5. THE «MOTHER PARTY» WANTS TO BE THE CONDUCTOR

Khrushchev seeks hegemony in the world communist movement. His attack on the Comintern and the Information Bureau. The Khrushchevites extend their tentacles to other parties. The sudden deaths of Gottwald and Bierut. Unforgettable memories from the meeting with Dimitrov and Kolarov. Correct but formal relations with Rumania. The opportunist zig-zags of the Rumanian leadership. Pleasant impressions from Czechoslovakia; wandering at will and visits to historical sites. Suffocating atmosphere everywhere in the Soviet Union. The chinovniki surround us everywhere. Our relations with the East Germans.

I spoke earlier about the «lecture» which Khrushchev gave me on the role of the first secretary of the party and the «opinion» which he had expressed to the Polish comrades about the replacement of Bierut by Ochab in this post. This
fact not only astounded me but seemed to me completely unacceptable, as a tactless undertaking (to put it mildly) towards a sister party.

Further developments were to make clear to us and convince us that such «undertakings» were Khrushchev's normal forms of «work» to put the international communist movement under his personal domination.

This activity did not lack its demagogic cloak. The essence of this demagogy was: «Stalin kept the communist and workers' parties in his grip through force, through terror, and dictated actions to them in the interests of the Soviet Union and to the detriment of the world revolution». Khrushchev was for struggle against the Comintern, except, allegedly, for the period when Lenin was alive. For Khrushchev and the other modern revisionists, the Comintern operated simply as a «Soviet agency in the capitalist countries». Their opinion, which was not expressed openly, but was implied, was in complete accord with the monstrous accusations of capitalism and the reactionary bourgeoisie throughout the world, that fought the proletariat and the new communist parties formed after the betrayal by social-democracy and the Second International.

By means of the Comintern, Lenin, and later Stalin, consolidated the communist and workers' parties and strengthened the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and the rising fas-
cist dictatorship. The activity of the Comintern was positive and revolutionary. The possibility that some mistakes may have been made is not ruled out, but it is necessary to bear in mind the difficult circumstances of illegality in which the parties and the leadership of the Comintern itself were obliged to work, as well as the fierce struggle waged against the communist parties by imperialism, the bourgeoisie and reaction. The true revolutionaries never forget that it was the Comintern which assisted to set up and strengthen the communist parties after the betrayal by the Second International, just as they never forget that the Soviet Union of Lenin and Stalin was the country in which hundreds of revolutionaries found refuge to escape the reprisals of the bourgeoisie and fascism and carry on their activity.

In his assessment of the work of the Comintern and Stalin, Khrushchev also had the support of the Chinese, who continue to make criticisms, although not publicly, in this direction. When we have had the opportunity, we have expressed our opinion about these incorrect assessments of the overall work of the Comintern and Stalin to the Chinese leaders. When I had the opportunity to talk with Mao Zedong, during my only visit to China, in 1956, or in the meetings with Zhou Enlai and others in Tirana, I have expressed the well-known viewpoint of our Party about the figure of Stalin and the Comintern. I do not want to ex-
tend on these matters because I have written about them at length in my political diary and elsewhere.

The decisions of the Comintern and Dimitrov's direction-giving speech in July 1935 have gone down in the history of the international communist movement as major documents which mobilized the peoples, and first of all the communists, to create the anti-fascist front and to organize themselves for armed struggle against Italian fascism, German nazism and Japanese militarism. In this struggle, the communists and their parties were in the forefront everywhere.

Therefore, it is a crime to attack the great work of the Comintern and the Marxist-Leninist authority of Stalin, which played a major role in the creation and the organizational, political and ideological consolidation of the communist and workers' parties of the world. For its part, the Bolshevik Party was a powerful aid for those parties, and the Soviet Union, with Stalin at the head, was a great potential in support of the revolution in the international arena.

Imperialism, the capitalist bourgeoisie and its fascist dictatorship fought the Soviet Union, the Bolshevik Party and Stalin, with all their might, waged a stern struggle against the Comintern and the communist and workers' parties of every country and ruled the working class with terror, bloodshed and demagogy.
When nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union, the communist and workers’ parties of various countries took up arms, united with the other patriots and democrats in their own countries and fought the fascist invaders. Because of this natural struggle, the enemies of communism said: «The communist and workers’ parties have put themselves in the service of Moscow.» This was a slander. The communist and workers’ parties fought for the liberation of their own peoples, fought for the working class and people to take power. In the great alliance of the anti-fascist war, the sympathies of these parties were with the Soviet Union, because it was the most reliable guarantee for the victory.

