

# / SERBIAN STUDIES /

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# Balkan Expert Reuben Markham's 1944 Resignation Protesting U.S. Support for Tito over Mihailovitch

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**Abstract:** Reuben Markham, OWI Deputy Director for the Balkans, spent 1944 in Cairo and Bari, Italy. Described as America's best-informed Balkan expert, he believed the Partisan leaders were committed Communists planning to install a dictatorship. Although recognizing the shortcomings of the interwar regime and Chetnik collaboration, he respected Yugoslavia's contribution to the Allied war effort and was horrified by the massacres against the Serbs. He favored Mihailovitch to prevent a Communist takeover, not believing the Partisan military contribution merited supplying Tito exclusively, while making the Allies complicit in its victory. His arguments against supplying the Partisans reached the highest levels and he helped the August OSS mission to assist the Chetniks. When these efforts failed, he resigned in October 1944. Through his journalism and his 1947 book *Tito's Imperial Communism*, he publicly presented his positions, based on his life-long experience, his personal involvement, and his wartime access to classified information.

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**Key words:** Reuben Markham, Tito, Mihailovitch, Serbia, Yugoslavia, Chetnik

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## Introduction

In February 1944, Reuben Markham, the Deputy Director for the Balkans of the Office of War Information (OWI), was sent to Cairo and Bari, Italy, often called *Partisiana*.<sup>1</sup> The image the Partisans wanted conveyed to the West was explained by Winston Churchill, who wrote that

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\* *Note from the Editor:* This essay makes use of many primary sources from Markham's papers in Washington, D.C.—letters, autobiographical sketches, unpublished manuscripts, personnel records, speeches, newspaper articles, and miscellaneous documents. They are the property of his grandson, Stuart Van Dyke Jr., the author of this article. The documents are furnished with historical background and secondary sources to provide context. These new documents presented here are envisaged as primary sources which can facilitate further research into the subject of the wartime history of the Serbs in former Yugoslavia. 1 I would like to thank Jason Livingood for his input on an earlier draft of this article. I also wish to thank the two reviewers whose constructive comments helped me revise the original version of this paper. All judgments and statements, however, are the author's own.

in August 1944 he had been assured by Tito that “he had no desire to introduce the Communist system into Yugoslavia” and that it “should be able to ... develop along democratic lines.”<sup>2</sup> “Throughout the war (the Partisans) denied any Communist objectives.”<sup>3</sup>

Markham, however, believed differently. “I spent many months among Yugoslav partisans,” he later wrote, “and saw Commissars exercise the absolute power of *gauleiters*.” He “heard many stories of men and women who had been taken away and never heard of again,” and saw men who left everything they had to escape.<sup>4</sup>

Our press and broadcasters constantly praise the Balkan partisans as democrats and bearers of freedom. I have just spent months in direct contact with them and ... I saw that they are by no means democratic. They are among the world’s most fanatical autocrats.... The partisans are terribly intolerant. They have divided humanity into fascists and anti-fascists and are determined to liquidate, dominate or exploit the fascists. Anyone whom they dislike they may call a fascist and thus place him beyond the pale. This attitude makes democracy impossible.<sup>5</sup>

These observations, and others like them, led Markham to conclude that “Tito is much more lawless ... than any other Yugoslav ruler has been.”<sup>6</sup> When America joined Britain in supporting Tito exclusively, cutting out Mihailovich, he feared it would lead to Yugoslavia and probably all southeastern Europe becoming Communist for the foreseeable future. “It is true that Tito fought long and hard,” the American stated. “He and his comrades were brave. But they fought chiefly for power in a new Balkan setup that was to be part of a new world setup ... for the World Soviet and Communist domination.”<sup>7</sup>

In writing about this “extremely complex situation,” Markham himself acknowledged in his 1947 book *Tito’s Imperial Communism* that “practically every point treated in this book is controversial and may raise doubts in the mind of the reader.”<sup>8</sup> North Carolina’s press release stated, “The book presents more fully than ever before the Serb point of view.”<sup>9</sup>

Before becoming a high-level American intelligence official, Markham had lived in the Balkans and Central Europe almost entirely since 1912 and been an accomplished journalist for the *Christian Science Monitor* for 15 years.<sup>10</sup> With his journalistic background, experience in the war theater, and access to current Allied intelligence, Markham served as a reporter and primary source. He also played an active role in trying to affect Allied policy toward Yugoslavia during the critical events of 1944 and influencing American public opinion at the war’s end and afterwards.

2 Winston Churchill, *The Second World War*, vol. 6, *Triumph and Tragedy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1953), 89–90.

3 Jozo Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941–1945: The Chetniks* (Stanford University Press, 1975), 155.

4 Reuben Markham, “The Night Swallowed Them Up,” *New Leader*, 21 July 1945.

5 Reuben Markham, “Our Political Immorality,” *Christian Century*, 31 January 1945.

6 Reuben Markham, *Tito’s Imperial Communism* (University of North Carolina Press, 1947), vii.

7 Markham, *Tito’s Imperial Communism*, 114.

8 Markham, *Tito’s Imperial Communism*, vii.

9 University of North Carolina, “Summer Books” [marketing brochure], 1947; Markham family papers. David Martin’s 1946 book *Ally Betrayed* had been very supportive of Mihailovitch.

10 He was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in journalism in 1947. Carl Ackerman, notification, Columbia University to Reuben Markham, Markham family papers.

In considering Yugoslav developments, Markham told his readers that “it is a fatal mistake to believe that B is good because A was bad.”<sup>11</sup> This may have been the prism through which Markham himself viewed the maelstrom of Yugoslavian conflicts. In other words, while “King Alexander had very serious defects,” one could not conclude that “Tito is a better ruler than Alexander was.”<sup>12</sup> Similarly, “the fact that evils flowed from former Serb domination does not mean that Tito’s regime is better.... Greater Serbianism was not good, but Tito’s Communistic totalitarian rule is worse.”<sup>13</sup> “Finally,” Markham wrote, “it must be kept in mind that in all the complexity of Yugoslav developments, the main issue is the struggle for and against Communist totalitarianism. Other conflicts and events, though important, are secondary.”<sup>14</sup>

## Markham’s Early Career

Born in Kansas in 1887 and educated at Washburn College in Topeka, and Union Theological Seminary, Markham became an ordained Congregational Minister and was sent in 1912 as a missionary educator to teach in the American Schools in Samokov, Bulgaria. There he soon witnessed the Balkan Wars and shortly thereafter, World War I.

In January 1918, Markham, the Bulgarian government, and the American Consul in Sofia devised a plan to have Markham and another missionary carry secret documents to the United States to try to convince Washington not to declare war on Bulgaria, which was fighting on the side of Germany.<sup>15</sup> After their testimony in front of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, it recommended American neutrality. The young missionary was pilloried by some as being pro-German, as his stance “was a very unpopular thing to do in this country at that time, and he suffered a good deal.”<sup>16</sup>

In 1920, the Markham family returned to Bulgaria. He began to concentrate more on journalism than teaching, writing for the Mission’s *Zornitsa*, and founding several Bulgarian language weeklies. Markham “spoke the language like a Bulgarian and wrote it like a Bulgarian in a very amazing way; he knew and understood the ways of the Bulgarians, and he became a Bulgarian figure just as much as he was an American figure.”<sup>17</sup> After the 1923 rightist coup,

[h]e made one of the most sensational exposés at the time ... on the ... “white terror” that was reigning over the country.... This outspoken opposition of his to official maltreatment of peasants and workers had a devastating effect on the Tsankoff regime.<sup>18</sup>

11 Markham, *Tito’s Imperial Communism*, vii.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid., viii. As a comparison between the two, Tomasevich quotes two sources that place the number of Croats killed during the interwar period as either 230 or “several hundred” (Jozo Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941–1945: Occupation and Collaboration* [Stanford University Press, 2001], 403).

14 Ibid., x.

15 Alexander Velichkov, “Reuben Markham and Bulgaria,” *Bulgarian Historical Review*, no. 1–2 (2001): 129–62 (in Bulgarian).

16 Floyd Black, “Markham’s Years in Bulgaria as Missionary and Teacher,” *American Bulgarian Review* 12, no. 1 (spring 1962): 23.

17 Black, “Markham,” 23.

18 Boyan Choukanoff, *Bulgarian Review* 26, 27 (December 1986–January 1987): 66–67.

In 1925, Markham's defense of anti-government figures, including Communists, caused the Bulgarian government to require his resignation from the American Mission, and in 1927, he was arrested under the State Protection Act for describing extrajudicial killings, tried but acquitted.<sup>19</sup>

Allowed to remain in Bulgaria, Markham found a job with the *Monitor*, first as its local correspondent, then for the Balkans, and in 1933 for Central Europe, leading to his move to Vienna. In these positions, *Monitor* editor Erwin Canham described him as roaming the Balkans "as no other American correspondent before or since,"<sup>20</sup> making the Balkan Circle once a month, with trips to Albania in the spring and fall.<sup>21</sup> During these tours, the journalist became close friends with the Serbian Agrarian leader Dragoljub Jovanovitch, as well as with Croats such as Stephan Raditch and Vladko Machek.<sup>22</sup>

Markham also had first-hand experience with Balkan political violence. In January 1934, after his train crossed the border from Hungary to Yugoslavia, a bomb exploded in his car in a compartment three away from his, killing three passengers.<sup>23</sup> It was a time when Croatian terrorists were trying to win independence, planting bombs, killing Serbs, even assassinating Yugoslav King Alexander in October 1934.<sup>24</sup>

In a 1938 article, he described the Serbs.

Those ... long-faced, blue-eyed, powerfully built men ... are Serbs.... They are called Shumadijans or woodmen.... [T]hey are the best dressed South Slav peasants and have a flair, a swing and challenge that distinguishes them from all their neighbors. These Serbs are free men and masters—masters of their neighbors.... [T]hey created Yugoslavia and they determined to dominate it....

The two chief forces in Yugoslav politics are their determination to dominate the others, and the determination of the others not to be dominated.<sup>25</sup>

In 1939, Markham returned to the U.S. He publicly called for America to enter the struggle against Nazism alongside Great Britain and France, and in April 1941, he published *The Wave of the Past*, a best-selling rebuttal to isolationist *The Wave of the Future* by Charles Lindbergh's wife, Anne Morrow Lindbergh. "Without victory in this cause," he wrote, "everything else is vain." To achieve "that will be our first step. Whatever it may cost, we shall take it."<sup>26</sup>

19 Velichkov, "Reuben Markham."

20 Erwin Canham, *Commitment to Freedom* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958), 46.

21 Letter, Mary Markham to daughter, 3 August 1935.

22 Reuben Markham, unpublished autobiographical material, February 1941; Bogdan Raditsa, "Reuben Markham, 1887–1949," *New Leader*, 14 January 1950.

23 Letter, Reuben Markham to Eleonora Markham, 22 January 1934. All letters to and from Reuben Markham are found among the Markham papers.

24 Reuben Markham, "Croatia, Land of Peasants and 'Uprisers,'" *Christian Science Monitor*, 12 April 1941.

25 Reuben Markham, "Labyrinth of South Slavs Traces Europe's Various Origins," *Christian Science Monitor*, 3 March 1938: 7. During the interwar period of "Serbian hegemony," Yugoslavia had a Serbian monarchy in which, during a parliamentary period until 1929, the King "wielded great power" and later, a constitution that granted the King "extraordinary personal prerogatives and powers, while also allowing a very limited amount of party activity" (Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 8–10). An agreement, the Sporazum, was reached in 1939 which gave Croatia substantial autonomy.

26 Reuben Markham, *The Wave of the Past* (The University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 55. It sold 140,000 copies (University of North Carolina Press, Royalty Records [1927–65], Special Collections, box 3:3).

## Yugoslavia Challenges the Nazis

By March 1941, what remained of the free world was in a very precarious place. There was no major military opposition to Germany other than Britain. France was defeated; Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, and Denmark had been taken over; Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, and the Soviet Union were siding with the Germans; and Greece was under attack by Mussolini.

That month, Germany gave Yugoslavia an ultimatum to sign a non-aggression pact and provide economic support for the Reich. Given the state of Europe, the Yugoslav government acquiesced.<sup>27</sup> Serbia had already lost a higher percentage of its population in World War I than any other combatant.<sup>28</sup>

Unexpectedly, two days later, on March 27, a group of Serbian army officers overthrew the regime, ousted the Prince Regent, and installed a government of national unity led by the 18-year-old boy King Peter.<sup>29</sup> This revolt was wildly applauded in Serbia and supported in Slovenia, though opposed in Croatia.<sup>30</sup>

The Serbian overthrow of the Yugoslav government, Markham wrote later, “was the most heroic popular act in the history of this war.” “No people among the 45 United Nations has a more heroic initial record than that.”<sup>31</sup> Churchill greeted the news by telling his Conservative Party that “the Yugoslav nation has found its soul.”<sup>32</sup>

Hitler could not abide the insurrection of the Yugoslavs, but his decision to attack in early April had the effect of delaying Germany’s planned invasion of Russia to 22 June 1941, with profound consequences on its ability to deliver the needed knock-out blow before the Russian winter arrived. William Shirer called “the postponement of the attack on Russia ... probably the most catastrophic single decision in Hitler’s career.”<sup>33</sup> As a result, the Allied countries owed much to Yugoslavia’s resistance.

Following the quick German victory, some, mostly Serbian, Yugoslav army officers who refused to surrender, including Colonel Draza Mihailovitch, retreated to the mountainous countryside.<sup>34</sup> They were known as Chetniks, and over time, Mihailovitch, named Minister of War by the Yugoslav government in exile, became their nominal head. For the most part, these officers, as well as other civilians, were and remained local commanders with their own troops and supplies. “Mihailovitch’s nominal subordinates did not follow his orders; they had their own local agenda.”<sup>35</sup> Markham described him in a publication after the war.

27 Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *Hitler’s New Disorder: The Second World War in Yugoslavia* (Columbia University Press, 2008), 11–12.

28 *Wikipedia*, s.v. “World War I Casualties,” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World\\_War\\_I\\_casualties](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I_casualties), accessed 13 February 2024.

29 Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 9. Tomasevich described the army as “an exclusively Serbian-run institution.”

30 Markham, *Tito’s Imperial Communism*, 30–31.

31 Reuben Markham, “The Serbian Volcano,” *New Leader*, 19 May 1945.

32 Churchill, *World War*, vol. 3, *The Grand Alliance* (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1950), 168.

33 William Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (Simon and Schuster, 1960), 824. See also Alexander Werth, *Russia at War* (E.P. Dutton & Co., 1964), 117; Churchill, *Grand Alliance*, 361.

34 Pavlowitch, *Disorder*, 20. Pavlowitch cites between 200,000–300,000 prisoners taken by the Germans, including 12,000 officers and 200 generals. There were 181,000 remaining after Croats and Montenegrins were allowed to return.

35 Pavlowitch, *Disorder*, 157. See also Matteo J. Milazzo, *The Chetnik Movement and the Yugoslav Resistance* (Johns Hopkins Press, 1975), 18.

I am not pretending he was a great figure.... He was ... the irreconcilable foe of Naziism, the champion of common men and women, the defender of the peasants who owned the little fields they tilled....<sup>36</sup>

Ultimately, Mihailovitch was captured and executed by Tito in 1946.

