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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS EXECUTIVE AND YUGOSLAVIA, 1941-1945

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ABSTRACT

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HISTORY

Doctor of Philosophy THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS EXECUTIVE AND YUGOSLAVIA, 1941-1945 by Heather Williams

This study explores the role of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) in wartime Yugoslavia, and the influence SOE had on the outcome of events in that country. It traces SOE's development from its early days as a small-scale, semi-amateur organization practising sabotage and subversion, to the later days of the war, when, greatly enlarged, it dealt with full-scale guerrilla warfare. The work is mainly concerned with the political, rather than the military, side of SOE operations. It includes the relationship with the British policy makers, particularly the Foreign Office and the military authorities, and questions how much influence SOE had in forming their policy. It also analyzes SOE's relationships with the Yugoslav guerrilla movements, the exiled Yugoslav government, other British secret organizations, and SOE's American counterpart. The work covers the rivalries and conflicting purposes of all these bodies, and looks at how the conflicts - not least those within SOE itself - influenced the direction of SOE activity in Yugoslavia.

The central question is whether SOE's involvement with the Yugoslav resistance movements made any appreciable contribution to the war against the Axis powers. By supporting first the royalist resistance, and, when they proved unsatisfactory, switching to the communist partisans, the British expected to gain military advantage from the increased level of guerrilla activity in Yugoslavia. My thesis is that, because this activity was designed to allay potential political conflict with Britain's Soviet ally, rather than to be of benefit to Yugoslavia itself, the long-term aims of the two opposing resistance movements were not fully taken into account. The conclusion that I have reached is that, far from any significant military advantage being gained, SOE's active involvement in Yugoslavia merely exacerbated the civil war that was just beginning when the first SOE mission arrived in the country.

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PREFACE

Having recognized Yugoslavia - the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes - when it was established following the First World War, the British paid scant attention to the new state during most of the 1920s and 1930s. As war drew closer, the British took more interest, but largely in relation to Yugoslavia's near neighbours - especially Turkey and Greece. Throughout the war, British interest in Yugoslavia waxed and waned; again, often not directly related to Yugoslavia itself, but to outside political and military needs - most often connected with the relationship with the USSR.

The role played by the Special Operations Executive (SOE) in wartime Yugoslavia is a useful illustration of the varying degree of interest, the lack of background knowledge prevailing in circles such as the British Foreign Office, and the influence of external pressures counting for more than the country itself. An examination of SOE also brings into focus the rivalries, antagonisms and confusion which prevailed within and between the various British bodies. The combination of these factors led the British first to support the resistance headed by Mihailović, the legitimate representative of the Yugoslav government *and* a bastion against 'communist chaos', *then* to throw all their support behind Tito and the very communists the British thought to be the authors of chaos.

By the end of the war, when the communists had control of the country, many of those who had helped to ensure this outcome, particularly Winston Churchill, decided that it was not what they had meant to do at all. It was too late then, and interest in Yugoslav affairs

returned to its pre-war low level. The Tito-Stalin split in 1948 comforted those who felt they had made a mistake, and legitimized those who did not.

It was largely the latter who began writing the victor's history. This, essentially, portrayed Mihailović as a traitor and collaborator, while the partisans were so superior militarily that they were the *only* possible choice for the Western Allies to back, regardless of the eventual outcome for the people of Yugoslavia. Over the succeeding years, this interpretation spread out from the personal recollections and memoirs of liaison officers who had served with the partisans, and gradually found its way into serious historical studies, and even into official histories. Another interpretation, which did not gain such wide currency until recently, was that Mihailović was a tragic and heroic figure, betrayed and abandoned by his erstwhile British allies as a result of a communist plot which had its origins in the Cairo office of SOE.

Somewhere between the two, I think, lies the truth, although the secrecy and manipulation of information which occurred at the time, and subsequently, probably means that it is impossible ever to gain a total picture of everything which passed. Then again, history never does form itself into clear-cut black and white images: to borrow from Edennothing is all white or all black, and grey is a much more usual Balkan colour. In the following work, I hope I have managed to wash in a few more shades of grey on to the complex picture of wartime Yugoslavia.

While emphasizing that everything I have written is entirely my own responsibility, I must thank the many people who have helped me along the way, especially the men and women who were involved with the secret wartime organizations, and who generously gave their time and hospitality to tell me of their impressions and experiences. I owe much to my supervisor, Stevan Pavlowitch, whose encouragement, guidance and friendship have been invaluable. Last, but certainly not least, my thanks to Keith Dear, who has supported, pestered, nagged and bitten by turns until I finally finished.

CHAPTER I

EXPERIMENTS IN SUBVERSION AND SABOTAGE

Belgrade became the scene of major diplomatic and subversive activity in the winter of 1940-41. By March 1941, perhaps for the first time, all the interested British parties were in concord: the most desirable outcome of a most undesirable situation would be to effect a coup d'état against the Yugoslav government, headed by the Regent Prince Paul. This apparently desperate measure, whereby the Foreign Office gave SOE the green light for a step the latter had long advocated and the former long abjured, was the culmination of months of frenetic diplomatic manoeuvring, which had ended in failure from the British point of view, when the Yugoslav government finally gave in to German pressure and signed the Tripartite Pact.

When the coup d'état came about on 27 March - a bare two days after the Pact had been signed - it produced a frisson of optimism in Britain. This, in the event, turned out to be the triumph of hope over reality. It also cast SOE fleetingly (and, to a large degree, spuriously) in the role of an effective, well organized and useful extra arm of diplomatic and military policy. Hugh Dalton, minister for Economic Warfare, and minister with responsibility for SOE, gladly - if a trifle dishonestly - accepted congratulations on "my Jug achievement". In retrospect one can hardly blame him: it must have made a pleasant change to hear the organization he was inclined to regard as his brainchild praised instead of blamed - at best as an expensive waste of time, at worst as a positive danger to more regular and established diplomatic and intelligence-gathering representatives of HMG.

In May 1940, with things going badly in France, it had been decided that an overhaul of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) should be put in train: Alexander Cadogan, permanent under-secretary at the Foreign Office, discussed this with Lord Lloyd, the Colonial Secretary, and Halifax, the Foreign Secretary, who agreed that this was needed badly.³ A paper prepared for the Chiefs of Staff, entitled "British strategy in a certain eventuality", was discussed at a meeting on 27 May when it was decided that possible revolts in occupied territories would need direction and co-ordination with sabotage and other tactics. To facilitate this, "A special organization will be required and plans to put these operations into effect should be prepared [...] as a matter of urgency."⁴

The Special Operations Executive was given its name by Neville Chamberlain. Although he had resigned as prime minister on 10 May, Chamberlain remained a member of the War Cabinet and was Lord President of the Council; it was he who drew up SOE's founding charter which was signed on 19 July. SOE was formed from Section D, the branch of SIS dedicated to propaganda, subversion and sabotage; MI(R), a branch of military intelligence with a function similar to that of Section D; and EH, the propaganda organization based at Electra House. Special Operations was divided into Propaganda - SO(1), Subversion and Sabotage - SO(2), and Planning - SO(3). The latter was short-lived: its plans "were so global and far-reaching, and incidently covered such an enormous acreage of paper... [that] in a few months SO(3) duly planned itself out of existence".⁵

As soon as he had heard of the projected new organization, Hugh Dalton, recently appointed Minister of Economic Warfare (15 May), began lobbying for control of the subversive and propaganda side of Secret Operations.⁶ The Ministry of Economic Warfare (MEW) was constituted on 3 September 1939 and, in addition to organizing a blockade, its brief was expanded to include strategic bombing of enemy industry, sabotage and psychological warfare.

The idea that Germany could be overcome by means of a blockade derived from the

perception that the First World War had ended when German morale succumbed to the British blockade; during the 1930s it had taken root in much of the forward planning for the possible eventuality of war with Germany. Chamberlain favoured this new concept, feeling that such tactics might defeat Germany without the involvement of large land forces: no one wanted a repetition of the 1914-18 trench warfare. The fall of France and the BEF evacuation from Dunkirk confirmed this opinion.

Dalton perceived Special Operations as a natural extension of the economic war, with secret agents continuing the destruction of German resources beyond the reach of strategic bombing. At a meeting on 1 July, Dalton put his case for the separation of subversive warfare from regular military operations and, therefore, outside the control of the service departments, arguing that the "war from within" would be far better conducted by civilians than soldiers:

What we have in mind is not a military job at all. It concerns trade unionists, socialists etc., the making of chaos and revolution -- no more suitable for soldiers than fouling at football...⁸

Neither Beaumont-Nesbit, Director of Military Intelligence, nor Sir Stewart Menzies, or 'C' as the head of SIS was known, was entirely happy about giving over his share of this activity, and the making of chaos and revolution was not a concept familiar to the Foreign Office: Dalton's implementation of the policy of blockade had already brought him into conflict with the Foreign Office (FO) over the diplomatic complications this brought about with neutral countries. However, "Dr Dynamo" continued to press his case for control of what was to become SOE with a letter to Halifax setting out his concept, and with his urging of Attlee to impress upon Winston Churchill that such an organization could only be led from the left. Churchill was not entirely convinced that Dalton was the man for the job, but Cadogan was, and, after rallying support from all his Labour party allies - especially Attlee - Dalton's appointment was officially confirmed on 22 July; whereupon Churchill exhorted

him to "set Europe ablaze". ¹¹ Dalton's responsibility for SOE meant that now one of the secret services was headed by a Labour politician, an important factor in cementing the new coalition government, and also possibly for allaying some of Labour's long-standing mistrust of the secret services, although he was not made a member of the War Cabinet. ¹²

Gladwyn Jebb, whom Dalton invited to be his "chief lieutenant", ¹³ was an undoubted asset, both in helping to formulate the ideas behind SOE and in representing the organization's interests in Whitehall through his special relationship with Alexander Cadogan, for whom he had worked at the FO before taking up Dalton's invitation. Although not entirely convinced of SOE's effectiveness, Cadogan was always prepared to consult with Jebb and intervene at the FO to ensure that SOE was not blocked at every turn. Cadogan did much to reduce potential friction, and did not share Halifax's moral objections to many of SOE's schemes. ¹⁴

Some old Section D hands remained in London SOE but Dalton, determined to make a success of his new organization, soon introduced a vast array of new faces and removed those that did not fit - most notably Lawrence Grand, the rather romantic and swashbuckling head of Section D: romanticism was out, dynamism was in. Sir Frank Nelson, a businessman and ex-Conservative MP, became 'CD', executive head of SOE, and soon made it apparent that a clean sweep was to be made, including the establishment of a country section or desk for each operational area. George Taylor remained from D, becoming chief of staff to Nelson, with responsibility for organizing the new country sections and general operations. Philip Broad joined Jebb from the FO, and Robin Brook left the City to become Jebb's own private secretary. Dalton himself recruited Brigadier Colin Gubbins, a regular soldier, whom Jebb later described as "the real motive force in the machine". There followed a rapid expansion which, because of the secrecy of SOE, was made by continuing Section D's practice of using the "old boy network", resulting in the recruitment of large numbers of merchant bankers, stockbrokers, industrialists and lawyers. So far the makers of chaos and revolution were

bastions of respectable society and ex-public schoolboys. It was by this method that Kim Philby joined, introduced by Guy Burgess; although Philby did not stay long in SOE - transferring instead to SIS, where his talents could be put to better use. ¹⁷ Burgess himself was one of those not kept on from D, when Jebb decided he was unsuited to any confidential work. ¹⁸ An agent recruited in Romania by two SOE men describes it thus: "It was, they said, a kind of club: you were invited to join". ¹⁹ SOE soon outgrew its existing premises and eventually found a permanent home in Baker Street which was to become synonymous with the organization itself.

The Balkan contingent of Section D transferred more or less intact into SOE. Agents included a number of journalists, whose profession gave them good cover for being in the region and served the dual purpose of feeding pro-British propaganda to the indigenous press and/or producing publications themselves, such as <u>Britanova</u>, and engineers with British or Empire connections who were useful for their sabotage potential. The Trepća mines, owned by Chester Beatty, a friend of Lawrence Grand, was a particularly good source of the latter.²⁰ Others were businessmen, British Council officials, and a variety of "old boys" who seemed potentially useful.

Dalton was instructed to keep the Chiefs of Staff (COS) in the picture, but although SOE's charter stated that irregular activities should be co-ordinated with general strategic planning, SOE was not represented on the COS Committee. SOE had to rely on the Joint Planning Staff meetings for liaison with the COS. The Chiefs of Staff were adamant that SOE was not to be a fourth, independent, service but must remain operationally dependent upon the other services - a factor which was to have far-reaching implications when the question of aircraft, supplies, etc for SOE operations arose. Neither were the regular military minds entirely convinced by SOE's irregular and amateur approach or even, in some cases, of the potential usefulness of resistance movements.²¹

SIS too was inclined to view SOE as amateurish (and was also not entirely happy at having to give up Section D), regarding SOE activity as a potential danger to its own intelligence network. In some respects the two bodies had opposite objectives: intelligence-gathering had to be invisible, while, as Gladwyn Jebb put it, "our whole raison d'être was to stir things up". 22 Sir Stewart Menzies, 'C', had direct access to Churchill, a privilege not enjoyed by 'CD', as the head of SOE was known. For the first two years of its existence SOE was dependent on SIS for its communications. By an agreement of September 1940, all SOE wireless traffic was handled by SIS who had the right to accept or reject it - an arrangement which also meant that SIS had access to all SOE information but did not return the favour: 'Ultra' information was kept well out of SOE's reach. "It remained a matter of bitter resentment that because of SIS hostility, there were no points of wireless contact in the Balkans when the Germans overran the area". 23 SOE established its own communications in May-June 1942, which alleviated the situation somewhat but the rivalry continued. In 1944 Churchill noted "the warfare between SOE and SIS [...] is a lamentable but perhaps inevitable feature of our affairs". 24 Members of SIS popularly referred to SOE as "the Thugs", 25 and an SIS man being sent into Greece in 1943 was warned to steer clear of SOE and its political dabblings.²⁶

Many members of the Foreign Office harboured deep suspicions of SOE and its activities which, by their very nature, were bound to have political implications. Section D had been active in the Balkans since 1938, and in 1939-40 the area became increasingly important to the economic war; after the German victories of May and June 1940 severed virtually all D's links in Western and Northern Europe, the Balkan section was the only really operative part of the organization. As Axis influence expanded in the area, many Section D agents found their way to Belgrade, which became the clearing house for subversive activity in the region, with much of the activity there directed at Yugoslavia's neighbours. This hive of irregular activity did not go unnoticed by the British diplomatic representatives in the region and

while Balkan neutrality was being promoted there were many aspects of Section D's exploits which, they felt, were not compatible with their own. Governments in the Balkans were nervous enough about Axis - and Soviet - intentions without what the regular body of diplomats often perceived as a bunch of dangerous freebooters upsetting them further. Propaganda was one thing, but bringing in caches of explosives ²⁷ and engaging in political skulduggery was quite another. Bickham Sweet-Escott, who was part of SOE's Balkan section, was critical of the diplomats' input - instead of making positive suggestions, merely "telling us what not to do, though the variety of their control varied greatly from country to country". ²⁸ Campbell, the British minister in Belgrade, was often inclined to be fairly liberal towards SOE.

Dalton was continually exasperated by what he regarded as FO obstruction, particularly in relation to SOE plans to disrupt Romanian oil supplies to Germany.²⁹ The FO, in return, appears to have been constantly vigilant for signs of SOE usurping the role of regular diplomats, reacting very tartly when congratulations on Anthony Eden's appointment as Foreign Secretary from Bogoljub Jeftić, leader of the Yugoslav National Party and former prime minister, were conveyed via SOE, rather than through Campbell.³⁰ The FO was anxious not to have SOE agents perceived as official representatives of HMG policy; although this, perhaps inevitably, did happen as a number of Belgrade agents used employment at the legation as cover for their more subversive employment. While they were unaware of the existence of SOE, many opposition politicians knew or suspected that its members were some kind of intelligence agents, and possibly saw them as a useful unofficial channel for communications with the British government.

While there were conflicts and rivalries with the other services and the FO, SOE was also plagued by internal disputes and jealousies. Although the original concept was that Jebb should be in overall charge of SOE under Dalton, Sir Robert Vansittart, Dalton's chief adviser

for SOE, persuaded the Minister to appoint Rex Leeper head of SO(1). Leeper had been senior to Jebb at the FO and this led to problems between the two men which spilled over into the two sections, especially after SO(1) moved to Woburn Abbey when the physical separation led to a division of loyalties. "SO1 tended to regard their colleagues as rather bungling amateur assassins, SO2 began to think of SO1 as half-baked theorists who were not to be trusted for reasons of security". The rivalries and petty hierarchies did not bode well for Dalton's concept of one united subversive organization. The matter was, eventually, settled by the creation of the Political Warfare Executive. The birth of PWE was a classic example of the "Whitehall War", which at times raged so furiously that one wonders who was actually fighting the enemy: after many heated demarcation disputes between the Ministry of Information and SO(1) - and a great deal of personal antagonism between Dalton and Brendan Bracken, who took over at the MOI when Duff Cooper could not stand it any more black propaganda was removed from SOE and became the responsibility of PWE. 32

British policy in 1939 was one of promoting neutrality in the Balkans and Eastern Europe; the Foreign Office was very much aware of the potential value to Germany of the food and mineral wealth of the region in the event of war and a British blockade of German ports. After Germany's action in Czechoslovakia in March 1939 and Italy's invasion of Albania three week's later, Alexander Cadogan noted that, if Germany had control of the resources of Central and Eastern Europe, the Nazis might well have it in their power to overwhelm the West. British policy, therefore, should be the creation of a "peace front", initially comprising Poland, Romania, Turkey and Greece.³³

The Nazi-Soviet pact of August 1939, Hitler's invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939 - which brought Britain and France into a state of war with Germany two days later - and, finally, the Soviet invasion of Poland on 17 September, pointed to a redrawing of the neutral group in S E Europe. In April 1939 Britain had given Greece and, under pressure from

France, Romania a similar guarantee to that issued to Poland; the guarantee to Greece was, to a large extent, to encourage Turkey to support the Western Allies. On 25 October Cadogan dined with the ministers of Romania, Turkey, Bulgaria, Greece and Yugoslavia and, on hearing they were planning a neutral Balkan Bloc, "encouraged them where and how I could", 34 but at the same time emphasized the advisability of getting together on economic grounds. He was, no doubt, all too aware that Britain had very limited means to supply any great material support, and that it was undesirable to see the war extend into the Balkans.

It might be perceived as somewhat ironic that Cadogan emphasised Balkan unity based on economic factors: throughout the 1930s German economic penetration of Yugoslavia had been growing apace, and appeals to both Britain and France to help counteract this had largely fallen upon deaf ears. An SOE agent in Romania laments the fact that during the 1930s Britain was unwilling to engage in political trading, keeping relations on a purely economic basis.³⁵ Only after the declaration of war and the establishment of the Ministry of Economic Warfare was any serious attempt made to counter German economic domination of the Balkans: one notable success was the Goeland Transport and Trading Company, established and financed by MEW, the efforts of which resulted in Romanian oil exports to Britain between December 1939 and April 1940 far exceeding those to Germany.³⁶

The German stranglehold on Yugoslavia's economy, coupled with its own internal political complexities, indicated to the Yugoslav government that its only hope of survival was to remain neutral - a policy fully supported by the British until Italy's invasion of Greece in October 1940 made it necessary for Britain to honour its pledge to that country. Initial Greek successes against the Italian forces were heartening, but it was obvious that it could only be a matter of time before Hitler would be impelled to come to the aid of his Axis ally: the route this aid would take must lie through either Bulgaria or Yugoslavia. British diplomatic efforts were, accordingly, concentrated on attempting to establish a Balkan front with Yugoslavia and Turkey acting in concert to support Bulgaria - regarded as the most

likely route for Germany to reach Greece. No Balkan front was forthcoming: Turkey remained non-committal, and once Bulgaria had given in to German pressure and adhered to the Tripartite Pact, the heat was turned on Yugoslavia. Prince Paul was in a cleft stick. Although personally pro-British he was all too well aware of Yugoslavia's precarious position. His advisers had given the pessimistic forecast that, in the event of a refusal to acquiesce to German demands for passage and this eventuality being forced upon Yugoslavia, its military forces would only be able to hold out for approximately one week.³⁷

In view of the decreasing hope that Yugoslavia could be persuaded to stand firm, George Taylor was dispatched to Belgrade to take charge of the SOE mission there. Dalton and Nelson briefed him over dinner at Claridges, emphasising that "this has got to be a success": Taylor was to have everything he needed in order to ensure that it was a success - ample funds and backing, not to mention the ability to ignore opposition since Dalton had the prime minister's support.³⁸

Taylor's brief was to co-ordinate all the political contacts SOE had been cultivating so assiduously, to see if they could dissuade Prince Paul and his government from signing the Tripartite pact and, if not, whether a coup to overthrow Paul's government could be fomented. SOE had first raised the possibility of a coup in July 1940, but the FO had preferred to keep this as a last resort. Taylor was also to complete the plans for sabotage which would deny German access to Romanian oil, and to Yugoslav lines of communication and raw materials, in the event of invasion. Perhaps the most delicate part of his allotted task was to organize post-occupational planning and make preparations for guerrilla resistance if - or when - the Balkan peninsula was overrun. The latter, in its presupposition of defeat for the Yugoslav and Greek armed forces, was hardly an encouraging aspect for the people in those countries; it also highlighted the fact that Britain had little to offer in the way of material support, relying instead on the assurance that the United States would join the fray,

that the Western Allies would win in the end, and that this was the side on which to be.

Once he arrived in Yugoslavia Taylor discovered that the one really secure pro-British element in the country was Serb public opinion. SOE's job was to mobilize its political contacts in order to influence the Yugoslav government's policy: from mid-February until around 18 March it was still thought possible to press the prince regent into maintaining neutrality. SOE hoped to counteract German threats by convincing Prince Paul that submission to these would not be tolerated by the Serb people and would result in the overthrow of the Yugoslav government, and possibly the end of the dynasty (a pretty accurate prediction in the event, although Taylor was not to know how this would eventually come about).

Taylor assessed the Serb Peasant Party (SPP) as probably the most important of SOE's political allies since it was actually part of the government: it had made a tactical alliance with Paul, and its pro-Allied propaganda had been subsidised by SOE since July 1940.³⁹ Its line on foreign policy was the most anti-German and pro-Allied in the government and SOE had complete confidence in Tupanjanin, who was deputising for party leader Gavrilović, since the latter had been sent by Prince Paul as Yugoslav minister in Moscow.⁴⁰ This confidence was not necessarily shared by the FO who, on receipt of a "most secret report" from Campbell on 23 February 1941, noted: "we are afraid this should be read with a grain of salt as Tupanjanin's party is in receipt of a subsidy from HMG - may influence his reports".⁴¹ The Peasant Party member and two others were prepared to leave the government and bring down the Cvetković ministry if it made any concessions to Germany.

SOE's political contacts also included the opposition parties - Radicals, Democrats and the Yugoslav National party: these were not regarded as being as valuable as the SPP, but had many influential members who held sway over Serb public opinion. The long-standing antagonism of these parties to the government meant that HM diplomatic representatives could not engage in overt dealings with them; SOE, on the other hand, was in almost daily

contact with them. Taylor regarded SOE's influence with the party leaders as "undoubtedly effective in preventing this good material being led astray".⁴² However, SOE's influence was not strong enough to unite them behind a strongly worded draft declaration on foreign policy, which was changed at the last moment to a much weaker version and served only to irritate Prince Paul.

The national associations, which were linked with Serbia's resistance during the First World War, and were particularly influential on Serb public opinion, submitted many petitions to Prince Paul: Narodna Odbrana, with which SOE had the closest relationship, published its petition setting out Serb objections to giving way to German demands. SOE members also had close personal contacts with other leading Serbian personalities and published a large volume of pamphlets designed to arouse public opinion against a government which would display such weakness as to give in to German threats. In short, all possible means of bringing pressure on Prince Paul not to sign the Tripartite Pact were utilized by SOE.

However, this pressure was not strong enough to dissuade Prince Paul: by 18 March he was seen as a hopeless case, and SOE's objective "inevitably changed from that of endeavouring to influence the Government to that of endeavouring to bring down the Government" - preferably before the pact was signed. This was the subject of discussion at a meeting of SOE, intelligence and diplomatic representatives at the British Legation on 19 March. The policy was confirmed when, in order to counter opposition, and after Tupanjanin had influenced three Serb ministers to resign in protest at the draft pact which they had been asked to approve, the cabinet continued its deliberations behind closed doors. It was apparent that they were going ahead with the pact. The only course open to SOE was to bring off a coup.

Deciding to foment a coup was one thing; actually bringing it off was quite another. SOE's contacts, excellent though they might be in influencing public opinion, were not necessarily the stuff that coups are made from. SOE assessed that the army, while against the pact, was wary of war and defeat, and the air force, a small but united body, less affected by the widespread paralysis, did not possess the political capacity to carry through after the initial overthrow. SOE was faced with the problem of co-ordinating all the necessary elements while time was fast running out: "The work of SO2 during these days therefore was essentially that of urging the necessity of action for a coup d'état upon all our friends and everyone with whom we had contact", 45 while hoping that once the first step had been taken everything else would fall into line.

When Cvetković, the prime minister, and Cincar-Marković, the foreign minister, went off to Vienna on 24 March to sign the Tripartite pact on the following day, SOE was still doubtful if and how the coup was to be made: "Prospects of united action by the Serbs seemed some distance off". Alexander Cadogan in London received the news of the Yugoslav ministers' departure with some gloom, noting in his diary that all the Balkan news was bad - Yugoslavia was collapsing and the Turks were running out: "Can only ask G.J. [Gladwyn Jebb] to blow up the Jug train! But he probably can't do that". 47

The suggestion that SOE blow up the train on which Cvetković and Cincar-Marković were returning from Vienna was in fact conveyed to Taylor in Belgrade. But according to Taylor, Ilija Trifunović, chairman of Narodna Odbrana, had just informed SOE (on Monday, 24 March) that the coup was 99 per cent certain and preparations were making good progress; to take such drastic action at this juncture would mean the introduction of martial law which would upset the plans.⁴⁸

When the coup actually came about, it took SOE by surprise: Trifunović had said that he did not expect any action for 48 hours, and that he would give SOE 12 hours notice for them to inform the British government. In the event the coup was brought forward by 24 hours when the planners heard of Prince Paul's departure from Belgrade. Alarmed that he had got wind of their plans and was making for Germany with King Peter, they were reassured to

hear he was only going to his hunting lodge in Slovenia, and had decided to take advantage of his absence. By two a.m. on Thursday 28 March, everything was ready to go. However, this had not given Trifunović time to contact SOE, and they were initially fearful that it was a counter-coup by Paul; it was not until eight o'clock in the morning that they heard all was well.

The leaders of the coup were General Dušan Simović, commander of the air force, his second-in-command Brigadier General Bora Mirković, Major Živan Knežević of the King's Guard (in Taylor's opinion the brains behind the operation) and a number of soldiers or old soldiers.⁴⁹

The Briton who claimed to be closest to the makers of the coup, and most in the know, was not a member of SOE, but Tom Mapplebeck, an honorary air attaché. Mapplebeck had lived in Belgrade since shortly after the First World War, had many contacts in the Yugoslav air force, and was a great friend of Mirković who supplied him with copies of the Yugoslav General Staff's weekly intelligence summaries: these Mapplebeck translated and passed on to Campbell and the service attachés.⁵⁰

The coup, however much encouragement and help on the propaganda side it had received from SOE and various other British agencies in Belgrade, was a totally home-grown affair and a predominantly Serbian one at that. Signing the Tripartite pact had provided the trigger: the majority of Serbs found it unthinkable to throw in their lot with the people they had fought against at such great cost in the previous war. News of the coup, and King Peter's assumption of the royal prerogative six months before his official coming of age, sparked off scenes of wild rejoicing in the streets of Belgrade - although these were not echoed in Zagreb. It was received as an encouraging sign in Britain where, for a short time, it gave a fleeting glimpse of early victory, coming as it did at the time of British successes in North Africa and signs of Italy weakening. Churchill declared "Yugoslavia has found her soul", and Dalton accepted congratulations on SOE's success.

What the British, including SOE, failed to understand was that the coup was not simply a reaction to the pact, which might be seen as just the last straw, but was the result of long-standing grievances against Prince Paul's government and a desire to address the internal problems of Yugoslavia. Not least of these was the unease felt in Serbia - and even more particularly among Serbs in Croatia - at the creation of the autonomous Banovina of Croatia in August 1939. The misreading of the longer-term causes of the coup caused perplexity in British diplomatic and government circles; Cadogan noted "Somewhat puzzling and rather discouraging news from Belgrade. Government seems to have put out a statement that their foreign policy isn't changed!" If the coup had taken place before the pact had been signed, as SOE had hoped, the new government, which was a coalition of all parties and included both Serbs and Croats, as well as Slovenes and Moslems, might have been more ready to stand up against the Axis, but to tear up the pact once it had been signed seemed too much like direct provocation.

The attitude of the new Yugoslav government, especially with regard to military preparedness and tactical deployment, was regarded as highly unsatisfactory by British ministers, causing great anxiety as to whether Britain would be able to gain full benefit from the coup. It put SOE back into virtually the same situation as in the pre-coup days, attempting to put pressure on the government through its various friends and contacts. SOE had not been too pleased at Simovic heading the new government, but he was the only possible figurehead on whom all parties could agree. SOE's closest associates, especially Tupanjanin and Trifunović, were equally disappointed and within a few days, according to Taylor, were discussing the possibility of another coup.⁵³

There was no time. Incensed by what he regarded as open defiance, Hitler ordered 'Operation Punishment': Yugoslavia was to be destroyed. On 6 April, without a declaration of war, Belgrade was attacked by German bombers.⁵⁴

SOE's plans for sabotage did not benefit greatly from the coup either. Plans to block the Danube, disrupting oil and grain supplies to Germany, had been made as early as autumn 1939. These included the Kazan scheme, which involved blowing a large quantity of rock into the narrow Kazan gorge, ⁵⁵ and the sinking of cement-laden barges at the Greben training wall to block the narrows, and in the Sip canal to block that waterway. The success of these schemes depended upon the consent of the Yugoslav government: the Kazan scheme had been partially completed by Section D agents by December 1939 but halted by the Yugoslav government for fear of provoking the Germans. ⁵⁶ In April 1940 Julius Hanau, 'Caesar', the then head of D in Belgrade had been expelled from Yugoslavia after his plans to block the Danube had been uncovered, causing protests from the German minister and a good deal of political embarrassment. ⁵⁷

In the autumn of 1940 SOE had an interview with the Yugoslav minister of war and the chief of general staff, with the object of interesting them in restarting the Kazan scheme. Both appeared amenable, and in December SOE handed over the plans and put them in touch with their contractors. However, SOE discovered that no further progress had been made by January 1941, and it was impossible to continue the work themselves undetected, since all the surrounding tree cover had been removed; the area was virtually under military control and in full view of German patrols on the Romanian side of the river.⁵⁸

SOE discussed the problem with Campbell who agreed on the importance of the project and had several meetings with Prince Paul in early February. After the third meeting Campbell telegraphed the FO Southern Department at the request of SO2: the chief of general staff had finally told SOE that the General Staff was unwilling to proceed with the Kazan scheme, but were prepared to go forward with plans for sinking tugs and barges. Prince Paul had asserted he was anxious to see the scheme completed, but this must be done in a manner guaranteed not to provoke the Germans. SOE's analysis was that neither Prince Paul nor the General Staff had any intention of proceeding with the Kazan scheme, and the only

remaining chance would be to bring the strongest possible pressure to bear on the prince regent and his government by SOE's Serbian friends and by the British government through their minister in Belgrade: SOE's friends were becoming increasingly restless and were looking to the minister to take a stronger line with Prince Paul than he had done in the past.⁵⁹

Having transmitted SOE's views, Campbell immediately sent a telegram with his own, which were rather more cautious. He agreed that strong action was called for if anything effective was to be done about blocking the Danube, "but SO2's suggestions obviously raise much wider questions of policy". A minister in the Yugoslav government had recently told Campbell that attempts to press either the government or individual members were counterproductive, particularly with regard to British interests. Campbell concluded, however, that if the government should show weakness towards Germany, it might be necessary to try such means, and he was ready to attempt direct pressure in respect of the Kazan scheme "if you can provide lever...Matter of course must be considered in the light of our general Balkan policy, strategical and political".⁶⁰

The lever provided was a personal message from Churchill to Prince Paul, urging him to complete the Kazan scheme for use as a trump card in case of threatened invasion: "you would merely have to tell them that, if a single German soldier crossed the frontier, the German oil supplies from Romania would immediately be halved". The portrayal of the scheme as a valuable means of defence was a nice piece of SOE thinking. To mention was made of the benefits Britain would derive from the denial of Romanian oil supplies to the Nazi war effort. The accompanying telegram from the FO to Campbell concludes: "I am afraid we are not in a position to make any promises of military help or war material, but if you think that an offer of financial assistance would help please let me know what form it should take". 63

The leverage initially appeared to work, but only up to a point. SOE, acutely aware of

the shortage of time, found the Yugoslavs very open and cordial at first but increasingly secretive. The coup, if anything, increased SOE frustration on the sabotage front, as all the ground had to be gone over once more with the new minister of war and chief of staff. The only overt action open to them was "nagging the General Staff".⁶⁴ However, SOE was able to utilize its direct contacts and 'other means of influence', ⁶⁵ so that by 4 April it was known that 12 barges had been loaded at Novi Sad: between the end of February and 18 March SOE had, through its agent, purchased and transported about ten thousand pounds worth of cement and iron, while the Yugoslav government had only sent out tenders on 10 March.⁶⁶ Dalton cabled Taylor on 3 April: "Minister and all high authorities know you realize fully that a successful blocking of Danube before it is too late would be the decisive factor in this war for England..." ⁶⁷ No doubt Dalton was aware that it could be a decisive factor for SOE too.