It was Stalin himself, who, on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, announced the decision for the disbanding of the Comintern and the reason given was that no further need was felt for its existence. This stand was completely correct, because by that time, the communist and workers’ parties had become mature and militant, had been tempered in class battles and in the great war against fascism and had gained colossal experience. Now, each party could march on its own feet and had Marxism-Leninism as its unerring guide.

After the Second World War the Information Bureau of communist and workers’ parties was formed. It was necessary to create this, because
the parties of socialist countries and those of cap-
italist countries, especially of Europe, needed to
exchange their very valuable experience. The ex-
change of experience between our parties was es-
pecially necessary in the unsettled period imme-
diately after the war, when American and British
imperialism wanted to interfere by any means in
the internal affairs of the countries which had
won their freedom.

Reaction, and Tito and the Titoites, later,
wanted and fought to place the countries of East-
ern Europe in a dilemma; with the assistance of
the British, they tried to bring reaction to power
in Czechoslovakia and to bring about the same
thing in Albania, Rumania, Poland and elsewhere.

The »Marxist« Tito made a major issue of the
Venezia Giulia province, claiming that the Sov-
iet Union was not assisting him to take this pro-
vince, which he described as entirely Yugoslav,
while this same «Marxist» not only did not raise
the issue of Kosova, which was truly Albanian,
in order to give it to Albania to which it belonged,
but did his utmost to prevent any talk about it.
The Belgrade clique massacred people from Ko-
sova, alleging that they were Ballists, and later also
attempted to gobble up the whole of Albania and
turn it into the seventh republic of Yugoslavia.

The Information Bureau uncovered the treach-
ery of the Yugoslav revisionists and this was
one of its historic deeds and a tribute to the revolutionary vigilance of Stalin. Tito was exposed and condemned with ample, incontestable facts and subsequent events completely confirmed his betrayal. In this just action, which came after a patient stand, first with comradely explanation, then with rebuke and finally, with condemnation, all the communist and workers' parties took part, not because they «submitted to the arbitrary decision of Stalin», as has been slanderously alleged, but because they were convinced by the true facts which were brought out about the betrayal of the Yugoslav chiefs. Later, all these parties, apart from the Party of Labour of Albania, ate the very words which they themselves had said and endorsed against Tito and Titoism. One after another, the chiefs of these parties made self-criticism, went on pilgrimages to him, kissed his hand, begged his forgiveness and declared that he was a «genuine Marxist-Leninist», while according to them, Stalin was «an anti-Leninist, a criminal, an ignoramus and a dictator».

Khrushchev's plan, as all his work and his successive actions showed, was to rehabilitate Tito by going to Belgrade and denouncing Stalin for the «crime» and the «mistake» which he had allegedly committed in this direction. In order to carry this problem through to the end, Khrushchev took his unilateral decision and liquidated the Information Bureau, without asking anyone about
it. He dropped this on us as a fait accompli* at one of the meetings which was organized in the Kremlin over a problem which had nothing at all to do with the Information Bureau.

Khrushchev announced the decision, and while administering the last rites to the Information Bureau said: «When I informed Nehru of this, he was pleased and told me that it was a wise decision which everybody would approve.»

The big Indian reactionary heard the news of the break-up of the Information Bureau before our communist parties (!). This fact, too, apart from others, showed what this renegade, this revisionist-Trotskyite, who had come to the head of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, was.

With cunning Trotskyite forms and methods, such as flattery, blackmail, criticisms and threats, Khrushchev aimed to get control of the whole world communist movement, to have all the other parties under his «conductor’s baton», and they, without his telling them openly, were to proclaim the Communist Party of the Soviet Union the «mother party», and moreover to think, as Liri Belishova, a secret agent of the Soviet revisionists whom we exposed later, put it, that »Khrushchev is our father»(!). This is the direc-

* French in the original.
tion in which Khrushchev and the Khrushchevites worked.

Of course, the Khrushchevites had begun this work when Stalin was still alive, behind his back. We base this conviction on the experience of our relations with the Soviet leaders, the arrogant, huckster's stand of Mikoyan and some others.

After Stalin's death, their attack to destroy socialism in the other countries mounted continuously. Both in the Soviet Union and in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Rumania, and Hungary, as well as in Albania, Khrushchev began to incite the disguised and undisguised anti-Marxist elements. Wherever these elements were in the leadership, Khrushchev and company struggled to get these elements under their control, and where they were not in the leadership, to put them there by eliminating the sound leaders through intrigues, putsches or even assassinations, as they wanted to do with Stalin (and it is very likely they did this).

Immediately after the death of Stalin, Gottwald died. This was a sudden, surprising death! It had never crossed the minds of those who knew Gottwald that this strong, agile, healthy man would die... of a flu or a chill allegedly caught on the day of Stalin's funeral ceremony.