Markham covered the Serbs during this period, criticizing American Yugoslavs for quarrelling among themselves. A small group of Croatians were to blame, but even worse was *Srbo-bran*, the Pittsburgh newspaper, which wrote that Serbs and Croatians could never live together, calling for Serbs to take vengeance on the Croatians. "Brave Serbian chetniks ... can be excused for bitter anti-Croatian feelings, but for Serbian Americans ... to help destroy Yugoslavia is not excusable."<sup>37</sup>

A second group which began resisting was Yugoslavia's 8,000-member, well-organized and well-disciplined Communist movement.<sup>38</sup> It "was subordinated to the ideological and organizational authority of the Kremlin."<sup>39</sup> When Germany attacked, the Communists stayed on the sidelines, because of Moscow's non-aggression pact with Berlin. In early May, Tito called a leadership meeting which decided "that the Communist Party should prepare itself to seize power in alliance with the USSR."<sup>40</sup> After Germany's invasion of Russia on 22 June 1941, and "precise instructions calling for immediate action," from the Comintern, the Communists commenced guerilla warfare under the leadership of Josef Broz Tito.<sup>41</sup>

These forces, the Partisans, soon came into contact with the Chetniks. For Mihailovitch "there could be but one resistance movement, that of the Yugoslav army bound by oath to King and country."<sup>42</sup> Tito refused, however, to accept a unified command, meaning that there were two armed groups competing for control.<sup>43</sup> "The Serbs of Serbia ... accepted the civil war and did everything possible to win it.... That became their war aim number one."<sup>44</sup> "All Communist parties," wrote Jozo Tomasevich, "a well-known American historian of Croatian origin,"<sup>45</sup> "have by definition the objective of seizing power and carrying out socialist revolution."<sup>46</sup>

36 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 24–25. Markham addresses Chetnik collaboration (p. 22), but Mihailovitch was prepared to help the Allies to the end (Milazzo, *Chetnik Movement*, viii; Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 182).

37 Reuben Markham, "Yugoslavs in America," *The Wide Horizon*, *Christian Science Monitor*, 12 December 1941: 24.

38 Milazzo, *Chetnik Movement*, 20, as of April 1940.

39 Sava Bosnitch, *The Communist Conquest of Power in Yugoslavia, 1941–1945* (Master's Thesis, McGill University, 1958), Library and Archives, Canada. See also Milovan Djilas, *Wartime* (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977), 4: "As responsible and fateful a move as an uprising could hardly have been taken without approval from above."

40 Pavlowitch, *Disorder*, 55.

41 Walter R. Roberts, *Tito, Mihailovic and the Allies, 1941–1945* (Rutgers University Press, 1973), 24. "We waited for Moscow's directive and for once Moscow did not delay" (Djilas, *Wartime*, 4).

42 Pavlowitch, *Disorder*, 55; Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 154. Tomasevich referred to Mihailovitch as "the legitimate representative of a sovereign state" (pp. 297–98).

43 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 74. A narrative of the split between the two groups in the fall of 1941 is found in Milazzo's, *Chetnik Movement*, 32–41.

44 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 145–46.

45 Dušan Biber, "Failure of a Mission: Robert McDowell in Yugoslavia," in *The Secrets War*, ed. George C. Chalou (National Archives and Records Administration, 1992), 202.

46 Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 155.

“At a January 1942 meeting of the Provincial Committee of the (Communist Party) for Bosnia and Herzegovina, attended by Tito, the decision was made ‘to fight the Chetniks.’”<sup>47</sup> Tito believed that “the fate of the Communist revolution had to be determined during the war by destroying all groups not under the control of the KPJ (Communist Party).”<sup>48</sup> “The main struggle in Yugoslavia ... was the civil struggle between the Communists and the anti-Communists.”<sup>49</sup> “The prize ... was nothing less than the control of the future state.”<sup>50</sup> “Civil war raged,” Markham wrote, facilitating “the work of the Germans.”<sup>51</sup>

Following some initial successes by Partisan and Chetnik guerillas in Serbia in the summer and fall of 1941, the Germans mounted an offensive that drove both groups either underground or into other parts of Yugoslavia. In Montenegro, Chetniks gained mastery of the countryside with Italians controlling the cities, forcing Tito and about 4,000 Partisans to embark on their “long march” to a “remote and backward area” in Western Bosnia.<sup>52</sup> Mihailovitch retreated to Montenegro in April 1942.

## Britain’s Involvement in Yugoslavia’s Resistance

When the British first made contact with Mihailovitch in 1941, their policy was for the Yugoslav guerillas to avoid “ambitious military operations which could only result ... in severe repression.”<sup>53</sup> Berlin had established a policy on 28 April 1941 to kill 100 Serbs for each German fatality and “applied it again and again.”<sup>54</sup> “The gruesome implementation of the order can be clearly seen from the German shooting of perhaps upward of five thousand people in the towns of Kraljevo and Kragujevac in mid-October 1941 as reprisal ... in which not more than a score of German soldiers were killed and a somewhat larger number were wounded.”<sup>55</sup>

After its victory, Germany broke Yugoslavia up, creating the Independent State of Croatia, comprising approximately 40 percent of its former territory, divided into German and Italian zones. It placed Ante Pavelic, a violent Fascist, and the small Ustaha movement in charge.<sup>56</sup> Serbs made up one third of the population, about 1.9 million people. Although there is no written record of the Minister of Education stating Croatia’s Serb policy would be to kill one-third, expel one-third, and convert one-third, “people talked about it and remembered it.”<sup>57</sup> Almost immediately, the Ustasha began to carry out mass killings of Serbs. “The most serious study estimates the total number of Serbs who died in the NDH (Independent State of Croatia) at be-

47 Ibid., 160.

48 Pavlowitch, *Disorder*, 132.

49 Markham, *Tito’s Imperial Communism*, 79. “The claim that the Royalists were the main enemies of the Partisan movement can be taken at face value” (Gaj Trifković, *Parleying with the Devil: Prisoner Exchange in Yugoslavia, 1941–1945* [Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, Andarta Books, 2020], 193).

50 Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 54. Chetniks feared Partisans “chiefly as a post war rival for control of the country” (“Armstrong-Bailey Report,” in *The Web of Disinformation*, by David Martin [Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990], 316).

51 Markham, *Tito’s Imperial Communism*, 79.

52 Pavlowitch, *Disorder*, 119.

53 Roberts, *Tito*, 27. See also Bailey, “British Policy,” 61.

54 Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 132.

55 Ibid., 146. See also Martin, *Web*, 35–40. Pavlowitch lists the number killed as 4,478; he says the Germans reported 21,889 hostages killed by spring 1942 (Trifković, *Parleying with the Devil*, 54, fn. 159).

56 Pavlowitch, *Disorder*, 29. He describes a “core of 4,500” and 25,000–30,000 irregular Ustashes.

57 Ibid., 32.

tween 370,000 and 400,000.”<sup>58</sup> “Serbs were killed in all parts of Yugoslavia,” Markham wrote later. “Bulgarians, Germans, Italians, Hungarians, Croatians, Moslems and Communists all killed Serbs.”<sup>59</sup> He believed that “the massacring of thousands upon thousands of Serbs is a colossal, ineradicable act that will long affect Balkan developments. Every planner of the future must bear that in mind.”<sup>60</sup> A 21st-century historian has written that the massacres in World War II and the 1990s “were linked both causally and thematically.”<sup>61</sup>

Tomasevich has noted that during World War II, “the use of terror on a large scale and in innumerable forms was practiced by all parties ... in Yugoslavia,” including the Chetniks.<sup>62</sup> As an example, in 1943, Chetnik commander Pavle Djurisić reported to Mihailovič that in eastern Bosnia his troops had killed “among the Muslims, around 1,200 fighters and up to 8,000 other victims, women, old people and children.”<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, Tomasevich continued

In terms of the number of victims ... the Croatian Ustashas were, of course, far more guilty of crimes against humanity than were the Chetniks.... It should also be pointed out that the Ustasha atrocities were undertaken first, and that at least to some extent, the Chetnik terrorist activities against the Croatian and Moslem populations were in the nature of a reaction.<sup>64</sup>

As far as this author knows, Markham did not address Chetnik ethnic and religious violence in his writings.

As a result of the extensive Serbian losses, Markham reported that “after 1941 the (Chetnik) method of opposition was less aggressive resistance, more consideration for the physical preservation of the nation, and preparation for participation in a grand, general, final offensive.”<sup>65</sup> When that time arrived, the Chetniks expected Britain and the United States to land on the Adriatic coast, at which point the Chetniks would initiate a general uprising “to assist and join the Allies when ... they landed troops.”<sup>66</sup> In a letter to Mussolini in early 1943, “Hitler stressed

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58 *Ibid.*, 34. The study was performed by Bogoljub Kocović.

59 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 80.

60 *Ibid.*, 81.

61 Marko Attila Hoare, “Genocide in Yugoslavia Before and After Communism,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 62, no. 7 (10 September 2010): 1193.

62 Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 56–57.

63 Hoare, “Genocide,” 1203. Mihailović said at the trial, “I ... [was] horrified by the reports of Pavle Djurisić; when he had to fulfil [sic] a task, he used to commit acts amounting to crimes” (*The Trial of Dragoljub-Draza Mihailović* [Belgrade: 1946], 351).

64 Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 259. Hoare wrote, “Ustasa extermination of Serbs provided a catalyst for Četnik massacres of Croat and Muslim civilians.” It was “untrue,” though, that “Četnik massacres were simply retaliation for Ustasa massacres,” as they took place in eastern Bosnia and the Sandžak. (“Genocide,” 1202, 1203)

65 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 104. See also “Lt. Colonel Robert McDowell Report,” 23 November 1944, in Martin, *Web*, 401: “In the face of the terrible German reprisals for the Nationalist attacks of 1941, General Mihailović informed the Allies that no useful purpose could be served by further major acts of resistance until the Allies were ready to invade the Balkans.” In contrast, Brigadier Fitzroy Maclean reported on 6 November 1943 about the Partisans: “The savage reprisals of the enemy are not taken into consideration” (Martin, *Web*, 305).

66 Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 234. Mihailović wanted to create “a country-wide regular army, to be used ... to expedite the expulsion of the occupying forces in concert with Allied operations from the outside” (Phyllis Auty and Richard Clogg, ed. *British Policy towards Wartime Resistance in Yugoslavia and Greece* [London: Macmillan Press, 1975], 64).

the absolute necessity of disarming the Chetniks because of their potential danger in the event of an Allied landing on the Dalmatian coast.”<sup>67</sup>

Although Ustasha massacres led to Chetnik groups being created in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Dalmatia, “The Chetniks throughout the Western half of Yugoslavia behaved like a collection of uncoordinated village self-defense units in spite of all the efforts of the officers and politicians to impose ambitions and military strategies upon them.”<sup>68</sup> During 1942, though, they were an important resistance movement in many parts of the country.<sup>69</sup>

The atrocities also supplied Tito’s Partisans with new recruits, “the homeless, landless, and penniless (Serbs) that were forced into the woods by the ruthless invaders.... They were the survivors of the massacres.”<sup>70</sup> The Partisans “were mostly Serbs themselves,” through 1943.<sup>71</sup> Throughout 1942, Markham wrote, “Tito kept up the tempo of his fighting. That was the foremost element in his activity.”<sup>72</sup>

By 1943, although continuing to be “unconditionally anti-German,” Mihailovitch’s relations with the English soured, partly because of his “policy of restrained or indirect or partial resistance.”<sup>73</sup> Markham felt it was very unfair to criticize the Chetnik leader for his cautious tactics vis-à-vis the Germans.

I think it is regrettable for an American to call a Serb a traitor for not wanting to have his house uselessly destroyed and his family massacred in vain.... I do not believe an honorable American, whose nation of one hundred and forty million had lost in killed only two hundred and seventy-five thousand by V-J Day can reproach a nation of eight million which for the same cause had lost up to a million and was still resisting.<sup>74</sup>

Fearful of an Allied invasion, the Germans launched a new offensive, “*Weiss*,” against both the Partisans and the Chetniks.<sup>75</sup> The Nazis drove the Partisans from Bosnia towards Montenegro, where the Italians wanted the Chetniks to help stop their crossing the Neretva River. Prime Minister Churchill heard these reports that as the Partisans “retreated into Montenegro, they were not only pressed by the German armies and Croatian Ustashes, but were harassed by Mihailovitch’s men.... He was also told that the Serb nationalists were collaborating with the Italians.”<sup>76</sup>

Mihailovitch was worried about committing and losing too many of his troops, allowing the Germans to finish them off.<sup>77</sup> In the end, Tito broke through, crossed the Neretva, and then un-

67 Ibid., 237.

68 Milazzo, *Chetnik Movement*, 136.

69 Ibid., 42.

70 Markham, *Tito’s Imperial Communism*, 107. “Many ... Serbs, especially young people, fled into the mountains and joined the Chetniks, or, in much larger numbers, the Partisans” (Tomasevich, *Occupation and Collaboration*, 408).

71 Pavlowitch, *Disorder*, 128; “overwhelmingly Serb” (Milazzo, *Chetnik Movement*, 111).

72 Markham, *Tito’s Imperial Communism*, 105. See also Bailey, “British Policy,” 63: “Tito stood for continual harassment of, and constant active resistance to, the occupying forces at no matter what cost either to his own forces or to the civilian population.”

73 Markham, *Tito’s Imperial Communism*, 97.

74 Ibid., 104.

75 Milazzo, *Chetnik Movement*, 113.

76 Markham, *Tito’s Imperial Communism*, 157.

77 Milazzo, *Chetnik Movement*, 128.

dertook a major offensive against the Chetniks in Montenegro. Tito thought the Chetnik army was of “rather poor quality.”<sup>78</sup>

Just as these events were happening, Mihailovitch, under considerable stress, made a speech highly critical of England at a christening party in the Montenegrin village where he was located, in which “a good deal of plum brandy had been consumed by all present except the baby.”<sup>79</sup> He described his enemies as being first Tito, the Ustashis, the Moslems and the Croats, and then second Germany and Italy. He added that Italy was “his sole adequate source of benefit,” and that “nothing the Allies could do would make him change his attitude toward them.” “In conclusion, he added that he needed no further contact with the Western democracies.”<sup>80</sup>

British Liaison Officer (BLO) Colonel S.W. Bailey was in attendance and reported back to London.<sup>81</sup> Mihailovitch’s speech highlighted the complications of the Serbs’ predicament, facing extermination by the Ustashas and the Germans, a take-over by a Communist revolution, a long-held animosity with the Moslems, successors of the Ottoman Turks, an occupation by foreign powers and demands, along with frustratingly little support, from the Western Allies. Nonetheless, this talk “hastened the Chetniks’ fall from favor with Churchill’s government.”<sup>82</sup> That decision by the British eventually proved fatal.<sup>83</sup> The Chetnik leader later apologized and said that some of his remarks had been misquoted.<sup>84</sup>

Despite Mihailovitch’s oratory and military prudence, Markham placed part of the blame for the deterioration in Britain’s relationship with the Chetniks on the English.<sup>85</sup> “Great Britain was exceedingly inept in supplying Mihailovitch with suitable explosive material.”<sup>86</sup> Between July and December 1943, the Partisans are reported to have received 18,000 tons in materiel, while the Chetniks received 30 tons.<sup>87</sup>

Mihailovitch also called Colonel Bailey “our greatest enemy.”<sup>88</sup> Markham wrote,

Mihailovitch resented the arrogance of ... Bailey. The Serbians have long been a sovereign nation and are pretty arrogant themselves.... They don’t like to be shoved around or scolded or given lessons in heroism.... Yet Bailey kept lecturing Mihailovitch, ordering him around, accusing him of bad faith, cowardice.... The two men had altercations and exchanged offensive epithets.<sup>89</sup>

78 Ibid., 129.

79 Bailey, “British Policy,” 75.

80 Martin, *Web*, 76.

81 Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 291.

82 Milazzo, *Chetnik Movement*, 125.

83 “A key weakness ... was Mihailovic’s inability to work with the Western Allies” (Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 469).

84 David Martin, *Ally Betrayed* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1946), 215–16.

85 See also Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 469: “The British were by no means easy to deal with.”

86 See also F. W. D. Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain* (Oxford University Press, 1971), 182: One shipment had a large quantity of anti-snake-bite serum captured from the Italians in Ethiopia. “To a very small extent, until the end of 1943, the British provided supplies and money” (Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 184).

87 Michael Lees, *The Rape of Serbia* (San Diego, London, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990), 111.

88 Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 362.

89 Markham, *Tito’s Imperial Communism*, 102. Tomasevich cites “constant criticism of Mihailovic” on the part of the British (*Chetniks*, 300).