SOE sabotage plans did not actually involve carrying out demolitions of bridges, mines etc, but only the supervision of operations: the country had been divided into five sectors, and one SOE representative was meant to be in each to observe sabotage operations. However, the plans presupposed Yugoslav resistance holding out long enough for the operations to be carried out. In the event, the total disarray caused by the bombing of Belgrade, and other sensitive military centres, followed by the rapid advance of German motorized forces - for which the Yugoslav 'oxcart' army was no match - and the lack of information, particularly as to precisely where the front was, meant that SOE representatives were unable to give accurate reports of demolitions.

In the ensuing chaos many SOE agents followed the fleeing Yugoslav government in the convoy of legation staff, service attachés, pressmen *et al.* which eventually finished up at the bay of Kotor. Taylor met one of SOE's agents en route who told him that four barges had been sunk, but disappeared before Taylor could get the full story.⁶⁹ If the plan to block the Danube had worked, the river should have been closed for six months, almost until ice

would slow down traffic anyway, but its partial implementation meant the river was blocked for only a short time.

Meanwhile in London, Dalton was anxiously awaiting news on the Danube; information was slow to emerge and initially sounded disappointing, but on 30 April he received a telegram from 'B' - number two in Belgrade - estimating that the river would be blocked for a minimum of three months. ⁷⁰ Dalton immediately passed on the good news to Churchill and 'other eminences'; but at a meeting of the Defence Committee on oil on 16 June, Dalton had to report that the Danube was free again. Churchill consoled him: "Never mind, you blocked it for two months. That was good". ⁷¹ This was actually looking on the bright side, as the river was probably impassable for between three and five weeks, and there was no significant decrease in Romanian oil supplies to Germany. ⁷²

At least sabotage was a limited success; post-occupational planning appears to have been a complete failure. SOE and the service attachés in Belgrade had discussed resistance with various patriotic groups and with Colonel Dragoljub Mihailović, who was responsible for planning against post-occupational contingencies, 73 but SOE itself had made no arrangements for a stay-behind mission. On the chaotic flight from the German invasion a Naval Intelligence attaché wondered "Should we stay, seek concealment in the hills?" but concluded that this would serve no purpose since no preparations had been made, and they had no radio; Mapplebeck was the only person in the convoy with a working transmitter. Of the seven W/T sets that SOE had managed to prize out of SIS, only one ever came on air. The SOE agents dispersed: some reached Istanbul or the Middle East, others, including George Taylor, were captured by the Italians and eventually repatriated. It was not until June 1941 that Taylor returned to London to give a report.

CHAPTER II

RETURN TO OCCUPIED YUGOSLAVIA

The Yugoslav campaign lasted only ten days. There was little chance of repelling the Axis onslaught: even if they had been fully mobilized, the Yugoslav armed forces had neither the manpower nor the modern equipment to match the invaders. Hitler, in a hurry to bail out the Italians in Greece so that he could return to his plan to invade the USSR, ensured that the strength of the attack on Yugoslavia was one that could not long be withstood. He also as did the British - recalled the Serbian army of the First World War, and overestimated the resistance that Axis forces would meet in Yugoslavia.

Faced with military collapse, the government fled into exile with the young king, despite Churchill's rather unrealistic urging that King Peter and his ministers take to some mountain fastness to organize guerrilla activity. Before his departure on 15 April, General Simović passed on his responsibility as Chief of Staff to the Supreme Command to General Kalafatović, leaving him to conclude an armistice with the Axis.² This action was later to cause bitter resentment and political problems for Simović as prime minister of the Yugoslav government in exile.

The capitulation was signed in Belgrade on 17 April, and Yugoslavia ceased to exist. The Independent State of Croatia (the NDH), which took in Bosnia and Herzegovina, was formed under the leadership of the self-styled *Poglavnik* Ante Pavelić, backed by his brutal fascist Ustaša forces.³ The NDH joined the Tripartite pact on 10 April: ostensibly independent, it was in fact a German satellite and was split into areas of German and Italian influence.

Slovenia was divided between Germany and Italy. The Italians annexed a strip of the Dalmatian coast and some of the Adriatic islands, and occupied Montenegro where they made an abortive attempt to establish a client monarchy.⁴ Serbia suffered the greatest dismemberment. All the territorial claims of its neighbours were granted: south-eastern Serbia was annexed by Bulgaria, south-western Serbia by Italian-occupied Albania, and the Vojvodina by Hungary. The Germans occupied the remainder of Serbia, eventually establishing a puppet government under General Nedić in August 1941.

The news which emerged from Yugoslavia, usually brought out by refugees, painted a grim picture of cruelty and deprivation in the dismembered country. There were dreadful stories of the maltreatment and malnourishment endured by captured Yugoslav military personnel - and their families - as they were marched away to prison camps.⁵ Even worse were the stories of Ustaša persecution and massacres of the Serbs living in the NDH. Pavelić's policy has been interpreted thus: of the two million Serbs in the NDH, one third was to be forcibly converted from Eastern Orthodox Christianity to Roman Catholicism, one third was to be expelled to Serbia, and the remaining third was to be killed.⁶ The latter task was undertaken by the Ustašas with a ferocity that horrified the German and Italian authorities. Many NDH Serbs fled to the Italian zone to escape persecution. Others, not waiting for expulsion, fled to Serbia where their stories exacerbated the fear and unrest already generated by the German occupation.

Meanwhile, King Peter and his ministers had made their way from Athens to the Middle East, and from there to London in June 1941, where they were accorded a hero's welcome. When news of the massacres reached the Yugoslav government in exile (YGE), it added to existing problems which there had been no time to resolve between the coup and invasion, created divisions between Serbs and Croats, and produced a cabinet crisis. Serb ministers wanted to publish reports of the atrocities and have the whole Croatian nation denounced.

Croat ministers argued that, if the reports were true, responsibility lay with a few hirelings of Pavelić, and that real Croatian feelings were represented by Maček, leader of the Croatian Peasant Party, who steadfastly refused to co-operate with either the Germans or Italians.⁷

There was a feeling among the Serbs that the military debâcle had, in part, been due to betrayal by Croatian members of the armed forces: he wholesale murder of the Serb population of the NDH appeared to be proof of this betrayal. Simović even went so far as to ask the British to bomb Zagreb. This suggestion did not go down well at the Foreign Office, and did little to enhance Simović's standing. At the time of the coup, SOE had expressed doubts about Simović's leadership, but noted there was little alternative. Since his arrival in London there had been growing doubts at the FO about his capacity to maintain unity in his cabinet, while his handing-over of control to Kalafatović and swift departure was regarded by some Serb émigrés in the Middle East as a dereliction of duty. Douglas Howard, of the FO Southern Department, noted that the proposed bombing of Zagreb was "typical of the muddled thinking for which General Simovitch is becoming famous", and, even if it were possible, such action would merely serve to alienate the pro-Allied Croats. However, the FO concluded that there was really no one to replace Simović and, as he had been portrayed in the British press as the symbol of Yugoslav unity, the British government had no option but to continue its support of him. 12

The FO was not entirely convinced about the scale of the reported massacres: Orme Sargent, deputy under-secretary at the FO, warned that the sources were entirely Serb, and it would be unwise to accept their veracity without further confirmation. Hugh Seton-Watson, an SOE agent in Istanbul and the Middle East, in a letter to his father which was passed on to the FO, wrote that in his dealings with Serb émigrés he had detected a definite drive against Slovenes and Croats, and the exploitation of every item regarding Ustaša atrocities to prejudice the British government against the Croats. ¹⁴

As well as stories of atrocities, news of widespread revolts against the occupying forces

had been filtering out of Yugoslavia during the summer of 1941. This was much more welcome news. The British were heartened to hear of large-scale uprisings (as distinct from the underground resistance in France, or the civil disobedience in the Netherlands for example) in Hitler's 'Fortress Europe'. What they failed to understand at this point was that the Yugoslav resistance was not a co-ordinated continuation of the April campaign, but a series of localized and independent actions in response to particular hardships and persecutions.¹⁵

The only common denominator was the predominantly Serbian nature of the revolts, since it was the Serbs who suffered the greatest hardships and the greatest losses. The uprising in the NDH was in self-defense against Ustaša persecution. Although the Italian regime was far less harsh (the Italians attempted to protect Serbs from Ustaša atrocities in their areas of influence), the Montenegrin uprising was caused by resentment of the Italian attempt to create a separate Montenegro under a puppet monarchy, as the population had emotional ties to the idea of being part of Serbia.

Serbia itself was in a state of chaos: the occupation was brutal, food was short, and the horrific tales of refugees from the NDH added to the general feeling of desperation. The German invasion of the USSR on 22 June 1941 produced a spontaneous rising, encouraged by the fact that many frontline German divisions had been withdrawn to the east, leaving less effective troops to man the occupation. The Yugoslav Communist Party, which had at first agitated against war and then kept a low profile, also joined the risings. The attack on the USSR had inspired uprisings against the Axis throughout Europe: just as in Yugoslavia, so in other countries, communists joined the fight partly to aid the USSR, and partly in the expectation of early assistance from the Soviets. A resistance movement, comprising the remnants of the Yugoslav armed forces who had refused to surrender in April, had already been taking shape in the woods of Serbia, eventually coming under the leadership of Colonel Dragoljub (Draža) Mihailović. Although this group had planned to lie low and wait until it

could make a major contribution against the Axis in concert with the Allies, it had no choice but to join in the summer uprising once it had started in order to defend the civilian population.

Members of the exiled Yugoslav government regarded news of the revolts with rather mixed feelings. On the one hand, it enhanced their standing as allies. On the other, accompanying reports of reprisals for any anti-Axis action alarmed the Serb ministers, while the emphasis on the predominantly Serbian nature of resistance made the Croat ministers even more uncomfortable. This discomfort was to increase once the myth of Draža Mihailović was set in motion.

Much was made of the revolts in newspapers and BBC broadcasts to Yugoslavia itself-something which was not wholly welcome to the Yugoslavia in London, or to those within Yugoslavia. The US secretary at the Belgrade legation, who left Yugoslavia on 12 July 1941, had brought a message from a representative of the Serbian resistance begging the BBC and other elements of the propaganda machinery to cease all reference to the Serbian guerrillas in the hills of south Serbia, since this provoked the Germans to react with punitive expeditions. The US diplomat said he had been informed that the guerrilla bands were quite numerous, but their leaders had no intention of attacking the Germans until the latter's grip began to weaken. The Serbs had requested more publicity for Ustaša atrocities, although they emphasized that it was to be made clear that these were committed by a minority led by Pavelić, not the Croats as a whole. 16

Broadcasting stories about the resistance not only conflicted with Yugoslav interests, but also with current SOE policy; this, ostensibly, was still one of encouraging the formation of secret armies in occupied countries, which, when the British returned to Europe, would provide local assistance by diversionary operations. You's 'black' propaganda radio station, Radio Šumadija (established in August 1941), urged restraint upon the insurgents, backing

up General Simović's broadcasts to Yugoslavia in which he condemned premature risings for the reprisals these brought upon the civilian population. On 4 September P Dixon of the Southern Department, having discussed the matter with the YGE, advised Kirkpatrick at the BBC that he should "avoid as far as possible reproducing matter which would have the appearance of being designed to incite the population to continued resistance". ¹⁸

During August and September, the BBC played down the rising, but by October PWE could no longer ignore the propaganda value of Mihailović. In the summer he had sent messengers out of the country requesting help for his movement, and had also managed to make direct communication when his radio signals were picked up by a naval monitoring station in August 1941. Since then, stirring stories of how he had refused to accept the capitulation, and taken to the woods to continue the struggle with like-minded members of the Yugoslav armed forces, had been appearing in the free world's press. Romantic articles were published, extolling the virtues and exaggerating the prowess of Mihailović as a resistance leader.

PWE was keen to capitalize on the image of Mihailović; in the early days of the war there was little to offer occupied peoples *except* propaganda. By the spring of 1942 Mihailović had been built up into the hero of European resistance, and was portrayed as a shining example to the rest of Europe. This image was also played back to Yugoslavia - regardless of the detrimental effect this might have on the position of the colonel and his forces.

The original stories portraying Mihailović as the leader of resistance had, apparently, been written by Raymond Brock, an American journalist in Istanbul.¹⁹ Later, when the FO was trying to stop the overplay, the British ambassador to Turkey claimed that the source of Mihailović stories was the Istanbul office of 'Britanova', SOE's propaganda agency.²⁰ However, Mark Wheeler - the official historian of SOE and Yugoslavia - disclaims this, since Hugh Seton-Watson and Basil Davidson, who were in charge of the Istanbul office at the time, never supported Mihailović. In addition, Wheeler says that SOE did not really warm

to Mihailović until summer 1942.²¹ Nevertheless, in November 1941 London SOE decided to use only Mihailović's name in broadcasting a message of loyalty to King Peter, despite the fact that it was the first of six.²²

Despite the general philosophy of secret armies still enshrined in official SOE policy, and the apparent support for the YGE's desire to keep things quiet, policy regarding Yugoslavia was already shifting under the influence of events within the country and the British response to them. Churchill and Eden were both keen to encourage the revolts in Yugoslavia.²³ In autumn 1941 the attitude to Yugoslav resistance was markedly different to that in other occupied countries: a factor which was to continue throughout the war, and possibly influence the eventual outcome of events in Yugoslavia.

Jebb, writing to Douglas Howard at the FO Southern Department, on 2 December 1941 on the subject of sabotage and reprisals, refuted Simović's opinion that communist sabotage injured the Serbs without hurting the Germans. All sabotage, he wrote, disturbed the Axis, and reprisals were a double-edged sword: the more savage they were, the more recruits to the resistance movement, "the more they rouse the people and make them ready to accept any sacrifice". (This, in a nutshell, was the policy of the communist resistance too.) However, Jebb went on to say:

This principle does not apply to countries where we are endeavouring to form subversive organisations on a large scale and where there has been no revolt up to now: but it certainly does apply to a country where operations versus the occupiers [have begun] ... only by hotting up the whole nation to murder Germans and Italians ... that revolt has any prospect of maintaining itself at all.²⁴

In fact, the idea of secret armies was becoming outmoded since the entry of the USSR into the war and the spontaneous uprisings it produced: predictions of an early Soviet collapse proved to be wrong, and the advent of this new ally changed the situation considerably.

Dalton and Jebb seem to have favoured the idea for a little longer, while the Yugoslav

government and Mihailović adhered to it until almost the end of the war. Once the United States was brought into the war by Japan's attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941, the whole concept of secret armies was entirely dead. The 'detonator' policy of arming on a massive scale large underground organizations which would lie dormant until the British call to arms, had not really taken into account the practicalities of organizing and providing arms for these secret armies; neither did it recognize the diversity of opinions and aims of the many occupied peoples, or the fact that *their* long-term objectives might differ from those of the British.

Having left no stay-behind team, or heard from any of its agents, SOE had to rely on refugees and messengers coming out of Yugoslavia with information on what was happening there in terms of resistance - both actual and potential. Of these, perhaps the two most notable for SOE were Stanislav Rapotec, a Slovene reserve infantry lieutenant, and Dragomir Rakić, a Serb industrialist. Both made their way separately to Istanbul, where they contacted Jovan Djonović, who had recently arrived in the city to establish an intelligence centre on behalf of the exiled government. Djonović had been an SOE contact in Belgrade and continued to work closely with the organization in Istanbul.²⁵

Rapotec arrived in Istanbul at the end of June 1941, having left Split two weeks earlier with instructions from an underground organization being formed there to contact the government in exile and ask its members to provide direction for the opposition to the occupiers. En route Rapotec had visited Ljubljana, Zagreb and Belgrade, contacting many other potential resisters, including a variety of politicians and disaffected members of the NDH army. In Belgrade he had heard from a friend that Colonel Mihailović had not surrendered, but instead had formed a resistance movement in Serbia. Rapotec had also been instructed to contact the British with a plan to deliver by British submarine the means of establishing a radio link with Split.²⁶

Rakić arrived at the end of July, bringing news of two resistance groups operating in Serbia. One was led by Colonel Mihailović and a number of other officers; they were creating a military organization in western Serbia, with their headquarters on the Suvobor plateau. The other was led by communists who had joined the fray only after the German attack on the USSR. Their anti-Axis activity was resulting in reprisals of one hundred Serbian lives for each German one.²⁷ Colonel Popović, the director of Yugoslav military intelligence in Cairo, had, apparently, also heard of the two movements in Serbia from another source.²⁸ Mihailović appealed, through Rakić, for funds with which to keep his organization afloat, as he was paying local peasants for supplies for his men. As a result of this appeal, Djonović asked SOE for a loan.²⁹

Simović (before he left for London), and representatives of Greek and Bulgarian exiles had agreed to authorize SOE to work with underground movements in the Balkans.³⁰ There was little opportunity for action, however, until news of - and messages from - potential Yugoslav resistance leaders were received in Istanbul in June-July 1941. Combined with the German attack on the USSR, and the summer risings, this news gave SOE something positive to work on. S W (Bill) Bailey, in charge of the SOE Balkan section in the Middle East, suggested that SOE should build up centres of resistance in the Balkans and influence their character by the supply of arms, money and political guidance.³¹ He also felt it essential to involve the Soviets at an early stage, while they were still fighting for their lives, rather than later when, if the tide turned in their favour, they might be more difficult to work with. London SOE agreed on this policy, and plans for missions to Yugoslavia were put in train: two simultaneous missions were envisaged initially, one to go via the USSR in a Soviet aircraft, the other by submarine from Malta.³²

John Bennett, who was responsible for Yugoslav operations in the Middle East, left Jerusalem and met Djonović in Istanbul on 4 August 1941 to discuss the plans: the latter suggested enlisting Soviet help in getting back into Yugoslavia, and arranged a meeting with

a Soviet agent named Nikolaev.³³ At this point there also appears to have been a possibility of using a French aircraft, flown from Syria, but this eventually fell by the wayside. Djonović already had two people earmarked for the mission - Dušan Radović and Vasilije Trbić. Radović was a retired air force colonel and Trbić was a former commander of Serbian irregulars in the wars with Turkey in Macedonia, who later became a politician - first as a Radical representative and then as a member of the Yugoslav National Party in opposition to Stojadinović's pro-German government.³⁴

It appears that at this juncture Djonović and his organization were following their own inclinations and making their own plans, without necessarily referring to the YGE. Rapotec was surprised at how critical Djonović was of Simović's leadership, and at Trbić's antagonism towards both the political and military leaders, whom he blamed for the April debâcle; in this, he also included Mihailović. Djonović's negotiations with Nikolaev seem to have been underway for some time before the YGE representatives in Cairo, or Simović in London, were made aware of them. However, Djonović later claimed to have appraised Slobodan Jovanović - the Yugoslav vice-premier - of his plans at an early stage. 36

SOE was also enthusiastic about enlisting Soviet help to get back into Yugoslavia; although London SOE instructed Bailey not to deal directly with the Soviets in Istanbul for fear of upsetting the neutral Turks, but to leave the matter in the hands of the SOE mission in Moscow.³⁷ Bailey, who had returned to Istanbul, and was waiting to hear the outcome of the Moscow negotiations, wrote a report on 31 August assessing that the best option was to send a mission by air and/or submarine from Cairo. On 5 September, Julian Amery in Cairo SOE, asked for Radović and Trbić to go to Cairo right away, to be sent in 'next week'. On the very next day, Nikolaev came up with the offer of an immediately available 'plane, W/T sets and operators. Although a little dubious regarding the Soviet W/T operators, which were an innovation and slightly suspect, the offer was too good to miss in terms of the speed of getting a mission into Yugoslavia. At a meeting between Nikolaev, Djonović, Bailey and

Bennett on 6 September, it was decided that Radović should go to Moscow and from there fly to Suvobor, accompanied by three or four Yugoslavs and a Briton. Meanwhile Trbić was to proceed to Cairo and, accompanied by a British officer, go into Yugoslavia from the other direction. Thus two missions would be en route simultaneously.

On 7 September Bailey commended this plan to Baker Street: he and the Yugoslavs in Istanbul were all enthusiastic about sending a mission via the USSR "to secure the adherence of the pro-Russian elements, to demonstrate Anglo-Russian co-operation, and as a check on Russian intentions".³⁸

However, while Djonović and the SOE agents in Istanbul had been beavering away at organizing these missions, there were other events afoot on the British and Yugoslav political front. In the summer of 1941 there was a major shake-up in progress in Cairo SOE: the first of many as it turned out. In late May, Eden had shown Dalton a private wire from General Wavell to General Dill, saying SOE Middle East was "a racket".³⁹ Allegations of corruption and inefficiency, combined with conflicts with other services - including internal feuds between SO1 and SO2 - continued, with GHQ Middle East pressing Dalton ever more urgently to address the problem seriously.⁴⁰ This eventually prompted Dalton to send Sir Frank Nelson himself to investigate.

After two false starts Terence Maxwell, a peacetime banker, was chosen to take over command of SOE Cairo from George Pollock: Dalton commented on his appointment that he had heard Maxwell was "good at Augean stables". At the end of July, Maxwell, accompanied by Sir Frank Nelson and Bickham Sweet-Escott, left for Cairo. Nelson carried a letter from Dalton to Oliver Lyttleton, minister of state in the Middle East, who had been highly critical of the lack of security, waste and ineffectiveness of SOE Cairo, and had even threatened court martial for some of its members; in his letter Dalton emphasized that "all subversion is one, and should be under one direction".

On their arrival Sir Frank Nelson was presented with a file purportedly containing incontestable proof of the allegations against SOE. According to Sweet-Escott the contents of the file was actually mere gossip and hearsay, combined with copies of reports and telegrams filched from SOE files. The latter, he concluded, had been the work of two people taken on by SOE at the behest of GHQ: "it looked very much as if a spy had been deliberately planted on us by the soldiers", ⁴⁴ an act which was symptomatic of the poisonous atmosphere existing in the secret and semi-secret departments of Cairo in the summer of 1941 - and during the following two years. ⁴⁵

Whether or not these allegations were predominantly baseless gossip, Nelson assessed, after discussions with Lyttleton and General Auchinleck (who had succeeded General Wavell as C-in-C), that the services no longer had confidence in SOE, and that a major reorganization was needed to repair the damage. Accordingly the heads of SO1 and SO2, and a number of their subordinates were immediately posted back to Britain (Bailey was one of the people removed from his post, although he seems to have remained in Istanbul a little longer), leaving Maxwell in charge of both branches of SOE. His was a unique position, complicated by the fact that he had neither of his predecessors on hand to brief him on the current situation.

Sweet-Escott stayed on temporarily to help Maxwell on the propaganda side, and at this point G(R) - SOE's military counterpart in the Middle East - was amalgamated with SOE Cairo, with Terrence Airey becoming Maxwell's chief of staff. Tom Masterson was sent from Britain to organize political action. Policy-making was still the domain of the Minister of Economic Warfare, but actual operations were to be approved by the C-in-C Middle East, while the newly-formed Defence Committee Middle East, presided over by the minister of state, was, in principle, a safeguard against activities which would have undesirable political implications. When Nelson returned to London, Dalton was very pleased with his reorganization, and the fact that he had won Lyttleton over. However, Sweet-Escott noted

that while the principle of the new structure *sounded* fine, in practise it was not such an easy matter to co-ordinate the demands of the military and political bodies: "Perhaps it would have solved the problem if there had been anyone in Cairo or London who was in a position to balance short-term military advantage against long-term political disadvantage". 46 This was a defect which was to complicate matters in future SOE dealings with Yugoslavia.

Before the dust had settled on the SOE shake-up in Cairo, Julian Amery had arrived there to try to organize a mission to Yugoslavia. Maxwell still had his hands full with the reorganization and was not fully cognisant of the situation in Yugoslavia, and Masterson, who was to be Bailey's successor, had not yet arrived.⁴⁷ As Amery tells it, in his frustration at possibly missing the opportune moment by delaying so long that the risings might be quelled due to lack of support and outside encouragement, he wrote to his father Leopold - Secretary of State for India - emphasizing the importance of immediate action. Amery senior passed this message to Churchill, Churchill prodded Dalton, Dalton prodded Maxwell, and it was all systems go, with a submarine being made available for the mission.⁴⁸

Possibly Amery is claiming rather more credit here than can actually be ascribed to his influence. (Another SOE officer recalls the raised eyebrows caused by Amery, then 22 years old, emerging from a meeting at Rustem Buildings - Cairo SOE's headquarters - and announcing that he was off to contact the cabinet.⁴⁹) Simović had approached Churchill the day before Amery wrote to his father, asking for a British submarine to go to Split in response to a courier.⁵⁰ This was probably Rapotec, whose preliminary report had been sent to Simović from Istanbul. No immediate action appears to have been forthcoming, so Simović approached Churchill a second time on 22 August.⁵² Following this, and possibly prompted by Amery senior, Churchill asked Dalton what could be done to help the Yugoslav guerrillas: two days later, Dalton informed the PM that plans were underway, and £20,000 was being sent to Mihailović by courier from Istanbul.⁵³ This was presumably the loan Djonović had

requested from SOE. In the meantime, Bailey's report of 31 August from Istanbul recommending the air and submarine route via Cairo also probably played a part in getting things moving.

One way or another, Amery and Bennett now had a submarine at their disposal, and a codename for the mission - 'Bullseye '- supplied by Maxwell,⁵⁴ but no men. Bennett had returned from Istanbul after the 6 September meeting, but on arriving in Cairo and discovering that the means of transportation was submarine - rather than by air - and the destination was Montenegro, Trbić flatly refused to go.⁵⁵ Amery says that now Popović was insisting that a British officer form part of the mission, although this seems already to have been part of the plan formulated by Bailey. This was no problem: DT 'Bill' Hudson had already volunteered to go with Trbić and Radović from Istanbul. When nothing appeared to come of this, Hudson, tired of hanging about doing nothing in Istanbul, had worked his way back to Egypt, arriving in Cairo in early September. He had been there a few days when he was called on for the Bullseye mission at literally 24 hours notice.⁵⁶ Hudson had been a mining engineer in Yugoslavia, spoke reasonable Serbo-Croatian, was a long-standing member of Section D/SOE, and had carried out some useful sabotage before leaving the country after the invasion.

Amery says it was "clear that unless we could produce an alternative mission by the following afternoon, we would never again be taken seriously by either the new leaders of SOE, or by GHQ".⁵⁷ Amery and Bennett went to see Colonel Popović, who - with the aid of Ilić and Mirković - supplied the three Yugoslav members of Bullseye: Majors Lalatović and Ostojić and Sergeant Dragićević as the W/T operator, all Serbs from Montenegro.⁵⁸ When Amery left with the team by air for Malta, he was under the impression that the joint Yugoslav, British and Soviet mission was also on the way.⁵⁹

This was not the case. It appears that the projected mission in co-operation with the

Soviets came to naught in part due to the personal antagonism of Simović towards Dušan Radović. A pre-war falling out between the two men seems to have been compounded by Radović's criticism of Simović's conduct of the Yugoslav campaign, and of the failure of Simović and Ilić, Yugoslav minister of war in Cairo, to make use of the Yugoslav military personnel who had escaped to the Middle East. The plan seems to have been fairly well advanced (to the point where Radović had actually travelled to the USSR) when Simović began to cast doubts on Radović's reliability and loyalty. Deroc's analysis is that the Soviets became so angry and disillusioned by first being presented with Radović, then being told that he was an enemy agent, *then* given no evidence to substantiate this allegation, that the mission fell through and a subsequent offer of replacement personnel from Ilić was rejected when London and Moscow SOE made a further approach.⁶⁰

The episode seems to have provided further ammunition to use against Simović. King Peter, trying to persuade George Rendel, British minister to the YGE, that Slobodan Jovanović should replace Simović as premier, ⁶¹ accused the latter of having muddled everything. As an example he quoted "a recent case in which a scheme to drop two agents into Yugoslavia from the air had been indefinitely held up and eventually allowed to miscarry". ⁶²

However, with or without the participation of Radović, it is possibly questionable whether the YGE shared Djonović and SOE's enthusiasm for the joint venture. In view of the news of a communist resistance developing within Yugoslavia, the YGE might have been naturally cautious about Soviet participation. These suspicions were probably strengthened when the Soviet offer changed from simply supplying aircraft and W/T sets to one of furnishing W/T operators to go with the sets. Deroc tells us that Bailey was suspicious of this move and, in order to balance things out, had suggested for the first time that British officers should be attached to the missions going into Yugoslavia. In addition, the Yugoslavs in the Middle East were becoming fed up with requests from various British secret organizations for personnel to send on missions.

Hudson's brief was to discover what was happening in Yugoslavia and to co-ordinate all forces of resistance he encountered there. Deakin describes this briefing as "in the vaguest of terms",64 while Amery seems to imply that the whole purpose of the Bullseye mission was to make contact with Mihailović. 65 In fact, as well as being instructed to gather information on the situation in Yugoslavia, Hudson was also told to contact various people known to SOE before the invasion. These included Colonel Radonić, whom Hudson discovered to be in prison, and Dule Dimitrijević, a veteran of the Narodna Odbrana, 66 Hudson reported that the latter would make a popular leader in Bosnia and other regions.⁶⁷ Amery also asked Hudson to contact some Albanians with whom he had been involved in pre-war Belgrade when trying to organize a revolt against the Italian occupation in Albania. If Mihailović's name was mentioned to Hudson, it was one among many: it was not until he had been in the country for some time that he was told to contact Mihailović and Pavlović; they were transmitting in clear, and Hudson was told to go to Suvobor and provide them with secure codes. 68 As Amery, on leaving Cairo for the Montenegrin coast, was still under the impression that the mission via the USSR was also en route - specifically bound for Suvobor - it would have been a pointless duplication to send Hudson there too. It was only when the latter mission fell through that Hudson received the message to proceed there.