I knew Gottwald. When I went to Czechoslovakia and met him in Prague, we talked at
length about our problems. He was a modest, sincere comrade, not a man of many words. I felt I could talk to him freely; he listened to me attentively, puffing away at his pipe and spoke with much sympathy about our people and our fight, and promised me that they would help us in the building of industry. He promised me neither mountains nor miracles, but a very modest credit which Czechoslovakia accorded us.

«This is all we can do,» he said. «Later, when we have our economy going, we shall re-examine matters with you.»

Gottwald, an old friend and comrade of Stalin and Dimitrov, died suddenly. This grieved us, but also surprised us.

Later came the equally unexpected death of Comrade Bierut, not to mention the earlier death of the great George Dimitrov. Dimitrov, Gottwald and Bierut, all died in Moscow. What a coincidence! The three of them were comrades of the great Stalin!

Edward Ochab replaced Bierut in the post of first secretary of the party. Thus Khrushchev’s old desire was realized. Later, however, Khrushchev «fell out» with Ochab, apparently because he did not fulfil Khrushchev’s demands and orders as he should have done. That is why Khrushchev later launched attacks on Ochab at those meetings at which we, too, were present. I met Ochab several times, in Moscow, Warsaw and Beijing,
and I think that he was a person who not only could not be compared with Bierut as a man, but also lacked the necessary capacity to lead the party and the country. Ochab came and went like a shadow, without being a year in that position.

Below I shall speak about how events developed in Poland later. It is clear that with the death of Bierut the road to the throne of Poland was opened to the reactionary Gomulka. This «communist», brought out of prison, after a number of ups and downs and writhings of a heterogeneous leadership, in which agents of zionism and the capitalist powers were not lacking, was to be brought into the leadership by his friend Nikita Khrushchev.

Poland was the «big sister» of the Khrushchevite Soviet Union. Then came Bulgaria, with which the Khrushchevites played and are still playing their game shamelessly, to the point that they have turned it into their «obedient daughter».

The Bulgarians were linked closely with Stalin and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union(B) led by him, quite differently from the Czechs, the Poles and the Rumanians, let alone the Germans. Moreover, the Bulgarian people had been traditionally linked with Russia in the past. Precisely because of these links, Czar Boris had not dared to involve Bulgaria officially in
the war against the Soviet Union and the Soviet armies entered Bulgaria without firing a shot.

Khrushchev wanted to consolidate this influence for his own chauvinist interests and the extension and consolidation of his revisionist views. Therefore he exploited this situation, the trust of the Bulgarian Communist Party in Stalin, the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (B), and placed at the head of the Bulgarian Communist Party a worthless person, a third-rate cadre, but one ready to do whatever Khrushchev, his ambassador, or the KGB would say. This person was Todor Zhivkov, who was publicized and inflated until he became first secretary of the CC of the Bulgarian CP.

My opinion is that, after Dimitrov, the Bulgarian party and state did not have any leader equal to Dimitrov, or even to come anywhere near him, from the point of view of his adherence to principle, breadth of ideological and political understanding and capacity as a leader. Here, of course, I do not include Kolarov, who died very soon after Dimitrov, only a few months later, who was an old revolutionary and the second personality after Dimitrov, with whom he had worked together in the Comintern.

I met Kolarov when I went on an official visit to Bulgaria in December 1947. He was about the same age and size as Dimitrov, liked to converse and all the time we stayed with him, talked
to us about the missions to Mongolia, Germany and elsewhere the Comintern had charged him with. It seemed that the party had placed Kolarov in charge of relations with foreign countries, because he spoke to us several times about the relations of Bulgaria, especially with its neighbours: Yugoslavia and Greece, which were also our neighbours. He also explained the general international situation to us. This assisted us greatly.

Like the unforgettable George Dimitrov, Kolarov was a modest man. Although we were young, there was not the slightest sign of haughtiness to be seen in him during the talk. He honoured us and respected our opinions and, although we were meeting for the first time, as long as we stayed there, we felt ourselves as members of one family, in an intimate group, in which affection and unity and efforts for a single aim, the construction of socialism, predominated.

I met Dimitrov and Kolarov, these outstanding Bulgarian communists only once in my life, but they left an indelible impression on my memory. After Dimitrov, Kolarov became prime minister and was one of the initiators of the condemnation of the Titoite agent, Kostov. But only a few months later Kolarov died. His death, too, grieved me greatly.

After the deaths of Dimitrov and Kolarov, people without authority or personality began to
come to the head of the Bulgarian Communist party and state.

