

Zitierhinweis

Hadalín, Jurij: review of: Silvin Eiletz, *Titova skrivnostna leta v Moskvi 1935-1940*, Celovec/Klagenfurt: Mohorjeva družba, 2008, in: *Südost-Forschungen*, 71 (2012), p. 611-614, <https://recensio-stag.lorax.syslab.com/r/11a360e8d26746fd90e701c36202c204>



copyright

Dieser Beitrag kann vom Nutzer zu eigenen nicht-kommerziellen Zwecken heruntergeladen und/oder ausgedruckt werden. Darüber hinausgehende Nutzungen sind ohne weitere Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber nur im Rahmen der gesetzlichen Schrankenbestimmungen (§§ 44a-63a UrhG) zulässig.

according to his own interests and independently of the national socialist directives“ (350). In ähnlicher Weise kommt die Verfolgung persönlicher Ziele auch im Falle der involvierten griechischen Akteure zum Vorschein. Die Diskrepanz zwischen dem erklärten Patriotismus seitens des Protagonisten einerseits und seinen anzunehmenden Verhandlungen mit der deutschen Institutsleitung andererseits veranlasst Zarifi dazu, die Frage aufzuwerfen, ob es sich bei seiner Tätigkeit tatsächlich um Widerstand (wie es von ihm seinerzeit behauptet und später in der griechischen Geschichtsschreibung rezipiert wurde) oder nicht eher um Kollaboration handele. Diese indikativen Beispiele relativieren die Anfangshypothesen, dass die (deutschen) Wissenschaftler hauptsächlich national motiviert waren und dass die deutsche wissenschaftliche Tätigkeit im Ausland bzw. auf dem Balkan primär als Aspekt der imperialistischen Kulturpolitik des nationalsozialistischen Deutschland zu betrachten sei. Diese Relativierung kommt auch im Resümee der Studie zum Ausdruck: „Transcending culture – broadly defined – national borders, is [...] a phenomenon fraught with hidden or ‚invisible‘ dimensions, which, when unveiled, bring to light the inherent complexity of the situation“ (351). Tatsächlich bringt die Gesamtanalyse komplexe Dimensionen ans Licht, die ein auf die Ebene der staatlichen Politik und der internationalen (also: zwischenstaatlichen) Beziehungen fixierter Ansatz schwer zu erfassen vermag. Es ist somit ein Verdienst dieser Studie, anhand vielfältigen Archivmaterials die Komplexität des wissenschaftshistorischen Ansatzes zu bestätigen.

Mytilene

Sevasti Trubeta

Silvin EILETZ, Titova skrivnostna leta v Moskvi 1935-1940 [Titos geheime Jahre in Moskau 1935-1940]. Celovec/Klagenfurt: Mohorjeva družba 2008. 282 S., ISBN 978-3-7086-0388-9, € 24,–

Yugoslav president Marshall Josip Broz Tito, leader of the Communist party of Yugoslavia¹ and undoubtedly the most prominent figure in the second Yugoslav state, has attracted the attention of many Yugoslav and foreign historians in the last decades. There has been enormous interest in his biography since the 1950's, when Tito became known as a dissident communist leader who dared resist Stalin. Vladimir Dedijer became his first biographer and after the strategic release of Tito's authorised biography in translation,² many western authors followed suit. A second wave of scholarship on Tito's life was published after his death in 1980, the bulk in 1981, took an almost hagiographical character and focused on his role in Yugoslav society.

Milovan Djilas, a dissident publishing in the West, provided the main alternate narrative to Tito's life. With the second wave of scholarship, however, change in the main stream evaluation of Tito's "character and work"³ began to appear with Dedijer's 1981 "New Contributions for Biography of Josip Broz Tito". In the ideologically relaxed atmosphere of the late 1980s and into the 1990s, as nationalism spread among the opposition, new scholar-

ship appeared that was more critical of Tito, with some works even reading like science fiction. I admit that I had difficulty categorizing the range of standpoints of the numerous writers, historians and publicists, but generally the most reliable method for judging this vast body of work is to take note of how they refer to Tito. Those that use his nickname are less critical while those texts that use only his surname – Broz – tend to be more so. Silvin Eiletz is a severe critic of the Yugoslav leader, but in predominately examining the pre-war life of Josip Broz, he mainly uses his Comintern codename “Valter”.