Despite his flaws, Bailey understood Mihailovitch's dilemmas and articulated them well by the end of his stay. Fluent in Serbo-Croatian, having lived in Yugoslavia for many years and having spent an entire year behind the lines, "he was by all odds the most knowledgeable liaison officer the British had on either side in Yugoslavia."<sup>90</sup> In a report he submitted with General Armstrong, in November 1943, they wrote that "all Yugoslavs here" believe

That present 100% support of Partisans by B.B.C., including gross misrepresentation of known facts, plus minimum mention of Mihailovic's activities, plus greater material support he believes we give the Partisans, plus fact that it is clear to him that a British Liaison Officer with Partisans is always believed in preference to a British Liaison Officer with his forces, all add up to mean that British have completely sold Yugoslavia down the river to the Russians.<sup>91</sup>

Markham believed that the positive British reports about Partisan activity fell victim to exaggerations about Tito's accomplishments. "No British or American liaison officer with Tito's forces had freedom of action!" "As a rule they reported only what they were told."<sup>92</sup> These "overall appraisals will remain examples of 'propaganda serving as intelligence.'"<sup>93</sup> "Future British military academies will read many of these reports with chagrin and shame."<sup>94</sup> From these reports, "the British government got the impression that among the Yugoslavs the Partisans alone were helping the Allied cause while Mihailovitch was hindering it."<sup>95</sup>

Interestingly, there is an explanation for some of Markham's and the Armstrong-Bailey report's accusations. British Special Operations Executive (SOE)/Cairo was staffed by an ardent Communist connected to the Cambridge Five, James Klugmann. SOE/Cairo was where Major F.W.D. Deakin worked before he was sent to lead the first mission to Tito on 27 May 1943.

An article in the *Journal of Intelligence and National Security* wrote that in 1945 Klugmann was secretly recorded by Britain's MI5, describing to another British Communist what he had done in Cairo to influence British policy.

The next stage ... was ... skewing (and) building up reports we were getting from the Chetniks and ... from the Partisans (to show there was) no activity against the enemy

90 Martin, *Web*, 166.

91 *Ibid.*, 317.

92 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 130. In terms of exaggeration, an example is the "Maclean Report," 23 November 1943, in Martin, *Web*, 305–14. Partisans had an army of 220,000 vs. German estimate of 100,000 (Pavlovitch, *Disorder*, 215); (Bailey estimate of 120,000; Martin, *Web*, xxvi); Maclean stated there were a total of 12,000 Chetnik troops (McDowell estimated Chetniks at 100,000; Martin, *Web*, 406); Maclean said Partisans tie down 14 Reichswehr Divisions; (Gaj Trifkovic, "The Key to the Balkans: The Battle for Serbia 1944," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 28, no. 3 [2015]; stated that the last German division left Yugoslavia in January 1944, leaving police units and Landesschutzen, 526; also Pavlovitch, *Disorder*, 217, "Until the end of 1943, they managed with a couple of low-grade Wehrmacht divisions"). "Schmider punctures the inflated estimates of the number of German troops actually tied down in Yugoslavia" (Brendan Simms, review of *Partisanenkrieg in Juglawien, 1941–1944*, by Klaus Schmider, *German History* 22, no. 2 [April 2004]: 298).

93 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 131. Pavlovic also thought American Major Lynn Farish's first report was "evidently influenced by Partisan propaganda" (Vojislav Pavlovic, ed. *The Balkans in the Age of New Imperialism and Beyond* [Editura Istros A Muzeului Brailei, Carol I, 2021], 149–50).

94 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 131. Novelist Anthony Powell, British military liaison to the Polish army, wrote that the reports from Yugoslavia were "more suitable to an adventure story in the *Boy's Own Paper* than a sober appreciation of what was happening" (Hilary Spurling, *Anthony Powell* [New York: Alfred Knopf, 2018], 243).

95 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 157.

on the Chetnik side (but) first-class activity on the Partisan side—in order) to recall the mission from the Chetniks and to give all the support to the Partisans.

“He sought,” the author continued “to filter the intelligence coming back to help ensure that an overall picture emerged that was favorable to the Yugoslav Partisans.” Klugmann picked which officers went to Tito and which went to Mihailovitch, briefing them as well. “People often find what they expect,” Klugmann explained.<sup>96</sup>

Deakin’s May 1943 mission was followed by Brigadier Fitzroy Maclean’s in October 1943. Markham described Deakin as “brave, intelligent, conscientious,”<sup>97</sup> and “one of Britain’s noblest and most idealistic empire defenders.”<sup>98</sup> Both Deakin and Maclean had personal relationships with Churchill. After just three weeks with the Partisans, and no contact with the Chetniks, Maclean submitted a report the first recommendation of which was “Discontinue support to Mihailovic.”<sup>99</sup> This report was a “blockbuster” that “gave a big shove to the movement towards dropping Mihailovic.”<sup>100</sup>

While the British had already begun supplying the Partisans with weapons in July, the Big Three formally approved these shipments at the Teheran Conference.<sup>101</sup> By November 1943, Britain had stopped supplying the Chetniks, while the Yugoslavian Government in Exile’s ambassador to Washington, Constantin Fotitch, was told in January 1944 that Roosevelt had also ordered supplies be stopped, although that was not the official State Department position.<sup>102</sup> In February 1944, Churchill spoke in Parliament about Mihailovitch’s commanders’ ‘accommodations’ with the enemy.<sup>103</sup> By May, all the British and American liaison officers were removed from the Chetniks.

Churchill, at the time the British threw their support to Tito, did not appear to care about Yugoslavia’s political future. Maclean met with Churchill in Cairo in December 1943 and

opined that Yugoslavia would inevitably be established along Soviet lines. Churchill thereupon asked, “Do you intend to make Yugoslavia your home after the war?” “No, Sir,” Maclean replied. “Neither do I,” Churchill said. “And that being the case, the less you and I worry about the form of Government they set up, the better. That is for them to decide. What interests us is, which of them [Mihailovic or Tito] is doing most harm to the Germans?”<sup>104</sup>

96 Roderick Bailey, “Communist in SOE: Explaining James Klugmann’s Recruitment and Retention,” *Intelligence and National Security* 20, no. 1 (2005): 76–77, 78. Lees has a section on Klugmann in *Rape of Serbia* (pp. 32–40).

97 Markham, *Tito*, 155.

98 Markham, *Tito*, 156.

99 “Maclean Report,” 6 November 1943, 314.

100 Elisabeth Barker, “Some Factors in British Decision-making over Yugoslavia,” in Auty and Clogg, *British Policy*, 39.

101 “Military Conclusions of the Teheran Conference, December 1, 1943,” Yale Law School, Lillian Goldman Library, <https://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/tehran.asp>, accessed 23 August 2024; Maclean reports supply drops starting in the summer of 1943.

102 Constantin Fotitch, *The War We Lost* (New York: Viking Press, 1948), 252. This was reported to Fotitch by John McCloy, Assistant Secretary of War.

103 Roberts, *Tito*, 196.

104 *Ibid.*, 174.

Maclean had been frank in his November 1943 report that the Partisans were run by the “Communists, officially, accepted as the directing force of the movement.” “All key posts are held by members of the Communist Party and policy is dictated by them.”<sup>105</sup>

In contrast, Markham thought that the value of preventing a Communist takeover of Yugoslavia outweighed Tito’s military contribution to the Allies. Markham acknowledged that the Partisans were the chief German fighters in the Balkans.<sup>106</sup> “From the strictly military point of view ... enemy garrisons were destroyed,” “and enemy soldiers were kept in Yugoslavia that might have gone to the Russian ... or ... the Italian front.”<sup>107</sup> “[T]he Partisans ... were brave ... skillful in maneuvering, agile in retreats, deadly in attacks.”<sup>108</sup>

Nevertheless, “it is plain to informed people that the Partisans liberated only wooded and waste areas in Yugoslavia, that they gave freedom to very few people, that Partisan claims were enormously exaggerated and that Partisan armies never at any time made headway against major groups of first-line German troops.”<sup>109</sup> Office of Strategic Services (OSS) officer, Lieutenant Colonel Richard Weill, confirmed this judgment in his April 1944 report by saying that Tito’s movement was unable “to drive the enemy out of the country ... or to destroy enemy forces in the country,”<sup>110</sup> and that “all the claims about ‘free Partisan territory’ were untrue.”<sup>111</sup> Tito acknowledged, according to Maclean, that if his troops “attempted a pitched battle with the Germans, they would undoubtedly be heavily defeated.”<sup>112</sup> Indeed, one author even argued “that the Allies gained less military advantage from the Partisans than did the Wehrmacht, which was able to ignore the royalists once Britain had abandoned them in the knowledge that they would henceforth only fight the Partisans.”<sup>113</sup>

A Communist victory would not only be a threat to the free world, but Markham was concerned about the conditions which would exist inside Yugoslavia after the war. Once in power, Walter Roberts wrote, Tito constructed a “tightly authoritarian Communist regime.”<sup>114</sup> Markham described the situation he observed. “He has deprived (the Yugoslavs) of freedom in practically every form.”<sup>115</sup> Free elections of Party members or Party representatives did not exist. “No informed observer of Yugoslavia denies that the premiership, the army, the police in all its

105 “Maclean Report,” 308.

106 Reuben Markham, “The Partisans,” handwritten manuscript, unpublished, spring 1945.

107 Markham, *Tito’s Imperial Communism*, 134.

108 *Ibid.*, 127.

109 *Ibid.*, 141. By “informed people” Markham may have meant those with access to classified material.

110 Vojislav Pavlovic, “The Perception of Tito’s Regime in the United States, 1943–1961,” *Association Internationale D’Études du Sud-Est Européen*, no. 40–44 (2010–14): 339–40.

111 Vojislav Pavlovic, “U.S. Influence in the Outcome of the Civil War in Yugoslavia, 1941–1944,” in Vojislav Pavlovic, ed. *The Balkans in the Age of New Imperialism and Beyond* (Editura Istros A Muzeului Brailei “Carol I,” 2019), 154.

112 “Maclean Report,” 308.

113 C. Ingrao, review of *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans: the Special Operations Executive and Yugoslavia, 1941–1945*, by Heather Williams, *Current Reviews for Academic Libraries* 42, no. 3 (2004): 539.

114 Roberts, *Tito*, 323. Roberts wrote that promises that had been made, “civil rights, inviolability of property, individual initiative, no radical social change, free elections after the war—none of these promises was kept.” See also Joseph Korbel, *Tito’s Communism* (Denver: University of Denver Press, 1951), 13–14: “In the case of Yugoslavia, none of the ... [Yalta] agreements were fulfilled.” By October 1945, “the rule of the country was fully in the hands of the Communist Party.”

115 Markham, *Tito’s Imperial Communism*, 254.

branches, the courts, the schools, the radio, the press,... trade, industry, finance,... labor and jobs are in Communist hands."<sup>116</sup>

The secret police kept a file on every individual and major decisions in a person's life, such as going to school or gaining employment, depended on the information in their file.<sup>117</sup> "It is certain that the Partisans marred their triumph by killing their fellow citizens on a large scale."<sup>118</sup> It was officially stated by the Yugoslav government that 100,000 people were in forced labor camps two years after the fighting.<sup>119</sup> According to Russian sources, 90% of industry, commerce, and agriculture had been nationalized by 1947.

Of course, Tito's accomplishments also need to be recognized, especially maintaining Yugoslav independence and establishing a federated state that kept the internal peace for 45 years. Although not certain, it is possible, as one historian wrote, that "the restoration of the monarch would surely have been accompanied by violent political purges and a reign of Serb vengeance."<sup>120</sup>

Describing the British decision to support the Partisans and abandon the Chetniks, Markham wrote, "London wanted American-British armies to free the Balkans from the Nazis," but "America rejected this project." As a result, Churchill had to improvise, because "Russia's penetration into the Balkans has not taken place according to an Allied plan. Great Britain did not wish it nor anticipate it."

Mr. Churchill didn't make this flop because he likes Balkan Communists.... But he swallowed his pride and began to coax, praise and flatter Tito because he saw Tito was going to win and he hoped to steal his heart from Russia.<sup>121</sup>

As Markham put it, "Churchill believed he could make a deal." "In the negotiations that followed, the Croatian Brozovitch [Tito] played rings around the astute, gifted and experienced Marlborough [Churchill]."<sup>122</sup>

"The British had much to lose" with their support of Tito, Tomasevich offered. "The Chetniks ... were ... representatives of the Serbian nationalist forces with a strong following in Serbia,... a movement of strong pro-Western orientation, and ... a strongly anti-Communist force."<sup>123</sup>

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116 Ibid., 261.

117 Ibid., 266.

118 Ibid., 265. At the end of the war, Tito had a "People's Defense Corps," "whose task was to fight 'internal enemies.'" In Belgrade, "The number of those killed (... particularly people's enemies liquidated by the new regime) is ... controversial" (Pavlovitch, *Disorder*, 236).

119 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 264.

120 Milazzo, *Chetnik Movement*, 187. "The fear of Chetnik postwar retribution in Croatia was ... great" (Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 467).

121 Reuben Markham, "Russia Takes Over the Balkans," *Human Events*, 25 April 1945; see also Martin, *Ally Betrayed*, 225. Pavlovic states that this decision was made "based on the assumption that Yugoslavia would be part of the Soviet zone of influence" ("U.S. Influence," 151). FDR was willing to accept that for Soviet global cooperation.

122 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 170.

123 Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 301.

By supporting Tito, though, the Foreign Office, a British historian opined, seemed “to have had the long-term aim of trying to establish British influence in post-war Yugoslavia in the face of clearly-seen threat of Soviet domination.”<sup>124</sup>

## The Issue of Collaboration

“Did not Mihailovitch collaborate with the enemy?” Markham asked. “The answer ... may cause keen distress to most Serbs, but it is the true answer.” That, “in waging the civil war,”<sup>125</sup> “both Chetniks and German forces often fought against the same Partisan band in the same engagement is so widely and publicly known that to question it would be absurd.”<sup>126</sup> Markham reported that Churchill had heard that the Chetniks fought alongside the Germans and the Italians at the Neretva River, trying to stop the Partisan retreat to Montenegro. In this way, Markham explained, the Chetniks “helped the enemy. They did this because as the war advanced, their primary interest was not in fighting Hitler, but in waging the civil war.” “From the point of view of England ... that was ... treasonable,” but Mihailovich did not feel “*primary* obligations to England.” “The survival of Serbia was their supreme end.”<sup>127</sup>

Markham stated that “the Serbs of Serbia” believed that the civil war was “most menacing to their survival.”<sup>128</sup> “Most Serbs of Serbia,” Markham said, “knew that Tito and his Comrades were determined ... to wipe out her traditional freedom and impose a foreign-sponsored dictatorship upon her.”<sup>129</sup> Trying to preserve Serbia from that fate “forced Mihailovitch into a method of fighting that amounted to collaboration.”<sup>130</sup> “Civil wars in the midst of national wars always cause collaboration with a foreign enemy.”<sup>131</sup>

[The Serbs] had lived through centuries of Turkish domination, and ... they felt somehow or other they would be able to survive anything which German ... or Italian armies could do to them, since foreign occupation would be temporary. But they were afraid that Serbia would be irremediably weakened if a Communist regime destroyed the foundation of Serbian patriotism and turned the new Serbian generation against all past sentiments. Consequently they feared and hated Tito, more than they had Turks.<sup>132</sup>

Plus, Markham continued in explaining Chetnik behavior, “with the Serbs in the western provinces of Yugoslavia more terribly persecuted than any other minority group of that size

124 Barker, “British Decision Making,” 47. On 4 May 1944, Churchill wrote Eden asking whether the UK was going “to acquiesce in the Communisation of the Balkans and perhaps of Italy?” (Elisabeth Barker, *Churchill and Eden* [New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978], 278)

125 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 143.

126 Ibid., 147. See also Martin, *Ally Betrayed*, 197.

127 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 143.

128 Ibid., 143. See also Churchill's letter to Tito (17 May 1944) describing 200,000 Serbian peasant landowners “who naturally hold the views of the peasant ownership community” (Biber, “1944,” 118).

129 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 144.

130 Ibid., 146.

131 Ibid., 147. See also Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 321–37. Tomasevich writes, “the primary reason for Chetnik-German collaboration” was “that the Partisans' chief area of operations in the second half of 1944 would be Serbia. For the Chetniks ... arms and ammunition from (the Germans) was essential” (p. 336).

