determined in avoiding the new Yugoslav regulations. USIS officers insisted on contacting movie users directly, and were very tenacious in sending propaganda materials to Yugoslav industrial plants, even after several had been returned. With the authorities, they insisted on individual deregulation, temporary permits, and ad hoc negotiations.[149] To prevent financial supervision by the Yugoslav Information Secretariat, USIS transferred its financial sector to the Embassy. When, henceforth, USIS signed the agreement with the Yugoslav government in June, the number of registered field officers dropped from 108 to 22.[150]

To remedy the consequences of the Press Law, USIS started to negotiate with the Yugoslav government. Walter Roberts, a prominent US public diplomat who served at Voice of America from the late 1940s, and worked for the USIA from its inception, arrived in Belgrade in the spring of 1960 to operate as PAO, where he remained until 1966. 'If you read that press law from A to Z,' he recalls in an interview, 'it meant the end of USIS,' but not of the British Council, because the British Council was registered as a Yugoslav 'non-governmental organization.' 'USIS could never have done that,' underlined Roberts: 'I personally was convinced that my days were numbered, […] because the press law denied diplomatic status to any information or cultural program. […] And of course, we bitterly protested, but in vain.' Then, in Roberts' words, we 'started negotiations about how to make our program livable,' during which 'we used certain gimmicks, like putting an American resident in Belgrade in charge of our library. And as weeks and the months went by, the Yugoslavs became less interested in enforcing it. So, within a year or so, we were back to where we were before.'[151] Thanks to such field lobbying, USIS in Yugoslavia never separated from the Embassy and the Consulate and continued to act independently from Yugoslav government intrusion. Kennan pushed Tito to transform the Press Law into 'a non-law,'[152] and by the mid-1960s circumstances returned to normal.

Relaxed bilateral relations between Belgrade and Washington helped USIS to restore regular activities. In 1963, Secretary Dean Rusk visited Tito in May, and afterwards intervened with Kennedy on the question of sales of military spare parts to the Yugoslav Army.[153] Tito's first official visit to the United States on 17 October 1963, which was Kennedy's last meeting with a foreign statesman, sanctioned a good partnership and prepared ground for the Fulbright agreement with Yugoslavia, signed in November 1964. In the aftermath of the Kennedy–Tito meeting, Congress withdrew

the MFN restrictions towards Yugoslavia.[154] In 1966, USIS was back to increasing trends. Compared to other foreign centres it supplied record numbers of printed materials (2.6 million of 3.7 million foreign printed materials distributed in 1965), frequently conducted public mail opinion surveys (angering the Yugoslav ideological commissions), and *Pregled* had the highest circulation of all foreign publications.[155] In the late 1960s, it would conquer many Yugoslav 'hearts and minds' and entice important societal changes.

The changing experiment

It was palpable to USIS from the late 1950s that profound changes were occurring in Titoist Yugoslavia. When, in May 1959, 3,000 Zagreb University students demonstrated because of bad food conditions at the university 'mensa' – the mess hall – the police blocked their way through the city and physical fights broke out. Two people died, while 150 students were injured, often suffering heavy blows from police truncheons, and many being arrested.[156] Following the demonstrations, some lost scholarships, and others were expelled from the university and Party. Shortly after, similar protests broke out in Belgrade, Skopje, and Rijeka. None of these were questioning communist power or inciting any political alternatives. But, for the US Consular officers, these first autonomous, non-governmental protests were deciphered as a signal of disagreement and dissidence, and, therefore, of liberalization. These demonstrations led to arrests and imprisonments, proving how the police authorities considered them politically dangerous.[157]

Liberalization occurred more evidently in literature but also in the newly approved 1963 constitution. In 1960, Miroslav Krleža, a prominent Croatian writer and Tito's friend, while welcoming Jean-Paul Sartre in Yugoslavia, proudly accentuated that the Seventh Congress 'liberated art from even the most insignificant administrative influence.'[158] Yugoslav artists, writers, and journalists were 'prohibited from making direct attacks upon, or from questioning, the domestic and foreign policy of the Tito government,' but they enjoyed a 'measure of freedom unparalleled in any other communist-ruled country, except Poland.'[159] The 1963 constitution institutionalized self-management practices in society, extended human and civil rights, and established constitutionally guaranteed court procedures.