I have gone to Bulgaria several times on business, as well as on holidays with my wife and children. To tell the truth, I felt a special satisfaction in Bulgaria, probably because, although our two peoples are of quite different origin, during the centuries they had coexisted, had languished under and fought against the same occupying power, the Ottomans, and are alike in many directions, especially in their modesty, hospitality, stability of character, the preservation of good traditions, folklore, etc.

Up to the time when Stalin died there was not the slightest shadow over our relations with the Bulgarians. We both loved the Soviet Union with a pure and sincere love.

I have talked with the Bulgarian leaders many times, have eaten and drunk with them, and have made trips all over Bulgaria. Even later, until we broke with Khrushchev, we had no ideological and political contradictions and they welcomed me warmly. Many of them, like Velko Chervenkov, Ganev, Tsola Dragocheva, Anton Yugov, etc., were not young. They were people of the older generation, who had worked abroad in exile with Dimitrov, or at home in illegality, and later had been in the prisons of Czar Boris. In the end, Todor Zhivkov emerged above them, a man who is the prototype of political mediocrity.
After the death of George Dimitrov, Velko Chervenkov became general secretary of the party. He was a big man, with greying hair and bags under the eyes. Whenever I met him in Bulgaria or in Moscow, he gave me the impression of a good fellow who walked with his arms flopping aimlessly, as if to say: «What am I doing at this fair? I am serving no purpose here.»

He must have been a just man, but lacking in will. At least this was my impression. He was extremely sparing in words. In official talks he said so little that, if you didn’t know him, you would form the impression he was haughty. But he wasn’t in the least haughty. He was a simple man. In non-official talks, when we ate together, and met with other Bulgarian comrades to exchange opinions, Velko sat in stony silence, with his mouth closed, as if he were not there at all. The others talked and laughed, but not he.

Chervenkov was Dimitrov’s brother-in-law. He had married the sister of the great leader of Bulgaria. It is possible that a little of Dimitrov’s glory and authority had descended on Velko Chervenkov, but Velko was quite incapable of becoming Dimitrov. Thus, just as he came to the head of the leadership of the Bulgarian Communist Party in silence, so he went without any fuss when he was thrown out. His ouster did not become any sort of issue, he was removed without any commo-
tion leaving place of leadership in the party to Todor Zhivkov.

Thus, for Nikita, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Bulgaria had been settled. Rumania, too, where the party had some inglorious episodes in its history, was not to be left out of his aims and efforts, either.

We did not have any contacts with the Rumanians during the war, which is different from what occurred with the Yugoslavs, or with the Bulgarians, who once sent to our country Belgaranov, who informed us of the work in Macedonia, sought our help in organizing the struggle of the Albanians living in «Macedonian» territory occupied by the nazi-fascists. After the war, from the Soviets we had heard very good things about the Rumanian party and about Dej, as an old revolutionary, who had suffered greatly in the prisons of the Doftana. But to tell the truth, I was somewhat disappointed when I met him for the first time, in the meeting about the problem of the Yugoslav revisionists, which I mentioned above.

This is not the place to speak about my recollections of that meeting, but I want to stress that, from what I saw and heard in Rumania and from the conversations I had with Dej, the impression I formed about the Rumanian party and about Dej personally was not good.

Regardless of what the Rumanian leaders
claimed, the dictatorship of the proletariat was not operating in Rumania and the Rumanian Workers’ Party was not in a strong position. They declared that they were in power, but it was very evident that, in fact, the bourgeoisie was in power. It had industry, agriculture and trade in its hands and continued to fleece the Rumanian people and to live in luxurious villas and palaces. Dej personally travelled in a bullet-proof car with an armed escort, which showed how «secure» their positions were. Reaction was strong in Rumania and, had it not been for the Red Army, who knows how things would have gone in that country.

During our talks in those few days which I stayed in Bucharest, Dej bombarded us with his boasting about the «valour» they had displayed in forcing the abdication of the corrupt King Michael, whom they had not condemned for his crimes against the people, but had allowed to leave Rumania for the West, together with his wealth and his mistresses.

Dej’s self-glorification was astonishing, especially when he told me how he «challenged» the reactionaries by going into their cafés with a pistol in his belt.

Thus, from this first meeting I formed a poor impression, not only of Dej, but also of the Rumanian party and its line, which was an opportunist line, and the things which occurred
later with Dej and his party did not surprise me. The revisionist chiefs of that party were the most conceited you could imagine. They «blew their own trumpets» loudly about the fight which they had not fought.

When we began the struggle with the renegade Tito group, Dej became an «ardent fighter» against this group. In the historic meetings of the Information Bureau he was charged with delivering the main report against the Tito-Rankovic group.