132 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 145. See also Wayne Vucinich, ed. *Contemporary Yugoslavia* (University of Cali-

in Europe except the Jews..., the only choice for many Serbs was extermination or an appeal for mercy to the least cruel enemy ... Italy."<sup>133</sup> Amidst this existential danger, "the Italian enemy came to seem almost a savior."<sup>134</sup> "Beyond dispute," Markham declared, "some members of the Serbian nation, our ally, were giving aid and comfort to our enemy, Italy. Into such a deplorable situation had Serbia been maneuvered by events."<sup>135</sup> Mass killing of Serbs by Usthas decreased "markedly" beginning in 1943, though, because "collaboration of Italians and the Chetniks in Italian controlled areas ... led to better protection for the Orthodox population."<sup>136</sup>

During 1942 and part of 1943, despite the British denouncing these agreements later, they "turned a blind eye to such accommodations," understanding the Chetniks' need for arms and their long-term commitment to the Allies.<sup>137</sup> British Liaison Officer Bill Hudson had reported in November 1942 that Mihailovitch could reach an understanding with the Italians or the Germans that "might serve his purpose without compromising him."<sup>138</sup>

As regards the Germans, despite fighting together in the same battles with Germans, Markham wrote that he was not saying "that Mihailovitch consulted with any German commander, nor am I intimating that there were jointly planned campaigns or even jointly planned battles."<sup>139</sup> Certainly, however, in Markham's example of the Neretva River battle, the Chetniks were part of a jointly planned battle. Furthermore, in the fall and winter of 1943–44, there were signed agreements between representatives of the German army and "Chetnik commanders who ... were among the half-dozen highest standing of Mihailovic's field commanders in Serbia."<sup>140</sup> One agreement in effect from January 17 until March 31, 1944, stated that "for the duration of the agreement the DM [Draza Mihailovitch] Chetniks will abstain from any enemy activity against the German, Bulgarian and Serbian troops." In addition, it read that "the DM Chetniks take the obligation to protect the transport routes ... against attacks ... committed by Anglo-Americans by way of land operations."<sup>141</sup> These agreements, too, reduced the amount of Ustasha mass killing of Serbs.<sup>142</sup> It should be added that these agreements only lasted a few months and were not renewed after the spring of 1944. The January 1944 Chetnik political conference at Ba had "boosted Mihailovic," and the order was given "not to make any arrangements with the occupation forces."<sup>143</sup>

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fornia Press, 1969), vii: "The ... Chetniks ... looked upon (the enemy occupation) as a temporary phenomenon."

133 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 148. "In Herzegovina, village heads journeyed to the nearest Italian garrison to ask for food and protection" (Milazzo, *Chetnik Movement*, 49). See also Pavlowitch, *Disorder*, 122: Italian "territory was a haven for Serb refugees."

134 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 149.

135 *Ibid.*, 150.

136 Tomasevich, *Occupation and Collaboration*, 408.

137 Bailey, "British Policy," 68. Bailey described how the British Liaison Officers approved Djuric's "connection with the enemy" in February 1943 (p. 74). In February 1943, the Germans gave the Italians intercepts "to convince Rome of Mihailovic's blatantly pro-Allied sympathies" (Pavlowitch, *Disorder*, 157).

138 Barker, "British Decision Making," 33–34.

139 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 146.

140 Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 325. Markham may not have known of these agreements as information the British had was "secret" and "circulated only to a highly select group of people" (p. 333, fn. 30).

141 Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 326–27.

142 Tomasevich, *Occupation and Collaboration*, 408.

143 Pavlowitch, *Disorder*, 225. See also Roberts, *Tito*, 199.

Markham wrote that Mihailovic's relations with "Serbia's Petain, General Milan Neditch ... amounted to collaboration," as well. "Both Neditch's state forces and Mihailovitch's Chetniks fought Partisans, who were trying to occupy Serbia. Naturally, they cooperated." "Through Neditch's administration the Serbs got guns, ammunition, money, provisions, and placed them at Mihailovitch's disposal."<sup>144</sup>

"It is fair to assume," though, Tomasevich wrote, "that if the Allies had executed a large-scale landing on the Dalmatian coast ... the Chetniks would have been able to carry through their plan to increase their strength by general mobilization ... and those detachments that were collaborating with the German ... forces would have turned their arms against them."<sup>145</sup>

Markham gave an evocative and moving personal account of the "deplorable situation" in which Serbs found themselves.

Dark beyond measure was the night of those Serbs.... [A]s the victory march was being prepared, near the head of which the Serbs had hoped to march, they were being denounced by the highest Allied tribunals as traitors. After being smashed by the Nazis, massacred in groups by the Ustashas, and executed in large numbers by the Partisans, the Serbs were being rejected by their great allies. Serb nationalists have wept as they told me of that. But even in their tears they were determined at all costs to continue to resist Communism.<sup>146</sup>

In summary, Markham found it understandable that Chetniks fought alongside the Germans, writing in 1947 that

[m]ost responsible leaders in most western lands have come to agree that Imperial Communism has become the world's greatest menace. The verdict of history will probably be that Mihailovitch saw earlier what other honest, wise men saw later, and that under his circumstances, most Americans or Britishers would have considered Tito's Communism enemy number one.<sup>147</sup>

The Chetniks were not the only ones negotiating with the Germans. For his part, Tito had serious and substantial talks with the foreign enemy, as he sent Politburo member Milovan Djilas on 11 March 1943 to negotiate an armistice with the Germans. This attempt may only have failed because Hitler was unwilling to agree.<sup>148</sup> The Partisan proposal stated that "[t]he Army of Liberation of Yugoslavia considers the Chetniks as the main enemies," and during negotiations

144 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 148.

145 Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 182. See also Milazzo, *Chetnik Movement*, viii: "[The Chetnik] movement leaders' long-haul anti-Axis goals."

146 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 150.

147 *Ibid.*, 154. Churchill wrote in the Second World War that after the war, "Soviet Russia had become a mortal threat to the free world ... and two years were to pass before [the Soviets] were confronted again by an equal will-power" (*Triumph and Tragedy*, 456). The Partisans were also fighting the Chetniks in a civil war. By 1942, "The 'Second Phase of the Revolution' i.e. the open struggle for power" had begun (Trifkovic, *Parleying with the Devil*, 52). For the Partisans, "the resistance against the occupier thus became secondary to an all-out civil war" (p. 55).

148 Roberts, *Tito*, 112. See also Trifkovic, *Parleying with the Devil*, ch. 3, "The March Negotiations," 135–95; Milazzo, *Chetnik Movement*, ch. 6, 113–39; Djilas, *Wartime*, 229–45.

they committed to “take up combat against the English, if the latter were to land.”<sup>149</sup> “We didn’t shrink from declarations that we would fight the British,” Djilas explained. “We really believed we would have to fight them if ... they ... supported the Chetnik establishment.”<sup>150</sup>

Tito initiated these contacts during the Battle of the Neretva River, at a moment when he was concerned that his army might be decisively defeated. It may also have been an effort “to attempt the total annihilation of the Chetniks before the expected Allied landing.”<sup>151</sup> According to Djilas, “[t]he Chetniks were a problem for us.” “Even if no landing took place the Chetniks could hold on for a long time, in league with the occupying forces, perhaps to the war’s end and then get support from the British.”<sup>152</sup>

Tito took these negotiations seriously. To keep them going, he returned German prisoners and stopped sabotage efforts on the Belgrade-Zagreb train route. He defied the Soviets as well, who wrote him, “Will you cease the struggle against the worst enemy of mankind and your people?” According to Djilas, “[t]his was the first time ... Tito expressed ... any difference with the Soviets.” Furthermore, they were breaking with them “on the most sensitive question of all.”<sup>153</sup>

Chetnik leaders were aware of these meetings and sent two telegrams to London reporting on “the continued negotiations between the Communists and the Germans. Although some SOE officials believed it indicated that the Germans were arming the Partisans, “it did not warrant cancelling sending missions to the Partisans.”<sup>154</sup>

Had an armistice been achieved, it is difficult to predict how relations would have developed. “Tito’s thoughts,” Djilas wrote, “were that later, we could reconsider this agreement.”<sup>155</sup> “Tito has been described as wanting “temporary freedom of action against Mihailovic rather than the sort of ongoing collaboration which the Chetniks developed with the Italians.”<sup>156</sup>

Following that initiative, Markham reported that Tito entered into a form of collaboration.

After Hitler had stabilized the situation subsequent to Italy’s collapse, in 1943, Tito ... observed an unwritten but no less real truce with the German occupiers. There was accommodation on most Partisan-Nazi fronts. Tito, by his action, said, “If the Germans won’t attack us, we won’t attack them. If they’ll leave us free ... to wage war against the Serbs, we’ll leave them alone.”<sup>157</sup>

“If one should carefully read Partisan war bulletins and draw a German-Partisan battle line at the end of each month, he would discover that the line was practically the same for the full year preceding November, 1944.”<sup>158</sup> “The Partisans left the German vital supply lines largely

149 Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 245.

150 Djilas, *Wartime*, 243.

151 Milazzo, *Chetnik Movement*, 131.

152 Djilas, *Wartime*, 230.

153 *Ibid.*, 231, 232.

154 Trifkovic, *Parleying with the Devil*, 156. See also Pavlowitch, *Disorder*, 162.

155 Djilas, *Wartime*, 231.

156 Milazzo, *Chetnik Movement*, 134.

157 Markham, *Tito’s Imperial Communism*, 152.

158 *Ibid.*, 152. This conclusion is apparently based, at least in part, on a study conducted by Lieutenant Colonel Robert McDowell of the OSS, in which he found Communist communiques of territory liberated by the Partisans were consistently contradicted in subsequent communiques (“McDowell Report,” in Martin, *Web*, 389).

undisturbed.”<sup>159</sup> “Even more striking ... was the ... fanatical persistence with which the Partisans attacked the Serbs in areas having little or no strategic importance for the Germans.”<sup>160</sup>

According to Djilas, “we knew that we wouldn’t win unless we won in Serbia.”<sup>161</sup> In October 1943, Djilas continued, “Tito indicated to the staff in Montenegro that the penetration into Serbia was their most important task.”<sup>162</sup> There were three Partisan invasions of Serbia in the spring and summer of 1944.<sup>163</sup>

A historian of Partisan military operations believed that

[t]he aim of these operations was to bring the war to key German positions in the Balkans, which also happened to be the stronghold of the rival Chetnik nationalist movement. The objective was to weaken the former, destroy the latter and greet the Red Army on the country’s eastern borders. Thus, the aspiration of the Communist-led People’s Liberation Movement to be recognized as the ... most serious contender for power after war would be fulfilled.<sup>164</sup>

For Markham, Tito did not deserve credit for Yugoslavia’s freedom from Nazi occupation. “The Allies handed liberated Yugoslavia over to Tito.”<sup>165</sup> This view differed from that of Tomasevich, who wrote, “[t]he Yugoslav Communists acquired power essentially by their own efforts ... rather than as a consequence of the Red Army’s control of Yugoslav territory.”<sup>166</sup> A second historian believed that Tito would have prevailed regardless of Allied help as “the failure of the Mihailovic movement was basically internal and ... the collapse of their relations with the British was of secondary importance.”<sup>167</sup>

Nevertheless, there is substantial evidence to support Markham’s claim. Tito wrote to Stalin on 5 July 1944, “we ... need your help ... to solve the problem of Serbia as soon as possible ... because our final success ... depends on this.” Stalin himself told Tito on 20 May 1948 that “the Soviet army came to the aid of the Yugoslav people, crushed the German invader, liberated Belgrade—and in this way created the conditions which were necessary for the CPY [Communist Party of Yugoslavia] to achieve power.”<sup>168</sup> Additional evidence includes the extraordinary

159 Markham, *Tito’s Imperial Communism*, 153. “Germans controlled ... vital communications” (Pavlowitch, *Disorder*, 217).

160 Markham, *Tito’s Imperial Communism*, 153.

161 Djilas, *Wartime*, 351.

162 Ibid., 352. On 28 August 1943, Tito ordered Main HQ for Serbia “to limit the size of operations against the occupier and concentrate on organizing, recruiting and fighting collaborationist formations and the Chetniks of Draza Mihailovitch instead.” In September 1943, Tito ordered Bosnian and Proletarian units to concentrate along the left side of the Drina River “to invade Serbia as soon as circumstances permitted” (Trifkovic, *Parleying with the Devil*, 61). The Partisans had a plan to penetrate Serbia “to destroy the Chetniks” (Pavlowitch, *Disorder*, 155).

163 Trifkovic, “Battle,” 547.

164 Ibid., 555.

165 Markham, *Tito’s Imperial Communism*, 185. See also Pavlovic, “U.S. Influence,” 161: “Yugoslavia was ... given to the communists, and the democracy sacrificed.”

166 Jozo Tomasevich, “Yugoslavia During the Second World War,” in Wayne Vucinich, ed. *Contemporary Yugoslavia* (University of California Press, 1969), 59.

167 Milazzo, *Chetnik Movement*, viii.

168 Biber, “1944,” 120. Stalin wrote this letter at a time he was criticizing Tito. See also Pavlowitch, *Disorder*, 236: “Belgrade was a well-defended point.... Tito’s [army] on its own could not have freed it at that time without the Soviet contribution in tanks and heavy artillery.” “It was only the arrival of the Red Army in the autumn of 1944 which actually forced them [the Germans] to withdraw” (Simms, review of *Partisanenkrieg in Juglawien*, 299).

amount of arms and supplies the Allies provided the Partisans in 1944, the Allied bombing campaign, the Allied rescue of Tito at Drvar in June 1944 and his protection on the island of Vis, the collapse of the German armies at the hands of the Allies, and the negotiations at Yalta.<sup>169</sup>

## Markham Goes to Cairo and Italy in 1944

In October 1942, Markham joined the Office of War Information (OWI), eventually becoming Deputy Director for the Balkans. There he saw how official American opinion became noticeably more pro-Russian after the Allies' Foreign Ministers' Conference in the Soviet capital in October 1943.

I was working in Washington, D.C. at the time ... of the meeting at Moscow. Our Office of War Information began exuberantly to whoop it up for Russia and to point out the "innocent nature" of Communism. We ... urged our distraught Allies, such as Poland or Yugoslavia ... to have no fear of Russia.<sup>170</sup>

In February 1944, Markham was sent to Cairo and Bari, Italy. Croat historian Bogdan Raditsa called him "the best-informed Balkan expert the country had,"<sup>171</sup> adding "he was one of the few Americans who knew how to understand us and handle us."<sup>172</sup>

He spent two weeks in London en route. "Lunch with Tito's boys. Ardent crusaders. Stimulating as Witnesses of Jehovah.... Felt back in the Balkans."<sup>173</sup> A more poignant meeting came with Serbian politician Milan Grol.

I caught him in a mood of despondency.... Mr. Churchill had just denounced the Serbian nationalists as collaborators and had urged all Serbs to join Tito. That repudiation of the integrity and political soundness of Serbia was a crushing blow for Dr. Grol. Serbia had lost everything for the cause.... "Yet Churchill," Grol told me, "had called the Serbs traitors." He was as much alone as Serbia and extremely sad.<sup>174</sup>

After a month in Egypt, Markham arrived in Bari, where he was "about as close as Americans could get to the Balkans in those days,"<sup>175</sup> in a city "teeming with real Balkan intelligence."<sup>176</sup> Markham was "in charge of American intelligence"<sup>177</sup> and described his work as "half intelli-

169 See Trifkovic, "Battle," 529–30, for a description of how a lack of supplies hindered the Partisans' first attempt to invade Serbia, and see pp. 550–52 for a description of the opposing forces and their armament at the decisive battle (7–8 September 1944). Biber describes the massive extent of Allied supplies provided the Partisans in 1944, such as 114,267,235 rounds of ammunition; the Chetniks received nothing ("1944," 125–26). "The Partisan penetration into Mihailovitch's Serbia in the summer of 1944 was a difficult conquest, in spite of Allied support, including the air bombardment of German held towns" (Pavlovitch, *Disorder*, 235).