The societal changes and the new regime's assets influenced the Yugoslav perception of the world outside. USIS results were already observable. Interviews of thirty Yugoslav refugees conducted in 1960 and 1961 showed that young male workers with medium income regarded 'freedom' in predominantly economic terms and the United States as an 'example of a democratic country.' Their image of America was shaped by American movies and VOA broadcasts. Indignant about the 'absence of political rights and freedom,' 'party control over life, and favouritism for party members' in Yugoslavia, they depicted American life where 'almost everyone has his home and television set,' 'You live like a human being,' and 'Freedom.'[160] In 1964, the Belgrade Institute of Social Science conducted a public opinion survey asking, 'Who is Yugoslavia's best-friend country?' While the United States came after the

Soviet Union, United Arab Republic, and India (a high score, given the presumable political caution of respondents), the results demonstrated that the 'younger the respondents, the more they favoured the United States and other capitalist countries.' Moreover, the majority replied that they were not politically active, nor wanted to become LCY members.[161]

Between March 1968 and January 1969, social scientists from Columbia University and Belgrade's Institute of Social Science worked together to research Yugoslav opinion leaders. They included federal legislators, administrators, mass organization leaders, enterprises directors, economic planners, and advisers, as well as editors from newspapers, television networks, radio stations, and publishing houses. The research involved leading journalists and commentators, intellectuals and university professors, leading literary writers, theatrical and film directors – a total of 517 individuals. The top twenty positions – the President and cabinet members – were excluded. The findings were remarkable. For instance, members of the federal government had 'conformist' attitudes to economic development, less propensity for freedom of criticism, and were less aware of public social criticism. On the other hand, participants at regional and local levels of power were more likely to endorse freedom of criticism and be more aware of the public mood. The most notable finding, however, was that in a society operating under a one-party government, influential leaders held a wide range of opinions and enjoyed a high level of mass media output and policy involvement.[162] This public opinion survey was comprised of the same group of leaders that USIS regarded as its primary target. They recognized the contribution of lower–higher hierarchy relations in Yugoslavia already in the early 1960s. 'We have evidence,' stated the 1963 USIS Country Plan, 'that leaders at the lower level exercised quite some influence on the higher echelon,' so that 'we had been able to convince at least lower echelons in the hierarchy of the necessity of continued close cultural relations with the West.' This was reflected in Yugoslav journalism as well. During the same period, USIS noted more objective news reporting, a distinction between news and editorials, and more openness towards foreign press agencies like Associated Press, United Press International, Reuters, Agence France Presse, and the USIS press service as well.[163] The Central Committee's ideological commission recognized this same trend as it affected Yugoslav journalism with 'market consumer mentality,' 'bourgeois aristocratism,' and the prevalent interest in Western over Eastern European countries.[164]

Despite occasional negative behaviour, USIS felt constructive when approaching lower ranked Yugoslav politicians and Party administrators. In 1966, USIS librarians undertook a large tour of Yugoslav cities and national libraries in Bosnia, Herzegovina, Dalmatia, Montenegro, and Serbia. Compared to the 1950s, the reception was warm, and it seemed 'that an old and enduring ice was broken.' At the National Library of Cetinje in Montenegro, Niko Martinović, the Library's director and president of the Yugoslav Association of Librarians, made a public toast to USIS, thanking them 'for your help to all Yugoslav libraries over these years.'[165] Compared to the severe and stern rhetoric of many Yugoslav ideological commissions, from the top to the bottom of the hierarchy, Martinović's standpoint seems opposed. It nonetheless illustrates the Yugoslav dichotomy between its projection outside – as a non-aligned leader – and its

internal identity, which struggled between 'open' self-management socialism and the defence of a one-party dictatorship.