Deroc, commenting on the 'puzzling' phrase in Hudson's brief to contact all resistance "regardless of national, religious or political belief" speculates that it probably referred to Albania and Bulgaria. However, as Yugoslavia had been divided into so many parts - often along ethnic-religious lines - and as the Axis occupiers were using the differences within the population to further their own ends, it seems equally applicable to contacting groups *within* Yugoslavia. Throughout the war, the British regarded the reconstruction of Yugoslavia as essential - a factor which was to be a very strong influence in subsequent policy. It also explains why Hudson had no qualms about arranging a supply drop for the communist-led resistance he first encountered: this fitted in with Bailey's idea of influencing the nature of

resistance movements through practical support.

The Yugoslavs in the Bullseye team *were* apparently specifically instructed to go to Mihailović, as Popović, an old acquaintance of Mihailović, told the two officers to ask if he wanted Popović to join him in Serbia. There has been much speculation on the briefing of the Yugoslav members of the Bullseye mission. En route to Montenegro Amery tried to discover what private instructions Popović had given them: "They did not give much away: but it was clear that the communist danger was very much in their minds". Deakin also refers to 'secret instructions' from Ilić to the two officers. Popović's account is that, instructed by Ilić to explain the situation in Yugoslavia, he gave them the information he had on the existence of a communist resistance, and "exhorted the two officers to heed Serb interests". The British briefing of the Yugoslavs he assumed to be on purely practical matters - namely, sabotage. Apparently Lalatović was told by Ilić "to locate and assassinate a colonel and ensure the country welcomed back the exiled government". It seems that the colonel was Radović; Ilić was also under the impression that the joint Soviet mission was going ahead and that Radović would soon be back in the country.

The speculation on the Yugoslav instructions is reflected in some of the FO attitudes, where there was a certain degree of suspicion that the YGE was not telling the British all it knew about the situation within Yugoslavia (which it probably was not). The British were inclined to take the attitude that they were the senior members of the Yugoslav-British relationship and, therefore, could call the shots. From Amery trying to ascertain private aspects of the Yugoslav briefing to, later, the insistence that Mihailović (by then a minister in the Yugoslav government) should only communicate with his government via SOE and, eventually, the British pressing Tito upon King Peter, indicate the British desire to be in the driving seat. The autonomy of the YGE was, in many respects, constantly assailed.

From the outset SOE was concerned with fulfilling its own conception of how resistance

in occupied countries should be managed, often, it seems, with little or no reference to the exiled governments in whose countries it was operating. Dalton's opinion was that exiled governments:

May be found not to have too much following when the storm breaks in their home lands. New men who have stayed and faced out the German occupation, and have bolder and more revolutionary ideas, may be preferred to those who have lived, not very dangerously, abroad.⁷⁵

However, the Bullseye mission was a joint co-operative venture with neither Hudson in command of the Yugoslavs nor vice-versa. Hudson's assertion that he was to co-ordinate resistance organizations does not necessarily imply command. After his arrival, Hudson did his best to co-ordinate - and mediate between - the various strands of resistance, but this was easier said than done.

Despite the importance SOE attached to getting back into Yugoslavia, the first mission seems to have been a fairly ad hoc affair, and in many respects set the tone for subsequent missions. When the submarine *Triumph* reached the coast of Montenegro on 20 September 1941, it was discovered that "some staff officers in Cairo had unaccountably forgotten some essentials";⁷⁶ these ranged from field glasses for Hudson (the captain of the *Triumph* kindly donated his own), through harnessing to carry the heavy wireless set, to spare shirts and sticking plaster.⁷⁷ The list of essentials supplied from the submarine's stores should possibly be borne in mind when reading too much conspiracy into later missions receiving drops of left boots or snake-serum.

CHAPTER HI

BACKING MIHAILOVIĆ: ONE SOE OFFICER AND NO SUPPLIES

After landing on the coast of Montenegro the Bullseye mission first encountered the communist-led resistance. Hudson spent some time with them, attempting to arrange a supply drop, and following up on the people Amery had asked him to contact. Majors Lalatović and Ostojić went, as soon as they could, to Mihailović's headquarters. Hudson eventually followed them there after receiving two telegrams from Cairo about the need for secure codes. On the way he stopped at Uzice to meet the leader of the communists - Josip Broz, alias Tito.¹

Following the summer uprisings the communist and non-communist forces had been co-operating in joint actions against the Axis, and a large area in western Serbia had been 'liberated' in a series of attacks by one or both resistance movements. Hudson's arrival coincided with the start of the breakdown in co-operation, which, in any case, had always been a fairly fragile one. Christie Lawrence, an escaped prisoner of war who had been in the country for some time before Hudson arrived, gives a vivid account of the deteriorating relationship, with minor clashes and disputes over liberated areas and chains of command finally turning into outright antagonism and open hostility.²

Quite simply, the objectives of Tito and the communists on the one hand, and Mihailović and other Yugoslav officers on the other, were totally incompatible. The latter mistrusted the Political commissars who were attached to every fighting unit, and objected to the communist Propaganda they disseminated wherever they went.³ Tito was keen to use the experience of

the trained soldiers, but wanted them to act under his direction to further his revolutionary aims rather than fight for the reinstatement of the king and exiled politicians. There was also the question of reprisals: the Germans, hard pressed and undermanned at the beginning of the revolts, had implemented a policy of executing one hundred civilians for each German soldier killed and fifty civilians for each one wounded. The communist leadership was not swayed by this: People escaping from such fearful retribution made useful recruits, and the breakdown of normal society and its regular pattern is one of the keystones of revolution. The reaction of the Yugoslav - mainly Serb - officers and Mihailović was entirely the opposite: German reprisals, coupled with the loss of Serb lives in the NDH, aroused fears of ethnic extinction. It was regarded as too high a price for short term gains in actions that were hard to sustain before positive aid from outside could be looked for to drive out the occupiers completely. Their whole philosophy was geared towards the preservation of the traditions and lives of the Serbian people. Soon after his arrival, Hudson assessed Mihailović's policy as one of becoming increasingly a shield for the Serbs.

Hudson did his best to mediate between the two, apparently only arousing the antagonism of both sides, while the situation slipped into a state of civil war. In an attempt to bring this to a halt, or at least to not make matters worse, Hudson stopped the meagre flow of supplies from SOE.⁷

News of the developing civil war was greeted with dismay in London, and messages flew back and forth on the necessity for the two sides to settle their differences and concentrate on fighting the common enemy. In mid November 1941 the SOE analysis, based on Hudson's reports, was that the partisan guerrillas were not actually communists themselves, but mostly comprised local peasants who had rallied to the communists when the latter led the revolt in Montenegro. The bands of 'chetniks', as the non-communists were popularly known, contained remnants of the regular Yugoslav army, and Mihailović had been recognized by

the YGE as the leader of all forces in Yugoslavia. To support the partisans would be tantamount to a repudiation of the exiled government, and in any case it was essential that the revolt should be seen as a fight for Yugoslavia by all Yugoslavs - rather than one engineered from Moscow and led by communists fighting for the Soviet Union. Mihailović, it was felt, was the best standard-bearer of Yugoslav unity. If he was recognized by the British as well as by his own government, and supported by arms and money, he stood a far better chance of establishing undisputed authority than did the partisans. While acknowledging that there were problems, the SOE view was that British policy should be to back Mihailović. To reinforce this, it was also regarded as essential that Moscow should see this policy as being in the best interests of the USSR, and in their broadcasts encourage the partisans to rally to Mihailović's banner.8

Shortly after this, a message was received from Mihailović, in which he claimed "I have done everything and succeed in stopping this fratricidal war declared by the other side". Now the civil war was over - or so the British thought - the question of getting supplies to Mihailović was treated as a matter of urgency: 10 not only to continue the fight against the occupiers, but to demonstrate to the partisans that Mihailović was receiving the support of the British, Yugoslav and Soviet governments. SOE was anxious for the revolt to continue; 12 the British military regarded it as premature, but felt that since it had begun, it should be supported. Dalton pressed Eden to use his influence with the air ministry, 4 as the aircraft SOE had available in Malta did not have the range to deliver supplies to Yugoslavia: bombers were needed to deliver them by parachute. (With its usual efficiency, SOE had the supplies in Malta and the parachute containers in Britain.) Eventually SOE arranged to divert a Whitley at the expense of SOE operations in other countries, when a further plea from Mihailović to the YGE told of the desperate shortage of everything and the possibility that his followers would be forced to capitulate if supplies did not come soon. 16

The situation was already desperate: in response to the guerrilla activity of autumn 1941 the Germans launched an all-out attack on both resistance movements in Serbia, in an effort to crush opposition once and for all. Reinforcements were brought in, and towns and villages in the 'liberated' areas were soon retaken, followed by appalling reprisals against their civilian populations. This exacerbated the differences in Mihailović's and Tito's policies, which was so apparent when they met for the second time on 26 October. After this, the clashes began to develop into civil war. Perceiving the communists as the greater threat, because of the chaos they were intent on creating in the short-term, and because of their long-term political ambitions, Mihailović decided to parley with the Germans. The meeting at Divci, on 11 November, bore no fruit: Mihailović emphasized that he was not offering to collaborate, but was simply asking for arms to fight the communists. The Germans demanded his surrender, and the result was a stalemate.

Mihailović and his closest associates, having narrowly escaped capture in a German attack, went to earth in the Serbian mountains, and disappeared from the airwaves for a month. ²⁰ Some of his followers camouflaged themselves as members of Nedić's newly formed 'official chetnik' militia, raised to fight the partisans and Mihailović's own forces. ²¹ The majority followed the traditional pattern of chetnik guerrilla warfare - pursued over the centuries of Turkish rule - and returned quietly to their homes to await the next opportune moment to take action against the Axis. (Winter, in any case, is not the season for guerrillas.)

This was not an option open to Tito and his movement, which consisted of a large proportion of people who had lost their homes in the Ustasa persecutions in the NDH, and people from urban areas rather than from peasant communities. Tito's forces were also organized differently, retained as a large band in revolutionary manner, which was impossible to disguise as ordinary local peasants. After the Germans had retaken Uzice he gathered his forces and left for the more remote and inaccessible mountainous area of the Sanjak, later moving on to south-eastern Bosnia. It was to take the partisans three years to

return to Serbia in any strength, and then only with a great deal of help from the Allies: first from the west and then from the advancing Red Army from the east.

Hudson was still attempting to reconcile the two resistance leaders, going to and fro between Tito and Mihailović's headquarters. He had gone to Uzice, partly in the hope of finding power to operate his W/T set, which was breaking down,²² and was with Tito when the latter decided to leave Serbia. Hudson, who went as far as the Sanjak with the partisans, seems to have regarded the departure for Italian-held territory as running away, and announced that he would return to the Mihailović camp to see what was happening there.²³ The Bullseye W/T operator did not return with him, opting instead to stay with the partisans: Hudson in any case suspected him of sabotaging his set because of his pro-partisan sympathies.²⁴

Hudson's return coincided with the German attack, and when he caught up with Mihailović he found that he was *persona non grata*: his attempts at mediation, contacts with the partisans and cancellation of supply drops - apparently without warning Mihailović - combined with the desperate situation led Mihailović to withdraw his permission for Hudson's presence at his headquarters.²⁵ Deroc points out that the above combination of factors led Mihailović into making a serious error of judgement, missing the point that Hudson's return at this time was, in fact, an indication of Hudson's confidence in him as opposed to Tito.²⁶

For the next few months Hudson had to fend for himself, relying on local peasants for his survival, and with no means of contacting SOE Cairo, as he had buried his radio on parting from Tito. Hudson heard that Mihailović refused to see him because he had stopped British aid, "which Cairo had promised before I arrived and continued when I was suppressed". When Mihailović had informed his government and the British that he had ended the civil strife, a congratulatory message was sent, along with the promise of supplies and support, with the proviso that this was dependent upon maintenance of a united front

under his leadership.²⁸ Knowing as he did that the hard-core communists would *never* come under his leadership, and that the 'quarrel' had no hope of being composed, he obviously would not want Hudson to relay this to SOE and the British. Hudson's radio, which had been found and dug up, was returned to him in early May 1942.²⁹ He was eventually readmitted to Mihailović's company in June 1942, when he was promoted to major and awarded the DSO,³⁰ but the rift was more patched up than healed, and the relationship between the two men was never warm.

After Hudson's last broadcast on 19 October, SOE was back to square one. SIS was still in communication with a radio in Ljubljana,³¹ but it is doubtful if SOE even knew of, much less had access to, information emanating from this source. An attempt to infiltrate two Yugoslav teams by submarine in November had been aborted as the first team was about to disembark on the Montenegrin coast where Hudson had landed.³² This was a great setback, as by the time the teams returned to the Middle East, the link with Mihailović had also been broken. During November, Ilić and Lyttleton had discussed the possibility of establishing a permanent link by air, as Simović was keen to use the Yugoslav air force pilots in the Middle East.³³ They also discussed the possibility of a Yugoslav-manned submarine operating on the Montenegrin coast, which Hudson's early reports had indicated was controlled by insurgents. After 5 December, SOE virtually had to begin again, attempting to re-establish contact with, and discover what had happened to the resistance - and Mihailović and Hudson - after the concerted Axis attack.

While the FO pressed the Admiralty to provide another submarine,³⁴ Masterson asked Ilić to prepare teams to go in by air. The latter felt this was too risky a proposition, given the onset of winter and preferred to send them in by submarine.³⁵ By late December a compromise was agreed whereby two teams should go by air and two by submarine; British officers were to be attached to three of them, at the behest of Pierson Dixon at the FO.³⁶

On 15 January 1942 the submarine *Thorn* left Alexandria with missions 'Hydra' and 'Henna' aboard.³⁷ Henna - Rapotec and his W/T operator Sergeant Stevan Šinko - was landed on the island of Mljet in the early hours of 26 January. Hydra, after a delay due to the full moon, disembarked on the Montenegrin coast near Petrovac on 4 February: the mission consisted of Major Terence Atherton,³⁸ a journalist and Section D agent in pre-war Belgrade, Lieutenant Radoje Nedeljković of the Yugoslav air force, and W/T operator Sergeant Patrick O'Donovan.³⁹ On the same day, 'Disclaim', the first airborne mission, parachuted into Bosnia near Sokola: the mission was headed by Major Cavan Elliot, accompanied by Second Lieutenant Pavle Crnjanski, Sergeant Petar Miljković and Sergeant William Chapman (W/T). They were almost immediately picked up by a Ustaša patrol and handed over to the Germans in Sarajevo.⁴⁰ The other airborne mission, led by Major Head was not sent, but on 28-29 April two Yugoslav sergeants - Milisav Bakić and Milisav Semiz - who had been placed at Masterson's disposal by Ilić and Popović, landed between Berane and Novi Pazar, only to be arrested by the local quisling militia and given to the Germans.⁴¹

The missions were briefed by Ilić and John Bennett, head of SOE's Yugoslav section in Cairo. They were told to contact resistance forces in the areas assigned to them, ascertain the situation of these forces, and provide what information they could on the strength and positions of the occupiers. In addition they were told, if possible to contact specific individuals, including important Yugoslav political figures and people known to SOE. It seems they were all instructed to contact Mihailović, though not necessarily to join him.⁴²

After a few days the Hydra team met the Jovan Tomasević partisan battalion and was taken to the headquarters of the Lovcen unit. There they were greeted with some suspicion, partly because of Hudson's return to Mihailović, and partly because the partisans believed that the British and the Yugoslav government had sent orders to the chetniks in Montenegro not to co-operate with them, thereby causing them problems there. Nor were their suspicions

lessened when Atherton named some of the people SOE had told him to contact. The commander of the Lovcen unit was instructed by the partisans' Montenegrin High Command at Danilovgrad to isolate the mission from both partisans and peasants, and not to allow them to use their radio. The party arrived at Danilovgrad on 12 February, where the first instinct of the commander, Ivan Milutinović, was to liquidate them. However, he contacted Supreme Command, and Tito on 25 February, ordered that they should be sent immediately to him, ensuring no contact was made with the chetniks in the meantime: "behave correctly - liquidation would indeed have had political complications. We have already informed [Comintern] and asked for explanation".⁴³

Milutinović also knew of Rapotec's and Šinko's landing on the Adriatic coast, and had ordered the Croat command to apprehend them. Meanwhile, Tito had heard of the arrest of the Disclaim mission.⁴⁴ Having just managed to re-establish direct contact with the Comintern, Tito initially thought these missions might be a response to his request for help from the USSR, only to be disappointed to discover that the Comintern knew nothing of them. Tito suspected that the missions he had heard of were only the tip of the iceberg, and that as many as ten might have arrived in Yugoslavia, and were responsible for encouraging chetniks to attack the partisans.⁴⁵ This was not actually the case, but the missions arrived at a time when the chetnik bands were more numerous and better organized than the partisans, and attacking them when and wherever they could.

Despite these suspicions, and instructions to partisan commands to find and isolate any such missions, Tito was very much aware of the political realities. The alliance of Britain, the USA and USSR was an important aspect that was emphasized in all public utterances; while Tito would have preferred to receive Soviet missions, he would do his best to make the most of what he had. The missions, if possible, were to be convinced that it was the partisans who were fighting the occupiers while the chetniks and Mihailović forces were collaborators.

Atherton, it seems, was given the full treatment on the latter points. He was given a tour

of inspection of the partisan organization by Moša Pijade in Zabljak, Montenegro, and on the evening of his arrival at Tito's headquarters in Foča on 19 March, was shown what was claimed to be documentary proof of Mihailović's collaboration. Vladimir Dedijer, who kept the partisan war diary, tells us these were documents captured on 14 March which showed that Mihailović's men were also Nedić men - an arrangement agreed secretly by the YGE. In early April Atherton was taken to inspect the front near Rogatica, to demonstrate that only the partisan army was fighting. He was, in fact, exposed to the same sort of information and demonstrations that were to so impress F W D Deakin when the 'Typical' mission arrived just over a year later; except that the latter landed in the middle of the Axis encirclement, when the partisans, fighting for their lives, put up such a tremendous struggle against their enemies.

We shall never know if Atherton was as impressed as Deakin, or whether his reports to SOE would have echoed Deakin's enthusiasm for the partisans, as Atherton never actually managed to get any messages out. Tito told the Comintern on 24 March that "The English mission is convinced that *all* chetniks are collaborating, directly or indirectly. Since it has no links with its own centre, has asked us to pass on information on the real situation". ⁴⁹ However, Tito did not allow Atherton and his companions access to his radio links, probably because he did not want them to know he was in communication with the Comintern. It seems likely that Atherton *was* impressed by the partisans: the increasing quarrels between him and Nedeljković seem to point to this. Nedeljković had been told to go to Mihailović, and part of his brief was to ascertain the level of support for the YGE in Serbia. On finally reaching Mihailović's headquarters he claimed that Atherton was promising support to the partisans, which he regarded as an incitement to civil war. ⁵⁰

Whether or not Atherton was totally convinced by all the partisan evidence, he told Tito that, having seen the partisans in action, he now had to go and see the others who were fighting. Tito replied "That will be difficult, because there is no such thing".⁵¹ In spite of being

'advised' not to go to the chetniks, the mission levanted from Foca on the night of 15-16 April, with the aid of General Novaković (a regular officer who had become a local chetnik leader, and was also a 'guest' of the partisans), and set out to find Mihailović and Hudson. On 22 April Atherton sent a letter to Mihailović, asking him to let Masterson know he was alive and would soon send more detailed information.⁵² This was never forthcoming, as Atherton and O'Donovan were murdered shortly after writing this letter. Subsequent investigations (by Hudson, Mihailović, Bailey and the partisans) concluded that the culprit was Dakić, a local chetnik who had helped the party get away from the partisans. Dakić's motive was given as gain; he had, apparently, murdered the two Britons for the gold they carried.⁵³

When Nedeljković, who had separated from the others, reached Mihailović's High Command on 10 May, he reported that Atherton was a friend of the partisans. Major Ostojić, in a letter to Mihailović commented that this English officer was worse than Marko (Hudson): that he had instructions to force a struggle against the occupation whatever the cost to the people, and seemed prepared to make a graveyard of the country on behalf of the English. He too thought that there were possibly other missions in Yugoslavia without the knowledge of Mihailović and his forces: "they should be told we do not sell ourselves, and are not ready to die for other people's interests". Nedeljković said that Atherton had every intention of returning to the partisans in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro, which was the area assigned to him by SOE, probably on the basis of Hudson's earlier reports of patriotic forces operating there. However, Atherton's secret departure had confirmed Tito's worst suspicions, and he said he wanted no more such missions. The Atherton affair coloured the attitude of Tito and the partisans to the British, whom they were convinced held them responsible for his murder. So

So far the attempts by SOE to aid the Yugoslav resistance had only managed to arouse the suspicion and antagonism of all sides, had achieved nothing in terms of opposing the Axis, and thrown very little light on the situation there.

Most accounts of the early SOE missions, acknowledging their failure, tend to include Rapotec's mission. In fact, although Rapotec was not an SOE agent, his mission was a joint SOE-Yugoslav venture, and, in terms of fulfilling his briefing, was undoubtedly successful. Initially, he too had failed to make radio contact, having lost his set in the perilous days following his arrival in the country, and at one stage had been given up for dead. However, Rapotec managed to elude capture and travelled widely in Yugoslavia, establishing contacts with a variety of organizations and leaders opposed to both the occupiers and the Pavelić regime. He emerged in Turkey on 2 July 1942 with an enormous quantity of information, including details of Croatian and Slovenian resistance, and intimations that many members of the NDH armed forces were not necessarily committed to Pavelić. Rapotec also carried a vast array of impressions and interpretations of the complexities and paradoxes prevailing in occupied Yugoslavia, particularly in the western regions. In addition, he brought out codes from Mihailović and Trifunović-Birčanin for the YGE to communicate privately with them, if only an independent radio link could be set up. Trifunović-Birčanin was one of SOE's prewar Belgrade contacts, and was now in command of the Dalmatia and Herzegovina regions.

In Istanbul Rapotec had a short meeting with Basil Davidson, but did not tell him very much, regarding the information and messages he carried as primarily for the Yugoslav intelligence service and government. His return from Yugoslavia coincided with the 'great flap' in Cairo, when Rommel seemed poised to take Egypt; SOE papers were hurriedly being burned, and SOE Middle East was divided between Cairo and Jerusalem. On 13 July the Jerusalem office asked for Rapotec to be sent there as soon as possible. There is no record of his time in Jerusalem, but he went on to Cairo where he told SOE a little more, though still not all. Despite Rapotec's reserve, SOE produced two fairly lengthy reports which included information he had held back, 58 indicating that members of the Yugoslav military intelligence - Major Perić in Istanbul, and Popović and Gligorijević in Cairo - had been more forthcoming

with their SOE contacts.59

The Cairo SOE report, dated 30 July 1942,⁶⁰ stated that the only organized resistance consisted of Mihailović's chetniks, partisans, and Serbian refugees, although local bands also carried out sporadic acts of sabotage. It assessed that Mihailović's organization was the most important, numerous and widespread force, numbering about 70,000, organized in bands of one to two thousand men, although only about 8,000 were actually mobilized at that time. Mihailović himself kept a small mobile headquarters - then located in the Durmitor area - with area headquarters at Mostar, Split, Zagreb, Ljubljana and Belgrade: current activity was limited to Dalmatia, Herzegovina, southern Bosnia and the Sanjak.

While the partisans had been the most active anti-Axis force after the collapse of Yugoslavia, their following had fallen off considerably. They were, however, still strong in Slovenia and north-west Croatia, where the situation was described as akin to that in Serbia the previous year; in some areas - notably around Fiume, on the Istrian border, and Kozara Planina - the whole countryside was under their control. The Istanbul report of 11 July stated that the partisans in Slovenia used Mihailović's name to dupe their rank and file into loyalty. Neither report mentioned Tito, although the Istanbul report named Moša Pijade as the leader of the partisans in Montenegro.

It also gave details of Rapotec's meeting in Split with Trifunović-Birčanin, known to SOE as 'Daddy' from their pre-war relationship with him; he had under his command about 12,000 men in the Split area, and they were responsible for cutting the Split-Zagreb railway line. It was planned that 'Daddy' would soon have his own transmitting equipment to keep in touch with Belgrade. In Zagreb Rapotec had met the Yugoslav Revolutionary Organization, which operated the most efficient of Mihailović's W/T stations with which it contacted Belgrade; the organization also ran a courier system to and from Ljubljana and Belgrade. Ljubljana itself was the centre of a close-knit Slovenian organization, also in touch with Belgrade by radio. Rapotec had no knowledge of any Mihailović organization in southern

Serbia.

The Istanbul report denied any contact with the Germans or Italians by Mihailović. The Cairo report stated that the chetniks had assisted the Italians in subduing the partisans; and also that Mihailović had decided to avoid all serious clashes with the Germans and Italians until there was a general Allied offensive on the continent.

Despite the quantity of information Rapotec had amassed - at a time when positive intelligence from within Yugoslavia was so desperately needed - little use seems to have been made of these riches. Other than the two reports quoted above, which indicate the breadth of Rapotec's knowledge without by any means tapping all of it, SOE does not appear to have made an enormous effort to extract the rest - at least not by talking to him. SIS attempted to get him to leave his papers in their hands when he was en route to Cairo, but he did not fall for that.⁶¹ Rapotec was not allowed to go to London, to report directly to the YGE as he wished, and there seems to be some doubt over whether members of the Yugoslav government there actually saw his full report: SOE fed them contradictory information on the position of Rapotec, giving rise to the suspicion that he was a British agent. Stevan Pavlowitch, in his detailed study of Rapotec's mission, concludes that Rapotec - as a Catholic Slovene who was not a regular officer - probably fell foul of just about everyone's prejudices, and the very complexity and objectivity of his information meant that it was not what people wanted to hear.⁶²

Pavlowitch also suggests the possibility that Djonović and his SOE friends - especially when they heard of Trifunović-Birčanin's active involvement - wanted to keep the information to themselves, to establish a link with him and pursue their own policies without reference to the YGE.⁶³ Rapotec re-emerged at the time when the Yugoslav military in the Middle East were in open mutiny against the Yugoslav government in London. Members of SOE, and the mutineers whose side they took, might well have felt that they had the more legitimate claim to any intelligence available. Whether SOE was fully able to capitalize on

Rapotec's information seems doubtful.

While Mihailović was incommunicado, anti-Simović feeling had finally come to a head. In January 1942 all the ministers resigned from the Yugoslav government, saying they could no longer work with him, and Slobodan Jovanović replaced him as prime minister. At the same time Mihailović was appointed minister of war, replacing Ilić who was deemed to be too closely allied to Simović. (Shortly afterwards, Mihailović was promoted to general.) Far from solving the YGE's problems, this gave rise to a six month crisis in the Yugoslav military in the Middle East, ⁶⁴ widening the divisions in the exiled Yugoslav community and exasperating their British hosts in London.

At first refusing to go, Ilić eventually retired on 'health grounds', but handed ever to Mirković instead of the officer appointed to take command of the Yugoslav forces in the Middle East. Despite FO support in London for the exiled government's position, the British military in Cairo backed Mirković and his 'dissidents' as the British called them, or 'mutineers' from the Yugoslav viewpoint. Both SOE and ISLD (SIS) in Cairo also backed Mirković: a fact of which the Jovanović government was well aware, although the FO was not prepared to acknowledge it. 65 When Ninčić, minister of foreign affairs, and Milanović, first under-secretary, told Orme Sargent that they felt a great deal of the trouble was due to the fact that British intelligence agents in Cairo sympathized with, and encouraged, the insubordinate Yugoslav officers, Sargent declined to accept the allegation, although admitting it privately in the FO minutes on the crisis. 66 It was not until the mutiny had more or less been settled that SOE London conceded that their people had supported the pro-Mirković Yugoslavs in Cairo. The only member of SOE to turn against the Mirković party at the time was Masterson; it was not until Lord Glenconner returned to London that he finally came to the conclusion that his people had been wrong. 67

The new Yugoslav government took over just as Ilić and Masterson in Cairo were

finalizing the preparations for the Hydra, Henna and Disclaim missions. Jovanović tried to stop these going ahead, fearing some conspiracy between Ilić and Masterson, who at the time was still backing the dissidents. Živan Knežević, head of the military office, suspected Ilić of acquiescing in SOE's plans, in spite of the danger to the people parachuting into Yugoslavia in winter, simply to gain British support for his defiance of the government.⁶⁸ Ilić informed the YGE on 23 January 1942 that it was too late, the missions had already been sent: in fact the submarine missions had gone, but not Disclaim, which was dropped in on 4 February. On 26 January the government sent an urgent request for information on where the teams had been sent, accompanied by instructions that if any of the Yugoslav members had taken part in the mutiny, they were to be recalled immediately. Ilić did not reply to this until 11 February, two weeks later.⁶⁹

It is quite interesting that it was Ilić - who had been dismissed from his post - who was receiving, and replying to, the YGE's messages. At this time a number of packages of correspondence from the YGE to the Yugoslav Supreme Command in Cairo found their way into the hands of the dissidents, rather than those for whom they were meant. Jovanović protested to Rendel that confidential letters sent by air ministry bag, with a special request that they be handed personally to Lozić, acting C-in-C Yugoslav forces Middle East, had in fact been delivered to the dissidents. This was explained as a simple mix-up - the request had not been translated. Given the fact that the YGE knew that all the British organizations in Cairo were pro-dissident, this probably did not sound very convincing. The exiles, divided amongst themselves, did not appreciate the divisions within the various British bodies, nor that inefficiency and muddle might also prevail in British affairs, with the result that the Yugoslavs were often inclined to read hidden motives and meanings into British actions. This sensitivity, which was not always unjustified, led the YGE into sometimes misjudged attempts to assert its independence, a factor which, combined with the crises constantly afflicting the YGE, did little to enhance its standing in British eyes and eventually resulted

in the British disregarding it altogether.

Possibly included in the 'misdirected' packages was a letter on the crisis which Simović wrote to Jovanović on 26 February, which was subsequently published in Novo Vreme, a German-controlled Belgrade newspaper, and in the German and Bulgarian press. Jovanović told Rendel that this letter had come into German hands by the mutineers giving it to Semiz and Bakić "whom the British GHQ at Cairo, without the knowledge and agreement of the Yugoslav government, sent by air to General Mihailović and who were captured". 72 Jovanović added that he had already discussed with Eden the undesirability of sending mutiny sympathizers into Yugoslavia. Semiz and Bakić had been selected in February on the advice of Colonel Popović, who, despite Jovanović's growing suspicions of his attitude to Nedić and the Serbian fascist Ljotić, was still in charge of liaising with SOE. Rendel pointed out that if his recommendations turned out to be unacceptable it was most unfortunate, but no responsibility of the British. In a more conciliatory vein, it was suggested that SOE would ensure in future that no Yugoslav would be infiltrated "until the Yugoslav military authorities have had an opportunity of expressing their approval of the men selected".⁷³ In fact, at the very moment of Rendel giving this assurance, SOE was engaged on recruiting and training expatriate Yugoslavs in Canada who would be dropped into Yugoslavia without the knowledge, never mind approval, of the YGE.74

The appointment of Mihailović as minister of war was more a political gesture than a practical move, since this was the time when he was being given maximum exposure as the most important leader of resistance in occupied Europe: by his inclusion in the government it was hoped that some of his success would rub off on the exiles. The impracticality of the gesture was highlighted by the fact that the government did not have direct communications with its minister of war. All communications were channelled through the British, namely SOE and SIS (who were still in charge of SOE's wireless traffic until summer 1942). Any

message from Mihailović would be picked up by SIS, passed on to SOE, who passed it on to the FO, who passed it on to Rendel, who finally handed it to the YGE, *if* all the above agreed the Yugoslavs should receive it. Messages from the YGE to its minister of war took the same path in reverse, and were subject to the same conditions.