170 Reuben Markham, *Romania Under the Soviet Yoke* (Boston: Meador, 1949), 169.

171 Raditsa, "Markham," *New Leader*.

172 Condolence letter to Mary Markham.

173 Letter, Reuben Markham to Mary Markham, 25 March 1944.

174 Reuben Markham, "Why Dr. Grol Resigned," *Christian Science Monitor*, 28 August 1945.

175 Elmer Davis, Letter to the Editor, "Mr. Markham's War Service," *Christian Science Monitor*, 5 January 1950: 20.

176 Letter, Mary Markham to all, 10 April 1944.

177 Raditsa, "Markham," *New Leader*.

gence.... [T]hat sort of work always seems futile, especially for an agency like ours which is not hooked to the activity that determines events."<sup>178</sup> An OWI colleague "said the State Dept. think it is the best of its kind they have ever had."<sup>179</sup>

In Bari, he formed his understanding that the Partisans were an autocratic, undemocratic movement. He believed that fighting the Germans was not the Partisans' "chief aim." "Their aim was to establish a new regime in Yugoslavia, to destroy all Yugoslavian resistance to such a regime, and to wipe out the basis for future opposition."<sup>180</sup>

As Britain, and gradually America, threw its support to Tito, Markham realized that the United States began to share responsibility for attacks on Serbia. Importantly, American air power was used to assist the Partisans. "The American nation," he wrote, "for a period allowed the Communist, Josip Broz-Tito, to direct a part of its magnificent and terrible air fleet ... against our Serbian allies." The bombing of Belgrade in April 1944 on the Sunday and Monday of Easter was an example.<sup>181</sup> "We Allies hit the places (Tito) told us to hit and killed the people he told us to kill."<sup>182</sup>

Although the British had made their decision to support only Tito, the American position was less rigid. Formally, the State Department continued to declare that it would support all groups resisting the occupation,<sup>183</sup> although Roosevelt generally agreed with Churchill's requests to stop sending arms and missions to Mihailovitch.<sup>184</sup> Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Director General William Donovan wanted to maintain "a flexible policy in Yugoslavia."<sup>185</sup> He was known for "his desire to use the OSS to help establish non-Communist Balkan governments."<sup>186</sup>

Inside Yugoslavia, at the beginning of 1944, "the Yugoslav Army in the Homeland was very much in control of the Serbian countryside."<sup>187</sup> The Chetniks' prospects depended "on holding their own ... in Serbia against Tito and on the Red Army remaining out of Yugoslavia."<sup>188</sup> In October 1943 Djilas believed that "the Russians were still far away." When Markham arrived in

178 Letter, Reuben Markham to Mary Markham, 11 June 1944.

179 Letter, Mary Markham to Reuben Markham, 28 July 1944.

180 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 143, 114. In 1975, Tomasevich wrote, "it was not until recently that it was candidly admitted in Yugoslavia that the CPY (Communist Party) and the Partisans were engaged in ... a civil war.... For ... political reasons this was not generally admitted during the war" (*Chetniks*, 155, fn. 116). He cites a paper by Vojmir Kljakovic ("About the Elements of Socialist Revolution in the Liberation War of the Peoples of Yugoslavia," 154): "To achieve their goal, the Partisans had to defeat the Chetniks."

181 Martin, *Ally Betrayed*, 100.

182 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 165. Pavlowitch states, "An agreement had been reached with Tito about bombing sites in coordination with the partisan advance." "The urban population suffered." "The number of victims is controversial." He reported that military and economic sites were bombed. Four of the hardest hit towns were Belgrade, Podgorica, Leskovac, and Zadar (*Disorder*, 236). Of Podgorica, Markham wrote that Montenegro "has no vestige of a main (railway) line," and that Podgorica, "on the wild fringe of Yugoslavia," "was not an arsenal or a port or a military center, though it contained a German garrison" (*Tito's Imperial Communism*, 165–66). Lees, *Rape*, 113–14: "air close support was exploited by Tito for civil-war purposes." "The strategy and tactics adopted inside Yugoslavia were decided by Tito and his commanders alone." Chosen by a Partisan Commander and a British Officer, "[a]ny target ... which was too strongly held by the enemy ... was made the responsibility of the RAF or ... of the US Army Air Force" (Fitzroy Maclean, *Eastern Approaches* [London: Jonathan Cape, 1974], 472).

183 Murphy to Secretary of State, 27 May 1944, fn. 4, Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS): Diplomatic Papers, 1944, Europe, vol. 4.

184 Pavlovic, "U.S. Influence," *New Imperialism*, 151.

185 Milazzo, *Chetnik Movement*, 172.

186 Robin Winks, *Cloak & Gown* (William Morrow & Co., 1987), 67.

187 Trifkovic, "Battle," 525. The Yugoslav Army in the Homeland was Mihailovitch's army; "even in the summer of 1944, they [the Chetniks] still had the overwhelming support of the people" (Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 425).

188 Milazzo, *Chetnik Movement*, 172.

Bari, Romania and Bulgaria were still allied with Germany and provided a buffer before Russia could reach Serbia. D-Day had not yet happened, and Britain remained allied with the Yugoslav Government-in-exile.

The conclusion of the German occupation and the civil war was an open question with Serbia's fate undecided. The civil war might have ended in a draw, with the Chetniks retaining power there. In other words, there was a genuine possibility that Serbia could emerge from the war independent and non-Communist. Having been deeply involved in Balkan politics for more than 30 years, knowing politicians such as Croatian peasant leader and former Yugoslav Deputy Premier Vladko Macek, who described the American as "a most loyal friend," Markham, a fervent democrat, strongly preferred an option that would allow a free political life.<sup>189</sup> It would have seemed to him that there was time and opportunity enough to help bring about that outcome.

In March and April 1944, King Peter came under pressure from Churchill to change the make-up of the Yugoslav government in exile and remove Mihailovitch from his position as Minister of Defense. Referring to Mihailovitch, Churchill wrote to Roosevelt saying that the British "had been pressing 'King Peter to clear himself of this millstone which is dragging him down.'" Churchill also asked, and FDR agreed, to have the U.S. stop a large OSS intelligence mission Donovan was sending to Chetnik headquarters.<sup>190</sup>

The King wrote to Roosevelt that April, defending Mihailovitch, and warning that concessions to Tito would have wide ramifications. "Labelling as 'traitors' our courageous people, who are fighting alone without anyone's help, drowning in their own blood," would be "one of the greatest scandals in history." Tito's victory, he went on, would not just affect Yugoslavia "alone. It is the test case for all of Central Europe, and if successful, it will lead to much more, with no end in sight."<sup>191</sup> America's ambassador to the government-in-exile also drew attention to "the ultimate effects on Yugoslavia's future" of abandoning Mihailovitch, "since we may have to deal with these effects in due time."<sup>192</sup>

In his letter to the President, Peter added that he had been informed that there would be "no landing in the Balkans. If such a fatal decision were taken, I implore you to change it." "Fatal" because it meant that there might now be no presence in Yugoslavia of the Western Allies to counter the Russians and the Partisans.<sup>193</sup>

In a reply to Peter dated May 12, Roosevelt responded, "I really think it would be to the best interest of your country ... to ... relieve (Mihailovitch) of government responsibility."<sup>194</sup> At the end of May, Peter dismissed his Prime Minister, Bozidar Puric, along with Mihailovitch from his Cabinet position. About this decision, Markham reported that "the King had fizzled."<sup>195</sup>

189 Condolence letter, Vladko Macek to Mary Markham, January 1950, in Djilas, *Wartime*, 453. Although Djilas describes criticizing Macek during the war (p. 371), and Markham writes that the Partisans denounced "Machek night and day as an arch-Fascist" (*Tito's Imperial Communism*, 179), the biographical notes in *Wartime* described Macek as "opposed to both the fascists and the communists," spending "the war under house arrest in the fascist puppet state of Croatia" (p. 453) Markham's *The Wave of the Past* was a paean to democracy vs. Naziism, Fascism, and Communism.

190 Roberts, *Tito*, 256.

191 King Peter II to President Roosevelt, 17 April 1944, FRUS, Europe, vol. 4.

192 MacVeagh to Secretary of State, 5 February 1944, fn. 43, FRUS, Europe, vol. 4.

193 At Teheran, "[t]he fate of Yugoslavia was sealed when the two biggest armies agreed that there would be no Allied landing in Yugoslavia" (Pavlovic, "U.S. Influence," 151).

194 Draft of a Letter from President Roosevelt to King Peter of Yugoslavia, 12 May 1944, FRUS, Europe, vol. 4.

195 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 175.

Appointed on June 1, the government-in-exile's new head was a Croat "of much distinction," Dr. Ivan Subashitch, but his cabinet "was a diplomatic fiction."<sup>196</sup> "Subasic started out as a one-man government because the Serbs refused to participate."<sup>197</sup> On June 13, days after Tito had been rescued by the Allies from the German attack on his headquarters at Drvar, Subashitch and British ambassador Ralph Stevenson met with the Partisan leader and his advisors on the island of Vis.<sup>198</sup> However, as Markham recounted, "Not one single representative of non-Communist Serbia was present."<sup>199</sup> The conclave agreed to funnel "all possible Allied aid to Tito," to recognize "Tito's army ... as the one fighting force in Yugoslavia," and to urge "all Serbians ... to join Tito."<sup>200</sup>

Markham also asserted that the group on Vis, along with the British, decided "to smash Serbia."<sup>201</sup> "The Croatian-Communist Conference reached a unanimous agreement and set to work with the help of the great Allies to deliver the final blow to Serbia." "A British minister was on ... Vis, acting as a sort of governess to the London Yugoslavs."<sup>202</sup> American diplomat Carl Norden reported to Washington on August 30 that Tito had informed him of a plan, "approved by (General) Wilson," "directed at both Germans and Chetniks," which would succeed in eliminating Mihailovitch.<sup>203</sup>

A British operation, "code-named 'Ratweek,' divided Yugoslavia into sections, each under a Partisan commander accompanied by a British officer who would specify the targets and arrange for ... air ... support." Beginning September 1, historian Walter Roberts wrote, it "was troublesome" "from the point of view of Allied policy ... because the Partisans used it simultaneously to attack the Četniks in Serbia."<sup>204</sup>

Markham described Allied air support. "Air strips were laid out as near Tito's fighting lines as possible, and on every suitable night, American-made airplanes carried American-made weapons and munitions to Tito ... to use against our ally Serbia."<sup>205</sup> American Lieutenant Colonel Robert McDowell, who was in Serbia with Mihailovitch, wrote that it was "very painful ... to watch American planes strafing Nationalist positions. Downed pilots said (they were) told in briefings that everything 'enemy' north of Partisan lines ... even though it was entirely and exclusively Nationalist held."

After a day spent in watching Nationalist troops go into battle with rifles and scant ammunition to face American and British mortars and automatic weapons, the mission each night had to listen alongside these Nationalists while American transport planes

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196 Ibid., 172.

197 Roberts, *Tito*, 230–31.

198 Ibid., 231.

199 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 174.

200 Ibid., 173.

201 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 174. Tito's plan to invade Serbia was ready by the end of February 1944. 5,000 troops attacked in March (Trifkovic, "Battle," 528, 529).

202 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 176. See also Martin, *Ally Betrayed*, 235; Fotitch, *The War We Lost*, 250.

203 Murphy to Secretary of State, 30 August 1944. General Wilson was Allied Supreme Commander for the Mediterranean.

204 Roberts, *Tito*, 252.

205 Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism*, 177.

circled overhead while preparing to drop further weapons and munitions for the morrow's battle.<sup>206</sup>

"The Partisan strategy," Roberts wrote, "aimed at liquidating the Četniks or at least evicting them from Serbia." "Control of Serbia ... had been the Partisans' goal for some time." Their "objective seemed within reach and they struck for it."<sup>207</sup>

## Markham Opposes Allied Support for Tito

When he had arrived in Bari, Markham already feared the spread of Communism, having lumped it together with Naziism as a totalitarian movement in *The Wave of the Past*.<sup>208</sup> Later he described what Russia was like in 1941.

Fugitives from there had told ... of stupendous slave camps, the confiscation of property, an ubiquitous secret police..., incredible famines, the bloody extermination of all the thriftier peasants called kulaks, and the degradation of workers under dictatorial bosses leading state labor unions. Stories of Siberia, people's courts, the desecration of churches, the enchaining of thought, the turning of children against their parents.<sup>209</sup>

He concluded that the Partisans would act similarly. In the Mediterranean theater, he was now at the locus of decisions which would not only affect southeastern Europe, but would have world-wide ramifications. "I daily feel the thrill of impending events & of Balkan developments. Aren't our countries [the Balkan countries] in a terrible mess!... I wish I could tell [the *Monitor* people] the things I know [sic]. In any case I am adding to my education."<sup>210</sup>

Markham started to make his views heard opposing Britain's policy of supporting Tito exclusively. When Norden visited Bari in early May, he spoke to "American ... specialists" there. While Markham is not identified by name, Norden's report includes statements that espouse his positions. Robert Murphy, "General Eisenhower's chief political advisor,"<sup>211</sup> paraphrased Norden's analysis of the effects of a Partisan victory: "some observers accept a later domestic reaction because of the movement's alleged semi-totalitarian nature, but this is conjecture." "The more mature observers still believe Serbia to hold the key to the future of the country."<sup>212</sup>

By May 7, Markham was back in Egypt, where he reported making "very pleasant contacts with people who are helping America determine its course."<sup>213</sup> As a ranking OWI official there, he was likely the cause of another cable from Murphy to Secretary of State Cordell Hull which

206 "McDowell Report," in Martin, *Web*, 396–97.

207 Roberts, *Tito*, 252. "The personnel of the McDowell mission saw how the Partisan armies invaded Serbia, avoiding the Germans and concentrating all their efforts against the Chetniks" (Martin, *Ally Betrayed*, 197).

208 Markham, *Wave of the Past*, 42.

209 Markham, *Romania*, 147

210 Letter, Reuben Markham to Mary Markham, 28 May 1944.

211 "Robert Murphy, Diplomat, Dies," *New York Times*, 10 January 1978.

212 Murphy to Secretary of State, 7 May 1944. On April 30, Markham was in Bari, on May 7 in Egypt. A June 6 letter back in Bari describes him as having been away for a month (Letters, Reuben Markham to Mary Markham, 30 April 1944, 7 May 1944, 6 June 1944). Markham, a "mature" 57 years old at the time, was certainly a "specialist."

213 Letter, Reuben Markham to Mary Markham, 2 July 1944.

reported an opinion, sounding very much like Markham's, that the U.S. should not agree to being associated with Britain's promotion of Tito over Mihailovitch. On May 22, OWI objected to integrating its Balkan Section in Cairo with its counterpart, the British Psychological Warfare Executive (PWE), because "it is not desirable for the United States to become identified with British policy in this area [Yugoslavia] and that if the British want to take a strong propaganda line supporting a certain leader or ruler their statements, broadcasts or leaflets should bear a clear British label and could not bear an Allied label." Murphy agreed "that it is not the American objective to unite all Yugoslav forces under Tito," but pointed out that having a separate identification violated the "fundamental principle of unity of action." For the time being, Murphy concluded, the integrated Psychological Warfare Branch (PWB) would try to avoid the issue of Tito.<sup>214</sup>

Following these developments, on June 10, the State Department reiterated its position that it did not support Tito exclusively. "The Department is not now prepared to accept, as an Allied objective, the urging of all forces in Yugoslavia to work under Tito's military leadership."<sup>215</sup> With Subashitch about to meet Tito, Markham recognized that "now is an especially important time," and feeling positively about his role, he added, "I may have a little Balkan contribution to make."<sup>216</sup> He still felt that "things seem ... to be developing rather favorably from the policy point of view."<sup>217</sup> His work was "decidedly interesting," and he was "quite close to one tiny batch of news."<sup>218</sup>

In July, Markham's worries about Washington's policies became more acute, as he feared that his opinion was being overlooked, possibly because of his strong opposition to supporting Tito exclusively. The following letter showed Markham's involvement in "run(ning) Balkan matters."

Somebody somewhere cooked up a Balkan conference to be held in America and seems to have invited some folks from here [Cairo] to attend. And they told me nothing about it. Naturally I'm hot and if they want to run Balkan matters without me, they can certainly dispense with my presence here. I had not planned to come home until the Balkans were freed; but this incident may cause a radical and permanent change of plans.<sup>219</sup>

A Bulgarian commentator wrote about Markham during this period, "his indomitable spirit and stubbornness to fully defend his own opinion on the issues created tension in relations with ... the new service."<sup>220</sup>

Nevertheless, notwithstanding Markham's concern, when the United States was asked by the British to endorse the June Vis agreement between Subashitch and Tito, Robert Murphy advised Hull to object to a blanket statement that no aid would be provided to Mihailovitch.<sup>221</sup>

<sup>214</sup> Murphy to Secretary of State, 27 May 1944.