Yugoslav dichotomy and US public diplomacy

The Yugoslavs modified the Press Law in 1966 and 1968, but articles regarding foreign propaganda remained untouched. For instance, the 1968 amendments gave individual Yugoslav citizens the right to initialize a press publication, but expanded the reasons for prohibiting one that was deemed an 'attack on the social realities established by the Constitution, the social self-management, […] and the violation of the honour and reputation of the nationalities of Yugoslavia.'[166] Such elusive definitions left the doors open for political manipulation and invisible boundaries of censorship.

Yugoslav balancing between openness towards the foreign world and the defence of its communist power emerged plainly in the approach towards American influence. 'We will never be able to solve propaganda. It is an octopus with thousands of tentacles […]. But we can do a lot if we lead our propaganda in the direction that will, in a certain way, paralyze what we don't want to […] exist,' stated Belgrade's City Committee in 1968.[167] The sharpest restrictions applied to Party members. 'Communists that participated in the contests of foreign radio stations, or who received gifts from foreigners or visited foreign reading rooms' were expelled.[168]

The Federation's bureaucracy and its institutions, associations, organs, agencies, leagues, trade unions, councils, and committees were not easily controlled. The ideological commissions felt that much had been done in the legislation, but the trends were intensifying, not diminishing. The Yugoslavs suspected that the sophisticated, long-term 'ideological influence' of American social norms, ideals, and moral concepts would change the outlook of young people and university students. They were irritated by the US's 'considerable cultural arrangements with organizations and individuals,' and by American infiltration of television, in the musical and entertainment press, film enterprises, and children's literature.[169] Against these penetrations, the Central Committee urged a stronger ideological battle. It was necessary to 'bring more order and intensify control.'[170] The ideological commission appointed a permanent working group at the SAWPY, the Commission for Political and Ideological-Educational Work, to monitor foreign propaganda. This added to other institutions and agencies which dealt with foreign propaganda – Internal Affairs, the Information Secretariat, the Commission for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, the Federal Secretariat for Education, the Office of Technical Assistance, and the Center for Scientific and Technical Movies. Representatives from these sectors were gathered in the Coordination Council for Information Activities (Koordinacioni savet za informativnu delatnost) established at Internal Affairs.[171] Juridically, the foreign cultural centres were subject to the Information Secretariat, possessed no diplomatic immunity, and reported to the authorities their finances, new publications, press materials, and musical recordings. They could organize film screenings, but only with

the authorities' permission. Internal Affairs officially controlled the film catalogues, while the Information Secretariat oversaw exhibitions. Nevertheless, 'the opening of our country towards the foreign world' emphasized Belgrade's City Committee, and the 'circulation of people' rendered these 'measures of limited impact.'[172]

The issue was on the table already from 1962 when the Central Committee's ideological commission stressed the dual view of the Party leaders on foreign propaganda. Some members considered foreign influences a weakening feature of the Yugoslav political scenario. Others regarded it as an internal problem, but not as its source. The commission concluded that Yugoslav political and social developments were both the cause and consequence of foreign propaganda operations. Because of its non-alignment, Yugoslavia was an open community, under attack by the 'psychological warfare' of 'block politics' and by 'moral pressure' that was exploiting Yugoslav weaknesses and popularizing foreign values and lifestyles.[173] This dichotomous vision of foreign propaganda tortured the Yugoslav leaders in subsequent years. In 1966, Leo Mates, a pro-Western Yugoslav diplomat, chaired the SAWPY's ideological commission. He stated: 'Our country has gradually liberalized its contacts with foreign countries and according to our Constitution Yugoslavia is a community open […] to foreign influence'; the latter, he pointed, could be only 'defeated by better living standards of Yugoslav workers.'[174] On the one hand, the highest ranked politicians tried to rationalize the propaganda problems as a side effect of Yugoslav non-aligned international policy. On the other, they identified a possible risk of Western 'infiltration' in Yugoslav society. While the SAWPY's commission defined the foreign propaganda as 'anti-socialist,'[175] the Federal Executive Council deemed it was impossible to restrict its dissemination without Yugoslavia losing international prestige as an 'open community.'[176] The story reported by PAO Roberts demonstrates the Yugoslavs' balancing between soft and hard approaches:

> We had a mailing list of our magazine called *Pregled*. One day, at some occasion, one of the Yugoslavs approached me and said: 'Have you discontinued *Pregled*?' And I said, no, not at all. 'Well, I didn't get my copy this month.' […] In the next two or three or four days, other people on the staff, both local employees, and Americans said they heard that *Pregled* was not distributed. So finally, I concluded that *Pregled* was not sent out to the post office. So, I took my jacket and went to the Foreign Office. […] One Sunday, a week later, […] Milan [Bulajić, who was the American desk officer] came over to my house and he said: 'I'm red-faced. I apologize. *Pregled* was thrown by the Ministry of the Interior into the Danube River.' […] But that was the only time.[177]

Certainly, among all the others, the middle echelons perceived and sought cooperation with the West from a mainly pragmatic, less ideological, point of view. We observe these phenomena in Yugoslav cultural exchanges with the United States. Because of this, they remained the major target of US public diplomacy in Yugoslavia. The American centres tried to change the Yugoslav regime from outside, and interpreted the liberalization processes of the 1960s as the result of American aid, and of its

rapprochement with the West. What is more, they admitted that many other Yugoslav citizens shared this view.[178] This was, of course, only partially true, because internal, often opposing, Yugoslav movements also pushed for reforms.

As in other countries, USIS channels aspired to encourage democratic and Western cultural influence through books, magazines, newspapers, exhibitions, movies, cultural contacts, the English teaching program, and VOA broadcasts. However, unlike in Italy and France, where USIS mainly focused on the labour target group,[179] the USIA in Yugoslavia prioritized those mid-level leaders who could, in the future, be proponents of liberalization. And USIS did it using slow but continuous field work that, in a persuasive and creative manner, was trying to 'sell America' in a socialist society without criticizing the dictatorship.

Notes

1 Yugoslavia was a federation state comprising six socialist republics (Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro) and two autonomous provinces (Vojvodina and Kosovo), with Belgrade as its capital. Both the federal and republican governments had their own president, vice president, a parliament (the assembly), an executive council, the administrative agencies, and a judiciary.
2 Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat*, 71, 83, 119.
3 Special Guidance 91 for the Mutual Security Program, 23 May 1951 in memorandum from Block to several Department of State offices, 24 October 1951, Box 2243, CDF 1950–54, RG 59, NACP, 7.
4 Lampe, Prickett, and Adamović, *Yugoslav–American Economic Relations Since World War II*, 72.
5 Allen to Secretary of State, 20 April 1950, FRUS, Vol. IV, 1950, doc. 799, 1404–5.
6 Jakovina, *Socijalizam na američkoj pšenici*, 32, 37–9.
7 Project TROY Report to the Secretary of State, vol. I, 1 February 1951, 511.00/2–151, CDF 1950–54, NARA, 1, 58, 61; Allan A. Needell, '"Truth is Our Weapon": Project TROY, Political Warfare, and Government–Academic Relations in the National Security State,' *Diplomatic History* 17, no. 3 (1 July 1993): 399–420, http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467–7709.1993.tb00588.x.
8 Foreign Service Circular 32, 10 April 1952, 511.00/4–1052, Box 2244, CDF 1950–54, RG 59, NACP.
9 USIE Country Paper Yugoslavia in circular 2 Belgrade to Dept. of State, 3 July 1950, 511.68/7–350, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, RG 59, NACP.
10 IIA Plan for Yugoslavia 1951–1952, 15 January 1952 in Despatch 946 Belgrade to Dept. of State, 9 April 1952, 511.68/4–952, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, RG 59, NACP.
11 M. S. Handler, 'Tito Warns Against Pressure,' *New York Times*, 19 February 1950; and Walter L. Hixon, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945–1961* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997), 16–17.
12 Ambassador Allen to Secretary of State, 20 April 1950, FRUS, Vol. IV, 1950, doc. 799.
13 Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat*, 81–119.