When the Yugoslav military crisis in the Middle East was at its peak, the British used their control over communications to try to keep the details from Mihailović until the matter was settled. There had been some suggestion that Mihailović should be consulted and give his opinion on the crisis - Rendel was convinced that he would come out in favour of the king and his government - but the FO did not want to take the risk. While the crisis continued there was a great deal of concern about the effect it might have on Mihailović and his followers, and a constant fear that if the extent of the divide was known within Yugoslavia it would so dishearten the members of the resistance that they would give up altogether. The Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI), hoping that the coming of spring would bring a renewed offensive - thus taking some of the heat off the Soviet Union - was afraid that the FO, wrapped up in the political machinations, did not appreciate the importance of Mihailović. This was not the case: as FO impatience and irritation with the YGE and its 'petty quarrels' increased, so did the idea that Mihailović and his movement was the only important element in the Yugoslav situation.

The question of independent communications was a continually vexed one.⁷⁸ A contributory factor in the deterioration of the relationship between Mihailović and Hudson was the latter's refusal to allow access to the codes with which he communicated with SOE Cairo. One of the most important points Rapotec had made, first in 1941, and again on his return from Yugoslavia, was the urgent need for the YGE to communicate directly with its homeland - not only with Mihailović, but also with the various other groups Rapotec had contacted - to give positive direction. When the Yugoslav prime minister's military office wanted to confirm with Mihailović that Rapotec was in possession of codes, SOE refused to

transmit the message: the YGE's protests were met with prevarication and obfuscation which eventually cast doubt on Rapotec's status and the secrecy of the cyphers he had brought out - a ploy probably designed to prevent direct communications. The British wished to ensure control of all communications, not least because they suspected the YGE of instructing the resistance *not* to take any precipitate action against the occupiers which would provoke reprisals for little gain. By the spring of 1942 the British military had warmed to the idea of revolt in Yugoslavia, no longer viewing it as premature, but as a useful diversion of Axis troops from the Russian front.

Representations by the Yugoslavs to the effect that SOE - the "sabotage service", as they knew it - delayed and mislaid telegrams and issued orders of which the YGE had no knowledge, and requests for W/T transmissions to be entrusted to them, fell on deaf ears. ⁸⁰ By October 1943 the delayed and mislaid telegrams from Mihailović to the YGE - codename "Villa Resta" - had reached enormous proportions. Whether by accident or design, Cairo SOE had accumulated a backlog of about a hundred messages: one was ten months old. While admitting this was unacceptable, SOE decided it was best brushed under the carpet: "To hand over ancient messages to the Jug government would certainly provoke a scream. If enquiries are made, I will produce an answer."

There was quite a stir at the FO when Rendel revealed, in July 1942, that the YGE did have independent communications, using agents from Istanbul.⁸² In the light of this, the British were also anxious that SOE should gain access to messages which were not transmitted by their channels. Diplomatic bags were frequently opened,⁸³ and packages of letters opened and translated before being sent on their way.⁸⁴ In fact, a secret Yugoslav radio link with Mihailović was established from Cairo in September 1942, after air force captain Nedeljko Plećaš was parachuted into Yugoslavia, taking with him radio sets for Mihailović and Trifunović-Birčanin. There was a temporary break in this link after the Italian capitulation in September 1943, but it was restored at the end of the year when the secret

transmitter was transferred to Istanbul. The Yugoslavs, constantly aware that they had to be one step ahead of the British, were afraid the latter would put pressure on the Turks to close down the link. Eventually, with help from the Free French, and despite FO attempts to put a spoke in the project, Djonović was able to establish a communications centre in Algiers. This became fully operational in May 1944 - just at the time when the British broke their Cairo link with Mihailović.85

Having adopted Mihailović as their protégé, SOE was able to do little in practical terms to help him. Shortage of aircraft, and the distance from North Africa to Yugoslavia - when Malta was no longer viable because of enemy action - meant that during 1942 very little in the way of matériel could be delivered to Mihailović. Eden, after a joint FO-SOE policy review, recommended to the Defence Committee in a memorandum of 28 February 1942, that SOE should have its own squadrons of long range aircraft. However, the Air Ministry decided that only two Liberators could be made available to SOE, as Bomber Command wanted all its long range bombers. In March 'most secret sources' indicated that the Germans were preparing a major offensive against the USSR: after the heavy Allied losses incurred in the fall of Singapore, there was no possibility of opening the second front in Europe which the Soviet government was urging upon its western allies. In view of this, Churchill advised Stalin on 9 March that the RAF was resuming its heavy air offensive on Germany, a decision specifically designed to be of substantial benefit to the USSR.

The pressing - and conflicting - needs during this period of the war were difficult to reconcile. On 15 March a DMI report observed that since SOE had recommended that British backing for Mihailović would ensure that he, rather than the communists, would play the prominent role in Yugoslav resistance, he had received no substantial aid. It was now apparent that not only were the chetniks and communists fighting each other again, but also that the communists were playing a leading role. While the latter's successes against the Axis

were just as valuable, the situation presented two major problems: first, the inter-resistance conflict dissipated the energies of both sides and benefited only the Axis, and secondly partisan ascendency contained the inherent risk of 'Russian' domination in Yugoslavia. The report went on to say that the two long-range aircraft assigned to SOE to aid Mihailović were woefully short of the number needed to provide any really effective help, adding that the thirty Axis divisions in Yugoslavia, although they were second grade, were twice the number in Libya.⁸⁹

Any effect this argument - and SOE's desperate pleas for additional aircraft - might have had, was overtaken by the German and Italian attack on Malta. While all concerned recognized that it was vital Mihailović received the maximum possible aid, military resources were under tremendous pressure. Rommel's advance in North Africa, Japanese advances in Burma, and the defence of Malta which took priority over Yugoslavia, meant that no extra aircraft were available for SOE operations in Yugoslavia. The DMI, while setting out the political disadvantages of failing to supply Mihailović, concluded "It would not mean however that resistance to the enemy would cease": 90 unable to provide anything more concrete, the DMI could only hope that SOE could persuade Moscow to influence the partisans to co-operate with Mihailović.

For most of 1942, SOE had at its disposal only four Liberators for all its Balkan operations. Lack of precise information on the situation on the ground during the first half of the year, meant that the accuracy of the few sorties destined for Mihailović was rather hit or miss, with supplies often going astray or being stolen.⁹¹

In spite of the desperate shortage of aircraft, negotiations between King Peter, on a visit to the USA, and the Americans for the latter to supply long range aircraft by which the Yugoslavs themselves could deliver arms to the resistance movement were not looked on with favour. ⁹² Intelligence from Peter Boughey, who acted as SOE's liaison officer with the YGE, that the US was set to supply four Flying Fortresses to the Yugoslav air force was far

from welcome, and Glenconner and the Air Ministry set about nipping the plan in the bud.⁹³ Rendel, however, drew the line at SOE New York approaching William Donovan, who at the time was establishing the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the US equivalent of SOE, preferring that the FO should handle the matter in Washington.⁹⁴ SOE also complained that the US authorities in the Middle East, in attempting to intervene in the Yugoslav miliary crisis, were likely to make the situation even worse.⁹⁵

The relationship between SOE and the newly-formed OSS was often friendly and co-operative on the personal level, particularly in the USA. Donovan and Sir Charles Hambro, who succeed Nelson as CD in May, signed the 'London Agreement' in June 1942, which established the basis for co-ordination and co-operation between the two organizations and set out geographical zones of interest for each of them. SOE Cairo was less enthusiastic, harbouring doubts about the security of some of the Americans in the Middle East and viewing OSS - rather ironically in view of its own image - as blundering amateurs who did not have the experience fully to comprehend the situation. 97 Yugoslavia might well have been a sideshow - at least for the greater part of the war - but SOE saw it as their sideshow. For their part, OSS officers found the divisions and quarrels within the British secret agencies an unedifying spectacle: all American intelligence and secret operations came under one head. In the event, little came of the American promises of help, partly due to the same factors which prevented the British supplying extra aircraft, and partly because the USA regarded the Yugoslavs as a British responsibility. Unfortunately, the United States' authorities did not make the latter point entirely clear to the YGE, who, although they probably realized that it antagonized their British hosts, continued to look for American aid which would allow a greater degree of autonomy.

While only a limited amount of material aid was possible, propaganda was not in short supply, and the Mihailović myth-making continued apace in broadcasts and publications. This was not only of little use to Mihailović, but was actually counterproductive: the last

thing a secret army needs is a world-wide advertising campaign. Protests, and requests to play this down, from both the YGE and Mihailović, ⁹⁸ seem to have been taken rather too literally by PWE, and were followed by further protests that he was being totally ignored and the partisans being given attention instead, which was just as harmful. ⁹⁹

PWE was attempting a difficult balancing act on Yugoslavia, not least because they were not sure themselves of precisely what was going on. While policy was to support Mihailović, there was also a desire to make as much as possible of any news of action against the Axis. It was decided that vagueness was the best solution. Since the term 'partisans' was not in keeping with backing Mihailović, Ralph Murray issued a PWE directive forbidding its use: 'patriots' or 'fighting forces' covered all eventualities.¹⁰⁰

By the summer of 1942, a whole year after first news of the Yugoslav revolts had caused such excitement and hopes for positive action within SOE, the organization had only one officer with the Yugoslav resistance, and were doubtful anyway about the security of his communications. The plan to influence the nature of resistance had come to virtually nothing due to the problems of supplying the arms and money which had been an essential part of the plan. The deep-seated political divisions between the two resistance movements had been imperfectly understood by SOE and other British bodies concerned with Yugoslavia: attempts to bring together these irreconcilable factions had merely served to arouse the suspicions of all sides, and the civil war was continuing. PWE's propaganda campaign, while ostensibly successful outside Yugoslavia, bore little resemblance to reality within the country and was worse than useless to Mihailović and his followers.

CHAPTER IV

PROPAGANDA WARS

A new dimension was added to the propaganda front in mid 1942. From that point, the Soviet Union began to broadcast anti-Mihailović stories and commentaries on Radio Free Yugoslavia, a station purportedly operating from within Yugoslavia, but actually situated in the southern USSR. On 12 August an article appeared in the Soviet War News, published by the Soviet Embassy in London, claiming that only the partisans were resisting the Axis, while Mihailović took no part in the struggle. These stories were taken up by the communist press - first in neutral countries and then in the United States - and eventually found their way into the general press in the USA and Britain. Croat settlers in the USA, provoked by the wide coverage of Ustaša atrocities in Serbian-American journals there, and not unhappy to redress the balance somewhat, also gave maximum coverage to the anti-Mihailović line.

Up to this point the Soviets had gone along with the British line on propaganda. Stirring stories about Mihailović were as good for morale in the USSR as they were in occupied Europe and Britain; he was also the legitimate representative of the YGE, with whom diplomatic relations had been re-established after the German invasion of the USSR and the Yugoslav revolts. Despite supporting Mihailović in their propaganda, the Soviets always claimed that they had no contact with, or influence over, the Yugoslav partisans. This was not the case: a more or less constant radio link with Zagreb had been maintained,⁴ and in late January or early February 1942 Tito had re-established direct contact with the Comintern. While they were reluctant to admit this, the Soviets were equally reluctant to rock the boat

with their British ally by being seen to take a different - and opposing - line on the Yugoslav resistance. Stalin was aware of the fact that he needed aid from the Western Allies for the survival of the Soviet Union, so the Comintern urged the partisans to keep a low political profile and play down the revolutionary nature of their movement. What was required was concerted action to distract from the Axis attack on the USSR.⁵ The Soviets advised Tito and his followers to forge a common resistance movement with the nationalists in Serbia and Croatia, although never actually instructing Tito, as the British wanted, to come under the direct command of Mihailović. Tito had, in fact, attempted to make agreements with Mihailović in Serbia and with Maček's Peasant Party supporters in Croatia, but the early excesses of the communists had not aided his case with the nationalists.⁶ The Comintern appeared to blame Tito for this failure, and to dismiss partisan protests at pro-Mihailović propaganda and allegations that Mihailović and his followers were collaborators.⁷

It had become obvious to the British in March 1942 that the civil war was far from over, when MI3b reported renewed fighting between chetniks and communists, and when Mihailović re-established fairly regular radio contact he complained that the communists were still causing him trouble. Numerous diplomatic approaches were made, in London and Kuibyshev or Moscow, for the Soviets to use their influence with the partisans to end the conflict: as usual, any such influence was denied. However, in July 1942, shortly before the full-scale anti-Mihailović propaganda began, Maisky, the Soviet ambassador in London, informed the FO that his government had no inclination to join the British in attempting to curb the partisans, as they believed Mihailović was in touch with Nedić, and, therefore, not to be trusted. In reply, Maisky was informed that Mihailović had several times reported to his government that he maintained contact with the Nedić forces, and claimed the loyalty of many of the latter's officers. As there had been no attempt to hide this fact it could hardly be cited as proof of untrustworthiness. This defence is interesting in the light of events

which followed, when, in 1943, contact with the Nedić forces was interpreted by Cairo SOE and the British ambassador to the YGE, as tantamount to collaboration with the Germans.

The question one has to ask of course, is why did the Soviets suddenly switch their propaganda policy so drastically at this precise moment?

Responding to the British warning in March 1942 of a massive new German offensive against the USSR, the Red Army launched a pre-emptive strike near Kharkov on 12 May: it was not a major victory for the Soviets, but the action did displace the German timetable for their attack. Ten days later Molotov, the Soviet foreign minister, in London to discuss the Anglo-Soviet Treaty, urged Churchill to open a second front in Europe which could draw off at least forty German divisions from the Eastern front. When Churchill explained the difficulties, Molotov responded by asking what would be Britain's position and attitude if the Red Army were to be defeated in 1942. Churchill of course replied that Britain and the USA would fight on and ultimately win. However, in the next few weeks, the prime minister, aware of the serious position of the USSR - and, no doubt, the implications for the Western Allies of a Soviet defeat, or the making of a separate peace - explored all possible avenues for providing diversionary action, even if it were to be a limited exercise, in either France or Norway. 12

On 9 June Molotov visited Britain again, this time armed with a Soviet-US draft on the urgency of creating a second front in Europe in 1942. This seriously alarmed the British, especially Eden, as by this point it had become obvious that major operations into Europe during 1942 were impracticable. That evening, Churchill set out for Molotov the problems which precluded an immediate continental offensive, and the following day presented him with an *aide-mémoire* which, in essence, stated that if at all possible, landings would be undertaken in August or September. The document went on to list the various theatres in which Axis forces were being tied down and challenged, and concluded that maximum effort was being concentrated on plans for a large-scale invasion of the continent by British and US

forces in 1943.13

From Molotov's discussions with Churchill, and the aide-mémoire, it must have been obvious that, even if the limited operations in western Europe went ahead, the hoped-for distraction of the German offensive on the Eastern front would not be forthcoming on anything like the scale that the Soviets needed. The realization of this fact made the Soviets view guerrilla activity in occupied Europe with more seriousness than they had done hitherto, and take another look at the trouble the partisans were apparently causing the Axis in Yugoslavia. It is probable that once the Soviets realized that the western Allies were not going to provide the necessary diversion, they felt less compunction in breaking ranks on the common propaganda line. Having appeared only a few months earlier to dismiss Tito's 'proof' of Mihailović's collaboration - indeed, actually reproaching him for the divisiveness of these allegations - the timing of their volte face seems to point to this. In addition, the British were at this time strenuously discouraging the YGE from signing a treaty of mutual assistance with the Soviet Union:¹⁴ the implied mistrust of possible rivalry in post-war Yugoslavia between the British and Soviets could not have been lost on the latter. It may have been no coincidence that the article in the Soviet War News appeared on the very day, 12 August 1942, that Churchill arrived in Moscow to explain in person to Stalin that there was to be no second front in Europe until 1943: a task Churchill described as "like carrying a large lump of ice to the North Pole". 15

Appeals by the Yugoslav government to the Soviets to cease their propaganda attack on Mihailović elicited much the same response as British approaches. Continuing to deny any responsibility for the partisans, the Soviet government presented the Yugoslav minister at Kuibyshev with a memorandum, ¹⁶ detailing instances of Mihailović forces collaborating with the Italians in attacks on the partisans, and of his collaboration with the Nedić forces, and, thereby, with the German-Italian occupiers. In addition, the thorny question of the YGE's lack of direct communications with their minister of war was used by the Soviets. Whenever the

question of relations with Mihailović and the partisans was raised, the Soviets asked whether the YGE had direct and independent communications with Mihailović, and made it clear that if not, the Yugoslav ministers were not qualified to speak for him;¹⁷ with the obvious implication that it was the British - not the YGE - who were in control.¹⁸

In response to the Kuibyshev memorandum, the YGE presented the Soviet government with a lengthy *aide-mémoire*, refuting all the allegations against its minister of war. For once, the FO was impressed by the YGE's efforts, although doubtful if the Soviets would be moved by them. ¹⁹ Jovanović followed this up with a letter to Bogmolov, Soviet minister to the exiled governments, listing the murders in Yugoslavia which had resulted from Mihailović identifying traitors by attaching the letter Z to their names in broadcasts. Jovanović pointed out that the names were those of Nedićists and people who had collaborated with the Germans, thus scotching the suggestion that Mihailović was working for the Axis or its agents. PWE obtained a copy of this letter by "rather delicate means". ²⁰

Eden had also received a copy of the Kuibyshev memorandum from Maisky on 7 August: although he firmly told Maisky that this did not tie in with the information which he possessed,²¹ the realization that the Soviets were obviously not disposed to revert to their former position vis-à-vis Mihailović caused considerable consternation at the FO.

Soviet charges against Mihailović reveal a dangerous difference of opinion between ourselves and the Russians. We support him, they attack him...We ourselves are not altogether clear as to M's singleness of purpose, and I fear that, now the Russians have committed themselves so far in condemning M, it will be extremely difficult to convince them that M and the Partisans can and should make common cause...Either we or the Russians must be wrong about M.²²

Following the Kuibyshev memorandum, a meeting was convened at the FO on 8 August, at which SOE and SIS were represented. That the partisans were causing more trouble to the Axis than Mihailović's forces does not appear to have been in dispute.²³ On 2 June Churchill

had urgently requested a report on patriotic activity in Yugoslavia - "on not more than two pages". The DMI report,²⁴ which stated that the activities of the "wilder elements" of the partisans would continue to necessitate considerable Axis garrisons, had unequivocally backed Mihailović as both a bastion against anarchy and to ensure the maintenance of British influence in the Balkans and the Mediterranean.

Orme Sargent concurred with the latter point: supporting the partisans would be an "opportunist and short-term policy", while taking the long view, Mihailović best served British interests. However, it was essential that the breach with the partisans should be healed, since, whether or not Mihailović was actually accepting help from - or collaborating with - the Axis forces, a continuation of the internal conflict might well lead to that eventuality. The conclusion of the 8 August meeting was that reconciliation should be attempted by yet another approach to the Soviets to influence the partisans. Meanwhile from the other side, Hudson should be consulted on reminding Mihailović of the original British condition for helping him: namely, a determined effort on his part to reach an understanding with the partisans. At the same time, the possibility of the British themselves making direct contact with the partisans was to be examined.²⁵

The proposed telegram to Hudson caused friction between the FO and SOE, with some degree of exasperation on the part of the latter at the lack of understanding for Hudson's position. Major Pearson of SOE, was particularly reluctant to ask Hudson to broach the delicate subject of Mihailović making an understanding with the partisans:

You will remember that Hudson made strenuous efforts to bring about a reconciliation between the two parties soon after he got to Jugoslavia and that these efforts very nearly wrecked his entire mission and almost fatally undermined his personal relations with Mihailović. For months he was completely discredited and unable to carry out at all his primary function of helping to organize assistance to the resisting forces.²⁶

Pearson pointed out that although Hudson had won back some degree of confidence, his

position was still none too secure:27 if it was HMG's policy to press this issue with Mihailović, then he felt it should be up to the YGE to raise it. Many of the questions in the FO draft telegram were, Pearson felt, superfluous, since Hudson had already gone to a great deal of trouble to explain the complexities of the situation in telegrams received since the 8 August meeting. The correspondence between Pearson and Howard on the wording of the questions for Hudson reveals a certain degree of scepticism at the FO regarding SOE's attitude to Mihailović's policy of making "no active attack on the occupiers for the present, but concentration on the restoration of internal order" - which Howard interpreted as "subduing the partisans". 28 Interestingly, what Howard picked out as the greatest problem, was not the intelligence of the association between Mihailović's followers and members of the Nedić gendarmerie, or the fact that some indirect support from the Italians had been utilized, but the concentration of Mihailović's principal military effort on the partisans. It is apparent from Pearson's reluctance to ask Hudson to raise the question of a rapprochement with the partisans that SOE were well aware that it was not possible to reconcile the Yugoslav minister of war with the communist resistance, while the FO continued to pursue this idea as the only possible way to solve their diplomatic problems with the Soviets.

Eventually, after lengthy discussion, Pearson and Howard agreed on the wording of the message for Hudson. In essence, he was asked if an Anglo-Soviet appeal to the partisan leaders would have any effect on either side in Yugoslavia; who and where were the partisan leaders; and if Mihailović's whole effort to date had been directed at the partisans, was this likely to continue until they either submitted or were exterminated.²⁹

While the FO struggled to find a way around the difficulties of a potential rift between themselves and the Soviets, SOE in London, headed by the conservative Lord Selborne since the British government reshuffle in February 1942, steadfastly promoted the policy of supporting only Mihailović. This position was supported by the DMI: in August, a map was produced which "shows the bulk of activity is apparently carried out by 'Partisans' - alias

communists - who do not come under Mihailović's orders and who he, in general, tries to restrain..." However much anti-Axis activity was being carried out by non-Mihailović forces, the DMI was convinced that Mihailović was the leader to back. They thought, or hoped, that some of the activity might be attributable to Maček supporters or other non-political elements.³¹

PWE took a different line: a report produced in the same month from its own sources, gave a similar picture of the amount of activity actually attributable to the forces of General Mihailović, but reached a different conclusion. PWE asserted that SOE's appreciations of the situation of Mihailović were "seen from their point of view alone", with the underlying implication of an SOE bias towards Mihailović, and, to a certain degree reflecting the rivalry between the two bodies. While recognizing the British obligations to Mihailović, PWE warned that "If the Soviet Ambassador chose to brief himself with the sort of information which we lay before you it might be very difficult... to maintain the thesis that Mihailović was the horse to back". 32 The difference in these two interpretations might well reflect the fact that PWE's assessment was, to use its own phrase "seen from their point of view alone", or more correctly, from their sources³³ alone, which did not include the secret intercepts from which the DMI worked. The reports of the latter, as well as including maps illustrating areas of partisan activity, also provided maps showing the location of Mihailović's 'lieutenants', who were gradually establishing his organization all over the country. In addition, their 'most secret sources', while showing that partisan tactics and organization were improving, also indicated that Axis reprisals caused more damage to the country than the partisans caused to the Axis.34

The assumption by PWE that the Soviets did not possess the same sort of information as themselves seems naïve to say the least: the Soviets may have been hard pressed, but their intelligence services were hardly existing in a vacuum. It may also have been the case that the Soviets had access to more information than PWE. German Enigma decrypts, known as

'Ultra', 35 were limited in circulation to only about thirty people most closely concerned with the running of the war (neither SOE nor PWE was included). The British were very careful not to reveal to the USSR the full extent of their access to German signals, passing on only carefully disguised reports when it was essential that the Soviets be made aware of some particular strategic aspect. Recent spy literature indicates that the Soviets had at least one long-term agent at Bletchley Park, where Enigma signals were decoded and analyzed, who supplemented the officially sanctioned information. 36 If this was the case, the intelligence that non-Mihailović forces were causing most concern to the Axis - and, perhaps more importantly, that this was generating interest and debate in Britain - might have been an additional factor in the Soviet propaganda offensive.

While SOE in London continued to advocate a policy of total support for Mihailović, PWE argued that their present propaganda risked bearing little relation to the real situation in Yugoslavia. It was suggested that a way of providing a basis for unified propaganda with the USSR would be to get Mihailović to modify his - and the YGE's - policy of conserving his forces for future action.³⁷ In September SOE and PWE agreed that partisan action could no longer be ignored totally, and that it should be mentioned in publicity and propaganda: the general idea was to demonstrate to Mihailović that he was not alone in the field, and it was up to him "to continually show proof that he is worthy of the total support of the allied powers".³⁸ It was hoped thereby to galvanize him into action which could be used to refute the Soviet propaganda. Possibly the new line was also a way of hedging their bets if the British did indeed decide to contact the partisans at some future date.

In August 1942, Cairo SOE had received another shake-up: Maxwell was replaced by Lord Glenconner, with Colonel (later Brigadier) C M Keble as chief of operations, with an enlarged military staff at their disposal.³⁹ Part of the latest reorganization entailed SOE finally

gaining control over its own communications from SIS. As a result, Hudson's communications problems were alleviated when Lieutenant Lofts and two wireless operators joined him in September, and his messages began flowing regularly and securely.

When Hudson replied to the series of questions agreed between Pearson and Howard, it took the FO a whole month to digest and comment on them. This delay probably reflects the fact that Hudson's reports were not necessarily what the FO wanted to hear. In particular, the FO would not have been pleased to receive Hudson's opinion that the Mihailović-partisan situation was not one that had much chance of being transformed into a united resistance, especially under the leadership of Mihailović who was "concentrating on the partisans whom he regards as his most immediate and dangerous enemy". While obviously disheartened by Hudson's view that a joint Anglo-Soviet appeal would not effect a reunion unless accompanied by wide-ranging guarantees of post-war political freedom, from both the YGE and Mihailović himself, the FO hoped that "Hudson may be mistaken in this estimate and we do not think we should allow it to deter us from trying to agree upon a common policy with the Soviet government". 40 SOE's response to Hudson's analysis was the decision to send in Bailey, regarded as one of their most experienced agents, with a wide-ranging understanding of Yugoslavia and its politics. In the light of this, Dixon concluded that the FO would wait to hear what Bailey had to say before making another approach to Maisky on the question of a common policy.⁴¹

When he reaches Yugoslavia, our emissary will be in a better position than Hudson to give us the sort of information which we require regarding Mihailović, and with his thorough knowledge of Yugoslavia, better able to estimate the intentions and capacity of Mihailović and the strength of the various other forces operating in Yugoslavia. We propose, therefore, to review the situation again when our emissary has reached Mihailović's headquarters and has been able to report on the general situation as he sees it.⁴²

In the event, Bailey - variously delayed by an attack of malaria, bad weather and the usual problems with aircraft - finally parachuted in to Mihailović's headquarters on

Christmas day 1942. In the interim, a period of almost three months, FO policy appears to have been in a state of limbo. Every question on Yugoslavia was left in abeyance, and rounded off with the conclusion that matters would become clearer, and decisions made, once Bailey had reported.⁴³

The Middle East Yugoslav military crisis had finally stuttered to a 'solution' in July, when the dissident elements in the Yugoslav forces were given the option of joining the British forces. Even so, problems concerning the numbers and their equipment persisted for months afterwards, along with YGE suspicions that the British were attempting to establish a 'Free Yugoslav Force', independent of the politicians in London. Whether the deteriorating relations with the YGE influenced the FO view of Mihailović is difficult to tell, but by autumn 1942, serious doubts and criticisms of him were being raised. There were many reservations in addition to the fact that Mihailović was not as active against the Axis as might be wished. These included the fear that his political ambitions might run to a South Slav Federation - an idea irreconcilable with the British concept of a Balkan federation, and one that the FO thought would best serve Soviet long-term interests in the Balkans. 44 As early as March 1942, Orme Sargent had been struck by the fact that Mihailović had been dismissed in one sentence as no longer of any importance in a letter from Ljubljana, 45 forwarded to Bruce Lockhart, of PWE, from Dr Krek, Slovenian deputy prime minister in the YGE. This implied that Mihailović was influential only with Serbians, and, by extension, did not fit in with British ambitions for a united resistance which could ensure a reunited Yugoslavia at the end of the war.46 The letter had also emphasized that the communists enjoyed a monopoly of positive propaganda in Slovenia.

Glenconner, the new head of SOE Cairo, probably inadvertently fuelled these fears. After studying a paper based on Hudson's reports, he considered that all hope of uniting Mihailović and the partisans should be abandoned, and went on to put a strong case for

continuing British support for Mihailović, which included the opinion that "it is more than doubtful whether the communists would ever agree to work with us even if we turned completely round and gave them our full support". Glenconner gave a fairly realistic assessment of what Mihailović was and was not capable of achieving, and of his position regarding British interests as against Serb interests, concluding that the British should recognise that his "chief preoccupation will always be to save his country and the system to which he belongs.....we would only disappoint ourselves if we try to build him up as the leader of a Balkan federation". It would, therefore, be necessary to make independent contacts in Croatia and Slovenia, as well as in Hungary and possibly Bulgaria.⁴⁷

The FO felt there was an undoubted risk in building up Mihailović morally and materially to the degree that he would be in the strongest position in post-war Yugoslavia, with the result that any British plans would be dependent upon him.⁴⁸ Ironically, exactly the same fears were to be voiced later, when discussing the support given to Tito.⁴⁹ Despite reservations, the policy of full support for Mihailović was to continue - at any rate for the present. The conclusions were, however, preliminary: the situation was to be reviewed in the light of Bailey's reports.

The increased sabotage activity demanded of Mihailović in the second half of 1942 was presented to him as strategically essential to help the Allies in North Africa. However, as Rommel's supply line ran from Italy and Sicily to Tripoli,⁵⁰ it is apparent that the real reason that Mihailović was being pressed into a more active role was to demonstrate to the Soviets the validity of British policy in backing him. It was also hoped that Mihailović's activities might distract German forces from the eastern front. This was not a signal success: the Soviets acknowledged that Mihailović was doing more, but complained that the British were only interested in creating diversions of Rommel's supplies, and not supplies destined for the Russian front.⁵¹

Whether the change in British propaganda had the desired effect is also questionable. although the FO was convinced that it did.52 Mihailović seems to have been quite prepared to carry out sabotage, but with two important provisos: first, that there should be some specific reason for it, rather than just stirring up the wrath of the occupiers, and, secondly, that the sabotage should, if possible, be untraceable, so that the wrath - which generally fell upon innocent civilians - would not result in reprisals. This, in essence, is what had been agreed between Ilić and Masterson in Cairo before the first missions had been despatched.53 The problem for Mihailović was that while he still wanted to keep to this original agreement, his British allies wanted much more. Mihailović's second proviso might, in the propaganda war, be seen to be working against him: his reports of successful sabotage operations always carried a warning to the effect that details should not be broadcast so that the Germans would not take punitive action against the people.⁵⁴ These reports also contrasted with Hudson's, who described Mihailović as evasive on the question of taking action against the main Belgrade-Salonika line: Mihailović was willing to blow up anything outside Serbia, so that reprisals would not affect the population there, but was only prepared to undertake limited and small scale actions within Serbia.55

The new PWE policy of praising the partisans, not surprisingly, provoked strong protests. Earlier in the year, H D Harrison, BBC Balkan editor, had made a contentious broadcast which was agreed by all concerned to be out of line with British policy, and had led to the decree that the partisans should not be mentioned.⁵⁶ Mihailović had reminded his British allies that "Last Autumn I took cognisance of (information) from British government that Yugoslavs should fight for Yugoslavia and that struggle should not be converted into a communist revolt for Soviet Russia", and warning that Hudson's promises of help had brought about a great crisis: broadcasts glorifying the partisans held the danger of a repeat of the crisis.⁵⁷

The Yugoslav government, who do not appear to have been informed beforehand of the

changed propaganda policy, was not unnaturally upset when they realized what was happening. In December 1942, the YGE was in the throes of another cabinet crisis, which they hoped to resolve by reducing the number of members to seven, with Jovanović remaining as premier. Before finalizing the new cabinet, King Peter sought assurance from Eden that Mihailović was to continue to receive the British government's support. Lunching with Peter and his mother, Queen Marie, Eden admitted that there had been some suspicions that the General had been devoting his energies to fighting the partisans, who, by contrast, had been causing trouble for the Axis. However, the foreign secretary agreed that of late Mihailović had been active against the Germans and Italians "partly due to the exhortations which he had received from us", and told the king and his mother that only in the last few days the British government had decided to continue the fullest possible support for Mihailović.58

Despite Eden's assurances, the Yugoslavs were still nervous about the British attitude to Mihailović, and the implications it held for their own position, especially as FO criticisms of their minister of war continued. Their fears appeared to be justified by a conversation Boughey had with Živan Knežević in late December; and their reaction indicates that YGE adherence to Mihailović was conditional on the continuance of British backing. During the course of the conversation, Boughey had apparently told Knežević that SOE was far from satisfied with Mihailović's attitude, and regarded him as no better than Nedić; he was lying about the sabotage he reported; was intriguing with the Italians; and was a pan-Serb and anti-Croat. In the circumstances, SOE was not inclined to advise HMG to continue support of him, as the partisans were more active against the Germans. Jovanović took this to mean that the British recognition of Mihailović was about to be withdrawn, and told Rendel that "In these circumstances he could not possibly recommend to King Peter that General Mihailović should be reappointed minister of war in the new cabinet unless he has prior assurances that his impression was wrong and that HMG were in fact continuing to support Mihailović'. 59

After Rendel had discussed this with Orme Sargent and Douglas Howard, and with SOE, the YGE was told that no change had taken place in British policy. While this was true at the time, the sincerity of these reassurances seems somewhat questionable: the idea of transferring patronage from Mihailović to the partisans had been under serious discussion, and was not yet fully decided. At the time, Bailey had been in Yugoslavia for about a week, and Pearson, awaiting his reports, advised that no major decision on policy should be taken until these were received.⁶⁰

Boughey, aware that a transfer of British support to Tito was in the air, had been making a last-ditch attempt to save Mihailović. His conversation with Knežević was meant to be a warning, so that the YGE would bring pressure to bear on Mihailović to take action, thereby making it more difficult for the British government to break with him. Boughey had also given King Peter a discreet warning earlier. However, the Yugoslavs did not react as Boughey had intended: the king approached Eden directly and Knežević went to Rendel to repeat what Boughey had said.⁶¹

The YGE was not helped by the conflicting and confusing signals the British were putting out at this time. On the one hand the partisans were being praised over the airwaves while Mihailović was being criticized by the FO and now, apparently, SOE: on the other, they received a message from the British general staff on the anniversary of the foundation of Yugoslavia, full of warm praise for "the indomitable Četniks under your heroic Minister of War, General Mihailović". 62 The Yugoslavs constantly fell prey to their failure to grasp that the British were not a homogeneous entity with one clear-cut policy, but a collection of individuals who could be as confused as themselves. The conflicting signals in fact reflected the divisions and uncertainties in the various British bodies, not to mention the rivalries between and within them.