<sup>215</sup> Murphy to Secretary of State, 27 May 1944, fn. 4.

<sup>216</sup> Letter, Reuben Markham to Mary Markham, 11 June 1944.

<sup>217</sup> Letter, Reuben Markham to Mary Markham, 13 June 1944.

<sup>218</sup> Letter, Reuben Markham to Mary Markham, 17 June 1944.

<sup>219</sup> Letter, Reuben Markham to Mary Markham, 2 July 1944.

<sup>220</sup> Velichkov, "Reuben Markham."

<sup>221</sup> Roberts, *Tito*, 234. The July 3 wire to Hull says it is from Chapin, but Roberts attributes it to Murphy (Murphy to Secretary of State, 3 July 1944).

On July 8, Hull responded that “exclusion of Serbian interests in the ... negotiations ... have jeopardized” them. “The reason commonly advanced is Mihailovitch’s alleged collaboration with the enemy.” The State Department, he continued, was not yet prepared to approve “a directive setting forth an irrevocable decision to withhold supplies from Serbian forces and giving support to a forcible penetration of Tito into Serbia.” Thus, the Department understood, as Markham had described, the agreement was made without non-Communist Serbian participation and that its goal was the conquest of Serbia. “It is felt that to implement the present directive would work an injustice on certain large and deserving groups among the Yugoslav population, whose major offense appears to be their opposition to Partisan domination.”<sup>222</sup> This strong statement showed that the State Department was unwilling to support the Partisan invasion of Serbia and shut the door on providing supplies to the Chetniks.

On August 12, Churchill engineered a meeting with Tito at General Wilson’s Allied headquarters in Caserta, Italy. By this time, the plan put forth by Tito, Subashitch, and the British to attack Serbia had become sufficiently well known that H. Freeman Matthews, Deputy Director of the Office of European Affairs, laid it out to the Secretary of State. For Matthews, the question had gone beyond whether the U.S. should supply materiel to Mihailovitch, but whether it should continue supplying weapons to Tito because of their use against the Chetniks.

The question which is of chief interest to the United States at the present moment, in the matter of Yugoslavia, has reference to the supply of arms to the resistance forces, and to the reports that these arms, supplied by the Allies, are used, or are being held for use, in the struggle between the two major factions in Yugoslavia, rather than for use against the Germans.<sup>223</sup> We have received several reports containing flat assertions that the American arms are being supplied to the Partisans to kill the Serbs. There is no doubt that as of a few weeks ago it was Tito’s plan to invade Serbia, and he discussed this matter with the British mission and we have record even of the officers who would command the operation. It was expected at that time that Brigadier Maclean, the chief of the British mission, would accompany these troops. About the same time the British Ambassador to the Yugoslav Government reported that such a project might well succeed since the Serbs had been greatly weakened and many of their best men are held as prisoners of war by the Germans.<sup>224</sup>

It could not be clearer both that the British were fully involved in the plan to conquer Serbia and that the views of those Americans opposing Tito were being heard at the highest State Department level. It should be noted for the record that “[s]upport will not be furnished the Partisans where it is obvious that they will use it ... merely against the Chet-

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222 Hull to Chapin, 8 July 1944, FRUS, Europe, vol. 4.

223 Markham wrote that persons with “first hand” knowledge reported that “certain Partisan corps headquarters ... refused to use [American weapons] in offensives against Germans, but saved them for the subjugation of Serbia” (*Tito’s Imperial Communism*, 153).

224 H. Freeman Matthews to Secretary of State, 18 August 1944, FRUS, Europe, vol. 4. See also Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 470–76.

niks,” but there were loopholes that would make it very difficult to apply in practice.<sup>225</sup> Churchill himself acknowledged in an August 31 memo to Anthony Eden, British Foreign Minister, “that a great responsibility would rest on England after the war when all the arms in Yugoslavia—supplied by the West—would be in Tito’s possession and could be used by him to subjugate the country.”<sup>226</sup>

Markham’s efforts to change America’s support for British policy continued, as historian Bradley Smith recounted, “[i]n August, an O.W.I. representative in Cairo, Reuben Markham, mounted a blistering attack on Anglo-American aid to the communist Tito, which reverberated all the way to the offices of the J.C.S. [Joint Chiefs of Staff].”<sup>227</sup>

On August 19, Markham penned a letter, stamped “Top Secret” at the top, directly to Robert Murphy opposing assistance to Tito, not on the grounds that he was an autocratic Communist or that the Allies owed the Serbs a debt, but, directly countering Churchill’s argument, that it was actually Tito who was helping the Germans. The data, Markham informed Murphy, was “from an official report, which came to me officially. It has probably already gone to our government by a different route.”<sup>228</sup>

Markham starts off the letter saying, “I hope you will not take it amiss if I call your attention to the following matter” and proceeds to make several points about Tito’s activity.

1. “Tito’s Partisans are engaged in an attempt to invade Serbia. They tried in April/May and completely failed.”
2. Subashitch was a party to this plan. “Tito emphatically assured Shubashich that he would soon conquer Serbia. That was a main point in the Tito-Shubashich agreement.”
3. “Last month Tito launched a new offensive against Serbia...”
4. There were only “two German battalions” involved, “one Police, the other Schutz,” as well as one Bulgarian division. In other words, “four or five hundred third-rate German troops are looking on and cheering.”
5. “[A]s of the first week of August, 19,000 Chetniks had been engaged.”
6. “Thus Tito’s Yugoslavs, with ... ardent British propaganda support, are fighting against the Serbs of Serbia—and incidently [sic] being defeated.”
7. “In this horrible civil war,” Tito is using “our guns, with the mark Made in the USA, British Battle Dress bearing the words Made in Philadelphia and American food supplies.”
8. “By our policy of supporting Tito,... 35,000 Yugoslavs ... are killing one another leaving the Germans free to kill us Americans.”
9. “Can there be any doubt that Tito by his civil war is serving Germany!”<sup>229</sup>

225 Chapin to Secretary of State, 3 July 1944, FRUS, Europe, vol. 4. One loophole was if they were opposed attacking any objective of “military value.” A second was if they were fighting Chetniks who were collaborating, as that definition could encompass many Chetniks.

226 Roberts, *Tito*, 247.

227 Bradley F. Smith, *The Shadow Warriors* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1983), 282.

228 This wording implies Markham was getting secret intelligence “officially” that may not have gone to other U.S. government agencies.

229 Letter from Reuben Markham to Robert Murphy, 19 August 1944, National Archives, British War Office, 204/1972. See also Trifkovic, “Battle,” 537–44: Trifkovic’s description of the “Second NOV] Incursion” (NOV) was the Partisan army) is strikingly similar to Markham’s in this letter, starting with his July–August date, the Germans having only one police battalion and one armored company, concentrations of Chetniks ranging from 10,000 to 14,000, battles fighting to a draw. With this letter,

Markham hoped Murphy would help stop the United States from providing weapons to the Partisans. At this point, he believed that the fate of Serbia and Yugoslavia was still an open question.

The letter showed that Markham and Murphy knew each other. It is addressed to “My dear Mr. Ambassador,” written in a familiar manner, with it being unnecessary to explain who he is. Murphy would probably have known about him from the May OWI/Cairo protest, but it is also possible that Markham and Murphy may have crossed paths as far back as 1918 at the American legation in Bern, Switzerland, where the young Markham spent two weeks explaining to American diplomats his secret mission on behalf of the Bulgarian government.<sup>230</sup>

Markham, with his reports to the State Department, may also have been a source for Matthews on the same issue, as his use of phrases such as the plan “to invade Serbia,” and the “flat assertions” that American arms were being used to “kill the Serbs,” mirrors this letter to Murphy.

### The McDowell Mission to Mihailovitch

There was a certain anti-Tito sentiment in Washington<sup>231</sup> which led General Donovan to approve a new intelligence mission to Mihailovitch’s headquarters on July 6, with FDR concurring August 5, and, according to Donovan, receiving the sign-off from General Wilson and Alexander Cadogan, British Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, as well.<sup>232</sup> Led by Lieutenant Colonel Robert McDowell, accompanied by Lieutenant Ellsworth Kramer, the team landed on August 26, on the seventh try.<sup>233</sup>

Although the mission was not to have any political authority in regard to recognizing the Chetniks, the OSS Secret Intelligence Section Chief in Bari, Robert Joyce, believed “[t]he sending of a mission to Mihailovich represents a most important political act, a reversal in American policy, and, in a sense, a defiance of British policy in the Balkans.”<sup>234</sup> That is what Markham was working for. After meeting with Murphy on August 22, Joyce wrote that the ambassador “admitted that this might be true,” thus implying that both the OSS and the State Department understood that a new direction in Yugoslavia was possible. Murphy also wrote that at this time, “the American Government still had no Yugoslav policy,” meaning that debate on this issue remained open.<sup>235</sup>

Markham was well connected with the personnel in this mission, later receiving a personal letter from Lieutenant Kramer in February 1945 that began, “Sure was surprised to hear that you had returned to the States when I returned to Italy after my return from the trip inside,” and ended with “If you get anywhere near this area [Pennsylvania] drop me a line and maybe we can meet.” Since Kramer was flown back to the States 48 hours after returning to Bari, he had learned about Markham’s departure almost immediately.

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Markham ensured that Murphy had the most up to date information about Partisan activity in the Yugoslavian civil war.

230 Robert Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1964), 1. Markham also spent a week in Algiers, where Murphy was stationed, on his way to Cairo in February 1944.

231 Milazzo, *Chetnik Movement*, 173.

232 Biber, “McDowell,” 196, 200.

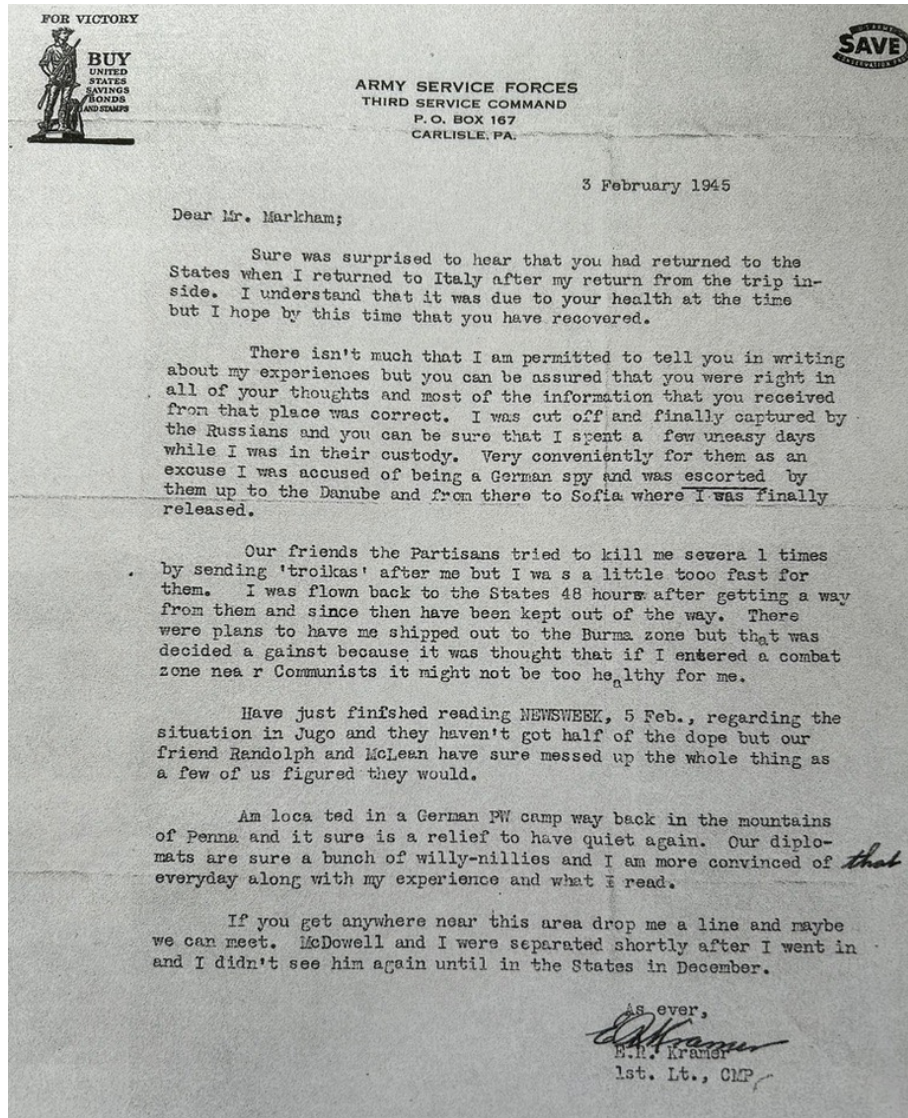
233 Roberts, *Tito*, 257

234 Biber, “McDowell,” 197. Nevertheless, Joyce believed “[t]he mission to Tito is still the big show and we would do nothing at this point to prejudice its success.”

235 Murphy, *Diplomat*, 224.

“There isn’t much that I am permitted to tell you in writing about my experiences,” Kramer informed him, “but you can be assured that you were right in all of your thoughts and most of the information that you received from that place was correct.”

Referring to Churchill’s son Randolph and Fitzroy Maclean, Kramer continued, “our friend Randolph and McLean [sic] have sure messed up the whole thing as a few of us figured they would.” “Our friends the Partisans tried to kill me several times,” he went on, “by sending ‘troikas’ after me but I was a little tooo [sic] fast for them.”<sup>236</sup> He closed with “McDowell and I were separated shortly after I went in and I didn’t see him again until in the States in December.”<sup>237</sup>



Letter from Lieutenant Ellsworth Kramer to Markham

236 Martin, *Ally Betrayed*, 196. “Both sides sent out troikas (trios) to assassinate marked individuals on the other side.”

237 Letter, Lt. E.R. Kramer to Reuben Markham, 3 February 1945.

This casual reference to “McDowell” informs the reader that he was well known to Markham. McDowell, a 50-year-old professor of Balkan history at the University of Michigan, was born in Syria of American missionary parents, grew up in the Middle East and spoke Arabic, Turkish, French, and German.<sup>238</sup>

In 1944, McDowell was in Cairo, working for the Joint Intelligence Collection Agency Middle East analyzing intelligence reaching the OSS.<sup>239</sup> In this capacity, McDowell evaluated “communist communiques on the basis of their own evidence. This ... study revealed that communist claims of territory liberated in Yugoslavia and of defeats of Axis forces were consistently contradicted by subsequent communiques.”<sup>240</sup>

Markham, the 57-year-old former missionary, spent most of March, May, July, and part of August in Cairo as well. It seems very likely that McDowell, described variously as “violently pro-Chetnik,” a “conservative anti-Titoist,” or as one whose “sympathies lay with the Chetniks,” met the OWI intelligence chief in the course of business, and the two may have found much in common with their missionary backgrounds, interest in the Balkans, and anti-Communist views.<sup>241</sup> Markham appeared familiar with McDowell’s research, writing himself, “If one should carefully read Partisan war bulletins ... in almost all cases the same towns are mentioned and we find the Partisans repeatedly taking the same places they had already taken.”<sup>242</sup>

McDowell had asked to be sent to Yugoslavia in March and June 1944.<sup>243</sup> By June 10, Robert Joyce in Bari was “preparing recommendations to his Washington headquarters that an OSS mission be established to work with General Mihailovich.”<sup>244</sup> Joyce also recommended that the head of the mission be a Lieutenant Colonel and able to speak French in order to communicate directly with the Chetnik leader. For Joyce, the Chetniks were “a group that is playing and will play a vital role in the post-war organization of Yugoslavia.”<sup>245</sup>

One can only speculate about Markham’s connection to the genesis and activities of this OSS mission. Perhaps he did not play a role in Joyce’s recommendations, as sending teams behind the lines into Yugoslavia, after all, was the business of the OSS. Nevertheless, Joyce, the OSS chief of secret intelligence in Bari, and Markham, the OWI official “in charge of intelligence” there, must have cooperated and coordinated with each other. By June 6, Markham was back in Bari after a month in Cairo, where he had probably interacted with McDowell. In his June 11 and 13 letters, he had told his wife that “I may have a little Balkan contribution to make,” and that “things seem ... to be developing rather favorably from the policy point of view,” possibly alluding to Joyce’s initiative. Kramer’s letter shows the OWI leader’s close connection to the group and the young lieutenant’s familiarity with “all of [Markham’s] thoughts.” Suffice it to say that it is feasible that

238 “Robert H McDowell,” Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, <https://www.gf.org/fellows/robert-h-mcdowell/>, accessed 2 February 2024; “Head of Last Mission to Mihailovich,” General Draza Mihailovich, 28 December 2011, <http://www.generalmihailovich.com/2011/12/head-of-last-mission-to-mihailovich.html>, accessed 2 February 2024.