14 USIS-MSA Information Plan for Yugoslavia 1952–1953, 1 August 1952 in despatch Belgrade to Dept. of State, 31 July 1952, 511.68/7–3152, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, RG 59, NACP.
15 *Ibid*.; USIS Country Program for Yugoslavia 1952–1953, 3 December 1952, 511.68/12–352, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, RG 59, NACP.
16 Telegram 1940 Belgrade to Dept. of State, 19 June 1951, 511.68/6–1951, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, RG 59, NACP.
17 Telegram 291 Belgrade to Secretary of State, 4 September 1952, 511.68/9–452, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, RG 59, NACP; Radmila Njegić, 'Razvoj Stanovništva Beograda u Posleratnom Periodu,' *Godišnjak Grada Beograda*, issue 11–12 (1964): 219.
18 Despatch 166 Belgrade to Dept. of State, 20 August 1951, 511.68/8–2051, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, RG 59, NACP; Buttles to Barnett, 28 June 1951, 511.68/6–2851, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, RG 59, NACP.
19 1954–1955 USIS Mission Prospectus, 3 December 1953, 511.00/3–1253, Box 2246, CDF 1950–54, RG 59, NACP.
20 Američki Informativni Centri u Jugoslaviji, 1973, Box 1, Records Relating to Culture Centers 1946–88, USIA Library Program Division, RG 306, NACP; Propaganda kapitalističkih zemalja u Jugoslaviji, 1953, 724/1953, Box 44, Materijali komisije za međunarodne veze 1950–59, SSRNJ, RG 142, Archives of Yugoslavia (hereafter AY); IRC US Embassy Belgrade, email message to author, 16 June 2015.
21 USIS Zagreb opened first in a small building on Kumičić Street in 1951. As for USIS Belgrade, it closed its doors in 1998. See Despatch 4 Consulate Zagreb to Department of State, 3 July 1953, 511.68/7–353, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, RG 59, NACP; Marica Bahlen, IRC US Embassy Zagreb, email message to author, 18 June 2014.
22 Space occupied by US Information Center Overseas, 19 February 1969, Box 3, Records Relating to Culture Centers 1946–88, USIA Library Program Division, RG 306, NACP.
23 Summary Hours opened to Public, 17 February 1969, Box 3, Records Relating to Culture Centers 1946–88, USIA Library Program Division, RG 306, NACP.
24 Buttles to Barnett, 28 June 1951.
25 1954–1955 USIS Mission Prospectus; Airgram 398 Dept. of State to Certain Diplomatic and Consular Officers, 3 April 1953, 511.00/4–353, Box 2247, CDF 1950–54, RG 59, NACP; Hager to Arnold, 9 July 1953, 511.00/7–953, Box 2248, CDF 1950–54, RG 59, NACP; Message 1272 USIA CA to USIA circular, 22 November 22, 1957, Box 7, USIA Master Budget Files 1953–64, RG 306, NACP. From the PAO, the Country Plan passed to the Ambassador, and then to Washington. Here, at USIA headquarters, it waited for the final concurrence from the State Department. Only then, the Plan turned into an action document.
26 Bekić, *Jugoslavija u Hladnom ratu*; Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat*; Jakovina, *Socijalizam na američkoj pšenici*; Ljubodrag Dimić, *Jugoslavija i Hladni rat* (Belgrade: Arhipelag, 2014).
27 Despatch 189 Belgrade to Dept. of State, 24 August 1951, 511.68/8–2451, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, RG 59, NACP.
28 USIE Report 62 for June 1950, 27 July 1950, 511.68/7–2750, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, RG 59, NACP.