Only a few days after reassuring King Peter that Mihailović was to continue to receive the fullest possible support, Eden had suggested to Churchill that a strongly-worded telegram

should be sent, reminding the Yugoslav minister of war that he was not being furnished with supplies to fight the communists. The British expected in return that he would commit acts of sabotage against the Axis, and create a united front. On 3 January 1943, Eden was not pleased to discover that this message had not been sent:

We are to go back on the decision we had previously taken (because, it seems, SOE and C-in-C Middle East didn't agree, tho' PM does) and give full backing to Mihailovich tho' he is not fighting our enemies and is being publicly denounced by our Soviet ally. I can see no sense in such a policy and every likelihood that we and the Russians will come to an open clash...I spoke to Cadogan last week and thought he agreed.⁶³

Cadogan, however, noted:"I fear I do not remember you saying anything to me that would necessitate a change".64

While London SOE had agreed with PWE to implement the new propaganda line, it appears that Cairo SOE were either not informed of this agreement, or chose to ignore it. No sooner had the new policy been put into practise in late October, than SOE Cairo asserted both its own independence and its support for Mihailović by establishing Radio Karageorge. This 'freedom station', purporting to broadcast from Mihailović's headquarters, was established to enhance his standing - and to counteract Radio Free Yugoslavia and the new BBC line - and caused yet more animosity in London towards Cairo SOE on two counts. First, in the August shake-up it had been decided at the highest level that control of all propaganda in the Middle East should be handed over to PWE; Paul Vellacott had been despatched to Cairo by PWE in November expressly for that reason. He had told SOE to close down Karageorge, and they had flatly refused. Secondly, it upset the FO by directly contradicting the new propaganda line which was designed to put pressure on Mihailović Cairo SOE, instead of acting purely as the agents of the Commander-in-Chief Middle East, were actually making their own policy.

When Bailey finally reached Mihailović's headquarters it did not mean that the time of

indecision and suspense at the FO was ended: nearly six weeks later, Eden was still waiting to hear what Bailey had to say,⁶⁶ and was hardly pleased to hear from Selborne that Bailey's interim report was hoped for soon, and that portions of interest to the FO would be communicated to him immediately.⁶⁷ It appeared to Eden that SOE - or at least Selborne - was not totally aware of the importance he and the FO attached to Bailey's mission and "the influence his reports may ultimately have on our policy in general".⁶⁸ Eden wanted *all* Bailey's reports.

The expectation, built up by SOE, that Bailey would be able to produce reports which might immediately make the situation so clear that a major policy change could be decided on the basis of them, seems a trifle unrealistic. This attitude on the part of the FO and Eden probably reflects the 'waiting for Bailey' syndrome, which developed over three months of SOE consistently advising that nothing should be decided until Bailey went in; it also reflects their total inability to grasp the complexity of the situation in occupied Yugoslavia, where both war and civil war were raging, with political differences further complicated by ethnic and religious divides. In addition, it appears that Bailey was expected to produce these complicated analyses and encourage Mihailović to be at least as active as the partisans, with one hand tied behind his back.⁶⁹ An example of this is Bailey's recommendation that BBC broadcasts praising the partisans should be suspended for a period of six to eight weeks to gauge the effect. As well as putting Mihailović under pressure to step up his activities, these broadcasts were meant to be a bargaining counter for Bailey "and should he deem it advisable for us to change our tone, it would greatly enhance his prestige with the General that it was on his recommendation this was brought about". 70 However, when SOE wanted to put this into practise, Orme Sargent was not impressed, noting tartly that he could not see what Bailey hoped to gain and that the peasants would hardly flock to Mihailović in thousands just because all mention of the partisans ceased. More tellingly perhaps, Orme Sargent disagreed with SOE on the issue because it would seem too much like giving in to the YGE and Mihailović:⁷¹ illustrating the depths to which the former's prestige had sunk at the FO, and how closely tied were the YGE and Mihailović. It seems unfortunate for Mihailović that he had as his spokesmen people who, by the winter of 1942-43, had entirely lost the sympathy of their British hosts.

Bailey's early reports indicate that he had got off to a good start with Mihailović: he had been well received and relations were good and set fair for future co-operation, including agreements for receiving British sub-missions and for passing agents into other countries.⁷² Bailey was also pleasantly surprised to discover that Hudson's standing with Mihailović was much better than he had anticipated. However, this honeymoon period was not destined to last; in addition to the rejection of Bailey's recommendations on broadcasting, the problematical supply position was not improved. Despite messages emphasizing that supply drops would greatly strengthen his position with Mihailović, and Jovanović's pleas to Eden for "Arms! Arms! Arms!",⁷³ the limited aircraft available to SOE Cairo, and their uncertain serviceability, meant that for the first two months of Bailey's mission in Yugoslavia, only two sorties were received. Bailey, who had obviously been welcomed at Mihailović's headquarters with the hope that the situation would soon improve, had - although for no apparent fault of his own - failed to come up with the goods. His relationship with Mihailović began to deteriorate.⁷⁴

CHAPTER V

YUGOSLAVIA, FROM SIDE-SHOW TO CENTRE STAGE

During the 'waiting for Bailey' period the war moved on: a number of important developments took place elsewhere which were to have far-reaching implications for the Yugoslav resistance. Rommel's defeat at El Alamein in early November 1942 had opened the way for the 'Torch' landings of British and American troops in French North Africa. In mid January 1943 Churchill and Roosevelt met in Casablanca for eight days of discussions on all aspects of Anglo-American policy. While the conference was in progress, Churchill received a telegram from Stalin on 15 January informing him that German forces near Stalingrad were being finished off; three days later the siege of Leningrad was lifted by the Red Army; on 23 January, the Eighth Army entered Tripoli.

One of the most important decisions taken at the Casablanca conference¹ was that operations in the Mediterranean should take priority over cross-Channel landings in the summer of 1943. The rationale was that the elimination of Italy from the war would make the Allied return to northern Europe, when it came, more certain of success; Churchill was also hoping - despite the pessimism of Eden and Attlee - that action in the Mediterranean might yet bring in Turkey on the Allied side. The first move against Italy would be the invasion of Sicily in July. To cover the western Allies' real intentions elaborate deception plans² were put in train, designed to convince the Axis that the next move would be on Sardinia and the Greek Peleponese, followed by an advance through the Balkans. In March the Chiefs of Staff issued a directive to SOE³ to step up guerrilla activity in the Balkans to

strengthen this impression: Yugoslavia, hitherto viewed as of minor significance in the overall conduct of the war, was to take on greater importance as a result.

Subsequent accounts,⁴ particularly those written or influenced by those personally involved in the deception plan, portray the operation as a major triumph, claiming that the Germans bought the whole idea and acted upon it. However, Klaus Jürgen Müller⁵ argues that this conclusion is based on too limited a reading of sources and too optimistic an appraisal of the ability to deceive the Germans. Using German sources to analyze strategic planning, he argues that the German High Command - not unaware of the possibility of Allied deception - was only marginally, or temporarily, influenced by the deception operations and continued to rely mainly on the High Command's own strategic analysis of what was the next most likely move and, consequently, the longer-term pattern of the conduct of the war. According to Müller, Hitler's main preoccupations in the Balkans were to keep Italy in the war and to secure for the German war machine the vital mineral wealth of the area. Fears and doubts about Italy's commitment to the Axis war after the loss of north Africa apparently generated a domino theory: if Italy dropped out then the Balkans and eventually the right flank of the Eastern front would be threatened. The reinforcements sent into the Balkans in spring 1943 were less a response to the idea that the Allies might invade, more a precautionary measure against a vacuum if Italy did indeed withdraw. If Müller is correct, it is arguable that the mere fact of resistance forces existing in the Balkans, and posing a threat, was as important as any action they engaged in. If so, this raises the question of whether any useful purpose was to be served if the British Chiefs of Staff did manage to increase activity beyond small scale sabotage and disruption, especially given the cost in civilian reprisals.

Whether or not the German High Command and Hitler - as distinct from the German occupation forces in Yugoslavia - were deceived, there can be little doubt that both Tito and Mihailović were expecting an Allied landing in Yugoslavia at some stage.⁶ Yugoslavs and

occupiers alike were prey to the 'Salonika front fixation', envisaging a repeat of the Allied landings which liberated Serbia in 1918. While both resistance leaders expected such a scenario, they perceived it in a very different light. Mihailović looked forward to the arrival of the Allies as the trigger for the *Ustanak* - the general rising when he and his followers would join forces with the Allies to throw out the Axis. Tito and the communist leadership of the partisans, by contrast, regarded this eventuality as wholly detrimental to their long-term aim of establishing a communist state. They saw the Western Allies as a reactionary force which would naturally unite with similar elements in Yugoslavia - namely Mihailović - to frustrate this aim. One idea common to both was that before any such landing occurred, the other had to be roundly defeated. All the deception did in fact was to give fresh impetus to the civil war, which could only be of benefit to the occupiers.

In June 1942 a combination of Italian pressure and shortage of supplies had led to the conclusion that the Foča area was no longer suitable for Tito's headquarters, and the whole partisan movement had embarked on the 'long march' to the remote and barren area of western Bosnia. En route the partisans collected dispossessed Serbs who had lost all in the Ustaša persecutions and young Croats who felt themselves at odds with the Ustaša government of the NDH and, rather than be conscripted into its army, preferred to join the partisans. With expanded numbers, in an area containing no Axis troops and of little or no strategic value, Tito and the communist leadership established the 'Republic of Bihać'. Here they set about creating a new image of a broadly-based movement, with the emphasis on Yugoslav patriotism rather than communism. To further this impression the first session of the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ) was convened on 26 November 1942. The National Liberation Army (NLA) had been developed throughout 1942 to ensure a wider appeal than the overtly communist Proletarian brigades. In fact both AVNOJ and the NLA were totally dominated by the Yugoslav Communist Party (CPY): the

Politburo and the Supreme Command of the NLA were one and the same, while political commissars were attached to all NLA units at every level to ensure maximum control. The discipline imposed allowed the leaders, many of whom had fought in the Spanish civil war, to mould the NLA into a much more organized and useful body than the irregular one that had fought in Serbia in 1941.⁹

Early in 1943 the Axis launched another major drive to clear out the Yugoslav resistance once and for all, planning to deal with the partisans before turning their attention to Mihailović's forces. 'Operation Weiss', the first move against the partisans, began in January, forcing them to move out of their 'liberated territory'. Retreating southwards, the partisans attempted to fight their way into the predominantly chetnik areas of Herzegovina, Montenegro and the Sanjak. Even though hard-pressed on all sides by Germans, Italians, Croats and chetniks, Tito perceived the defeat of the latter as the main objective in the light of the expected Allied landing. Tito's solution to this potentially desperate situation was to negotiate with the Germans.

What has subsequently become known as the 'March Negotiations' opened with a proposal for an exchange of prisoners. There had been a previous exchange in November 1942, at which Glaise von Horstenau, German military plenipotentiary in the NDH, had suggested an agreement whereby the partisans would be left in peace in their own territory as long as they undertook not to sabotage the transport of vital minerals and foodstuffs. Now three high-ranking partisan negotiators - Djilas, Popović and Velebit - took up this proposal and enlarged upon it at their preliminary meeting with the German general commanding 717 Infantry Division. In addition to Horstenau's straightforward 'truce', the partisans wanted the Axis to accord them the status of a recognized belligerent. Velebit pointed out that there was no reason to continue hostilities since the partisans regarded the chetniks as their prime enemy. Furthermore, as the British supported the YGE in London - and, thereby, the chetniks in Yugoslavia - the partisans would have no compunction in opposing any British landing

on the Adriatic coast.

This must have looked fairly appealing to the German negotiators. Not only could they cease, or maybe just postpone, their fight with the partisans, but the latter would destroy the chetniks, who were next on the list in the Axis offensive, and, if the British did invade, fight them too. Encouraging the civil war would result in both sides being weakened and generally make their job easier all round. For the partisans, the agreement - apart from the obvious short-term practical advantages - possibly held a longer-term appeal: to be recognized as a regular belligerent force, even by such dubious means, would enhance their prestige and their standing vis-à-vis Moscow.

The negotiations continued at increasingly high levels, eventually involving German, Croat and Italian authorities in Sarajevo, Zagreb, Vienna, Rome and Berlin. The parley lasted for more than six weeks, during which time a ceasefire was in operation. Velebit, having visited Zagreb with the German intelligence agent Hans Ott¹² to discuss the proposals with Horstenau, travelled to all possible outlying partisan commands - under German and Croat escort - to assure them that Tito had indeed ordered a ceasefire and prohibited sabotage on the Zagreb-Belgrade railway line. Prisoner exchanges¹³ went ahead, and Ott and Velebit discussed the possibility of arranging a 'conclusive conversation' between Tito and Kasche, the Nazi diplomatic representative in Zagreb.

It must have come as rather a nasty shock when this temporary peaceful coexistence was brought to an end on Hitler's orders. He had no desire to deal with 'bandits', and instead of playing off the two resistance movements against each other, German troops should destroy both of them. Leven so, the breathing space provided by the parley had been of considerable benefit to the partisans. Nearly two months of German inactivity had removed the pressure on them, enabling Tito to utilize the forces previously engaged in defensive action against the Germans to penetrate chetnik-held territory.

In early February Bailey reported the Axis attack on the partisan republic, and the possibility that Bihać was already in German hands: "recent hysterical tone of Radio Free Yugoslavia confirms the position is desperate...Regrettable as might be the Axis success in clearing up the Partisans, it may be the best solution for our long term policy." He went on to explain this with a detailed history of the relationship of the two resistance movements and the reasons for its irretrievable breakdown, setting out the pros and cons of each side.

On the one hand, Mihailović had decided on a long-term policy of exhibiting collaborationism as a cover for the development of his organization, and received arms and assistance from the Italians - although clearly stating that these would one day be turned against *both* occupiers. On the other, the partisans had lost the support of most of the rural population due to their hit and run tactics which left the peasants to face the music once the partisans had moved on, and to their insistence on the republican aspect of their proposed communist state while the majority of the population were loyal monarchists. In addition, in clashes between the two forces, the "record generally is of Partisan withdrawal before Mihailović" and the former no longer existed as an organized force in any Serb inhabited territory except Bosnia. Bailey concluded:

In my opinion, despite its defects, M's long term policy will serve us best in the long run. After all credit to the Partisans for the trouble they have caused the Axis...M's kinder policy of appeasing the occupiers appeals strongly to the peasants [who are the] strongest source of popular support [although it is] difficult at times to see much difference between this policy and that of Nedić.¹⁵

Bailey's problem, although he did not perceive it at the time, was that he had little or no up-to-date information on the partisans: his report speaks of poor military leadership, indicating that he was unaware of the development of the NLA in Bihać. The tactics that had made the communists unpopular in Serbia had been modified, and the politics disguised, allowing them to gain far more credibility with the population in Bosnia. Bailey reiterated the opinion he shared with Hudson, that the gulf between the two movements was too great

ever to be bridged. British influence would not sway Mihailović from attempting to liquidate the partisans but could, if properly exercised, be used to dissuade him from collaborating with the Axis in pursuit of them.

The problem which Bailey perceived all too clearly was that the continuing chronic shortage of aircraft available for SOE operations left him with virtually *no* influence. His inability to provide supplies was steadily eroding his position with Mihailović and souring their relationship. In addition, the BBC broadcasts praising the partisans - while Mihailović was being attacked by Radio Free Yugoslavia - was, in Glenconner's opinion, driving Mihailović to the conclusion that the British not only lacked faith in his movement but were playing a double game. Glenconner warned that the combination of these factors might soon render Bailey's position untenable. "Moreover, our influence over Mihailović will be so diminished that he may feel he has no alternative but collaboration with the Italians". An unidentified FO hand has noted in the margin next to this statement "he's doing that already". In the continuing chronic statement "he's doing that already". In the provide supplies was steadily eroding his position with the Italians in the margin next to this statement "he's doing that already". In the provide supplies was steadily eroding his position with the Italians in the margin next to this statement "he's doing that already". In the provide supplies was steadily eroding his position with the Italians in the literature was steadily eroding his position with the Italians in the literature was steadily eroding his position with the Italians in the literature was steadily eroding his position with the Italians in the literature was steadily eroding his position with the continuity eroding his position with the literature was steadily eroding h

The essential problem for Mihailović was his dependence upon the chetnik leaders in the Italian occupied zones. There, early accommodations had been made with the occupiers, first to defend the populations against the excesses of the communists, and subsequently to ensure food supplies and gain much-needed weapons. These arrangements were already in place before Mihailović and his immediate entourage were driven out of Serbia in the winter of 1941-42. His hosts in Montenegro and the leaders in Herzegovina had already decided on this policy, ¹⁸ and since Mihailović's armed strength largely derived from their followers, he had little choice in the matter. Local chetnik bands, already planning action against the partisan republic, became incorporated in Operation Weiss. In turn, the partisans, withdrawing to the south, attempted to fight their way into chetnik territory. Hudson put his finger rather nicely on the situation: "Axis are playing a pretty game by pushing the Partisans down from the north, thus cutting them off from Croatia and forcing the chetniks in the south to defend

their territory."19

While reporting the attack on the Bihać republic, Bailey had stated that Mihailović's forces - albeit against their wishes - were *not* participating in the anti-partisan drive. If this was true at the time, it did not long remain so. Mihailović was acutely aware that it was essential to prevent a partisan take-over of the area where the expected Allied landing would occur, and hoped simultaneously to finish off his rivals once and for all. He was just about to depart to join the fray himself when the notorious christening incident took place. On 28 February, at a christening in Lipovo in Montenegro, Mihailović made an impassioned speech which was highly critical of 'Perfidious Albion' who required the Serbs to fight to their last drop of blood without adequate assistance: his only source of supply to date had been the Italians. His main enemies were the partisans, Ustašas, Moslems and Croats - in that order - and only when he had dealt with them would he turn his attention to the Germans and Italians.

Bailey's report of this speech caused a furore in London, and brought down upon Mihailović the collective wrath of both British and Yugoslav governments.²⁰ It took quite some time for the ruffled feathers to be smoothed - if ever they entirely were - in the wake of this incident.²¹ The DMI attributed the speech to Mihailović being badly advised: "his political confidant, Dr Vasić, was a reactionary pan-Serb of a dangerous type, while two of his principal staff officers Lalatović and Ostojić were decidedly anti-British".²² Jovanović, called to account by Eden via Rendel, denied that it reflected any anti-British feelings on the part of Mihailović or that it proved him to be in collaboration with the Italians. It was, he said, obviously made in a moment of great irritation - if he did not know for certain that General Mihailović did not drink, he might have thought it was made under the influence of liquor - and should not be taken so seriously by the British. The Yugoslav premier cited as examples other instances of allies violently abusing each other: the French and the British at the outset of the war, or the Serbs and the French during the First World War, but neither case had prevented them from acting as loyal allies fighting side by side against the common

enemy. While admitting that Mihailović should not have spoken as he did, Jovanović went on to point out that at least some degree of irritation was attributable to recent BBC broadcasts and the fact that independent communications were still denied to the YGE and its minister of war.²³

Karchmar argues that it should be viewed in the context of the situation, pointing out that the speech was a 'battle oration', designed to signal to his Montenegrin and Herzegovinian allies that he was not about to make a sudden *volte face* on receiving aid from the Italians, and to emphasize that the foe they were about to engage was indeed the primary threat.²⁴

The breakdown in the relationship between Bailey and Mihailović had led to a lack of confidence on both sides. When the latter suddenly departed on 16 March without telling Bailey where he was going, Bailey thought the most likely explanation was that "He might be assuming personal command of operations against Partisans". However, having recently heard of attempts by the Germans, Italians and Ljotić to arrange a meeting with Mihailović, Bailey did not consider it an impossibility that this might be a secondary reason for his absence. 25 Mihailović had in fact gone to fight the partisans, but did not want Bailey to know it. This made Bailey suspicious, and perhaps a little nervous: on 23 March, with Mihailović still away, and reports that the fighting was going against the chetniks, he thought it not impossible that the SOE mission might be abandoned - as Hudson previously had been. In this eventuality he told Cairo not to heed any appeals from Mihailović for supplies unless they were guaranteed by Bailey's correct code signature.26 Bailey's signals, some of which seem to contradict each other, reflect his uncertainty as to what exactly was happening. Shortly after fearing that Mihailović might be meeting Germans, Italians and Ljotić,²⁷ he sent a telegram clearly indicating that Mihailović would have no truck with the Germans.²⁸ Mihailović himself had already informed Jovanović of a German offer to withdraw their own and Bulgarian forces in return for his co-operation and free rail access to the south.²⁹ This

proposal had been turned down flat.

The Bailey-Mihailović relationship was patched up after Jovanović sent a telegram to his minister of war, instructing him to receive Bailey at once, and a new broadcasting policy was arranged between SOE, PWE and the BBC. The situation appeared to be improving until the BBC went back on the agreement and began to broadcast pro-partisan items again.³⁰

While everyone was getting so indignant over the christening speech, the partisans - who in turn regarded Mihailović and his adherents as their primary enemy - were making their arrangements with the Germans. Mihailović had some intelligence of this, although not all the details: Bailey reported on 22 March that 'most reliable sources' had informed Mihailović that the partisans in Bosnia were parleying with the Germans, and gave some details of the participants in Sarajevo, although the object of the parley was unknown. He asked if SOE had any confirmation of this. Rendel drew this to the attention of Howard, and reminded him that a recent report from Bailey had indicated that the partisans had recently obtained a good deal of German war material. While admitting that the fact that the information came from Mihailović sources, therefore possibly rendering it suspect, and doubting that the partisans would closely co-operate with the 'Huns', Rendel felt it was interesting in the light of the great play being made of Mihailović's contacts with the Italians.³¹

An accusation constantly levelled at SOE, particularly by the FO, was that of taking only the short-term view regarding Yugoslavia. Hudson's comment that "I remain convinced that we should attempt to persuade Mihailović to think more as a soldier than a politician" was interpreted by Rendel as an illustration of the fundamental difference between SOE and the FO. The very nature of SOE, he felt, meant that short-term expedients were inevitable, while the FO looked to the long-term consequences of any actions. Obviously winning the war was the most important consideration:

But my own impression is that no military action on the part

of Mihailović can possibly tip the scale in favour of an Allied victory, and that the war will be won in quite different areas, and by military operations on an infinitely vaster scale. Mihailović's movement in fact seems to me to be of comparatively little military importance, but of very great potential political importance. I cannot help feeling therefore that the time is coming when we shall have to decide whether the political or military aspect of his movement should come first.³²

This in fact was largely in line with Bailey's conclusions: one of his early messages stated that "German intentions to liquidate Mihailović are directed much more against his movement as a political factor in Serbia than against him personally as a military opponent." An SOE analysis, produced in January 1943, which advocated unqualified support for Mihailović - mythologizing him if necessary - was greeted with a degree of scepticism, if not downright antagonism, at the FO. It appears that the FO interpretation of 'long-term' planning was tinged with a certain lack of realism and a large amount of wishful thinking. The FO wanted to appease the Soviets, while keeping them out of Yugoslavia; and they wanted a resistance leader charismatic enough to inspire his followers, but at the same time lacking any long-term political ambitions of his own, easily bent to the British will, and who would reunite Yugoslavia at the war's end. If such a creature existed, SOE had not found it: they appear to have been trying to make the best of what they had, while the FO found this unsatisfactory.

In early 1943, Bailey and London SOE were putting forward what in their judgement was the best long-term option politically. However, while London SOE was attempting to convince the FO that the greatest long-term advantage was to be gained from not only continuing, but increasing, support for Mihailović, there were other ideas taking shape in SOE's Cairo offices. As 1942 drew to a close an internal feud was raging there between those who wanted to replace Mihailović with the partisans, and those who adhered to the idea that supporting Mihailović meant that SOE should only have dealings with forces deemed to be

loyal to him: the battle between the 'Children of Light and the Children of Darkness', as Basil Davidson rather picturesquely termed it.³⁵

When Glenconner had been despatched to reorganize the Cairo office on London SOE lines, by creating individual country desks, Basil Davidson had been put in charge of the Yugoslav desk and James Klugmann had been included in the Yugoslav country section. These two were very firmly in the 'Children of Light' camp, and between them have probably done more than anyone else to fuel the flames of conspiracy theories: this is due in great measure to Davidson's account which is lively, biased, and not untouched by artistic license, and the fact that Klugmann was subsequently revealed to be a prominent member of the British communist party. It was to Davidson, and later also to Captain F W D ("Bill") Deakin, that Colonel Keble, the new SOE chief of operations, chose to reveal his big secret namely, that he had access to bootleg secret information to which SOE was not officially privy.

The usual explanation of how Keble got hold of this is that he had access to it in his previous post in intelligence,³⁷ and that by some bureaucratic oversight he was left on the list of people cleared to receive secret information. The origin of the information is a matter of dispute. Davidson confidently claims it was derived from 'Ultra',³⁸ while people who worked on the Enigma decrypts staunchly deny that this could be possible and claim that it could only have been low grade 'sigint' from German forces in Yugoslavia.³⁹ Since the latter seems to be the consensus, it is difficult to understand why Davidson persists in his assertion: the only way that Keble could possibly have received 'Ultra' information was by someone in SIS deliberately and clandestinely feeding it through to Cairo.⁴⁰

Whatever its origins, the use to which this secret information was put is not in dispute. From early January 1943 Davidson and Deakin, with the aid of the intercepts, plotted a map which indicated the extent of partisan activity, 41 confirming the idea that these people were being unjustly ignored. It was not long before the 'Children of Light' were able to make

telling use of their information, by a stroke of what appears to be extreme good fortune.

After the Casablanca meeting Churchill stopped at Cairo for four days, and while there had lunch with Deakin who, apparently entirely by coincidence, was his former research assistant.⁴² On the same evening, 28 January, the prime minister met Keble. Deakin has subsequently denied that this meeting was due to any influence on his part, but Basil Davidson, in his usual oblique style, clearly implies that it was.⁴³ Either way, Martin Gilbert is right in asserting that "Churchill's meetings with Deakin and Keble were to be decisive for British policy towards the resistance forces in German and Italian occupied Yugoslavia." The result of these meetings was a report produced two days later.

While stating that aid to Mihailović was as necessary as ever, the report pointed out that the areas in which he was known to be active were occupied by three German and six Bulgarian divisions. This, in effect, meant only Serbia. 'Other resisting elements', in Slovenia and Croatia were holding down thirty divisions in areas known to be vital to both Italian and German communications, without having received any external aid at all. The leadership was politically 'extreme left', but the rank and file - who included Croats, Slovenes and Serbs - were 'not necessarily politically minded'; in northern Croatia some still came under the leadership of Maček. Therefore, it was not accurate to adopt the German technique of branding the whole movement 'communist'.

At the present time no aid from any quarter is reaching these elements. If this situation continues, either the RUSSIANS or the AMERICANS will, for different reasons, take a practical interest. This will inevitably lead to the weakening of the whole BRITISH position. His Majesty's Government will, and is in fact already being accused of supporting a reactionary Pan-SERB leader, who commands no universal support within the country as a whole. The prospect of two members of the United Nations backing mutually antagonistic groups within JUGOSLAVIA could only have lamentable consequences. 45

The report, in fact, did not contain anything new or radically different from the regular reports the PM received from the DMI and Enigma intercepts, or indeed some previous SOE

reports.⁴⁶ Nor was the dire warning set out above anything novel, precisely this dichotomy had exercised FO minds for some considerable time. It did, however, offer what looked like an ideal solution: if SOE officers were to be with both sides they could use their influence not only to maximize Yugoslav resistance but also reconcile Mihailović and the partisans. The only thing preventing this being achieved was the want of a few long-range Liberators. The report concluded neatly with the latest telegram from Bailey, illustrating the dangers of not supplying material assistance.

The encounter in Cairo aroused in Churchill a new interest in Yugoslav affairs and an enthusiasm for the potential of these extra guerrillas who had hitherto been ignored. Churchill needed all the Balkan guerrillas he could get, given Stalin's anticipated reaction to the news that Husky (the codename for the Sicily landing) was to take precedence over the cross-Channel landings. Churchill and Roosevelt had sent a joint telegram to Stalin informing him of what had been decided at Casablanca, expressing as their 'main desire' the diversion of German forces from the Russian front.⁴⁷ American and British forces would be concentrated in Britain to prepare for an entry to the continent 'as soon as possible'. These concentrations would be known to the enemy, but not their eventual destination or purpose: thus the Axis would have to divert forces to France, the Low Countries, Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, the heel of Italy, Yugoslavia, Greece, Crete and the Dodecanese. It must have been plain to Stalin that this was not the second front in western Europe that he had been promised for 1943, a fact of which Churchill was painfully aware:

Nothing in the world will be accepted by Stalin as an alternative to our placing 50 or 60 Divisions in France by the spring of this year. I think he will be disappointed and furious with the joint message.⁴⁸

The prime minister was also acutely aware that Stalin was facing 185 German divisions while the British and American forces were only engaging about a dozen.⁴⁹ In the light of this, the Cairo report's claim that the partisans were holding down 30 Axis divisions

increased his enthusiasm for pressing ahead with closer contacts with them.⁵⁰ In fact, there were 31 Axis divisions in the whole of Yugoslavia, of which seven - three Italian and four German - at that time were engaged in Operation Weiss.⁵¹ However, this was rather immaterial, as Churchill was more inclined to get involved with the *idea* of things rather than the mundane details: in Cairo he had been presented with the idea of a great guerrilla force. He made an immediate start on trying to obtain the much-needed aircraft with an approach to Eisenhower in Algiers in the hope of persuading the Americans to provide the Liberators.⁵²

On 11 February Keble's report had been circulated to the Chiefs of Staff Committee "for information and any action which they may consider necessary".⁵³ It did not appear to have an immediate impact upon them. At a COS meeting on 4 March at which they discussed a memorandum by the FO on policy in Yugoslavia, which was accompanied by minutes from Eden, Selborne and Orme Sargent, they concluded that they could not divert any Liberators for Yugoslavia: they were all needed elsewhere. However, anxious to help Eden and SOE, they could spare four Halifaxes. Having considered the alternative policies set out in the FO memorandum, they did not feel qualified to express a strong view on the intricate political issues involved. "In principle, however, they are inclined to the view that it would be a mistake to adopt a policy of supporting both sides" - not least because the scarcity of aircraft was hardly sufficient to give effective support to either.⁵⁴ By 20 March, when the COS issued a new directive for SOE, they had obviously changed their minds.