As long as Stalin was alive and the Resolution of the Information Bureau remained in force, Dej performed like a rabid anti-Titoite. When the revisionist traitors, headed by Khrushchev, usurped power in their countries and did all those treacherous things we know about, and amongst others, proclaimed Tito clean and prettied him up, Dej was among the first to turn over the page and change his colour like a chameleon. He recanted all the things he had said, made a public self-criticism, and finally went to Brioni, where he publicly begged Tito's pardon. Thus Dej came out in his true colours as an opportunist of many flags.

After Liberation, we, of course, established friendly relations with Rumania, as with all the other countries of people's democracy. For our part, we greatly desired to develop our relations
to the maximum with that country, especially with the Rumanian people, not only because we were two socialist countries, but also because we retained a special feeling of friendship and sympathy, formed because of the aid which had been given the Albanian patriots residing in Rumania during the period of our Renaissance. However, our efforts in this direction did not yield the results we desired because of the indifference of the Rumanian leadership. This had its own reasons which did not depend on our stands and desires.

Nevertheless, the relations between our two countries developed in a correct, although entirely formal manner. There was not the slightest warmth and special friendship for a small socialist country like ours, which had fought and sacrificed so much in the war against the fascist invaders, to be seen among the Rumanian leaders. Rumania was the socialist country which proved to be more indifferent than all the others in regard to the development of Albania and the activation of relations between our parties and states.

Later, when I went to Rumania with a delegation, during the visits we made there I saw many interesting things; they showed me many aspects of the progress they had made in the economy. I visited Ploesti, which, in comparison with our Kuçova, was a colossal centre of the
oil industry. The oil there was subjected to a modern refining process and I remember that in the final meeting he had with me, Dej boasted that they had bought a very large and modern oil refinery from the Americans. (He told me that they had bought it for cash with dollars, but as it turned out later, it had been bought on credit. As early as that time, «socialist» Rumania was engaged in deals with American imperialism.) They showed me a metallurgical centre where many kinds of steel were produced, as well as a series of other factories of every kind, model agricultural farms, a big clothing combine, etc.

They showed me «the Rumanian Village», a big outdoor museum complex, which was an ensemble of rural buildings with the furnishings and clothing used in the Rumanian countryside, which was very beautiful and original.

We liked everything we saw and visited. They had many new buildings, but they had also inherited a very great deal from the past. True, the Rumanians had created agricultural cooperatives, but the work was not going well there; there was a lack of leadership, organization and political work. Nevertheless, on the whole, progress had been made in the country and it was obvious, as they told us themselves, that the Soviet aid was very great and in every direction, even including the construction of the big palace, where, at the time of our visit, «Scînteia»
was published and various cultural activities were carried out.

In regard to aid for Albania, I must say that up till the time when our relations with the Yugoslavs were broken off, none of the countries of people’s democracy assisted Albania with some small credit. Later, these countries, to a greater or lesser extent, did give us a certain amount of aid. Some did so quite correctly, at first, some with trickery and wiles, and others just to keep in line and to display their «socialist solidarity», or to show the Soviet Union, from which they received large amounts of credits and aid: «See, we too are giving socialist Albania something. When we have more we will give more.»

Several times we sought credits from the Rumanians, but they either refused us or gave us some ludicrously small sum. In regard to experience on oil, in industry and in agriculture, for example, they made us promises, gave us their word, but never gave us anything of any substance. As to experience of party work and the state structure, we neither asked for nor received anything from them.

Why was this more pronounced with the Rumanians, although even with the others we had great difficulties in securing their aid?

In the other parties, at first, there was a more or less tangible spirit of unity and mutual
internationalist aid, and this was reflected towards us in practice. Whereas in the Rumanian party, this spirit of unity and aid was very weak.

In general the Rumanian leaders were prominent both for their megalomania towards «lesser mortals» and for their servility towards «the mighty». They cut their conversations with us very short, if they did not content themselves with a mere nod of recognition or a handshake. In meetings and congresses they were so «pre-occupied» that it seemed as if they were carrying the entire weight upon their shoulders. On these occasions they were always to be seen together with the main leaders of the Soviet Union. Undoubtedly, they were their servile opportunist lackeys and this became quite obvious when it was necessary to fight in defence of principles.

In my opinion, the Czechoslovaks were different from the others. They were more serious than all of them. I have spoken about Gottwald, but it must be said that we Albanians also got along well with those who came after him. We were sincere with them, as with all the others, but the Czech leadership behaved well towards us, too. They had respect for our people and our Party. They were not very lively, but I can say they were restrained, correct and kindly.

Novotny and Shiroky, Dolansky and Kopcicky, whom I have met and talked with many
tires, when I went to their country on business or for holidays with the family, behaved openly and in a modest way with me and all our comrades. That conceit and arrogance, which was apparent in the others, was not to be seen in them.