The research behind many of these works is excellent, building off documents in ex-Yugoslavia archives that were open until the new millennium. Journalist Pero Simić, who has been writing biographies of Tito for more than two decades, works mainly with these archival sources. His studies are in many ways complementary to Eiletz’s book, as both show interest in the darker aspects of Tito’s career. Along with his love life, these features are currently the main attraction for an eager audience.

But let us leave the reading public’s interests and focus instead on Tito’s mysterious years in Moscow. These years are mysterious first because the average ex-Yugoslav pupil already knows all about Tito’s youth thanks to the works of Slovene literate, writer France Bevk, a lot was written about the WWII years, while more or less enough is available about Tito’s post-war political career. There remain some crucial points that are still not perfectly understood, such as some issues involving Tito’s wife Jovanka and the Marshall’s role in the mass killings that took place in the aftermath of the Yugoslav civil war. Yet an account of how Tito ascended to the chief position of the CPY (which was heavily controlled at the time by the Yugoslav regime, miserably organised and divided) is something entirely different. Until Eiletz’s book, it was unclear how, while Tito was a lowly figure in the movement during the 1920s, he somehow rose quickly through the ranks of senior Yugoslav communists.

Silvin Eiletz believes that the answer to this mystery can be found in the collections of the Comintern housed in the Russian State Archive of Social and Political History (RGASPI) in Moscow. Eiletz is currently one of the few Slovenian researchers who have visited the archive, and is already author of another monograph using the collection.⁴ On the presentation of the book currently under review in Ljubljana a few years ago, Eiletz said that he felt the need to bring these materials to the Slovenian public since he speaks Russian and he felt that there would not be another researcher who would do the work. It is additionally important to secure the relevant documents as Russian archives are notoriously selective and availability of their collections is subject to frequent change.

In “Titova skrivnostna leta”, there is an abundance of unknown or little known sources discussed that shed light on how Tito successfully paved his way to the top. Eiletz argues that his path was hardly safe as Tito arrived in Moscow under false pretences during the worst of the Stalinist purges, claiming that he wanted to see his Russian ex-wife and son as well as study on the Lenin University. Building off Dedijer, Eiletz claims that Tito instead went to Moscow after he was released from prison in Yugoslavia because “Josip Broz was driven to Moscow by his firm belief that he should fight against fractions inside the CPY”. He then concludes: “Why exactly to Moscow, when there were fractions also in Yugoslavia, in prisons, hiding in illegal or in Paris. The most influential Party people were in Moscow. How should Broz fight against fractions, when he possessed no mandate? With the help of the NKVD” (159).

Cited and published documents give the reader a plausible insight into the schizophrenic atmosphere that ruled in the Soviet Union at the time and was even more extreme among communist emigrants. Tito sailed through the abysses in the only possible way that I can imagine: he paved his road through Comintern carefully, trying to make allies in the important Centre of Human Resources, and came under the direct influence of the general in the GPU/NKVD Mihail Abramovič Trilliser, known as Mihail Moskvinin (executed in 1941). During this period, Tito wrote multiple autobiographies, later counter analysed, as well as a series of reports of his Yugoslav comrades. Through the years, these became sharper, which could be lethal in the suspicious atmosphere. Eiletz's argues that Tito was intentionally, but carefully, denouncing his comrades, resulting in the imprisonment/elimination of alleged "Trotskyites" and members of right wing fractions. Among these men and women was the CPY secretary Milan Gorkić, who had made Tito's arrival in Moscow possible, as well as Petko Miletić, who was competition for the post. In the meanwhile, Tito was responsible for arranging a transport of volunteers to go to war ravaged Spain. The train just happened to stop in Marseille, bringing Tito out of the mercy of the Comintern. His ally in this endeavour was Georgi Dimitrov, who also cautioned Tito when his reports from Paris about the alternative centre of CPY forming there (that Tito wanted to eliminate) became too impudent. According to Eiletz, Tito was very close to receiving a death sentence during this period, but was miraculously saved by the bell in January 1939 and instead given a mandate to consolidate the CPY as a temporary secretary. "And who saved Tito from the abyss? No one other than the NKVD" (162). According to Eiletz Tito knew the interior of the NKVD headquarters well since he was reporting to general Moskvinin personally and had thus become part of the wider NKVD network.