In the interim Keble's report had heightened the debate between the FO and SOE on their respective attitudes to the partisans. Following a discussion between Sir Charles Hambro and Orme Sargent which was obviously stimulated by the Cairo report, Hambro defended Mihailović against the charge of being a Pan-Serb, anti-Croat and anti-partisan. Basing his

argument on telegrams from Bailey and Hudson dating from the middle of February 1943, he pointed out that Mihailović was now abstaining from fighting the partisans and from collaborating with the Italians. SOE's policy of backing Mihailović was not based on considerations of post-war interests but on military ones. The possibility of co-operating with the partisans had never been excluded, the failure to do so was only due to the fact that SOE had not been successful in establishing a British officer with them.⁵⁵

He went on to say "we are in full agreement with backing both sides" but with a number of provisos. These included the fact that the Serbian Orthodox population was in a position to make a greater contribution than the Slovenes or Croats and, it therefore followed that Mihailović, as head of the most important para-military organization in Serbia, Montenegro, Herzegovina and south-west Bosnia should have priority. It was technically impossible to give support to anyone until they had a British officer to organize it, and any such support must never be allowed to jeopardize the excellent relations SOE had with Mihailović's movement. Hambro concluded that the eventual decision to back both sides rested with the FO, but this would involve a modification of present policy which was to support Mihailović, infiltrate officers to other resistance elements, and support these if the resulting information justified it.⁵⁶

Orme Sargent agreed with this, but pointed out that it already implied a change of policy. The FO was always "influenced by post-war interest in the Balkans and not entirely on the short-term policy of military advantage", 57 said Orme Sargent, setting out the objections to Bailey's plan to separate the two contending factions by moving the partisans into Croatia. 58 While this seems to have appealed to SOE as the most sensible solution to the clashes between the two, it represented the worst of all possible worlds to the FO. It would be the first step towards the ultimate disintegration of Yugoslavia. Having disagreed with the idea that Mihailović should always receive priority, Orme Sargent went on to contend that once the other elements had been contacted it might well "serve our immediate purpose" to give

them priority in certain circumstances. Ironically, he did not appear to perceive any discrepancy between his statements on post-war interests and immediate purposes.

Mihailović champions in Cairo SOE fought a rearguard action, producing a memorandum on 6 March which backed him to the hilt, arguing that "We should only praise or back the partisans if he fails to play after we have given him material support". ⁵⁹ The memorandum, presumably penned by the 'Children of Darkness', warned that to back both sides simultaneously would only fan the flames of civil war. It went on to put forward suggestions on how to get Mihailović to agree to British proposals. Howard described this as 'sensible', acknowledging Mihailović's faults and the partisans' good points "The conclusions, however, do not in every respect coincide with our views". ⁶⁰ A questionnaire, based on the 6 March memorandum, was sent to Bailey. He took a more critical line than the Mihailović backers in Cairo, but recommended stronger support if Mihailović would agree to act in accord with SOE requirements. ⁶¹

SOE had agreed to contact 'other elements' - although there appeared to be different perceptions within the pro-Mihailović camp on whether this included the partisans. The 6 March report wanted to extend missions to Croatia and Slovenia, but cautioned that "the communists would not suit us". While the discussion was going on, the FO changed the idea of *contacting* the partisans into one of *supporting* them, a move that SOE viewed as not only precipitate but shortsighted. At a meeting of the FO-SOE Committee on 9 March, Orme Sargent stated "it had been decided as a matter of policy to support all resistance groups in Yugoslavia". Pearson pointed out that it was impossible to agree to this without first discovering the long-term aims of other resistance groups.⁶²

The 6 March memorandum from Cairo in support of Mihailović ended with the claim that PWE had seen it and were in substantial agreement. This was not entirely true of all PWE members: Cairo PWE had drafted its own memorandum in February which was very similar in content to the report prepared for Churchill but very much more antagonistic in

its references to Mihailović.⁶³ Keble felt a number of modifications to this memorandum were necessary before it was sent to London.⁶⁴ One of the most notable things was the way in which he wanted some of the strongly anti-Mihailović references toned down, and more positive aspects of his contribution included. Keble also wanted references to 'partisans' to be changed to 'Croats and Slovenes': the impression these modifications gives is that Keble was in favour of maximum support continuing to go to Mihailović, but at the same time very much in favour of supporting the partisans, even if they had to be disguised as simply Croats and Slovenes. Even though he had given the 'Children of Light' their ammunition, he does not, from this showing, appear to have shared their ultimate goal of switching support from Mihailović to the partisans. Meanwhile, in London PWE and SOE continued to be at loggerheads over PWE's propaganda, which SOE felt had taken on far too much of a pro-partisan content since they had reluctantly agree to PWE's changes in autumn 1942.

Rendel joined in by reminding Orme Sargent that it was the British who had played up Mihailović in the early days, and pressed the YGE to give him unequivocal support. In conversation with the British ambassador, Jovanović had drawn an analogy between the Russian attitude towards the Mihailović-partisan situation and their attitude towards the war in the west. The Soviets always took the line that the partisans did all the fighting while Mihailović stood idly by; similarly only on the Russian front was the war being waged seriously while the Western Allies stood idly by. This, Rendel felt, was a reasonable line: Mihailović was no more anxious to strike prematurely than were the Allies. Selborne thought Orme Sargent was taking "an unusually pessimistic view of the amount of sabotage that Mihailović had actually executed" and sent him a list of actions for the past six months.

Into the midst of the debate came Bailey's report of the christening speech.⁶⁸ This obviously did little to further the case for Mihailović, but essentially made little difference overall, since the FO had been moving inexorably towards taking up the partisans for some considerable time.⁶⁹ Eden and the FO had decided, in view of the fact that nothing could be

done to persuade the Soviets to use their influence with the partisans to form a united resistance, that the only alternative was to establish direct contact. The efforts of Sir Archibald Clark-Kerr, British ambassador to the USSR, had fallen on stony ground, as had all previous appeals. Clark-Kerr's proposal that, in view of the British association with Mihailović, the suggestion of an Anglo-Soviet mission to the partisans might allay Soviet suspicions, was not greeted warmly at the FO. This, it was felt, would commit the British too far. In addition, there was no reason for the Soviets to be suspicious unless *they* had ulterior motives for preventing British-partisan contact. In which case, it was preferable to go ahead without Soviet aid or involvement. 22

Having agonized over long and short-term interests, the FO had finally decided to try to combine the two.⁷³ It was hoped that by increasing British influence it would be possible to prevent the establishment of a communist regime in Yugoslavia and thus obviate the possibility of communism taking hold in Austria and Hungary.⁷⁴ The fact that SOE Cairo judged that the partisans were not all communist was also no doubt a favourable factor, but it seems that none of the British intelligence sources had any idea of the degree of control Tito and the partisan leadership had managed to establish. Or if they did, they did not say so.

Clark-Kerr welcomed the news. He told Orme Sargent that 'our SOE man here' had been hard put to meet attacks from his Russian opposite numbers, who were baffled by British determination to support someone known to be in touch with the Yugoslav Quisling when they might be helping the gallant partisans. Apparently Clark-Kerr relied quite heavily on the advice of Brigadier Hill - "our SOE man", who appears to have been something of a shady character. British diplomats in Moscow and Kuibyshev were also influenced by the opinions of Simić, the Yugoslav minister to the USSR, who was at odds with the YGE over the question of the partisans. He felt it unlikely that the partisans were communist, but was not averse to supporting them even if they were, as long as they were fighting the Axis. To

Eden later wondered how hard Clark-Kerr had tried to get an agreement with the Soviets.⁷⁸

The March directive to SOE, setting out what was required in 1943 to distract German forces from the Eastern front and give cover to the Mediterranean operations, gave as one of their main objectives the encouragement of large-scale revolts in the Balkans.

It is of the greatest importance that all resources at your disposal should be employed to the full to strengthen guerilla warfare and direct the efforts of all resistance groups in Yugoslavia against the enemy....It may be necessary at a later date to co-ordinate the actions of all Yugoslav and Albanian guerillas with the operations of Allied forces but this should not be allowed to detract from the fullest exploitation of guerilla warfare from now onwards.⁷⁹

It was only in the Balkans that large-scale guerrilla warfare was required: diversionary activity on a lesser scale was planned in Norway, while other areas, such as France and the Low Countries were to concentrate on sabotage and preparations for acting in support of Allied strategy. The co-ordination with Allied forces referred only to possible small-scale forces being established in the Balkans, to act in conjunction with the resistance forces against communications and the Romanian oilfields. The Yugoslav instructions contrast with those regarding Greece, where the prestige of the king and his exiled government was to be built up. "In your dealings with the guerilla leaders you should let it be known that they have the King of Greece and his government to thank for the support that is being accorded to them."

Stafford points out that while the strategic objectives of the COS policy were apparently simple, they knew that the consequences were much more complex: he states that the COS were aware of the fact that guerrilla forces always had political objectives and that external control and manipulation were never easy. However, on purely pragmatic grounds, the communists were too good a military advantage to miss. In the light of the recent success of 'Operation Harling' in Greece, in which communists and non-communists had co-operated

in blowing up the Gorgopotomos bridge, the COS had convinced themselves that the same thing could be achieved in Yugoslavia.⁸⁰ This flew in the face of Bailey's and Hudson's opinion that the two could never be reconciled.

The COS change of attitude between 4 and 20 March probably reflects the influence of SIS and military intelligence,⁸¹ which had much more detailed information than was available to SOE. DMI reports had intelligence of collaboration between chetnik and partisan forces in some parts of Bosnia.⁸² Their own intelligence also told them that Mihailović's organization was not inactive but more inclined to acts of sabotage while the partisans were actually fighting.

Selborne's reaction to the COS directive was guarded: he felt that the COS could not possibly want to encourage activity that would play into Axis hands and prematurely break up Balkan resistance. He argued against supporting both resistance movements in Yugoslavia with the current resources, and for increased support for Mihailović's organization. This would not only bring about political and military agreement with Mihailović, but also win over the Slovenes and Croats, thus leaving the partisans with only hard-core communists with little popular support and of no value to the British.⁸³ Pearson enlarged on this in a long letter to the FO on 12 April, warning that any attempt to back both sides would simply result in falling between two stools.⁸⁴ The FO, however, did not want political advice from SOE.⁸⁵ Hambro regarded the directive as an opportunity to obtain a new charter for SOE, now that its role was to be a link between regular armies and resistance, in the hope of freeing the organization from "interdepartmental grab and deliberate misinterpretations".⁸⁶ He did not agree, however, to Glenconner's proposal for greater autonomy for the Cairo office.

London SOE eventually agreed to the FO policy, albeit half-heartedly. Howard felt that they had no choice, in the light of the evidence against Mihailović, and Bailey's report of the christening outburst had brought things to a head. This, combined with the COS March

directive, had produced a "sudden and unexpected change" in SOE's attitude which brought their policy into line with that of the FO. The new policy was to 'slow down' with Mihailović and contact others outside his sphere of influence.⁸⁷ It might be difficult to see *how* it was possible to slow down any further with Mihailović, since the paucity of supplies had been one of the main problems for Bailey who - time after time - had emphasized that if anything was to be achieved these had to be increased. Lack of any substantial aid from the British, and the continuing reliance on having to get what he could from the Italians, was, after all, the cause of the christening outburst which was now being used in evidence against him.

Bailey had expected the Mihailović forces to disperse the partisans, although at a cost, but he looked forward to vigorous action against the Axis from some of the younger commanders once the partisans had been liquidated.⁸⁸ In the event, Bailey's predictions were wrong: the partisan-German truce, although short-lived, had given the partisans enough breathing space to survive the battle on the Neretva, probably one of the most decisive events in the war in Yugoslavia. If Mihailović had defeated them there his position would have been strengthened considerably: a once-and-for-all defeat of the partisans by Mihailović was often viewed by the FO as an alternative to a united resistance. While the debate on whether or not to contact and support the partisans was raging in London and Cairo, events in Yugoslavia were making this eventuality inevitable.

CHAPTER VI

CONTACTING THE PARTISANS

Once Cairo SOE had the green light to contact the partisans, there was no problem on whom to send. Already in Cairo was a group of Yugoslav émigrés from Canada and the USA who had been trained by SOE at 'Camp X' on the Canadian-United States border. Canada and the USA were fertile ground for both SOE and SIS looking for European immigrants to train and return to their homelands. The economic situation in Europe during the 1920s and 1930s had led many to cross the Atlantic in search of employment; others had made the crossing to escape political repression. Many of the latter naturally tended to be left wing and had left Europe as fascism expanded its hold there, and following Franco's victory in Spain.

One of the earliest Yugoslavs to be recruited and returned to his homeland was not a signal success for anyone concerned. Branislav Radojević, a veteran of the Spanish civil war, was discovered in a Quebec prison - where he was serving a sentence for inciting a strike - by William Stuart of SIS in October 1941. Stuart assessed Radojević to be a Yugoslav patriot, in exile because of his leftist sympathies, who would be useful in view of his previous employment as a telegraphist. Radojević arrived in Cairo on 28 January 1942 to be trained as a W/T operator to be sent to the partisans. At the end of March the first attempt at this failed, as did several subsequent attempts, due to the usual problems with weather and mechanical troubles. In late July SOE decided that the most effective way to get him into Yugoslavia was to send him to Mihailović's headquarters. This course of action would kill

several birds with one stone. Radojević's briefing was to ascertain whether Hudson's transmissions were genuine, as his security check was missing from his messages, and to gain information on the partisans, joining them if he thought it necessary. He was also supposed to act as a mediator between the two factions.²

By the time Radojević arrived, he had been commissioned as a captain in the British army and renamed Charles Robertson. According to Hudson, this was because he had refused to return to Yugoslavia as a civilian: he also appears to have attempted to disguise the fact that he was a Yugoslav. While in Cairo he seems to have convinced at least one SOE officer that he was no longer a communist. Hudson had been told of Robertson's left-wing background, but had been assured that as a British officer, and on his own word of honour, he would not get involved in politics. This was far from the truth: from the moment he arrived Robertson constantly attempted to spread communist propaganda among Mihailović's followers. He was also highly critical of Mihailović in his signals, and generally undermined Hudson's position, which was still a rather delicate one following his recent return to Mihailović's company. Having protested about Robertson's conduct, Mihailović eventually demanded that Hudson put Robertson under arrest before his men executed their own justice. Robertson also caused problems for Bailey, who tried to get him out of his hair by sending him to a British sub-mission on Kopaonik. He continued to spread propaganda there, and according to Lees possibly indulged in even murkier exploits.

Robertson was undoubtedly a shady character. The decision to send him to Mihailović's headquarters when he could not be sent directly to the partisans seems inept to say the least, particularly the idea that giving him a new name and instructing him to speak French⁹ would deceive his fellow countrymen for long. Whether he was sent in good faith because Cairo SOE accepted his assurances regarding politics, or whether he was deliberately planted by 'moles' in Cairo, his unsubtle approach can have done little to reassure Mihailović about his British allies. Robertson appears to have had no intention to attempt the mediating role that

was included in his instructions in Cairo. More important perhaps is the fact that his criticisms of Mihailović became intertwined in SOE reports prepared for the FO in the second half of 1942, apparently without London SOE realizing the background of the agent they thought was 'helping' Hudson in Yugoslavia.¹⁰

The Camp X graduates were an altogether more straightforward group: they were communists and made no bones about it. They had been recruited in late 1941 and early 1942, by Bailey for SOE and Captain William Stuart for SIS. One of the seemingly enduring mysteries, and a major cause of suspicion, is why Bailey sought out only left-wing Balkan émigrés - or 'radical groups' as he termed them - on his mission to New York and Canada. The various accounts seem to be contradictory at times and in some cases involve virtually every mole or spy - suspected or proven - to be in action at the time. One even asks "could Bailey have been a mole?" 12

All agree that the British Security Council (BSC), headed by William Stephenson in New York was the jumping off point. Bailey's 'Terms of Reference in America' stated that he was to act as political adviser to Stephenson on all east European and Balkan matters, including the selection and vetting of recruits from the Balkan émigré groups for training in subversive work and subsequent return to occupied Europe. Before Bailey arrived, SOE in New York had already been asked to find potential recruits so he did not have to start from scratch. On 23 November 1941 New York already had six, and by the time Bailey arrived at the end of December there were 14: three Greeks and eleven Yugoslavs. In reply to an enquiry on security vetting, Bailey told London that he had checked them out in all available British files and would do the same in American records. He also added that all 14 had been "introduced through contact recommended to us by DONOVAN personally." 13

The contact introduced by Donovan was Milton Woolf,¹⁴ an American communist and Spanish civil war veteran, as were the majority of the 14 potential recruits. The appeal of

Spanish veterans is obvious, since they already had some military experience. Spanish veterans helped to form the backbone of Tito's movement when it took on a more military aspect. Donovan's relationship with Milton Woolf is interesting in that it reflects the OSS chief's domestic problems, which in many respects were not dissimilar to the problems encountered by SOE in its early days - namely, antagonism from the establishment.¹⁵

Bailey obviously found the 14 satisfactory, as all except one were selected by the end of January 1942 and subsequently sent to Britain in June for further training, finally arriving in Cairo in February 1943. In May 1942 Bailey moved on to Canada where Kosta Todorov, ¹⁶ a Bulgarian Agrarian Party politician and SOE agent, introduced him to three members of the Canadian Communist Party (CPC): Paul Phillips, a Ukrainian and treasurer of the CPC; Nikola Kovačević, a Montenegrin and Soviet agent; and a member of the Croatian CP. ¹⁷ Woolf continued to advise Bailey on 'radical groups', while Tommy Drew-Brook, the official BSC representative in Toronto, helped out: Stafford says he advertised in Novosti, a left-wing Serbo-Croatian journal. Officials in the Canadian Department of External Affairs were also helpful: Wheeler says they arranged with the RCMP for Bailey and Phillips to have freedom of movement; Stafford says McClellan, head of the RCMP, provided names from his list of illegal immigrants and possible subversives. ¹⁸

In summer or autumn 1942, Bailey was replaced by Robert Lethbridge¹⁹ who selected further groups of Yugoslavs in Canada. According to Wheeler, Lethbridge carried out his recruiting among serving members of the Canadian army and that "leftists or communists were not, therefore, any longer the objects of special attention". However, Stafford says that Lethbridge arranged in early 1943 for all recruits to be enlisted into the Canadian army, after they had agreed to transfer to the British army when requested. "This had the immediate advantage of placing them under military discipline and increasing the security of the operation". Lethbridge himself describes the people he enlisted as 'largely communists'. ²²

Wheeler claims that Bailey kept the Yugoslav consul-general in Montreal in the picture, 23

while Stafford states quite firmly that SOE told neither the YGE nor its consul-general what was going on.²⁴ The latter seems more likely, as Bailey's mission to the USA and Canada coincided with the crisis in the Yugoslav military in the Middle East when the YGE made a number of protests to the FO at the 'unsuitable' people being returned to Yugoslavia by the British secret services.²⁵ The news that SOE was recruiting communists would not have been greeted with enthusiasm by the YGE. Given the files full of protests which Rendel passed on to the FO Southern Department on behalf of the YGE, one would certainly expect to find something on this matter, had they known of it. Deakin tells us that the consul-general got wind of the recruitment, but not of its underlying purpose.²⁶

The fact that *predominantly* communists were recruited so long before the meeting at the FO on 8 August 1942, at which the possibility of eventually contacting the partisans was agreed, has been regarded with some suspicion. The recruits themselves thought it unusual: their leader, Kovačević, apparently asked Bailey why he was recruiting them when plenty of pro-royalist Yugoslavs were available. According to Stafford "Bailey replied that the royalists were collaborating in Yugoslavia and only the Communists were fighting". Stafford says this was possibly designed to please the Yugoslavs but thinks it 'unlikely', although he does not explain why.²⁷

Neither Stafford nor Wheeler mentions a British approach to Stanković, of the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS). When the first Camp X graduates arrived with the partisans they claimed that the British had at first attempted to recruit Croats loyal to Maček and that it was only after this had come to nothing that 'progressive elements' in the British intelligence services looked to the CPC for volunteers. Although this is the only mention of such a move, it would seem to be a logical one for the British to make, given the fact that all branches of British intelligence were convinced that there were guerrilla forces loyal to Maček operating within Croatia.

The earliest recruitment began shortly after Hudson reported the existence of communist

guerrillas and before Mihailović was recognized as the leader of Yugoslav resistance. In the winter of 1941-42, information from within Yugoslavia was very thin on the ground. SOE's one agent - Hudson - had disappeared from the airwaves and although he reported the start of the civil war, Mihailović had claimed it was over. It was not until March 1942 that it became apparent that the civil war had resumed, and in the meantime SOE had been attempting to contact all resistance forces in Yugoslavia.²⁹ An additional factor to bear in mind was that Dalton was still in charge of SOE until February 1942. Recruiting communists would fit in very well with his concept of stirring up left-wing revolutions throughout occupied Europe, an idea which probably lingered for some time after he had been replaced by the more conservative Selborne. While the communist recruits were still training, the Soviets started the anti-Mihailović propaganda which eventually led to the FO decision to hold in reserve the possibility of establishing contact with the partisans.

Once they had arrived in Cairo, the left-wing Yugoslavs were looked after by Klugmann. The suggestion that they might be sent to Mihailović, which apparently caused such alarm, is an illustration of the ongoing battle in Cairo SOE. A British officer told them this was their best bet since the partisans had been annihilated, presumably the officer was basing his view on information received from Bailey in early February that the defeat of the partisans was imminent. The Yugoslavs took this seriously - and took a dim view of it as they had joined up to fight with the partisans, and had no intention of joining the royalist resistance. They were soon reassured by Davidson and Klugmann. In fact, the intention had always been to send them to areas where Mihailović's writ did not run: according to Deakin the planning of infiltrating these men into Croatia had begun in autumn 1942, before high-level decisions had been taken.

The only member of the first missions to the partisans who genuinely thought he was destined for Mihailović was Alexander Simić-Stevens, an Anglo-Yugoslav in the British army who had volunteered his services as a Serbo-Croatian speaker in April 1940. It was not until

early 1942 that he was taken up on this, when "a Col. Bailey presumed I knew all about a legendary Mihajlović and his ghost army of Chetniks heroically opposing the invaders of his country in the Serbian mountains".³³ Assuming that it was Bailey to whom Simic spoke, this encounter throws some interesting light on Bailey's motivation. Simić-Stevens was not a communist, although he had left-wing sympathies, so Bailey was not exclusively recruiting communists before he left for the USA, although he seems to have been happy to go along with the existing arrangements once he arrived there.³⁴ It also appears that Bailey was enlisting people to contact *all* resistance groups: the fact that he mentioned Mihailović might indicate that Bailey thought Simić suitable to send to the chetniks: if this is so, it might put into context his remark about only the communists fighting while he was trying to enlist the Yugoslavs in Canada. At that stage of the war, and of the development of SOE, when trained people who could be infiltrated into occupied territory were hard to come by, telling potential agents what they wanted to hear might have been a useful ploy.

Simić-Stevens met the Yugoslavs from Canada and the USA, and Bill Deakin, on the SOE training course. However, it was only on board the ship transporting them from Liverpool to West Africa en route to Cairo, that his Yugoslav companions informed him that Mihailović and the chetniks were collaborating and fighting against the communist-led resistance of Tito and the partisans. Somewhat shocked by this intelligence, Simić, when interviewed by James Klugmann in Cairo, demanded to know the truth: Klugmann told him that "the reports seem to be fairly accurate", but that he should not worry, he was going to be dropped to "a chap called Tito who led an army of Partizans". Before this was accomplished Simić-Stevens seems to have caught the off-shots of the Cairo SOE battle. It had been proposed that he should be commissioned before his departure, but instead of meeting Keble, "who was heart and soul in favour of the project", he saw Colonel Tamplin whose first question was "What do you want to go to those bloody Reds for?" 136

Simić-Stevens - without his commission - parachuted 'blind' into western Croatia with

Petar Erdeljac and Paul Pavlić on the night of 20-21 April 1943; this was the 'Fungus' mission. On the same night the 'Hoatley 1' mission, made up of Stevan Serdar, George Diclić and Milan Družić were dropped blind into eastern Bosnia, landing near Sekovic. The Fungus mission was picked up by local peasants who passed them on to partisan divisional HQ at Brinje, whence they were transported to partisan HQ for Croatia. There Erdeljac's bona fide was established when the Croat GHQ commander, Ivan Rukovina, recognized him as an old comrade from Spain. Simic was closely questioned by the political commissar, Dr Vladimir Bakarić: he tells us that "for a full week I was held incommunicado, albeit treated with the utmost courtesy and friendliness and allowed to question all and sundry the while".³⁷ In this case 'all and sundry' should probably be read as 'loyal partisans', bearing in mind that when Atherton had arrived he was carefully kept away from the local population.

A cable was immediately sent to Tito, advising him of the arrival and asking for advice on how to proceed. The cable also informed him of the other group led by Stevan Serdar, supposed to be landing near Bihać and bringing an authorization signed by 'Alexander, commander of the near east'. Neither group bore a message from Alexander: any such formal communication would have been premature, as these two missions were purely exploratory.

Tito told Croatian HQ to keep the new arrivals there, to look after them, and to ensure that they did not, as Atherton had done earlier "undertake some provocation which would compromise the Partisans in the eyes of the international public". ³⁹ Atherton was very much in the minds of the partisans with this new approach from the British: they suspected the whole affair to have been part of some dark plot against them by the YGE, possibly with the connivance of the British. ⁴⁰

The Comintern was informed of the new arrivals and asked to check on their identity through the Canadian Communist Party.⁴¹ On 28 April Tito cabled the Comintern with further information: in Canada 'Filipo' [Paul Phillips] had worked with 'Lesbric' [Lethbridge]

in assembling the members of the mission. The people with Croatian HQ had said that the British would furnish aid to the partisans as soon as they requested it: their briefing was to supply information on the occupying forces and the partisan movement. The Comintern did not reply until 5 May, and then denied all knowledge of the Communist Party's involvement in Canada, cautioning Tito to act with the greatest care in establishing the true identity of the mission and on no account to give them any information on the internal affairs or plans of the partisans. This advice was somewhat superfluous, since Tito was acting with the utmost caution, and the missions had been received with considerable suspicion.

Nevertheless, Tito had the political foresight to take what was on offer. On 28 April he allowed Simić to broadcast, although ensuring that the partisans had control over the contents of the messages. 44 Once communications were established, Cairo asked whether the partisans would receive a sabotage team to disrupt railway lines used to transport Axis war material and petrol. Thus it was that the first uniformed mission, consisting of Major William Jones, Captain Hunter and Sergeant Ron Jephson, arrived on 18-19 May.

Jones, a 50 year old Canadian veteran of the First World War, who had the use of only one eye, was very brave by all accounts and not a little eccentric, immediately fell in love with the whole partisan movement. ⁴⁵ Jones' enthusiasm led him to jump the gun regarding British policy: his requests for explosives, enough equipment for four partisan divisions, and the proposal that a partisan delegate from Croatian HQ should be sent to Cairo to negotiate far exceeded his briefing. To agree to any of these would have implied a commitment to the future support of the partisans. ⁴⁶ The Comintern was no more enthusiastic regarding such proposals, and after further communications with 'Grandad', Tito ordered the Croatian HQ not to contemplate sending a delegate to Cairo; such a move would be decided by him, when and if it became possible. ⁴⁷

Fungus and Hoatley 1 were purely exploratory missions; the addition to Fungus - Jones and company - was specifically to sound out the possibility of committing acts of sabotage.

As these had apparently been favourably received, Cairo proposed a further mission to partisan supreme headquarters to which Tito agreed on 17 May.⁴⁸ This was two days after the Axis began 'Operation Schwartz', the resumption of the offensive against the resistance. The message relayed through the Fungus mission in Croatia agreeing to receive a liaison officer requested that he land at once near Durmitor in Montenegro; it also asked that the RAF should bomb specific towns which were the bases from which the fresh Axis attack was being launched.⁴⁹ The 'Typical' mission, which was a joint SOE-SIS affair, headed by Bill Deakin and William Stuart respectively, arrived just as the Axis circle was drawing perilously tight around the partisans.

It was at this juncture that Tito decided to introduce ranks into the NLA. Dedijer noted this innovation on 24 May (Typical was expected on 25 May, but did not arrive until 28 May) adding "we are becoming a regular army". 50 Tito's ambition was to have the NLA recognized as an official belligerent: the Germans had turned down this proposal in the March negotiations, and he was probably hoping for better luck with the British now that the first official mission was on its way. Dedijer observed "There is no doubt that the coming of this mission, albeit exclusively military, means a great victory" and went on "The English are realists. We should be realists too." He also noted that Deakin was a personal friend of Churchill.