After the Soviets, it was the Czechs who assisted us most from the economic angle, too. Naturally, when it was a question of granting credits, they were cool-headed and cautious, people who reckoned things carefully. In what they gave us, there was no obvious underestimation, or sense of their economic superiority. Amongst the countries of people’s democracy, Czechoslovakia was the most industrially advanced; its people were industrious, skilful, systematic, orderly in work and life. Wherever you went in Czechoslovakia, it was obvious that it was a developed country, with a cultured people who preserved the traditions of their ancient culture. The Soviets used the country as a health resort, and abused it to the extent that they brought it to its present sate. The leaders of other countries of people’s democracy were envious of the Czech leadership, and made vain gibes about it, but the Czechs displayed much more dignity than all the others. In the meetings of the socialist camp also, what the Czech leaders said carried weight. As far as I could see and judge, within the country, too, they enjoyed respect and sympathy.
When I went to Czechoslovakia I did not feel that heavy sense of isolation which was created in Moscow after Khrushchev took over the reins. As soon as we arrived in Moscow, they allocated us a *dacha* on the outskirts of the city, where we remained isolated for whole days. Officials such as Lesakov, Moshatov, Petrov and some other minor functionary of the apparatus of the Central Committee of the party would be there or would come and go, usually to accompany us, but also to eat and drink. They were all people of the security service, dressed as functionaries of the Central Committee, i.e., people of the apparatus. Of these, Lesakov was my inseparable companion and billiards partner. He liked me and I liked him because, although he was not outstandingly intelligent, he was a good, sincere person. Moshatov came more rarely, appeared to be more important, prepared the journeys or fulfilled any request we might have to buy something, because you could find nothing easily in the market (you had to order everything in advance, because they brought the things ordered from some mysterious source to a special room in the «GUM» store, which had a special entrance for the Central Committee). Petrov was an apparatus man who had long been engaged with the Greeks and our company inter-

* country villa (Russian in the original).
ested him for this reason. He was a serious comrade and liked us. He had come to Albania several times, especially when we were supporting the Greek Democratic Army in its just war. As if all these were not sufficient, later, other «escorts» were added, such as a certain Laptiev, a young fellow who knew Albanian and who was swell-headed about the «position» they had given him, and another who dealt with Yugoslav affairs and whose name I don’t remember, but whom I recall as more intelligent than all the others.

I was never free, I always had an escort. They were all Khrushchev’s men, informers for the Central Committee and the Soviet security service, without taking account here of the official guards and the bugging devices with which they filled the various villas in which we stayed. But that is another story. Let us pass over the devices and concentrate on the people.

These Soviet employees tried to find out our nastroyenie* in order to learn what we were seeking, what we would raise, with whom we would raise it, what the situation was in our country, what we thought about the Yugoslavs, about the leaders of the Greek Communist Party, or any other matter. They knew why they came and we knew who sent them and why they were

---

* mood (Russian in the original).
sent, therefore both sides were friendly, we talked about what interested us and waited for news to come from the Central Committee about when we were to meet. The chinovniki did not talk about politics, no doubt because they had orders about this, but even if they had wanted to open some conversation they did not dare, because they knew that every word would be recorded. We talked especially against the Titoite revisionists. You could not visit any collective farm or state farm, or make contact with the comrades or the people, without giving two or three days notice. And if you did go on a visit, they would sit you down at a table laden with drinks and fruit and you would see nothing, no cattle stall or collective farmer’s house.

It is fair to say that it was different in Bulgaria. Wherever you went, the atmosphere was more comradely, with less formality and fewer guards.

In Czechoslovakia the difference was even greater. Whether in Prague, Bratislava, Karlovy Vary, Brno and many other places to which I have travelled, either officially or privately, I have been free to go wherever I wanted, whenever I wanted, with one obvious guard and everywhere I have been welcomed in a very cordial and friendly way. In the course of a trip, they themselves spontaneously took me to stra-
tegic places. Wherever I have gone in Czecho-
slovakia, either in official talks or in free conver-
sations with the families of Novotny and Shiroky in Prague and Karlovy Vary, or with Bacilek in Slovakia and with a number of party secretaries in various towns and factories, the conversations have been sincere, joyous, happy and not formal. There was not that heavy atmosphere which I felt in the Soviet Union, despite the great love we had for that country and that people.

After the break in relations with Tito, we travelled to the Soviet Union by sea, because the Yugoslavs did not permit us to fly over their territory. Thus, we have had to stay many times in Odessa where we met the famous Yepishev, the first secretary of Odessa and later, political director of the Soviet army. We saw none of the places of interest there. We did not see the famous catacombs of Odessa because they did not take us to visit them, nor even the historic Potemkin steps, because we would have had to walk down them. We saw these famous steps, which began from the statue of Richelieu, governor of the city at the start of the 19th century, only from the car.