29 Despatch 358 Belgrade to Dept. of State, 10 November 1952, 511.68/11–1052, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, RG 59, NACP; Telegram 980 Belgrade to Secretary of State, 5 February 1952, 511.68/2–552, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, RG 59, NACP.
30 USIE Report 178, December 1949–January 1950, 28 February 1950, 511.68/2–2850, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, RG 59, NACP; Despatch 358 Belgrade to Dept. of State, 10 November 1952.
31 USIE Report 178, 28 February 1950.
32 Semi-annual Evaluation Report in despatch 44 Belgrade to Dept. of State, 13 July 1953, 511.68/7–1353, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, RG 59, NACP.
33 Semi-annual Evaluation Report – Yugoslavia in despatch Belgrade to Dept. of State, 17 December 1952, 511.68/12–1752, Box 2247, CDF 1950–54, RG 59, NACP.
34 Report from USIS program in despatch 4 Consulate Zagreb to Dept. of State, 3 July 1953; USIE Report 610 for April and May 1950, 20 June 1950, 511.68/6–2050, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, RG 59, NACP.
35 Despatch 267 from Zagreb to Dept. of State, 10 April 1953, 511.68/4–1053, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, RG 59, NACP.
36 Bogetić, *Jugoslavija i Zapad 1952–1955*; David R. Stone, 'The Balkan Pact and American Policy,' *East European Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (1994): 393–405; Bojan Dimitrijević, 'Jugoslavija i NATO 1951–1958. Skica intenzivnih vojnih odnosa,' in *Spoljna politika Jugoslavije: 1950–1961*, ed. Slobodan Selinić (Belgrade: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2008), 255–74.
37 Katarina Spehnjak, 'Posjeta Josipa Broza Tita Velikoj Britaniji 1953. godine,' *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 33, no. 3 (2001): 597–631.
38 Mates, *Međunarodni odnosi socijalističke Jugoslavije*; Dimić, *Jugoslavija i Hladni rat*, 16.
39 Dušan Bilandžić, *Hrvatska moderna povijest* (Zagreb: Golden Marketing, 1999), 333–4.
40 Despatch 798 Belgrade to Dept. of State, 21 February 1952, 511.68/2–2152, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, NACP; Despatch 891 Belgrade to Dept. of State, 20 March 1952, 511.68/3–2052, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, NACP; Telegram 187 Beam to Secretary of State, 1 April 1952, 511.68/4–152, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, NACP; Telegram 1218 Beam to Secretary of State, 3 April 1952, 511.68/4–352, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, NACP; Telegram 1232 Beam to Secretary of State, 5 April 1952, 511.68/4–552, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, NACP; Despatch 992 Embassy Belgrade to Dept. of State, 22 April 1952, 511.68/4–2252, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, NACP.
41 Despatch 46 Consulate Zagreb to Dept. of State, 1 August 1952, 511.68/8–152, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, NACP.
42 Despatch 885 Belgrade to Dept. of State, 19 March 1952, 511.68/3–1952, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, NACP.
43 Despatch 984 Belgrade to Dept. of State, 26 June 1953, 511.68/6–2653, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, NACP.
44 Translation of 'Mr. King, We Had Enough of Your Propaganda,' *Timok*, 12 June 1953 in despatch 1033 Belgrade to Dept. of State, June 26, 1953, 511.68/6–2653, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, NACP.
45 Despatch 43 Embassy Belgrade to Dept. of State, 12 July 1953, 511.68/7–1253, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, NACP.