The choice of Deakin as the first SOE liaison officer to be despatched to partisan HQ is an interesting one, especially in the light of the fact that he knew about the intercepts of German signals. Official SOE policy was to ensure that anyone going into the field where they risked capture should not be the bearer of sensitive secret information. He was certainly not the only officer available.⁵² Jasper Rootham was on hand, and hoped that he might get the job: he had earlier proposed that, as he spoke fluent Russian, he should be dropped in to contact the partisans in the company of a Soviet officer. Rootham had taken a course in Serbo-Croatian, been trained in demolitions and had travelled extensively throughout Croatia,

Dalmatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina a few years before the war. However, when he suggested this might be a useful background for making the first official SOE contact with Tito, he was told the post was filled. 53 Deakin himself admits "I was no outstanding specialist on Yugoslav affairs, but had been directly engaged in studying the situation in the country for some time, and now in Cairo, had been closely connected with the recent operations. 54 The report recommending contact with the partisans was presented to Churchill in Cairo at the end of January, the COS Directive to SOE was on 20 March, and Cairo SOE had been planning to establish contact since the end of 1942. In view of this, it is somewhat surprising that Tito's message of 17 May, agreeing to receive the military mission, appears to have caught SOE unawares. They had, apparently, "not either briefed or selected the mission proposed to be sent to the Partisan Staff in the southern sector. 55 The joint SOE-SIS party was now 'hastily assembled', some twenty months after Bullseye had been hastily assembled with its attendant omissions: if Deakin's account is accurate it appears that SOE's organizational skills had not improved in the interim. 56

Events had, it seems, moved so swiftly that neither London SOE nor the FO had been informed beforehand of the despatch of the first missions to the partisans. Considering the ongoing debate, and high level of anxiety in both these bodies, it was hardly of little import to them. The Typical mission also departed before London SOE had been told of it; Churchill asked for Deakin for a further briefing on Yugoslavia only to be informed that he was already in that country.⁵⁷

Deakin and Stuart had parachuted into a very perilous situation: Tito and the partisans were almost encircled by the Axis forces in the area of Mount Durmitor in Montenegro, where, according to Dedijer, they had delayed their departure in order to meet the British mission.⁵⁸ In the series of skirmishes as the partisans attempted to battle their way out of the Axis ring Stuart was killed on 9 August in an air attack which also slightly wounded Tito

and Deakin. The prologue of Deakin's <u>Embattled Mountain</u> is given over to a graphic account of the desperate escape; perhaps not unnaturally, Deakin, who was experiencing guerrilla warfare for the first time, felt that "as a stranger, I had taken on by stages a binding and absolute identity with those around me."⁵⁹

Stuart's death left the Typical mission with only one Serbo-Croatian speaker, Starčević, who was one of the Yugoslavs from Canada. Deakin was warm in his appreciation of the people who made up the original mission, not least of Starčević:

I was ill-qualified in Serbo-Croat, and he was nominally allotted to me as an interpreter. If he had any other duties, I never discovered them. There were many times during the coming months when I was grateful for his presence.⁶⁰

Lees points out the incongruity of the head of the first official military mission to partisan headquarters admitting that one of the men under his command might have 'other duties' of which he knew nothing.⁶¹

Deakin's feeling of binding and absolute identity was not wholly reciprocated. The partisans were pleased to have been noticed at last, but were not going to be overwhelmed; they heeded not only the Comintern's warning to be careful in their dealings with these new friends, but also their own deep suspicions of 'Perfidious Albion'. During the first few months of the Typical mission Dedijer records numerous complaints about expected supply drops not arriving or, when they did, of the inappropriateness, meagreness or uselessness of the contents. However, much more important than the contents themselves was the fact that they arrived at all: "We have no particular material advantage from the things they send, but they are politically useful, particularly about here [eastern Bosnia]".62 This was recognized by both sides as being the most important factor: receiving supplies and the presence of British - and later American - officers conferred legitimacy on the resistance group thus favoured, and helped secure the support of the local population. Deakin himself was not unaware of this fact.63

The Typical mission was supplemented by three additional members⁶⁴ on 25 July, although Stuart was not replaced until 15 August when Kenneth Syers⁶⁵ was sent in by SIS. In the interim, Deakin was presumably filling both roles of establishing operational co-operation with the partisans and providing intelligence. In addition, extra missions had been dropped in Mihailović territory in accordance with the agreements Bailey had made.⁶⁶ This sudden upsurge of interest and the arrival of more liaison officers appeared to be an indicator that an Allied landing in the Balkans was indeed impending. This impression was reinforced in early June when the partisans received a message from General Alexander, C-in-C Middle East, which told them to "Hang on...the second front is not a dream...your struggle will gain significance in coming months".⁶⁷

Now that the partisans had an official British mission, the possibility of having to fight against the Allies when they landed might be thought to have receded somewhat, although certainly not entirely. A new possibility had opened up but the partisans could not afford to relax, nor could they afford to be an *additional* guerrilla movement, simply aiding the strategic objectives of the Allies. Their long-term plans were much more ambitious. Deakin got the following impression:

Underlying these frequent discussions was, latent and unexpressed, the conviction that the British and Americans would land in the Balkans, beginning on the Adriatic coast, before they had recognized the Partisans as their formal allies and broken with the chetnik movement.⁶⁸

As Deakin was the partisans' main channel to the Western Allies, he was undoubtedly perceived as their only chance to effect this formal recognition. He had been enormously impressed by the partisan military muscle displayed in escaping the Axis ring; as soon as he had been able to establish radio contact with Cairo he had recommended that they should receive all possible aid. The first step in achieving official recognition was on the way to being accomplished. The second - a British break with the chetniks - was a larger leap and would take longer, although of course at this time the partisans did not know how *much* time

they had to accomplish it, especially after news of the Sicily landings on 8 July reached them.

In the light of this presumed urgency, no time was lost in trying to convince Deakin that Mihailović and his followers were collaborators. As they were breaking out of the ring, the partisans pointed out to the British the 'vultures' of Mihailović, when fired on by chetniks." Apparently the British were rather surprised at this,⁷⁰ though quite why they should have been surprised, when the fact that there was civil war between the two resistance movements was one of the main problems confronting all concerned, is difficult to see. Later a meeting was arranged by the Croat Supreme Staff between the British and a chetnik, who stated he was *not* fighting on the orders of Mihailović who was collaborating with the Italians and in agreement with Nedić, with the primary aim of saving the Serbs from communism.⁷¹ The partisans continued to provide Deakin with proof of chetnik collaboration, which he duly reported to Cairo. According to his own account, Deakin generally seems to have been satisfied to accept the word of the partisans on this matter: given the chance to interrogate three captured chetniks he refused: "The British could not be party to a civil war. The evidence was clear."⁷²

In August the British mission and the partisans had a welcome lull after the constant moving on which had made it difficult to arrange pin-points for supplies to be dropped. A base was established on Petrovo Polje plateau where they stayed for two weeks while waiting to move into Bosnia to establish a new 'free territory' centred on Jajce. During this period Deakin and Vlatko Velebit, who was attached to the British mission as a liaison officer, became quite close. Over the two weeks Deakin was presented with documentary evidence of chetnik collaboration, in the form of captured German, Italian and chetnik papers. On 16 August Basil Davidson arrived at Petrovo Polje and describes the idyllic scene of Deakin and Velebit's daily meetings by a riverside in a ravine, where they:

sat naked in the sun looking at dreary documents captured from chetnik commanders which proved their complicity with the occupiers, and when we were tired of doing that we would swim in a pool, and afterwards begin again with Vlatko's evidence of what the partisans had done to help the United Nations.⁷⁴

Velebit has described it thus:

My system of indoctrinating Deakin was to take him to a stream nearby, very nice and cool and fresh water where we used to bathe in the whole afternoon: I always took a bunch of captured documents with me...I think the course of indoctrination, if I may call it that, worked very well because Deakin got more and more convinced that the Mihailović movement was really no good at all, and was really a kind of fifth column supporting the enemy rather than a resistance force.⁷⁵

This was an interesting role for Velebit, bearing in mind that he was one of the partisan delegation involved in the March negotiations with the Germans: a fact of which Deakin was blissfully unaware.

Baker Street treated the information available from the first missions to the partisans with caution. On 25 May Pearson sent Howard a short memorandum on 'The Partisan Movement in Yugoslavia', based on telegrams received from the mission in Croatia, with the warning that he should bear in mind that this was composed of three Canadian Yugoslavs "who though intelligent, are certainly biased to the left". He also warned that the information emanated from partisan sources and was, therefore hearsay evidence: much information from Bailey was discounted on these grounds, and it was a factor to be borne in mind when forming any opinion on the basis of telegrams from partisan headquarters. When further information arrived, SOE would be better able to judge, meanwhile Cairo was arranging to drop supplies to Croatia and to partisan headquarters. He did not mention, since he did not know it, that Cairo was just about to drop Deakin and Stuart into Yugoslavia.

In addition to sending the Typical mission without first appraising London SOE of their intentions, Cairo was taking other independent action. On 24 May Bailey was sent a telegram informing him that in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Dalmatia, Herzegovina and Montenegro

chetnik commanders who claimed Mihailović leadership, were "known to be working with the Axis exclusively against partisans. This is not, rpt not, open to doubt". 77 The message went on to advise that Mihailović could only clear his name by denouncing these commanders in a detailed message broadcast by the BBC in Serbo-Croatian which should be coupled with immediate action against the Axis. This advice contained a number of major drawbacks as far as Mihailović was concerned. To denounce out of hand the various leaders who did not in most cases actually come under his direct orders, but felt themselves to be generally in sympathy with his aims - and upon whose long-term support he depended for the planned *Ustanak* - would immediately lose him that support and undermine his often fragile power-base. It would also leave him only his commanders in Serbia, while he was Yugoslav minister of war and regarded himself as head of the armed forces for the whole country. In addition, Mihailović had constantly and consistently made it plain that precipitate action, and the attendant reprisals, was not something he was prepared to undertake until the time was right. The possible effects of Cairo's telegram were recognized by London SOE: Boughey wrote to Rendel that the facts as stated by Cairo did not coincide with information in London. He could only conclude that Cairo was in possession of additional information and that it was up to them to decide on the appropriate course of action. But he went on to detail the problems confronting Novak, the commander in Slovenia, who was one of those to be denounced.78

A further attempt to confine Mihailović's influence to Serbia was made on 28 May, when Glenconner sent Bailey a telegram instructing Mihailović to move to the east of the Ibar river. ⁷⁹ If he complied with this, he would receive ample air support in the new area. Bailey protested to Cairo that their telegram had not been well received by Mihailović, and that it contradicted the directive from the YGE which had only just been delivered to him. Bailey also told Cairo that Mihailović knew that agents and supplies had been dropped to the partisans, which "I was unable to deny or confirm." ⁸⁰ Cairo, rejecting Bailey's opinion on the

contradiction between the two messages, told him that SOE was now supporting the partisans in Croatia, and that the only way to comply with the COS directive was to 'treat the partisan movement as a whole' and support them in Bosnia and Montenegro too, while Mihailović remained east of the Ibar. This was the policy they had recommended to London.⁸¹

They might have recommended it to London, but it had certainly not been approved there. There was uproar at the FO when it was discovered that Glenconner, without reference to themselves or Baker Street, had sent this telegram to Bailey. These instructions were not only at variance with their own and London SOE's views, but also cut across the message that the FO had just sent to Mihailović, in conjunction with the YGE, setting out conditions for continued support. Mihailović was furious at receiving these two contradictory messages. The FO was equally furious with Cairo SOE and with Bailey for repeating the whole telegram to Mihailović, "when it was clear to all but the totally blind that only one portion was intended for his sight". Glenconner was told to send a further message to attempt to put things right before returning to London to 'explain the muddle', although Howard feared that so much bad blood had been spilled that it might be difficult to rectify the situation. At the situation of the situation.

The YGE and King Peter had also reacted badly on hearing of this incident. In addition, they had been told at last that the British had sent liaison officers to the partisans. Rendel had informed Jovanović on 7 May, reassuring him that this did not mean any diminution of support for Mihailović and that the partisans were not receiving any arms which might be used against him. However, Rendel had decided to hold back for a few days the telegram Mihailović had sent about the arrival of British missions to the partisans, him case Jovanović thought this was the only reason he was being informed of them now. It transpired that King Peter had already seen this telegram, and the two other telegrams (which had not yet reached London SOE) from Mihailović protesting about the conflicting instructions. This raised the

old question of direct communications, and Hambro was detailed to investigate and plug the leak.⁸⁸

At the Trident conference in Washington in May, Churchill and Roosevelt had agreed that the cross-Channel landings would be in spring 1944. From Washington, Churchill flew to Algiers to discuss the Sicily landing and subsequent actions with Eisenhower, who stated that if Sicily were to be "polished off easily", he would be willing to go straight on to Italy. ⁸⁹ This upbeat assessment encouraged Churchill's idea that once in Italy the Allies could 'do something in the Balkans' - not invade, but certainly take the opportunity to supply the Balkan guerrillas across the Adriatic. It was probably with this in mind that he asked for Deakin to be sent to him to provide an update on the situation in Yugoslavia.

In reply to the PM's request, Cairo SOE sent a brief note to say that Deakin was already in the country, with an account of 'SOE activities in Yugoslavia', dated 1 June 1943. As Deakin had only just arrived, this three page report obviously was not based on information from him. The contents of the report were very similar to the Glenconner telegram and concluded that, as Mihailović was now only effective in eastern and central Serbia, the present plan was to persuade him to keep to the east of the river Ibar. The report missed Churchill in Algiers, but caused quite a stir. Desmond Morton, the PM's intelligence adviser, "though no expert on the complicated Yugoslav situation, felt at once that the reports were not in line with what I understood to be FO policy". He was quite right. After much discussion, it was decided that the PM should not be presented with this document, but that London SOE would produce another, more suitable version. 92

Churchill was anxious to hear news of Deakin and what was happening in Yugoslavia.

On 18 June Selborne forwarded SOE's appreciation of the situation in Yugoslavia, giving the strength and disposition of the resistance forces as far as it was known and a brief account of their activities. The report also brought out the extent to which the shortage of aircraft had

diminished British influence in Yugoslavia, and Selborne made a direct appeal for "any sympathy that can be extended to me in this matter". 93 He concluded with the news that since the appreciation and map had been drawn up, Tito's HQ and army had been disintegrated by the Axis drive, a factor which might alter the whole 'set-up'. He feared that Deakin was there, and nothing had been heard of him for a week. 94 The PM reacted swiftly to the appeal for aircraft. On 22 June he added to SOE's appreciation a minute to General Ismay for the COS Committee, emphasizing the importance of supplying aircraft for SOE "and that this demand has priority even over the bombing of Germany". 95 Selborne was invited to discuss the paper at 10 Downing Street the following evening.

In his covering letter Selborne stated that his sympathy was definitely with Mihailović, who had kept the flag flying since 1941 with very little in the way of practical assistance from the British: he felt that the COS were not sufficiently aware of the difficulties facing Mihailović. Facing Mihailović. There was a degree of truth in this. At a COS meeting on 6 May Lord Louis Mountbatten expressed doubts about the military advantage of backing Mihailović, whose loyalty he felt to be in question in view of his known collaboration with the Italians. Additionally, the danger inherent in continuing to back Mihailović while the 'Russians' supported the partisans, might imperil relations between the British and Soviets, a fact which he thought ought to be brought to the attention of the FO. As the FO had been keenly aware of this dilemma for the past year, Mountbatten's advice might be viewed as somewhat superfluous. More tellingly, it is an indication of how little attention had been paid to Yugoslavia up to this point by those who were not directly involved in Yugoslav affairs, and who now viewed it in purely military terms.

This was the thinking that lay behind Glenconner's telegram to Bailey, which had not been sent off his own bat, but at the behest of the Middle East Defence Committee (MEDC), who wanted immediate action in Yugoslavia, regardless of the longer-term political

consequences. Glenconner had been caught between the conflicting orders of London SOE and the MEDC, and had eventually given in to pressure from the latter. Despite the uproar, the MEDC had sent a telegram to the COS, Eden and London SOE, reiterating the policy they had pressed upon Glenconner. The FO and SOE wanted to limit support of the partisans to the supply of sabotage and medical material until they had made an agreement to co-operate with Mihailović. The COS favoured the MEDC plan, advocating the immediate supply of war material to the partisans and favouring the recognition of the two resistance movements within territorial boundaries. Deventually a compromise was reached: there would be no territorial recognition which would lead to the disintegration of Yugoslavia, but the partisans would be supplied with war material as long as they agreed not to act against Mihailović's forces except in self-defence. The last point was the greatest concession by the FO: it was a far cry from agreeing to co-operate with Mihailović and yet the FO still nurtured the idea of a united resistance.

On 24 June, Eden sent the PM what was in effect to be the new British policy towards Yugoslavia, having been asked by the COS to give the FO views on the situation. These were briefly summed up as:

- (1) that we should continue to support Mihailović provided he accepts certain conditions which have now been put to him.
- (2) that the Croatian guerillas and Communist Partisans should forthwith be supplied with war material on condition that those Partisans operating in close proximity to Mihailović's forces should be required first to give an assurance that no operations will be carried out against Mihailović. This is also one of the conditions which we have put to Mihailović;

and

(3) that the suggestion that each group should be recognised in a certain territorial district should not be adopted. This would in my view have strong political objections. By dividing Yugoslavia into areas and recognising certain political elements as predominant in those districts we should be taking the first step towards breaking up the unity of the country which it is our policy to maintain. The principal change in policy with

which I hope you will agree is that we are now recommending that the Communist Partisans and the Croat guerillas should henceforth receive our military support. 102

The new line was communicated to C-in-C Middle East on 27 June. The British were now going to back both sides as "resistance to Axis is of paramount importance". The ultimate objective was to unify all resistance in Yugoslavia: accordingly SOE was to instruct Bailey and the other liaison officers to arrange, if possible, political non-aggression between Mihailović and the partisans.¹⁰³

CHAPTER VII

BACKING BOTH SIDES: THE PERIOD OF "EQUAL SUPPORT"

The aim of supporting both resistance movements in Yugoslavia was to create, if not a united resistance - although this was still hoped for, particularly at the FO - then at least one that was without internal conflict. The best way to achieve this seemed to be for the British to take control. To this end, a high-status mission would be established at both Mihailović's and Tito's headquarters. The original plan was that these missions would eventually consist of all branches of the services, including a representative of the FO.¹ As the immediate purpose was military, it was proposed that each should be headed by a regular officer with the rank of brigadier, backed by a political adviser and a staff who would co-ordinate resistance in Yugoslavia with Allied military policy and strategy. This appeared to the British to be the best solution: by running the show themselves they thought they could be sure of maximizing guerrilla activity while keeping a finger on the Yugoslav political pulse.

In practise this did not turn out to be such a straightforward solution, since it disregarded the fact that the two resistance movements were on home ground and had their own perceptions of how best to achieve their long-term political aims. This should have been apparent from nearly two years experience with Mihailović; while Tito had made it abundantly clear to the Fungus mission that he would not tolerate a situation such as that existing in Greece where the British were directing operations.² It is uncertain whether this warning was passed on as high up the scale of decision making as it should have been: Selborne appeared to have been unaware of it when he told Eden that Tito had made it plain

to Deakin that he was willing to accept guidance from the Commander-in-Chief Middle East and SOE regarding military dispositions and sabotage respectively.³ Bailey welcomed the new policy, with the proviso that the brigadier selected was of the right calibre and that the mission avoided giving the impression that it was attempting to subordinate Mihailović to British control. He also warned that it would be unwise to expect a situation comparable with that prevailing in Greece.⁴

Bailey was to be political adviser to the new brigadier at Mihailović's HQ, and Fitzroy Maclean was selected as his counterpart at partisan HQ. Maclean, late of the FO, a Conservative MP and a captain in the SAS, appeared to be an excellent choice, particularly at the FO, which had never been entirely happy with SOE's assessments and advice. The FO would now have the benefit of having one of their 'own' men on the spot.⁵ According to the plan, and Maclean's original brief, he was to be seconded to SOE to act as political adviser to the brigadier appointed head of the mission. Using SOE channels, Maclean was to maintain contact with Bailey - the senior political adviser for the whole of Yugoslavia - to enable the minister of state in Cairo to keep abreast of any political complications arising from differences in the assessments of the two advisers.⁶

However, despite objections from SOE, Maclean did not long remain second-in-command of the projected mission. Maclean has subsequently given accounts of the dirty tricks SOE tried to prevent him going to Tito,⁷ but from the FO files it looks like a pretty fair match - with the major difference that Maclean had more important friends. First among these was Churchill, whose romantic enthusiasm was already up and running for those splendid Yugoslav guerrillas on which his young friend Deakin was reporting. Churchill accordingly recommended to Eden that Maclean - as an ideal "ambassador-leader" - should be head of the new mission, and asked the foreign secretary "to use my influence, for what it is worth".⁸ Charles Hambro preferred to keep the military and political functions of the mission separate, in accordance with the original plan,⁹ but Eden agreed with the PM.¹⁰

Selborne weighed in with a sensible argument: while he recognized Maclean's qualities and felt his independent spirit made him admirably suited to the role of political adviser, he thought that to tie Maclean to Tito's headquarters would limit his ability to move around and get a clear picture of the situation in Yugoslavia. Selborne also had reservations regarding the military side. "I do see considerable difficulties in putting an officer who, however brilliant he might be, has only one year's service as a captain, in a position where he will be expected to give military advice to a commander of a force of 65,000 men and to furnish strategic appreciations to C-in-C Middle East Forces."11 He was also concerned about Bailey's position. Hambro had offered Bailey the post of brigadier when the plan was first mooted, 12 but Bailey had replied that he felt he was not qualified to advise Mihailović on the conduct of military operations, and that a regular officer was more appropriate in this role while he concentrated on the long-term political aspects of the mission. ¹³ Fitzroy Maclean appears to have had no such doubts about his own capabilities. He favoured the PM's plan, arguing that the C-in-C Middle East was not particularly interested in the Yugoslav venture, and that SOE were planning to send in people they wanted to get rid of; he felt it would be difficult for him to work with these 'inefficient officers' who would be senior to him. 4 What the basis of this argument was is difficult to tell, since Keble was keen to get a high level mission in to the partisans and the C-in-C Middle East was equally keen to make maximum use of them.

Although still adhering to his reservations, Selborne was forced to acquiesce, as Churchill and Eden felt so strongly about the matter, and he did not want to hold things up. ¹⁵ This was fairly academic, as Churchill had already sent a telegram to General Wilson informing him that Maclean was his choice as head of the mission and there was "no question of his being put under a Brigadier." On being sent a copy of this, and Eden's draft letter to Wilson, ¹⁷ Selborne essentially had no choice.

In the summer of 1943, Cairo SOE was again coming under fire for independent actions

which were not in keeping with FO and military policy. The main complaints stemmed from problems arising from SOE involvement with Greece, ¹⁸ which only a short time earlier had been held up as a major SOE success story. In addition, SOE was going faster with the Yugoslav partisans than the FO wanted, particularly in regard to propaganda, and taking to themselves authority that the FO thought inappropriate. ¹⁹ They were sharply told that the FO and London SOE were to be the arbiters on any changes of policy. The FO particularly objected to Cairo raising the question of the Anglo-Soviet political background and references to the AVNOJ. Nor did the FO want the word 'partisans' plugged: the favoured phrase was 'Yugoslav guerrillas', to promote the idea of the Yugoslav resistance as a whole. ²⁰ Cairo had also been rather precipitate in supplying matériel to the partisans before obtaining an agreement that they would refrain from fighting Mihailović's forces. ²¹

The FO was not taken by General Wilson's suggestion that yet another co-ordinating committee should be established "to see that SOE play the game in future", but preferred the idea of SOE Middle East being taken over by the military. This attitude was no doubt reinforced by the reception accorded Fitzroy Maclean in Cairo. Glenconner and Keble openly told him that they disliked his appointment and were working to reverse it, and in the meantime, according to Maclean, erecting obstacles to prevent his departure for Yugoslavia. Cairo SOE had taken on a rather more formidable opponent than they had bargained for in Maclean. The attempt to undermine him backfired and provided more evidence in the case against them, leading Wilson to the conclusion that "the whole organization was rotten. Adding Maclean himself was able to use it to escape the authority of SOE and, citing the handling of messages from Greece, ensured that he would have independent communications that did not go through SOE channels. Glenconner's subsequent attempts to pacify Maclean met with a stony response. SOE Middle East narrowly escaped being taken over by the military, largely it seems, due to the intercession of Mountbatten, whose aid had been sought by Colin Gubbins, the new executive head of SOE.

Nevertheless, SOE Cairo had lost this particular battle. Maclean rose from captain to brigadier, and was to be both political and military head of the mission with direct communications to the minister of state and Wilson in Cairo. All of this rendered Bailey's position as chief political adviser in Yugoslavia somewhat meaningless.

The appointment of the new head of the military mission to Mihailović was a much less dramatic affair and was made in accordance with the original plan. The brigadier selected was Charles Armstrong, a regular officer, who was not designated Churchill's personal representative, or 'ambassador-leader', or given his own independent communications, having to rely instead on the vagaries of SOE. As Maclean had put up such a strong argument against SOE's handling of messages from the field, this seems to have been a major oversight on the part of those who apparently wanted to make the best possible use of all resistance in Yugoslavia, and it did, in fact, turn out to be a handicap for Armstrong.

In April sub-missions had been established with Mihailović commanders throughout Serbia. From the outset they had been confronted with the same difficulty that had made Bailey's situation problematical, namely the meagre supplies that the British were able to deliver. Although some extra aircraft had been made available to SOE when it was decided to support both sides, these were far from adequate to service the additional missions established with either Mihailović forces or the partisans. Cairo SOE - or MO4, as it was now known - simply did not have the back-up organization in place: more personnel had been made available after the Allied successes in North Africa, but these men were dropped into Yugoslavia without proper communications or supply networks to support the number of missions. Extra men were added to existing missions in the face of advice from officers on the ground that this was pointless without sending the arms and explosives which would enable them to accomplish something when they got there. The same difficulty that had made available to SOE when it was decided to support to SOE when it was now decided to support to SOE when it was d

In addition, most BLOs (British liaison officers) were given very vague briefings which

hardly, if ever, touched on the political situation in Yugoslavia.³¹ This was a particularly odd state of affairs, since the officer in Cairo responsible for briefing agents was Hugh Seton-Watson, an expert on all aspects of the Balkans. Seton-Watson was also in charge of collating and interpreting political intelligence from Yugoslavia and producing appreciations for future action,³² so he should have been ideally placed for giving comprehensive briefings. The general line seems to have been that the BLOs were to fulfil a purely military role:³³ it was only on arrival that most of them became aware of the vital part politics played in the job they were meant to do. The situation might not have been so bad if the liaison and co-ordination between the political advisers with the two camps had been carried out as planned: Bailey attempted this, but was prevented from achieving it by orders from Cairo³⁴ and a total lack of reciprocal action from the mission with Tito.³⁵

All the missions constantly called on Cairo to increase supplies, warning that they were being placed in an impossibly embarrassing situation. Both resistance movements thought the British - with their empire - to be rich and well organized, and both read into the thin dribble of arms and equipment some dark undertone that was designed to work against them. The partisans took this attitude from the outset, but as the extra BLOs with Mihailović's commanders failed to produce supplies, they were looked upon with rather more caution. The Allied missions were not universally welcomed by either side, but regarded as useful if they could provide matériel.³⁶

A new directive to Mihailović, following the confusion of the two conflicting messages which had caused such bad feeling, promised him maximum support as long as he would take action against the Axis and agree not to employ his forces against the partisans. Liaison officers with both resistance movements were instructed to ensure that the two did not clash, by granting sorties to those who refrained from fighting each other, and withholding sorties from those who did not. Attempts to put this into practice by BLOs on the ground in Serbia were defeated by Cairo SOE, who failed to supply local commanders who did not fight the

partisans and who had agreed - sometimes in defiance of Mihailović's orders - to undertake anti-Axis activity.³⁷ Conversely, there were examples of sorties arriving just after a BLO had tried to stop them, leaving him with no bargaining counter to fulfil his own military briefing.³⁸ This seems to have been exclusively a problem for the British with the Mihailović commanders, as there is little evidence that any BLOs with the partisans ever tried it. Cairo SOE's attempt to prevent clashes after Djurić, one of Mihailović's commanders in central-eastern Serbia, and his men fought with partisans encroaching on their area ended in disaster for the BLO concerned. Major Neil Selby was instructed to contact the partisans in an effort to end the local conflict and persuade them to concentrate their efforts on the Axis: as a 'safety precaution' neither Selby nor Bailey were to tell Mihailović's people until it was a *fait accompli*.³⁹ The general idea was that Sehmer, the BLO with Djurić, and Selby, from each side, should decide who was the aggressor and allot sorties accordingly, a plan Sehmer thought "most impractical".⁴⁰ So it was: only three days later Selby and his wireless operator, whether by misfortune or betrayal, were captured by Axis forces.⁴¹

Mihailović had agreed to the terms of the directive, but was still reluctant to take any action which might provoke reprisals. In an attempt to galvanize Mihailović into sabotaging the north-south lines of communication in the Ibar and Vardar valleys, Bailey took matters into his own hands by delivering an ultimatum which he claimed came from the C-in-C Middle East. This earned him a rebuke from Cairo, 42 but a few days later Bailey sent out a long telegram, illustrating the depths of desperation which had driven him to take independent action. It begins "Herewith reasons for my failure...in hope that you [Cairo SOE] and Brigadier Armstrong may profit from them and so ensure success his mission". 43 Emphasizing that he did not wish to cast blame on anyone, Bailey set out both his own and Mihailović's shortcomings: the problems of supply and propaganda, coupled with the fact that he himself did not appear to enjoy the confidence of his superiors was hampering the whole operation. He was also distressed by Cairo's lack of understanding of the situation in

Yugoslavia.

This last point was apparent in the response to Bailey's telegram in Cairo, where it was interpreted as evidence against Mihailović - quite the opposite of what Bailey seems to have been trying to achieve. At a meeting between the minister of state, Glenconner and the DMO, Mihailović's reply to the British-YGE directive and to Bailey's ultimatum were deemed unsatisfactory, and a "show down" with the Yugoslav minister of war was recommended.⁴⁴ This provoked a furious response from Eden who, in accord with London SOE, had assessed Mihailović's replies to both as quite in order:

The fact is, I am sure, that S.O.E., Cairo (plus the Minister of State) do not want us to come to a satisfactory arrangement with Mihailović. We have been on the verge of doing so many times, but on each occasion a spanner has been thrown in to prevent us.⁴⁵

He went on to enumerate examples, including Glenconner's 'bludgeoning' telegram, and argued that Mihailović should at least be given a fair chance before a negative judgement was assumed, which seemed to him "a typical SOE way of doing things".

At about the same time that Cairo SOE was arguing that Mihailović's response was unsatisfactory, and complaining about his lack of activity, they stopped one of the BLOs carrying out a sabotage operation on the grounds that it had not been sanctioned by Mihailović. Cairo later apologised for the series of 'stop-go-stop-go' messages which had led to the cancellation of this operation, but it was only one of a number of confusing and conflicting signals which halted sabotage just as local commanders had agreed to carry it out. When these signals were followed up by orders from Cairo for immediate action, often the moment had passed.

Before either brigadier arrived to take up his command, the armistice with Italy was announced on 8 September 1943. The expected Italian surrender, what form it should take and how it should be handled in the Balkans, had been under discussion for nearly two

months before it finally occurred. In the interim, the coup that deposed Mussolini and made Marshal Badoglio Italian prime minister, brought the moment closer. Unsure of whether the Italians in the Balkans would surrender to anyone other than a British officer, the COS, FO and SOE had considered the possibility of SOE officers there taking charge.⁴⁸ In Yugoslavia, it was thought that the Italians might be more likely to negotiate with chetniks than with partisans. It was hoped that instead of being disarmed and evacuated, some Italian forces might be persuaded to come over to the Allies.

All parties in Yugoslavia were aware that Italy was about to drop out, and made their plans accordingly. The Germans⁴⁹ prepared to disarm the Italians and fill the vacuum, Tito produced the terms of an armistice,⁵⁰ and Mihailović had been waiting to take the Italian arms and positions since 1942. In the event, despite Mihailović's long-term plans, the partisans managed to obtain the bulk of the arms that the Germans failed to take. The British missions were not given prior notification of the exact date of the armistice; but following the overthrow of Mussolini, Cairo SOE apparently signalled *only* to the missions with the partisans to be ready to seize Italian arms dumps in the near future. Keble perceived the expected Italian collapse as an ideal opportunity for 'our resistance forces' to obtain Italian supplies,⁵¹ but if only the BLOs with the partisans were to be forewarned, SOE's interpretation of 'our resistance forces' is questionable. In the event, it seems that both Deakin and Bailey first heard of the armistice on the radio when Badoglio made his broadcast.⁵² A few hours later the British missions in Yugoslavia received a signal from GHQ Middle East:

Get in touch with Italian commanders in your area. Insist implementation armistice terms and enlist aid against Germans. If Italians unable to fight Germans take possession arms, aircraft, other military stores.⁵³

Deakin appears to be unable to recall the exact text of the signal he received, or whether it was 'similar' or 'the same' as the one sent to Bailey. He only recalled it telling him to "carry out the disarming of the nearest Italian division", while his W/T operator noted in his diary

"We have been told to arrange armistice locally".⁵⁴ Whatever the precise wording, Deakin received a dusty answer when he relayed the message to Tito, who made it clear that no British officer would assume the responsibility of conducting negotiations with the Italians whose armaments rightly belonged to the partisans.⁵⁵ Obviously Tito would wear no outside interference, so it would have done Deakin no good to push the matter, even if he had been inclined to do so, which was unlikely. There was a great difference between Deakin's relationship with Tito and Bailey's with Mihailović. Deakin had arrived well-disposed towards the partisan movement, having helped to convince Churchill of its importance: the circumstances of his arrival and subsequent experiences seem to have coloured his perception to the point of accepting Tito's authority as supreme. By contrast, Bailey, who was an old Yugoslav hand, had taken a much tougher line - and a much more sceptical approach - to Mihailović and remained first and foremost governed by orders from British HQ in Cairo.