«How is it possible,» I asked Yepishev, «that you keep this aristocratic French adventurer here, precisely at the head of the historic steps?!»
«Oh, he’s just been left there,» replied the secretary of the Odessa Party Committee. But what did we do in Odessa? We were bored, smoked cigarettes, went to the park of the «Kirov» villa, went to a room with an old billiard-table. We did not go to visit any museum or school, the only place he took us was to a vineyard, and there only so that he could taste and drink some of the bottles of selected wines which they kept in the nearby cellars.

This was what usually happened in the Soviet Union. Only at priyoms would you shake hands with some personality. When you went to a factory or a house of culture in Leningrad, Kiev or elsewhere, everything was organized: the workers were lined up waiting, a speech of introduction was made by a certain Kozlov, who, puffed up like a turkeycock, spoke with his voice made artificially deep in order to show himself omnipotent, and then people appointed in advance and told what they were to say, made speeches of welcome.

It was quite the opposite in Czechoslovakia, where the people, the leaders, and the factory workers would speak freely, ask questions and reply to everything you asked. There you could travel freely whenever you liked, by car or on foot.

I have always taken an interest in the history of nations and peoples. There are many historic
places in Czechoslovakia. I visited the place where the Taborite uprising took place and saw those characteristic villages through which Žižka had passed and in which he fought. I visited Austerlitz and from the museum hill I looked over the battlefield and imagined Bonaparte’s historic manoeuvre and the sudden appearance of his troops on the Austrian flanks, precisely at the time the sun was rising over Austerlitz. I remembered the battles of Wallenstein and Schiller’s famous trilogy. I asked the Czech comrades:

«Is there any museum about this historic personality?»

«Of course,» they said, and took me immediately to a palace, which was the Wallenstein Museum.

I went hunting deer many times. They had a special ceremony which was performed over the dead deer. To honour the body of the deer, you would break off a pine twig, dip it in the animal’s blood and then stick the twig like a feather in your hat-band.

One day when I was out hunting I found myself in front of a big château.* I asked:

«What is that building?»

«It is one of Metternich’s residences,» they told me, «now it is a museum.»

* French in the original.
«Can we visit it?» I asked the comrades accompanying me.

«Of course,» they replied.

We went in and looked at everything. The competent guide gave us full explanations. I recall that I went into Metternich’s library, full of beautifully bound books. When we came out of the library, we passed a closed door and the guide told us:

«In here there is a mummy which was sent as a gift from Egypt to the Chancellor of Austria, the assassin of Napoleon’s exiled son, the King of Rome.»

«Open it up,» I said, «let us see this mummy, because I am very interested in Egyptology and have read many books about it, especially about the findings of the scientist Carter, Carnarvon’s associate, who discovered the undamaged tomb of Tutankhamen.»

«No,» said the guide, «I won’t open that door.»

«Why?» I asked surprised.

«Because some misfortune might befall me, I might die.»

The Czech comrades laughed at him and said:

«What are you telling us, come on, open it up!»

The guide stuck to his guns and finally said:
«Here, take the key, open the door yourselves and have a look. I am not going inside and I won't take any responsibility.»

The Czech comrade escorting me opened the door, we turned on the lights and saw the mummy, completely black in a wooden sarcophagus. We closed the door, gave the key back to the guide, shook hands with him, thanked him, and left.

On our way out, the Czech comrade said to me:

«There are still superstitious people who believe in magic like that guide we saw.»

«No,» I said, «the guide is a man of learning, and not superstitious. The books on Egyptology say that nearly all the scientists who have discovered the mummies of Pharaohs have died in some mysterious way. There are many theories which say that the ancient Egyptian priests who lived about three thousand years before our era, were great scientists and to protect the mummies from robbers lined the walls with rock that contained uranium. It is said that in the sarcophagus chamber they burned plants which released powerful poisons. It has been proved that the structure of the pyramids is a rare miracle from the geometrical aspect in which sometimes the apex of the pyramid, like that of Cheops, coincides with a given star, or as occurs in the Valley of the Kings, in stated years, at a given hour of the day the
rays of the sun entered into the depths of the corridor and lit up the forehead of the statue of the Pharaoh.

My Czech escort, Pavel he was called, who was a good, kindly, modest chap, changed his opinion about the guide, and was interested to know more.

The Czechs themselves took me to Slovakia to show me the figure of our National Hero, Skanderbeg, amongst other outstanding historical figures in an old mural on the portico of a monastery. I went to a small spa, at one time called Marienbad, in Sudetenland, to visit the historic house where Goethe lived. Here, in his old age, Goethe fell in love with a very young «Gretchen» and wrote his famous «Elegy of Marienbad».