239 Biber, “McDowell,” 201.

240 Martin, *Ally Betrayed*, 95.

241 Descriptions found in Andrew Buchanan, *American Grand Strategy in the Mediterranean During World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 249; Smith, *Shadow Warriors*, 282; and Tomasevich, *The Chetniks*, 378. As Markham had a cousin who was a missionary in Istanbul and Aleppo, whom he had visited several times, it even seems possible that Markham and McDowell would either have known or known of people in common.

242 Markham, *Tito’s Imperial Communism*, 152.

243 Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 379.

244 Biber, “McDowell,” 200.

245 *Ibid.*, 200. It almost appears as if Joyce’s qualifications were designed for McDowell.

Markham was involved in the creation of the mission, the choice of McDowell, its briefing, and its eventual attempt to assist the Chetniks in their defense against the Partisans.<sup>246</sup>

“McDowell ... arrived in Četnik territory at a momentous time.”<sup>247</sup> Events were moving very fast, with the Battle for Serbia only days away. On September 1, with this threat looming and the stimulus of McDowell’s arrival, Mihailovitch called for a general mobilization.<sup>248</sup> The climactic moment for the Chetniks was at hand.

Authorized by his instructions to negotiate with the Germans,<sup>249</sup> McDowell met twice, at their initiative,<sup>250</sup> with Nazi representatives, who he believed were “honestly striving for unconditional surrender at once.”<sup>251</sup> They offered to withdraw to the Sava-Danube line, if the Americans would not attack them, and would then only fight the Russians. McDowell replied he could only negotiate on the basis of an unconditional surrender.<sup>252</sup>

If the Nazis could be induced to lay down their arms in Yugoslavia, if the Red Army could be deterred from entering Yugoslavia, and if the Chetniks could withstand the Partisan attack on Serbia, it might be possible to keep Serbia from Communist control.

The German representative who met with McDowell reported that the OSS officer said he was authorized to “discuss Balkan problems” and fly a German to the U.S. for talks, while “a special American plenipotentiary may ... come to participate in a very important conversation.”<sup>253</sup>

When Hermann Neubacher, the German plenipotentiary for southeast Europe, was interrogated after the war, he recounted “that McDowell had intended to prevent the Soviet invasion of the Balkans, to oppose Tito, and to give assistance to the nationalist, i.e., Chetnik, forces.” The American believed that Mihailovitch’s best option, since Germany would be defeated regardless, was to “engage all his forces against Tito” and “get as much equipment from the Germans as possible.”<sup>254</sup> At his 1946 trial, Mihailovitch testified that McDowell had stated that “Germany has lost the war. Your fight against the Germans does not interest us. You have to keep your position among the people. I have come to help you.”<sup>255</sup> If reported accurately, McDowell’s positions regarding the Chetniks—not fighting the Germans, receiving arms from them, and holding some territory—resembled actual Chetnik strategy. McDowell may have been trying to encourage such an arrangement. When McDowell left Serbia, Mihailovitch referred to him “as our great friend.”<sup>256</sup> An historian also claimed “that it appears certain that Donovan and ... Murphy ... hoped that the mission would ... facilitate a later and decisive American political gesture in Yugoslavia.”<sup>257</sup>

246 See also Joyce’s connection to Markham’s reentering the government in 1949 on p. 150.

247 Roberts, *Tito*, 257.

248 Trifkovic, *Parleying with the Devil*, 546.

249 Biber, “McDowell,” 201..

250 Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 383, fn. 65.

251 Biber, “McDowell,” 207.

252 Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 383. Fotitch said the Germans “brought a proposal for capitulation” (*Lost*, 283).

253 Biber, “McDowell,” 205–06.

254 *Ibid.*, 206.

255 *The Trial of Dragoljub-Draza Mihailovic*, 307–08.

256 Tomasevich, *Chetniks*, 380.

257 Milazzo, *Chetnik Movement*, 173.

August 1944 was a critical period in the Balkans, as a group of political parties in Romania, including the Communists, overthrew its pro-German dictator, Ion Antonescu, on August 23, and a Bulgarian coalition toppled its pro-Axis leadership on September 2. Bulgarian troops, therefore, would no longer be fighting alongside the Germans in Yugoslavia and Russian troops would soon be at the Serbian border. An equally dramatic event might have appeared possible there too. McDowell's summary of his first encounter with the Germans was "immediately studied at AFHQ [Allied Force Headquarters]."<sup>258</sup> Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop approved of these meetings and recommended them to Hitler, who, however, called Neubacher "crazy."<sup>259</sup> Unconditional surrender might not have been possible, but similar soundings were being made by German authorities in Croatia.<sup>260</sup>

On September 7 and 8, the Chetniks and Partisans met in battle. Mihailovitch told his troops that the outcome would decide the fate of Serbia. With 12,000 soldiers in the front line, the Chetniks outnumbered the 6,000 Partisans, but they "went into battle with as few as ten cartridges and accompanied by unarmed men who hoped to acquire a weapon during the engagement."<sup>261</sup> Their opponents were far better equipped, including one automatic weapon per every 8–10 men, numerous mortars, and a handful of US-made 75 millimeter artillery "delivered to a forward airstrip ... on the eve of the battle."<sup>262</sup> "Each night ... American transport planes circled overhead while preparing to drop further weapons and munitions into the Partisan lines for the morrow's battle."<sup>263</sup> Intense fighting took place on the 7th, and on the 8th, the Partisans attacked, supported by mortar fire that "tore apart" entire Chetnik units. The retreat became a rout. With Partisans advancing from the south, the Bulgarians set to attack, and the Red Army nearing the border, western Serbia was abandoned.<sup>264</sup>

At this moment, remarkably, it was still not known whether the Soviet Union would enter Yugoslavia. Tito wanted its intervention, having written Stalin in July asking for help.<sup>265</sup> During Murphy's conversations with Tito on Vis, August 31, the American asked whether Russia would invade. Tito "spoke with great assurance on this point stating that he was convinced that the Russians would not enter Serbia ... leaving Marshall Tito to deal with Serbian matters."<sup>266</sup> Maclean reported similarly on September 23 that he believed Tito would try to persuade the Russians not to enter Yugoslavia.<sup>267</sup> "To a large degree these illusions resulted from a double game Tito himself was playing with the western Allies and the Russians."<sup>268</sup>

One historian asserts "that McDowell led Mihailovitch to believe that the Russians would not enter Yugoslavia and that Mihailovitch took this as proof that at least part of the country would

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258 Biber, "McDowell," 205.

259 Ibid., 206; Roberts, *Tito*, 279.

260 Biber, "McDowell," 208.

261 "McDowell Report," 395.

262 Trifkovic, "Battle," 551.

263 "McDowell Report," 397.

264 Trifkovic, "Battle," 547–54.

265 Biber, "1944," 119.

266 Murphy to Cannon, 8 September 1944, FRUS, 1944, Europe, vol. 4.

267 Kirk to Secretary of State, 23 September 1944, FRUS, 1944, Europe, vol. 4.

268 Milazzo, *Chetnik Movement*, 175.

fall in the non-Communist ‘sphere.’”<sup>269</sup> Churchill’s October 9th agreement splitting Yugoslavia with Stalin also caused some in the Chetnik camp to believe there could be a non-Communist sphere, but by that time, with the Chetnik defeat and Russia’s entering Serbia, “The spheres of influence arrangement bore no relation to military realities.”<sup>270</sup>

This American involvement with Mihailovitch led Churchill to wire Roosevelt on September 1, complaining that “General Donovan is running a strong Mihajlovic lobby” “just when we have persuaded King Peter to break decisively with him.” Roosevelt concurred with the Prime Minister on the 3rd and ordered the intelligence mission back.<sup>271</sup> The Partisan-British military action Operation Ratweek, “a massive campaign of air and ground attacks,” was already underway by this point.<sup>272</sup>

On the 7th, Markham wrote Mary, “Within a few days there will be a radical change in the nature of our work, I think. I find every hour exciting now.”<sup>273</sup> Murphy, after his visit with Tito on Vis, informed the State Department on the 8th that he was coming around to the view “that Tito was more of a national patriot than an international Communist.”<sup>274</sup>

On September 12, King Peter delivered a broadcast to Yugoslavia calling on all citizens to unite and join the National Liberation Army under Tito. “The speech had an immediate and devastating effect on the morale of Mihailovic and the Četniks.”<sup>275</sup> A few days later, his headquarters was overrun by the Partisan offensive, although Mihailovitch escaped.<sup>276</sup>

Donovan had disagreed with Roosevelt’s September 3rd decision to cancel McDowell’s mission and postponed notifying Bari until September 13, the day after the King’s speech.<sup>277</sup> He may have hoped McDowell would make a breakthrough in his negotiations. On the 18th, McDowell was instructed, “In view of order to return, do not ... take initiative in peace negotiations or any other activities but continue to furnish intelligence reports pending evacuation.”<sup>278</sup> The O.S.S was “permitted to act with less than deliberate speed in pulling its intelligence mission out,” with McDowell not actually leaving until November 1.<sup>279</sup>

Also on September 18, Tito flew secretly, first to Romania and then to Moscow,<sup>280</sup> where he “succeeded in working out the details ... for the ‘Belgrade action,’ a Red Army invasion of Serbia.”<sup>281</sup> Crossing the border on October 1, the Soviets reached the capital on the 20th.

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269 Ibid., 174.

270 Ibid., 176.

271 Roberts, *Tito*, 257. See also Smith, *Shadow Warriors*, 282. In Smith’s account of Donovan running a “lobby,” he singles out Markham’s “blistering” attack, pointing out he was OWI, *not* (in Smith’s italics) OSS, and says Churchill “claimed” the lobby was being run by the OSS. This description makes Markham appear an important part of the “lobby.”

272 Trifkovic, “Battle,” 551.

273 Letter, Mary Markham to Children, 19 September 1944.

274 Murphy, *Diplomat*, 224.

275 Roberts, *Tito*, 260.

276 Ibid., 260.

277 Biber, “McDowell,” 209.

278 Ibid., 208.

279 Smith, *Shadow Warriors*, 282.

280 Roberts, *Tito*, 263.

281 Milazzo, *Chetnik Movement*, 175. The Partisans did not sign a similar agreement “authorizing the entry of British and American troops into Yugoslavia” (Roberts, *Tito*, 285).

## Resignation

Meanwhile, Markham traveled “to Naples and Rome on urgent business,” writing that he would know more about his plans after a few days.<sup>282</sup> After these talks, he must have become convinced that the question of whether the U.S. would support Tito or Mihailovitch was answered in Tito’s favor. He may have felt too that he had burned his bridges with his active and vocal opposition to Tito.<sup>283</sup> After submitting his resignation, he was back in the States by the first of October.<sup>284</sup>

America’s endorsement of Britain’s supporting only the Partisans placed Markham in a situation he found untenable, because, as one commentator wrote, he regarded “tolerance of the Communists as unforgivable short-sightedness with dangerous consequences for the post war order in the region.”<sup>285</sup> “The situation in my field was horribly tense,” he recounted shortly thereafter. “I was present at one of the most awful of the awful dramas that have been enacted in the Balkans. I hardly took my eyes from it day or night.”<sup>286</sup> Put simply, “[i]n Bari ... he saw how the West gave up the Balkan peoples to the Communists.”<sup>287</sup> He did not want to be part of implementing that policy and felt compromised by American complicity in the attack on the Serbs.

Elmer Davis, OWI Director, wrote a detailed explanation of Markham’s resignation as a Letter to the Editor in the *Monitor* shortly after his 1949 death.

Your readers ... may be interested in knowing of the esteem in which [Markham] was held by his colleagues ... during the war.... To his work with the Balkan nations ... he brought a thorough understanding of the peoples ... whom he probably knew better than any other American.... Eventually ... he came to the conclusion that American policy in dealing with the Balkan countries—the support of ... the Communists...—was mistaken.... American foreign policy ... was determined on a higher level than Markham’s or than mine.... It was a policy which promised (correctly in my opinion) to bring about an earlier and far less costly military victory. But it entailed long-term political consequences of which Mr Markham, familiar with the Balkans, was perhaps better aware than most American officials.... Having done his best, unsuccessfully, to get American policy changed, and being unable conscientiously to execute the policy which had been determined, he resigned.... The event proved that the policy which was followed led to precisely the unfortunate results which he foresaw....<sup>288</sup>

As Davis pointed out, American foreign policy was made at a higher level than Markham’s and his, in this case by President Roosevelt himself.

The decision to resign had to have been difficult. Like Elmer Davis, a reasonable person could have had the opposite view. Churchill and Roosevelt, revered leaders whom Markham

282 Letter, Mary Markham to all of you, 24 September 1944. It is uncertain with whom Markham met.

283 Describing McDowell, Tomasevich writes, “[u]pon returning to Italy,... all British doors were closed to him and he was sent back to Washington” (*Chetniks*, 383).

284 Letter, Mary Markham to Beryl Markham, 14 December 1944; Advice of Personnel Action, Office of War Information, NYC, 7 November 1944, “Last day service COB (close of business) October 14, 1944,” Markham family papers.

285 Velichkov, “Reuben Markham.”

286 Reuben Markham, “An Italian Papa and Mama,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 8 November 1944.

287 Raditsa, “Markham,” *New Leader*.

288 Elmer Davis, “War Service,” *Christian Science Monitor*.

admired, made their decisions based on the complete picture they faced. Although events were trending favorably to the allies in the fall of 1944, the conclusion of the war still seemed a long way off. Some forecasts did not predict defeating Japan until 1947 at the earliest, at a terrific cost.<sup>289</sup> With every passing day, the war's outcome risked being affected by German scientific discoveries, up to and including its potential invention of the atomic bomb. Plus, sympathy with the Soviet Union, which had borne the brunt of the war for three murderous years, was strong. Britain hoped, too, to retain some influence in postwar Yugoslavia. Looking at the big picture, it was certainly possible to believe that supporting Tito was the correct choice.

Although others were concerned about the consequences of supporting Tito, such as Anne O'Hare McCormick in the *New York Times*, it was a lonely decision.<sup>290</sup> As far as this author knows, nobody else resigned over this decision. Judging from Elmer Davis's lengthy, frank explanation, though, five years after the fact, it would appear that this resignation had not been forgotten by his colleagues.

Resigning meant that Markham would be defending the Chetniks, who were being treated as collaborators, traitors, and cowards, and attacking the Partisans, who were portrayed as heroic and democratic.<sup>291</sup> He was in opposition to the Roosevelt administration's policy "that everything possible must be done to win the confidence of Stalin," and would be giving up his official position in the middle of an existential war with far-reaching decisions still to be made.<sup>292</sup>

In the long run, though, he did not regret leaving OWI. Through his journalism, he was able to convey his opposition to U.S. policy to the American public. After returning to southeastern Europe for the *Monitor* in August 1945, he told Mary, "I'd rather do what ... I'm doing now than anything I've done during the last 4 years." He added, "[h]ave heard many reports from Yugo. All agree—& all agree with me. I was right on Balkan matters."<sup>293</sup>

As early as 23 September 1944, Maclean reported Tito saying that "it would probably be necessary for the first few years to rule Yugoslavia with an iron hand to 'cleanse' the country of those undesirable elements which would go underground after triumph of Partisan cause."<sup>294</sup> This view was already far from Tito's, having told Murphy a few weeks earlier that "he stood for a liberal and democratic ... regime, the form of which he was content to leave with the Yugoslav people."<sup>295</sup> By December, Maclean reported to the British Foreign Office "that new Yugoslav Government would of course be an authoritarian state."<sup>296</sup>

289 Catherine Grace Katz, *The Daughters of Yalta* (Boston: Mariner Books, 2020), 203.

290 Pavlovic, "Tito's Regime," 339.

291 Churchill said Tito was supported "because of his heroic and massive struggle against the German army" (Fotitch, *Lost*, 252).