46 *Borba*, 14 July 1953; Despatch 52 Embassy Belgrade to Dept. of State, July 15, 1953, 511.68/7–1553, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, NACP.
47 According to Apsen, some of the demonstrators were just library borrowers obliged by the authorities to participate in the demonstrations (Nada Apsen. Interview by author. Oral interview. Zagreb, Croatia, 31 May 2014).
48 Glenda Sluga, *The Problem of Trieste and the Italo-Yugoslav Border: Difference, Identity, and Sovereignty in Twentieth-Century Europe* (New York: SUNY Press, 2001); Bogdan C. Novak, *Trieste 1941–1954: La lotta politica, etnica e ideologica* (Milan: Mursia, 2013); John C. Campbell, *Successful Negotiation, Trieste 1954: An Appraisal by the Five Participants*, Reprint (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).
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50 Despatch 727 Embassy Belgrade to Dept. of State, 16 March 1953, 511.68/3–53, Box 2472, CDF 1950–54, NACP.
51 Tvrtko Jakovina, 'Razgovor s Cvijetom Jobom, dugogodišnjim diplomatom i veleposlanikom FNRJ/SFRJ,' *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 35, no. 3 (2003): 1037.
52 UDBA Report, 20 May 1953, XI-109-VI-36, Komisija za međunarodne odnose i veze 1945–90, Centralni komitet SKJ (hereafter CK SKJ), RG 507, Archives of Yugoslavia (hereafter AY).
53 Pitanje propagandnih stranih misija u FNRJ, 3 June 1953, Pov. br. 92562, Box 44, Materijali komisije za međunarodne veze 1950–59, Socijalistički Savez Radnog Naroda Jugoslavije (hereafter SSRNJ), RG 142, AY, 18.
54 Radina Vučetić, 'Amerikanizacija u Jugoslovenskoj popularnoj kulturi '60-Ih' (PhD dissertation, Belgrade, 2011), 129–30.
55 Pitanje propagandnih stranih misija u FNRJ, 3 June 1953.
56 The Yugoslav acronym is SSRNJ and it stands for 'Socijalistički Savez Radnog Naroda Jugoslavije.'
57 Propaganda kapitalističkih zemalja u Jugoslaviji, 1953, 724/1953, Box 44, Materijali komisije za međunarodne veze 1950–59, SSRNJ, RG 142, AY.
58 Propaganda zapadnih kapitalističkih zemalja (UDB FNRJ III odeljenje), 31 August 1953, 723/53, Box 44, Materijali komisije za međunarodne veze 1950–59, SSRNJ, RG 142, AY.
59 Propaganda kapitalističkih zemalja u Jugoslaviji, 1953.
60 UDBA Report, 20 May 1953, XI-109-VI-36, Komisija za međunarodne odnose i veze 1945–90, CK SKJ, RG 507, AY.
61 Petar Nikolić. Interview by author. Oral interview. Belgrade, Serbia, 5 July 2014.
62 Byrnes to Kolarek, 1 June 1954, Box 38, USIA Master Budget Files 1953–64, RG 306, NACP.
63 Zdenka Nikolić. Interview by author. Email interview. Zagreb, 3–27 June 2014.
64 Nada Apsen. Interview by author.
65 Bilandžić, *Hrvatska moderna povijest*, 302–8.
66 *Ibid*., 307.
67 *Ibid*., 333–4, 337.
68 Until his fall from power, Milovan Djilas was Vice President of Yugoslavia, president of the Federal parliament, and member of the Politburo and Central Committee. He was imprisoned under the Monarchy (1933–36), and under Tito (1956–61 and

1962–66). Among his works, by 1990 only published abroad (the first in the United States), are *The New Class* (1957), *Conversations with Stalin* (1962), *The Unperfect Society* (1969), *Tito: The Story from the Inside* (1981), and *Rise and Fall* (1985). He lived as a freelance writer in Belgrade until 1995, uncensored, but occasionally harassed by the police.

69 Osgood, *Total Cold War*.

70 Tony Smith, *America's Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy*, Expanded ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 189–90.

71 Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat*, 173.

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73 Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat*, 122.

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