I mention all these things to show the reality in Czechoslovakia and the good disposition of the Czechs towards us. However, they behaved in the same way with everybody. Even the Soviets felt themselves different people when they went to Czechoslovakia.

In Czechoslovakia I talked in a park for several hours with Rokossovsky and Konev, who, in the Kremlin would merely shake hands. I had to go hunting in Czechoslovakia to meet the president of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukraine and for Nina Khrushcheva to invite Nexhmije and me to tea. I had to go
to Czechoslovakia to talk to General Antonov and others.

But as I said above, after the death of Gottwald, the Khrushchevites were getting their grip on Czechoslovakia. It seemed that Novotny, as the first secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, adhered to correct positions, but time showed that he was a wavering opportunist element, and thus, in one way or another, he did the work for Khrushchev and Co. He played a major role in carrying through the plans which made Czechoslovakia a dominion occupied by Russian tanks.

Thus, the revisionist spider-web was being spun in the countries of people's democracy. The old leaders like Dimitrov, Gottwald and later, Bierut and others, were replaced with younger ones, who seemed suitable to the Soviet leaders, at least at that stage.

With the German Democratic Republic they considered the problem solved, because East Germany was heavily occupied by Soviet troops. We considered this necessary because no peace treaty had been signed, and as well as this, the Soviet army in Germany served to defend not only this socialist country, but also the socialist camp. With the East Germans we had good relations as long as Pieck was alive. He was an old revolutionary and comrade of Stalin, for whom I had great respect. I met Pieck in 1959 when
I was heading a delegation to the GDR. By that time Pieck was old and sick. He gave me a kindly welcome, and listened to me cheerfully when I spoke about our friendship and told him of Albania's progress (he could hardly speak because of his paralysis).

In his last years Pieck apparently did not effectively lead the country and the party. He had been given the honorary position of President of the Republic and Ulbricht and Grottewohl and Co. ran things.

Ulbricht had not shown any sign of open hostility to our Party until we fell out with the Soviets and with him. He was a haughty, stiff-necked German, not only with small parties like ours, but also with the others. He had this opinion about relations with the Soviets: «You have occupied us, you have stripped us of industry, but now you must supply us with big credits and food, so that Democratic Germany will build up and reach the level of the German Federal Republic.» He demanded such credits arrogantly and he got them. He forced Khrushchev to say in a joint meeting: «We must assist Germany so that it becomes our show-case to the West.» And Ulbricht did not hesitate to tell the Soviets in our presence: «You must speed up your aid because there is bureaucracy.»

«Where is the bureaucracy,» asked Mikoyan «in your country?»
"No, not at all in our country but in yours," replied Ulbricht.

However, while he received great aid for himself, he was never ready to help the others, and gave us a ludicrous credit. When we attacked the Khrushchevites in Moscow, both in the meeting and after it, he proved to be one of our most ferocious opponents and was the first to attack our Party publicly after the Moscow Meeting.

The Khrushchevites wanted to have not only the countries of people's democracy, but also the whole international communist movement, under their direction.

I shall speak elsewhere about the revisionist and opportunist views and stands of such leaders as Togliatti, Thorez, etc., but I want to stress here that, after the death of Stalin, both Togliatti and the others began to express their revisionist views more openly, because they sensed that Khrushchev and his circle were their ideological and political allies, because they saw Khrushchev's opportunist line towards the Titoites, the social-democrats, the bourgeoisie, etc. This line which Khrushchev was building up suited Togliatti and Co., who, to one degree or another, had long been following the line of collaboration with the bourgeois parties and the bourgeois governments of their own countries, and fighting
and dreaming that they would become the spon-
sors of marriages of convenience and take seats
in those governments. These tendencies were
latent at first, were displayed hesitantly, but
after the 20th Congress they bloomed into «theo-
ries», like Togliatti's famous «polycentrism,» or
his «Italian road to socialism.»

Of course, within the world communist move-
ment, the Khrushchevites did not come out
with a completely open revisionist platform right
from the start. Just as within the Soviet Union,
they tried to adopt a flexible line, in order
to avoid arousing an immediate reaction in either
their own party or the others. The «Leninism» of
which they spoke, the odd good word dropped here
or there about Stalin, their noisy advertisement of
«Leninist principles in the relations among the so-
cialist countries», served to disguise the plots they
were hatching up, and to gradually prepare the
ground for their subsequent frontal attack. This
they launched at the 20th Congress of the Com-
munist Party of the Soviet Union. There they laid
their cards on the table, because Khrushchev and
Co. had worked for a long time to paralyze any
possible reaction inside or outside the country.