292 Murphy, *Diplomat*, 211.

293 Letter, Reuben Markham to Mary Markham, 20 December 1945. An example is a cable on 27 September 1945 from American charge in Belgrade Harold Shantz. He writes, "a relatively small group of Communists, inspired and directed by Moscow, has succeeded in foisting a ruthless, totalitarian police regime on the Yugoslavs. For this state of affairs we, and to a greater extent, the British, are partially responsible." "We are convinced of our obligation ... to attempt to address the harm we have done by our part in establishing Tito in power." (Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1945, Europe, vol. 5, document 1012, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v05/d1012>).

294 Kirk to Secretary of State, 23 September 1944, FRUS, Europe, vol. 4.

295 Murphy to Cannon, 8 September 1944, FRUS, Europe, vol. 4.

296 Kirk to Secretary of State, 27 December 1944.

## Markham Explains His Position Publicly

Markham began almost immediately to publicize his views on Yugoslavia. In a spring 1945 piece which the *Monitor* did not publish, he asked, “will these stern, brave, triumphant Partisans bring democracy to the Balkans? Each must answer as his knowledge of events and of fanatics direct him. As for me, I think this will be the negation of democracy.”<sup>297</sup>

On 26 February 1945, the *Monitor* did include a piece in which Markham cleverly conveyed his positions in the guise of an engaging conversation with (the apparently fictional) Major Yakitch of the Royal Yugoslav Army. Major Yakitch wanted to get back into the fighting, but when the journalist advised him that the British might send him to the Partisans, Yakitch said he “couldn’t do that.... Tito is not trying to free Serbia but to enslave it.” Rather than fighting against the Germans, “[h]is chief campaign is against Serbia.”

Then Markham suggested that the Serbs might be helping the Germans. At that remark, Yakitch almost exploded. The Major rattled off his reasons that it was offensive. There were 150,000 Serbs still held as prisoners in Germany; the Serbs led the Yugoslavian coup that opposed the Nazis; more Serbs had been killed than either British or Americans.

When the journalist suggested that Communism might be good for Serbia, Yakitch looked at him like he was an idiot. “Why? We don’t need a revolution. People already control Serbia, the land, the church.”<sup>298</sup>

Mary recognized how effectively this article made Mihailovitch’s case.

Your Serb Major story was in last night. You surely hit the points.... You will ... have paid all the debts you owe to the Serbs with that article, and I hope they appreciate it.<sup>299</sup>

She recognized that Markham believed debts were owed to the Serbs.

Markham was disparaging of the Yalta Conference’s treatment of Yugoslavia. “All that happened is that the American government officially recognized Tito’s Communist-led, coercively imposed dictatorship.” “Free elections in Yugoslavia under the Partisans, with a gun on each hip and a gallows in each town are ... unthinkable.”<sup>300</sup>

He published an even more significant piece on Yugoslavia in the *New Leader* in May. Entitled “The Serbian Volcano,” it was the most explosive and explicit explanation of the American policies he opposed.<sup>301</sup> Markham later explained that the “British wanted at all costs to avoid ... the story of American-British active participation in Tito’s civil war [getting] to the outside world.”<sup>302</sup> He revealed it in this article, along with a prophetic description of what Serbia’s experiences portended for the future.

297 Reuben Markham, “The Partisans,” unpublished manuscript, spring 1945.

298 Reuben Markham, “The Major Wants to Help Free Serbia,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 26 February 1945. Major Yakitch may be loosely based on Zivan Knezevich, the Yugoslav government-in-exile’s military attaché in Washington, who wanted to return to Serbia to join Mihailovitch after the Subashitch government was installed, but, after having reached Bari, was prevented by the British from entering Yugoslavia. See Roberts, *Tito*, 261–62.

299 Letter, Mary Markham to Reuben Markham, 27 February 1945.

300 Reuben Markham, “Gold Bricks from Yalta,” *Christian Century*, 4 April 1945.

301 Reuben Markham, “The Serbian Volcano,” *New Leader*, 19 May 1945.

302 Markham, *Tito’s Imperial Communism*, 180.

He began by writing, “[t]he Serbs are the most nationalistic, dynamic and indomitable of the Balkan peoples.” In fighting the Turks, they “accomplished the most, with the least outside help.” “[T]hey are very democratic in a patriarchal way.” “I am not saying,” though, that “they are pleasant people; indeed they are often disagreeable and dominating.”

During the war, the Croats “massacred in cold blood at least a third of a million Serbs.... This fact is disputed by no one. The only question is how many hundreds of thousands were massacred.”

In June 1944, the article continued, Tito and fellow Croat Ivan Subashitch “conspired to finish off Serbian anti-Communist resistance.” “Tito won the support of Britain and to a certain extent of America.” The British radio urged Serbs to join Tito, while American bombing, with targets often chosen by the Partisans, killed thousands of Serb civilians. “It is a literal fact that Nazis, Communists and the Great Allies were united in trying to destroy the Serbs.”

In 1389, “the Moslem Turks crushed the Serbs at the battle of Kossovo, but the Serbs never ceased to sing of liberty.” Now the Serbs say that “in 1944 they went through another Kossovo, inflicted not by hostile invaders only but also by their Allies, their Croat fellow-citizens and Serb Communists.” The Serbs will not forget 1944 as they never forgot Kossovo.

I am not saying this will be nice. I am not praising Serb nationalism. Greater Serbism was an evil.... I am just reporting.... *The memory of an Allied plot against a helpless nation will burn as the deep flames in Mt. Vesuvius. And some day it will explode.*

*New Leader* editor Sol Levitas followed up with the journalist.

I can tell you that the article created a furore [sic]. We have received telegrams from the two Serbian publications asking for permission to reprint it and I know it was read with great interest in many important circles.<sup>303</sup>

Markham’s journalism did not go uncriticized. One reader asserted that

It is very unfortunate that Mr. Markham’s views on the so-called Tito’s Yugoslavia are completely ... perverted by a blind political bias;... nothing but a tissue of gross misrepresentation and poisonous propaganda. Mr. Markham uses every device of his eloquence to convey ... that “Tito’s” Yugoslavia is nothing but a Communist dictatorship of the most horrid and bloody type.<sup>304</sup>

Markham first broached the idea of a book on the Yugoslav conflict to University of North Carolina Press editor William Couch on 24 April 1945.<sup>305</sup> Couch was not reticent about the challenge such a book would pose, writing, “[i]n my opinion you could have searched a long

303 Letter, Sol Levitas to Reuben Markham, 24 May 1945, *New Leader* archives, box 74, folder 14, series II.1, Columbia University. See also Hugh Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer* (Harvard University Press, 2008), 229, 230: “[The *New Leader*’s] editors and chief contributors were consulted frequently by government officials such as George Kennan, Allen Dulles and C.D. Jackson.” “Its coverage of the cold war actively shaped official attitudes.”

304 Anton Garden, “R.H. Markham’s ‘Blind Bias,’” *Progressive*, 11 June 1945.

305 Letter, Reuben Markham to William Couch, 24 April 1945, University of North Carolina Press Records, University Archives, Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, box 4:35.

time and not found any subject more difficult to write about than this one.”<sup>306</sup> Taking a leave of absence from the *Monitor* in July and August, Markham completed and submitted a draft. Most of *Tito's Imperial Communism*, thus, was written immediately after the war when these events were fresh. At the end of the summer, the Potsdam Conference had cleared the way for American journalists to enter southeastern Europe, and Markham arrived in Sofia on September 1.

In February 1946, there was positive news from North Carolina, but when Mary notified her husband, who was in Romania, he telegraphed back, “Politically Unwise Release Book Now Perhaps Soon.”<sup>307</sup> He explained that he wanted to go to Yugoslavia first and did not “want to be thrown out of the Balkans yet.”<sup>308</sup> Despite this caution, Belgrade did not permit his entry. After Markham was expelled from Romania in June, he contacted North Carolina and his book was published the following year.

The work received mixed reviews, as might be expected about such a disputed subject. *The New York Times* covered it favorably as “Mr. Markham’s lively and authoritative report on the Yugoslavian tragedy,” and supported many of his views. “Not the least important source of our moral confusion today is the mistaken belief that it was wrong for men like Mihailovitch ... to save the lives of Serbians.” “Tito and his partisans” sacrificed “more lives to less purpose than any other resistance movement in Europe.” “The shameful result, here emphasized in detail for the first time, was the little-known fact that our pilots raided scores of Serbian and Montenegrin towns for the purpose ... of destroying popular resistance to the Comintern.”<sup>309</sup> *The American Political Science Review*, on the other hand, called the book “an apology for Mihailovich and his Chetniks.”<sup>310</sup>

Markham’s description in the book of the close connection between Belgrade and Moscow would come into question in 1948 when Tito refused to obey Stalin’s orders. “I don’t believe,” Milovan Djilas offered on this subject, “that anyone in Britain or America—not even Churchill—was so farseeing as to anticipate the Soviet-Yugoslav clash of 1948.”<sup>311</sup>

Nevertheless, it seems fair to say in retrospect that British policy, as Maclean described it, which hoped that Tito “might well prefer to be a ruler of an independent Yugoslavia rather than [a mere] Soviet official,” was partially redeemed in 1948, when the Yugoslav leader stood up to Moscow.<sup>312</sup> After the publication of *Tito's Imperial Communism*, Markham’s 600-page opus, *Rumania Under the Soviet Yoke*, appeared in 1949.

Remarkably, in 1949, Reuben Markham, was invited back to government service in spite of his resignation, having exposed American assistance to Tito in the Yugoslav civil war, blasting the decisions made at Yalta, and lamenting American weakness in Bulgaria and Romania in

306 Letter, William T. Couch to Reuben Markham, 27 April 1945.

307 Telegram, Reuben Markham to Mary Markham, 14 February 1946.

308 Telegram, Reuben Markham to Mary Markham, 14 February 1946.

309 Leigh White, “Kingpin in the Communist Drive,” *New York Times*, 7 September 1947.

310 Wayne Vucinich, review of *Tito's Imperial Communism*, by Reuben Markham, *The American Political Science Review*, University of North Carolina Press Records, University Archives, Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, box 4:35.

311 Djilas, *Wartime*, 349.

312 For Maclean, Murphy to Secretary of State, 30 August 1944. See also Heather Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans: The Special Operations Executive and Yugoslavia, 1941–1945* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), viii: “The Tito-Stalin split in 1948 came as a welcome surprise to the Western Powers and appeared to vindicate the decision to support the Partisans.”

1946. By virtue of this invitation, the American government showed that it concurred with the reasoning behind his resignation.

Based on a George Kennan proposal, the CIA created a front organization, the National Committee for Free Europe (NCFE), to help East European emigres and promote their anti-Communist views. As one of the officials organizing the new entity, Robert Joyce, by then a staff member of Kennan's State Department Office of Policy Planning, may well have played a role in Markham's return.<sup>313</sup>

The *Monitor* journalist started work for the CIA on 1 May 1949 primarily to write a series of studies on life in Eastern Europe under the Communists.<sup>314</sup> He had days such as the following, "Saw raging Slovaks at 9; Poles with Hungarians at 10:45, Serbs at 12–2.... From all the sad people, I get sad."<sup>315</sup> A day later he commented on these draining meetings, "All folks are prejudiced. Most seem to hate the others. Many of these émigrés are in a desperate situation. To Poles, the sit.[uation] seems utterly hopeless; to Czechs desperate. The world is slipping away from them."<sup>316</sup>

He entertained many prominent refugees in his home including former Yugoslav ambassador to Washington Constantin Fotitch, Vladko Machek, and Slovene Miha Krek.<sup>317</sup> For NCFE Markham penned *Communists Crush Churches in Eastern Europe* and put out the first Iron Curtain News Bulletin.

Czech diplomat Joseph Korbel, father of Madeleine Albright, American Secretary of State from 1997–2000, wrote Markham about his manuscript, *Tito's Communism*, which had been turned down by Yale University Press because of its faulty English. Korbel asked if the American would rewrite it for him.<sup>318</sup> Mary Markham eventually carried out the request, with the book coming out in 1951.<sup>319</sup>

On 28 December 1949, Reuben Markham suffered a heart attack, dying the next day. A memorial service was held in Washington on 3 January 1950. Hungarian Bela Varga, Czech Peter Zenkl, and Romanian Alexandre Cretzianu gave eulogies. The fourth commemoration was by Yugoslav Lieutenant Colonel Zivan Knezevich, who "had played a major role in the coup d'état of March 27, 1941."<sup>320</sup>

I bow respectfully before the soul of One of the finest citizens, authors and newspaper men of America; One of the bravest fighters against godless Communism; One of the very few open admirers of the gallant fighters of General Draza Mikhailovic, who perished in the struggle for freedom and democracy; One who not only understood, but

313 <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/memorandum-mr-wisner-notes-discussion-new-york-committee-mr-george-kennan-february-18-1949>, accessed 2 February 2024. On 18 February 1949, Joyce attended a meeting, led by Kennan, on the formation of the National Committee for Free Europe, which included Frank Wisner, the Office of Policy Coordination Head, and Maynard Barnes, former American civilian representative in Bulgaria and long-time acquaintance of Markham.

314 Reuben Markham, *Communists Crush Churches in Eastern Europe* (Boston: Meador Publishing Company, 1950), back cover.

315 Letter, Reuben Markham to Mary Markham, 8 May 1949.

316 Letter, Reuben Markham to Mary Markham, 9 May 1949.

317 Fotitch described Markham as "the well known student of Balkan affairs" (*Lost*, 307).

318 Letter, Joseph Korbel to Reuben Markham, 21 November 1949.

319 "To write this book in English was not an easy task.... It is thanks to Mrs. Mary G. Markham's invaluable work that I have overcome the obstacle. I would like to extend to her my deep gratitude" (Korbel, *Tito*, vi).

320 Roberts, *Tito*, 53.

felt the suffering of the oppressed people of the Balkans and Eastern Europe, especially the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in Yugoslavia;...

I bow deeply before ... this ... friend ... of the Serbian people especially.<sup>321</sup>

Knezevich also sent a poignant condolence letter to his widow. "I know what he did for my Country when everybody called us traitors and collaborators."

Another note that Mary Markham received was from Peter II, Rex, exiled King of Yugoslavia. "Learned the sad news with great sorrow. Please accept all my sympathy in your bereavement which so many of us are sharing with you."<sup>322</sup>

Echoing Markham's belief that "[t]he Allies handed liberated Yugoslavia over to Tito," historian Vojislav Pavlovic wrote, "Yugoslavia was ... given to the communists, and the democracy sacrificed."<sup>323</sup> Americans, Pavlovic said, "analyzed the situation in Yugoslavia from the standpoint of American interests, whereas the fate of Yugoslavs was of far less importance." "Americans did not want to get involved in Yugoslavia's civil war for military nor for political and still much less for humanitarian reasons." "The fact that it was transformed into decisive support for the Partisan's [sic] was regretful, but nothing more could be done."<sup>324</sup>

Reuben Markham, however, did not fit this description. As a ranking intelligence official, he did everything he could to change American policy of supporting Tito exclusively. Unsuccessful, he resigned in protest and then described to the public how America had affected the outcome militarily and the stakes of Yugoslavia becoming communist. He continued his struggle to promote democracy and oppose authoritarianism in the Balkans until his death.

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321 Col. Zivan L. Knezevich Former Military Attaché and Representative of the Former Yugoslav Army, at the Memorial Service in Christ's Church (Episcopal) in Washington, D.C. on 3 January 1950; Markham family papers.

322 Condolence letter, Peter, Rex, to Mary Markham.

323 Pavlovic, "U.S. Influence," 161.

324 *Ibid.*, 163.

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Letters, Newspaper articles, manuscripts, autobiographical sketches, personnel records, speeches, lectures, miscellaneous documents