Back in Yugoslavia Tito soon unified and "cleansed the Party of undesirable elements" as well as established necessary control by excluding all arrested members from the CPY and co-opting the younger generation of communists into CC CPY. Similarly to other communist leaders, he slowly purged any members of the old cadre who opposed him. By 1949 there was almost no one from the group alive or free. The last ones were imprisoned during the Cominform dispute and sent to the Goli otok gulag. Consequently, and in accordance with Tito's master plan, the older generation barely played a role in post-war Yugoslavia. As Stalin said to Djilas: "Tito is a brave man, he killed them all" (93). The majority of the communists purged were later rehabilitated during the destalinization process following the XX. Congress of the CPSU, but Tito did not exactly welcome that and those acquittals did not have a serious impact on the CPY.

Eiletz's analysis of these events comprises the first 110 pages of the text. The text itself is divided by the author into two parts. In the first part there is a subchapter that demonstrates Dr. Eiletz's expertise as psychoanalyst. In it, the author explores possible reasons for why part of the Slovenian nation followed a path toward extreme brutality. Eiletz uses this question as an introduction to the second part of the text, which describes the transfer of Josip Broz's pre-war Stalinist experiences in the aftermath of the World War II. I believe that he correctly states that most of the atrocities connected with the post-war killings of the defeated side in the Slovenian interwar civil conflict conforms with the practises used in the Soviet Union and then passes over to Tito's gulags which were opened on a small

archipelago in the Adriatic Sea during the Cominform conflict. During that period, the Yugoslav regime was trying to resist pressure from Moscow and started to intensively purge the Party. Eiletz claims that Tito arrived in Moscow as a convinced, but inexperienced communist and built his lasting public identity there. He argues that Tito's experiences in Moscow and Paris gave him the psychological foundation that is to blame for all "further killings" (163). Practises used on fellow comrades accused of supporting Stalin and sent by administrative decree to the gulag were undoubtedly based on the Soviet model. Unfortunately Eiletz tries to connect these issues using only the excerpts from one memoir and one novel, without any additional evidence.

Eiletz's use of Valter's negative characteristics to form the basis of his wider interpretations is unfortunately a weakness in the text, considering that Eiletz is also biased at times. His biography states that he is an expert on Marxists philosophy and a psychoanalyst. That might contribute to the literary style of the book, which has very short paragraphs and a lot of exclamation marks, as well as frequent bolded passages. But despite scruples, the third part of the book overcomes any faults with a long list of personal data on the main figures and a considerable number of original documents in facsimile. Eiletz writes in the introductory note that his work is based primarily on 389 pages of archival documents, some of which are published in the last 96 pages of the book. Yet they are, unfortunately for the majority of Slovenian readers (myself included), in Russian. A translation and critical analysis of these texts would have given the book the extra value it is occasionally missing.

Ljubljana

Jurij Hadalin

¹ Renamed the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) during the 7th Congress of CPY 1952 in Zagreb.

² Vladimir DEDIJER, Josip Broz Tito: prilozi za biografiju. Beograd 1953. In addition to translations in the languages of other Yugoslav nations and national minorities, four foreign translations – in English, Italian, French, and German – have been released by renowned publishing houses such as Gallimard and Simon & Schuster.

³ I suggest that as a direct translation of a common contemporary phrase, there was also a commission in existence carrying such name as a part of the "Federal Council for the Constitutional Protection".

⁴ Skrivnost Kominterne. Celovec 2006.

Davor KOVAČIĆ, Redarstveno-obavještajni sustav Nezavisne Države Hrvatske od 1941. do 1945. godine [Das Polizei- und Nachrichtendienstwesen im Unabhängigen Staat Kroatien von 1941 bis 1945]. Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest 2009. 328 S., 7 Abb., 12 Beilagen, ISBN 978-953-6324-74-3

Mit seiner Studie, der erweiterten Fassung seiner im Jahre 2007 an der Universität Zagreb approbierten Dissertation, wollte der Autor eine Lücke im Forschungsstand zum politischen