The experience of the Italian armistice is a clear illustration of the different positions of the two chiefs of mission. After his confrontation with Tito, Deakin suggested that he be allowed to accompany Koča Popović to Split to witness the Italian surrender. In Split Deakin rebuffed an attempt by General Becuzzi, commander of the Bergamo Division, to discuss the armistice with him personally, making it clear that this was a partisan show. Later Deakin attempted to mediate between the Bergamo Division and Popović to reach an agreement on the Italian forces joining the partisans as whole units, but the latter had little enthusiasm for this idea and were willing to accept Italian recruits only as individuals. At about the same time Bailey set out for Montenegro with Lukačević, one of Mihailović's local commanders, to negotiate with the Venezia Division. At Prijepolje the forces with Lukačević fought with and defeated the Germans who had already disarmed the Italians there. On reaching Berane, the Venezia Division's headquarters, Bailey - following instructions from Cairo -57 had a private discussion with the commander, General Oxilia, who agreed to co-ordinate his division's actions with those of the resistance: namely, to come over lock stock and barrel to

the Allied side. Bailey had to dissuade the Mihailović forces from disarming the Italians, but eventually an agreement was reached whereby the civil administration would be taken over by the Yugoslavs and the Venezia Division would fight against the Germans.

The arrangement reached in Berane was the optimum outcome from the Allied point of view; unfortunately this mutually beneficial arrangement was not destined to last. While the Split and Berane discussions were still proceeding, Deakin and Bailey were informed of the imminent arrival of their new heads of mission and hastened back to their respective headquarters to meet the brigadiers. The Lim Valley around Berane was Mihailović territory, with no partisans in the area: before Bailey departed to meet Armstrong, he contacted Cairo and told them to inform Tito of the position there, and ask him to restrain his troops from moving into the Sanjak and Montenegro.⁵⁸ It seems that Cairo was unable to secure such co-operation from Tito. Partisans in large numbers, under the command of Peko Dapčević, were rushed to the Lim valley, where they attempted by both force of arms and persuasion to win General Oxilia and the Venezia Division away from the already-concluded agreement with Mihailović's forces.⁵⁹ The reported presence of British officers who finally helped persuade Oxilia that the partisans were the official Allied representatives, 60 calls into question whether Cairo really tried to secure co-operation from the partisans. Lees tells us that one officer was Major Hunter of the Fungus mission, ⁶¹ Deakin says that the "ghost of the British officers at Berane" were an invention of Mihailović's HQ, offering as proof the fact that Hunter was established in the area only on 1 January 1944.62 This does not, of course, preclude Hunter's presence in Berane in September. Another possibility is that the 'British colonel and major' were partisans in British uniform; Dedijer had pulled off this trick already, when a large force of Italians surrendered to a much smaller group of partisans in the belief that Dedijer was a British officer.⁶³

General Oxilia, after attempting to unite the two opposing forces, finally succumbed to Partisan pressure but did manage to arrange safe passage out of the area for the Mihailović men.⁶⁴ This must have been a bitter blow for Mihailović and his followers, as they had been counting on obtaining Italian arms for the *Ustanak*: not only had they lost the arms, but the partisans had managed to move into Montenegro and the Sanjak.

Immediately after the Italian armistice, Mihailović sent out a general order to his commanders throughout Yugoslavia to attack lines of communication and German troops. Widespread sabotage was achieved and a number of towns and villages taken from the Germans. The action was in full flow when Armstrong's arrival added weight to the general belief that the Allied invasion was at hand and the time ripe for the general rising. This aggressive action was further encouraged by the message Armstrong brought from General Wilson, promising military supplies on a much larger scale. Four railway bridges around Mokra Gora were blown up in a single day, Mihailović assembled about 2,500 guerrillas and after heavy fighting Višegrad fell to his forces and the railway bridge there was destroyed.

The BLOs with the various sub-missions were pleased to hear of Armstrong's arrival; they too thought this would presage better—organization and supplies, and improve their chances of achieving more positive action.⁶⁸ This turned out to be an illusion: the supply situation did not improve at all, but deteriorated in both frequency and quality.⁶⁹ Eventually Armstrong himself was reduced to sending desperate messages to Cairo. Expected sorties were cancelled at short notice or simply did not materialize, and when the BLOs with Mihailović's forces protested, they were told this was unfortunate but beyond Cairo's control. They were also told that BLOs with the partisans were receiving only minimum sorties.⁷⁰ This was not true: supplies to the partisans steadily increased following the arrival of Maclean.⁷¹ The partisans were the main beneficiaries of the extra aircraft that were made available to SOE in early autumn, and when it became possible to transport supplies across the Adriatic the partisans were the *only* beneficiaries.⁷²

The suspicion gradually took hold, in the minds of both the Mihailović BLOs and their hosts, that the partisans were receiving their sorties.⁷³ The suspicions were hardly allayed by

the arrival of two mysterious missions in September. 'Monkeywrench', headed by Major Dugmore, joined the partisans in eastern Serbia, and 'Mulligatawny', led by Major Mostyn Davies, dropped to partisans to the east of Lake Ohrid. When Sehmer asked Cairo SOE for information on the Mulligatawny mission, Cairo denied its existence, but was caught out by the fact that Davies had already contacted Purvis, another BLO with Mihailović's forces. The mission was in need of assistance which Purvis was trying to arrange, until he was told by Cairo to leave Mulligatawny alone: they were on a special mission. Furthermore he was instructed to keep their presence secret. This, Sehmer concluded, was ludicrous, since all the local people already knew, and had informed him of Mulligatawny's arrival.⁷⁴ The Mihailović BLOs were in an impossible situation - either they looked foolish for not knowing about Davies' presence with the partisans, or treacherous for not acknowledging it. Purvis felt Cairo had displayed a lack of confidence by not warning him of the mission's passage through his area; it was also detrimental to the task of preventing clashes between the local resistance and partisans. The situation was made worse a few days later when Davies received a sortie so close to Purvis' own position that the signal flares were visible: feelings were already running high and "the result of course was a battle".75

The 'special mission' was an attempt to get in touch with the Bulgarian partisans. A 'Captain Patterson' had already joined Jasper Rootham in eastern Serbia for the same reason. Colonel Pavlović, the local commander, had initially been willing to help Patterson, but his enthusiasm apparently had waned when he heard who Patterson wanted to contact. While waiting to contact the Bulgarians, Davies remained with the small band of partisans in the south, with Svetozar Vukmanović -'Tempo', one of Tito's 'lieutenants'. Cairo sent sorties to this mission, and to Dugmore, despite the fact that the policy of GHQ Middle East was that arms would not be supplied to either Mihailović or partisan forces in areas of 'debated ground' where the two were in close proximity to each other.

To make matters worse, if this were possible, all the action taken by Mihailović's forces,

including the success at Višegrad and Mokra Gora, was attributed to the partisans in BBC broadcasts.78 Mis-attribution of each side's activity was not an uncommon feature of broadcasts, it had provoked protests from the partisans too, and caused embarrassment to the BLOs with Tito's forces.⁷⁹ The problem with these particular mistaken attributions was that Mihailović had at last taken overt action, as opposed to covert acts of sabotage to avoid reprisals, and received no credit. The mistake was compounded by the fact that the attendant reprisals in Yugoslavia were not given air coverage, while the BBC made great play of four victims of reprisals in Norway resulting from resistance activity there. 80 This blunder, if such it was, coupled with declining supplies and the Venezia affair, convinced Mihailović that "the British had sold him down the river to Stalin."81 Having co-operated with the British, and had insult added to injury for his pains, Mihailović seems to have concluded that he should return to his own policy regarding both occupiers and partisans.⁸² The result was a swift decline in relations between Armstrong and Mihailović. At times the two were not even on speaking terms, and, in the opinion of Major Archie Jack, it was only thanks to the personal efforts of Major Kenneth Greenlees that any channels of communication were kept open between them.

In addition, Armstrong appears to have alienated the American members of the mission at Mihailović's HQ by excluding them from any important discussions and treating them as inferiors. He also insisted on seeing all the telegrams they wished to send out, while denying them access to his own. A protest to Cairo from the Americans simply confirmed that they were under Armstrong's command.⁸³ Armstrong was probably only following instructions from Cairo, who did not want the Americans muscling in on their show. Eventually the OSS officers, Colonel Seitz - who had arrived with Armstrong - and Captain Mansfield, became so frustrated at kicking their heels that they departed on a tour of inspection around Serbia.

Subsequently, various people have questioned the wisdom of selecting Armstrong for this mission, even suggesting that he was deliberately chosen because of his unsuitability.

Deliberate or not, it was not a fortunate choice: he was a regular officer with no experience of guerrilla warfare, was given to sticking to military discipline and 'proper' conduct, and had stated openly before he arrived that he wanted no truck with matters political.⁸⁴ Furthermore, as a non-smoking teetotaller, he was far from being at home in meetings at which rakia was regularly passed around and a thick fog developed from the heavy-smoking Serbs around him.

Fitzroy Maclean was a very different character. He and Tito seem to have got on well from the start, perhaps recognizing a certain degree of kindred spirit in each other. At the meeting with Churchill, the PM had told Maclean not to bother unduly about the political colouring of the resistance he was to join - this was something for future consideration. ⁸⁵ Churchill's own enthusiasm for the partisans, made apparent in his phraseology, ⁸⁶ had given Maclean the keynote for his mission and he appears to have determined to make a success of it from the outset. Free from the constraints of SOE, Maclean was able to make good use of both his own initiative and personal contacts.

There was a great difference in the attitude of the British with Tito and those with Mihailović. While the latter delivered orders and ultimatums to Mihailović and fell out with him, Maclean treated Tito with kid gloves, often warning that 'deep offence' would be caused if things did not go exactly in accordance with Tito's wishes.⁸⁷ Armstrong sent Mihailović a number of letters warning him to desist from fighting the partisans,⁸⁸ but there are no equivalent letters from Maclean to Tito. When the two missions were asked to sound out Mihailović and Tito on the possibility of establishing a neutral zone between them to lessen the risk of clashes, the mission with Mihailović indicated that he would accept such an arrangement. The mission with Tito refused even to pose the question, "as it would involve a withdrawal by him from territory now in his occupation".⁸⁹ The territory in question was the area of Montenegro and the Sanjak that the partisans had acquired as a result of Bailey following Cairo's instructions after the Italian armistice. Although Armstrong had protested

to Cairo that Mihailović had been severely provoked there, and that Tito was to blame for the confrontation this was bound to produce, no pressure was to be brought to bear on Tito. Instead, Cairo SOE sent Armstrong a warning that Mihailović's positioning of his HQ on the extreme western edge of his territory was 'highly precarious' and advised *him* to move. ⁹⁰ This was followed by a signal informing Armstrong that in view of this situation, an agreement had been reached with Tito that any BLOs who might be captured by the partisans would be treated as members of the Allied army and sent to Maclean's mission for evacuation. ⁹¹ Two questions spring to mind: how else should they have been treated, and what had happened to the British organizing and co-ordinating the resistance? The answer to the second point is to be found in Maclean's statement:

There is, of course, no question of any Allied officer or other outside authority conducting the operations of the National Liberation Army or in any way directing its strategy.⁹²

Tito had agreed that it would be "useful" for Maclean to keep him informed of the main lines of Allied policy, and he had undertaken to do what he could to further Allied plans. Maclean thought this help would be in direct proportion to the amount of material help. The British knew that Mihailović had no-one else to turn to: he constantly hoped for aid from the USA but, although sympathetic, the Americans regarded Yugoslavia as a British sphere of influence. By contrast, the British were constantly aware that Tito could turn to the Soviets; they probably overestimated Soviet interest and intentions to begin with, but it was a possibility which coloured British perceptions. It played an important part in Maclean's recommendations which were largely designed to win Tito and the partisans away from their primary loyalty to the USSR.

Having formed a favourable impression of Tito and his movement, and discussed the best way of increasing supplies to them, ⁹³ Maclean set out for the coast, walking most of the way, ^{to explore} possible landing places for seaborne supplies. After a not-so-brief sojourn on the

island of Korčula, during which time a boat bearing aid for the partisans arrived, Maclean made the return journey to Jajce. On 5 October, 19 days after his first arrival there, the ambassador-leader set out for the coast once more to make his way via the islands of Hvar and Vis to Italy by sea and from there to Cairo.⁹⁴

By 5 November, Maclean was in Cairo, where he met Sir Alexander Cadogan and Anthony Eden on their way back from the Foreign Ministers' Conference in Moscow. Maclean presented Eden with a written report on the situation in Yugoslavia, to be passed on to Churchill before he left England to attend first the Cairo Conference with Roosevelt, and then the Teheran Conference of 'the Big Three'.95

This report - "the blockbuster" - was probably the most influential document produced by any british officer in Yugoslavia during the war. That fact makes it all the more unfortunate that it was so inaccurate. The reason for its inaccuracy was that it was based entirely on partisan sources. During Maclean's brief time in Yugoslavia, which he mainly seems to have spent 'yomping' between Jajce and the coast, he simply had not covered enough ground or gained enough first-hand intelligence to produce an accurate and impartial assessment.

The 'blockbuster' proved Selborne's doubts about whether Maclean had the experience to be both political and military adviser to the commander of 65,000 guerrillas to have been well-founded. The first point to note is that these 65,000 had risen to 220,000. The numbers game is a feature of Yugoslav wartime history, whether it be the number of Serbs massacred by their collective enemies, or, as in this case, the number of partisans at Tito's disposal. There are so many - and so disparate - estimates of the numbers of partisans that the only positive statement to be made on the subject is that no-one, other than possibly the partisans themselves, really had any idea of the exact figure. That Maclean's estimate is far too high is borne out by his subsequent accounts, which contain a number of different figures, but never again reached 220,000.97 There is also the sheer impracticality of keeping such a huge

force in existence in the conditions prevailing in wartime Yugoslavia, where many of the partisans were drawn from the dispossessed and had to rely on requisitioning foodstuffs from local populations for survival.

Maclean's claim that, when engaging the enemy, the partisans counted on losing only one fighter for every five Germans killed, and one dead partisan for every ten Ustašas or chetniks, reads like something from an ancient heroic Balkan ballad. According to the blockbuster, the partisans were also between ten and twenty times more numerous than Mihailović's forces, and "infinitely better organized, better equipped and better disciplined".98 The partisans were certainly better equipped after their gains from the Italians - and Maclean was on the way to increasing the discrepancy; the organization and discipline ensured by the communist control might well have been superior; but ten or twenty times more numerous was wildly inaccurate, 99 as was the claim that there were 30,000 partisans in Serbia itself. 100 This misinformation reflects the fact that Maclean had not had any contact with Mihailović-controlled areas, specifically Serbia, or made the slightest attempt to liaise with Bailey and compare notes with him. Bailey's suggestion that he should go to partisan headquarters to do just that had been deemed unsuitable by Cairo, as it would arouse the suspicions of both Mihailović and Tito, and would also be "premature until Fitzroy Maclean is established and we have his opinions". 101 This was in spite of the fact that the original plan for supporting both sides had emphasized the importance of the political advisers with the two resistance leaders maintaining contact with each other.

Politically, Maclean assessed the partisans to be the most important element in Yugoslavia, both in terms of reconstituting the state after the war, and for organizing it on a federal basis where racial harmony would prevail. The YGE was composed of 'traitors and deserters' whose aim was to restore the old régime with all its abuses. King Peter was compromised by his support of Mihailović, although the partisans had 'scrupulously refrained' from attacking him. Members of the Croat Peasant Party who had not thrown in

their lot with the Ustaša had joined the partisans (thus finally knocking on the head the long-cherished illusion of Maček guerrillas), while Maček himself was regarded as a traitor by the partisans. Mihailović was a Pan-Serb, compromised by collaboration, whose organization only continued to exist by means of British support. Withdrawing that support and concentrating resources on the partisans, Maclean argued, would produce immediate military benefits and simultaneously reduce Soviet influence. It would also, at a stroke, end the civil war, since without British aid Mihailović's movement would wither and his followers would transfer to the partisans.¹⁰²

Maclean's political assessment is also obviously based only upon partisan sources, and again reflects the fact that he had not seen enough of the country or its people. Mansfield, of the OSS, reported almost universal support for Mihailović in Serbia, where romantic songs were sung about him and "they talk of him as one would of the Messiah", 103 because Mihailović was perceived as standing for the king and democracy. Maclean patently had no idea of the Serbian loyalty to King Peter or his minister of war, and the partisans would hardly tell him of this, although they were very much aware of it themselves. The fact that they had not attacked the king in their propaganda was due to the fact that they knew this would have done them no good in Serbia where they must establish themselves if they were indeed to be the future rulers of Yugoslavia.

Armstrong and Bailey also produced a report.¹⁰⁴ This was not a blockbuster, but a carefully weighed and considered analysis of the situation which set out the problems with Mihailović and the best way to overcome them. Although it was despatched only one day later than the date of Maclean's report it did not enjoy the same swift channels of transmission, only arriving at the FO on 23 November bearing the date of origin as 18 November. On 27 November, the British Embassy to Yugoslavia in Cairo informed the FO that "we now learn from SOE that the date of the report itself was actually 7th November." ¹⁰⁵ It was a lengthy report and took many days to transmit: it was lengthy - 92 parts in all - and

had taken quite a few of the liaison officers at Mihailović's HQ a good deal of time to encode and transmit: *not* 16 days, however. The hold-up could only have occurred in Cairo SOE.

The Armstrong-Bailey analysis missed Eden by a hair's breadth as he was leaving London to join the PM in Cairo for the Sextant Conference; Eden later told Bailey that he had never seen it at all. 106 It missed Churchill by a mile: he had left on 12 November to embark for Cairo on the battleship Renown. Even if it had arrived in time, it would probably have made little difference; Churchill had already made up his mind in favour of the partisans on receiving Maclean's report. The discrepancies and exaggeration in Maclean's figures had been picked up at the FO, 107 but Churchill used them as a basis for all his discussions in November 1943. The Renown put in at Malta en route to Cairo, and at a meeting on 18 November with the commanders of the Mediterranean forces, Churchill spoke of the 'unsatisfactory situation' in the Balkans where the Germans had recovered their balance after the collapse of Italy and were now pressing back the partisans. 108 Churchill might - but does not appear to have stopped to wonder how this might be, given the attrition rate of five to one claimed by Maclean for German-partisan fighting. The slow Allied advance through Italy had allowed the Germans to transfer several divisions to the Russian front. The Western Allies had not only failed to take the weight off the Soviets but also failed to provide proper support for the partisans in Yugoslavia and Albania, despite the fact that "they are containing as many divisions as the British and American Armies put together." 109

At the Sextant Conference with Roosevelt in Cairo, Churchill made the same point, again quoting Maclean's figures. In the interim, the COS had managed to convince the PM that it was unnecessary to open a bridgehead on the Dalmatian coast and he now asserted that there was no need for regular formations in Yugoslavia. "All that was needed there was a generous packet of supplies, of air support, and possibly a few Commandos." 110

On 25 November the COS set out their thoughts on Mediterranean strategy: while remaining committed to Overlord in spring-summer 1944, they felt the surest and fastest way

to victory was to stretch the Germans as far as possible by threatening their vital interests in the area. In Italy the offensive would be pushed as far as the Pisa-Rimini line, while in Yugoslavia, Albania and Greece, Allied policy should be placed on a regular military basis with intensification of measures to nourish partisans and irregular forces in these countries. ¹¹¹ This in turn meant that SOE would take on a more regular military aspect and become greatly enlarged by forces drawn from bodies such as the commandos.

At the 'Big Three Conference' in Teheran, Stalin appeared unmoved by Churchill's enthusiasm for the partisans. The possible entry of Turkey on the Allied side, the support of Yugoslavia and the capture of Rome were all 'relatively unimportant': what Stalin was interested in was Overlord. 112 Nevertheless, at the end of the conference the first of the five 'military conclusions' was that the Yugoslav partisans should receive the greatest possible support in order to mystify and mislead the enemy. 113 One reason for Stalin not sharing Churchill's optimistic view of the partisans, was that the Soviets were highly sceptical about British figures for German divisions being contained in the Balkans. 114 Another reason might have been that on the day the Teheran conference opened, Tito held a meeting of AVNOJ at Jajce which essentially took the form of a new government in Yugoslavia. Tito had informed Dimitrov of his plans for this while the Foreign Ministers Conference was in progress in Moscow, and Stalin was expecting some adverse reaction from his Western Allies.¹¹⁵ None was forthcoming. This was partly due to the fact that the British and Americans were unaware of the full ramifications of the AVNOJ declarations: although some of the BLOs with the partisans had attended the meeting, they probably did not understand what was being said. PWE provided a text, but -apparently due to some problems with monitoring or translating - managed to miss out the parts that might have aroused the suspicion or antagonism of the British, particularly the one that forbade King Peter to return to Yugoslavia until the people themselves had decided. 116

While the Teheran conference was in progress, Maclean managed to fly back into

Yugoslavia. After a few failed attempts involving squadrons of fighters, 117 he had extricated Deakin and a partisan delegation¹¹⁸ just in time for Maclean and Deakin to meet Churchill in Cairo. The FO had asked for Armstrong and Bailey to be brought to Egypt at the same time as Maclean and the partisan delegation, to be on hand for consultation and to provide details on the situation in Serbia. 119 The Special Operations Committee in Cairo appeared to agree that this was a good idea, but managed to find vast numbers of dangers and complications in the proposal: they felt that the presence of Armstrong and Bailey in Cairo at the same time as the partisans "would lead to suspicion and misunderstanding on both sides."120 Weeks went by while the possibility of bringing Bailey out - SOE had decided that Armstrong's place was with his mission - was discussed, but no action taken.¹²¹ Finally SOE stated that it was an impractical suggestion and simply could not be done, and in any case it was unlikely that Bailey would be "able to add very much to our knowledge regarding the situation in Serbia, about which we have recently received such voluminous telegraphic reports."122 Thus, in December 1943, while the policy of supporting both resistance movements in Yugoslavia was still technically in existence, it was only the partisans' case which was represented in Cairo.

CHAPTER VIII

DITCHING MIHAILOVIĆ:

OR THROWING OUT THE BABY WITH THE BATHWATER

Churchill's Cairo meeting with Maclean and Deakin, at which the latter presented what he describes as a 'hostile brief' on Mihailović, set the seal on the fate of the Yugoslav minister of war. On 10 December 1943, Churchill declared that he wanted Mihailović removed by the end of the year. General Wilson suggested the simple expedient of letting him 'rot and drop off the branch'. This, however, did not answer the case: while Churchill was keen to capitalize on the partisans' more aggressive approach to warfare, regardless of their political colouring, there was still the matter of King Peter and his throne to be resolved.

In the spring of 1943 the YGE had again been plunged into crisis: an ongoing dispute between the Yugoslav ministers in London and Šubašić, Ban of Croatia, in the USA, was preventing the formulation of a declaration of policy on support for a united Yugoslavia. A further complication had been added by King Peter's desire to marry. Slovene opinion was favourable, Croat indifferent, while some of the Serb ministers regarded the celebration of the monarch's nuptials in wartime to be totally out of keeping with Serb tradition. The FO was inclined to agree with the Serbs, fearing that his marriage outside the country, while his people suffered occupation, might lose him support. In addition, the king's future mother-in-law, Princess Aspasia of Greece, was perceived as potentially an even more baleful influence than his own mother. Jovanović finally resigned on 17 June and Trifunović took over, although his premiership was short-lived as he too failed to resolve the problems.

By this time the FO was heartily sick of the YGE - a feeling not entirely unreciprocated - and plans were made to move King Peter and a small group of ministers to the Middle East.⁸ The general idea was that they would thus be closer to their homeland as new developments took place there: it would also get the YGE out of the FO's hair.⁹ The king, his new premier Božidar Purić and the mini-cabinet arrived in Cairo in September 1943,¹⁰ where Ralph Skrine Stevenson replaced Rendel as the British Ambassador to the Yugoslav government. This was not a fortunate change for the YGE. Rendel had become rather fed up with the exiles' wranglings, and had made the departure for Cairo his excuse to give up his post. Nevertheless, however fed up he became, Rendel had always attempted to be fair and had done his best to put the Yugoslav case to the FO. He had also witnessed the emergence of Mihailović as resistance leader, and was keenly aware of the British role in getting the YGE to recognize him, a fact which often led Rendel to argue for patience and fair-play for Mihailović. Stevenson shared none of this history, and in the absence of it relied heavily on Cairo SOE and, subsequently, on the advice of Deakin and Maclean.

When the new Allied missions were established in Yugoslavia in September, it was hoped that not only would they be able to reconcile the internal divisions, but also pave the way for the return of Peter as a constitutional monarch. A new propaganda line was proposed which would play down the old parties and affiliations associated with the exiled politicians, and portray King Peter as quite separate and independent, representing him as a unifying force with modern democratic ideas. Eden and the FO had given up on the exiled politicians: while not a little weary of the king's own contributions to the problems, they still regarded him as the best hope of reconstituting Yugoslavia after hostilities had ceased. Churchill's own fondness for royalty and conviction that it was essential that Peter regain his throne, combined with his rose-tinted view of Tito led the PM to conceive of a post-war Yugoslavia ruled jointly by the king and the communist guerrilla leader.

The FO did not share Churchill's insouciance regarding the partisans' political colouring,

and sounded out SOE on rescuing Maček from Croatia. It was felt that Maček would provide an "invaluable counterpoise to the pan-Serb element on the one hand and the communist element among the partisans on the other". The news that the partisans viewed Maček as a traitor led the FO to conclude that the communists were determined to suppress all political competitors, and made him even more valuable in their eyes as a possible rival to Tito in Croatia. PWE disagreed, arguing that Maček would do little to solve the YGE divisions and, since the partisans suspected him of being an *attentiste*, he would be more hindrance than help in reconciling Peter and the partisans. Quite how he could have been other than *'attentiste'* under house arrest is another question. SOE Cairo settled the matter by stating that the rescue was impossible: the partisans suspected Maček of opposing their movement, and without their connivance and help nothing could be done. There does not appear to be any evidence of SOE broaching the subject with the partisans, presumably for fear of offending them.

Fitzroy Maclean's 'blockbuster' had been received with caution at the FO. They were particularly doubtful of his assessments of Serbia, on which his information could not be reliable "since it can only have been obtained from the partisans themselves". To maintain Yugoslavia as a single state, Rose argued, it was necessary to obtain an agreement between the partisans and the king, who would bring Serbia with him. This was incompatible with Maclean's recommendation that the British drop Mihailović: it would either also mean a break with King Peter or, if he accepted it, his own rejection by the Serbs. Howard agreed: the liaison officers had reported that Mihailović represented the majority of Serbs; to abandon him was tantamount to handing them over to communism. It was one thing to increase supplies to the partisans, quite another to break with Mihailović. Eden and Orme Sargent were rather less convinced, fearing that it might eventually be unavoidable to come down in favour of Maclean's proposal on Mihailović "even though this will mean sacrificing our long-term political objectives to short-term military necessities". 18

Only a few days after the lengthy FO minutes on Maclean's report had been written up, three telegrams arrived from Stevenson in Cairo. The first relayed a message from Armstrong, showing Mihailović's position in Serbia to be paramount: Howard was just about to submit a minute to the COS saying that in view of this the British could not throw him over and support only the partisans. The second two telegrams completely changed the position.

They suggest that Mihailović's fear of communism has driven him into active collaboration with Nedić and therefore indirectly with the Germans. If the case is proved against him it will mean a radical alteration to our whole policy.²⁰

This dramatic new development was the result of messages from Lieutenant-Colonel Cope, a BLO at Djurić's headquarters, concerning an order issued by Mihailović. Following the Venezia Division incident, the disastrous BBC broadcasts and the failure of the British at his HQ to prevent the partisans encroaching on his territory, Mihailović had decided to go back on his promise to avoid fighting the partisans. The latter had attacked his own men in the rear while they were fighting Germans, and he instructed his commanders to use the same tactic - and any others necessary to drive the partisans out of the area. He went on to refer to Nedić's recent mobilization order for young men: as his forces were in such desperate need of clothing, arms and ammunition this seemed a golden opportunity to obtain them from Nedić, with the proviso that only people who had first taken an oath of loyalty to the Mihailović movement should answer the call-up. Each one should swear to come over to the Mihailović forces when he got the word and desert rather than fight against them. Only the most reliable men were to be put forward, and Nedić would only "obtain apparent hold of our men."²²

The interpretation of this in Cairo as an order to collaborate²³ seems to have stemmed from a garbled version radioed to SOE by Cope. It was either the result of Cope, who did not read Serbo-Croatian,²⁴ misunderstanding the order or, more likely, Djurić deliberately

misleading his BLOs: given his past history, any information emanating from Djurić should have been treated with caution in SOE Cairo. 25 The situation highlights the problems inherent in the communications system of the British missions who did not have direct radio contact with each other, which meant in this case that Armstrong and Bailey could not obtain first-hand information from Cope and Major Raw at Djurić's HQ. Raw had persuaded Djurić to come to some sort of agreement with the partisans in his area, 26 which had earned him a severe reprimand from Mihailović: Bailey thought this might have aroused in Djurić an anxiety that could have caused him to be "a little careless in his allegations". 27 Djurić muddied the water further by telling Cope that Mihailović had issued another order forbidding his commanders to have any dealings with the Nedić government without his express orders, and to have no dealings with the Germans. Djurić claimed to be unable to understand this "reversal of policy". 28 The reason that Djurić could not understand the "reversal" was that it was no such thing, but what Mihailović had ordered in the first place. It appears that Djurić was trying to cover himself before he handed the original text to Cope. 29

By the time the full text of Mihailović's order reached Cairo much damage had been done to his reputation.³⁰ A detailed explanation from Bailey illustrating precisely why it was impossible that Mihailović could have issued an order to collaborate with Nedić appears to have made little impact.³¹ The concept of Mihailović as a collaborator had been established, and the debate had turned from whether to make a break with him to how and when. On 2 December Cairo SOE advocated an immediate break.³² A telegram addressed to the Dominion prime ministers on 6 December indicates that neither the full text of the order nor Bailey's message had been widely disseminated.³³ This is presumably another example of Bailey's and Armstrong's communications going through very slow channels of transmission.³⁴

It was hardly surprising that the combination of this 'new evidence' and Maclean and

Deakin's personal opinions led Churchill to the conclusion that Mihailović should be dropped by the end of the year. In addition, he was perceived as a major obstacle to King Peter reaching an agreement with Tito. This was why the suggestion that he be left to drop off the branch would not do; the king had to repudiate his minister of war and openly embrace Tito if he stood any chance of regaining his throne. While King Peter was quite amenable to dealing with Tito, he was rather more reluctant to disavow someone who had upheld his cause so loyally throughout the war.³⁵

Even before Churchill's declaration, there had been considerable pressure on the king and the YGE to dismiss Mihailović from the post of minister of war. When Jovanović resigned, Cairo SOE had suggested that this might an opportune moment not to reappoint him. On November Eden met King Peter and Purić and pressed the matter by telling them that, at the Moscow conference, it had become obvious that the Soviet government had a very low opinion of Mihailović's attitude. Molotov, the Soviet foreign minister, had apparently shown considerable interest when Eden mentioned that the British intended to ask the general to carry out certain specific military operations in the near future, and that a failure to accede to this request would lead the British to revise their policy of helping him. Had Purić seen some of the reports from Armstrong and Bailey, and pleas for sorties from other BLOs in Serbia, he might have been tempted to ask: 'what help?'. As it was, he protested that it was in both British and Yugoslav interests that Mihailović should be able to deploy sufficient forces around Belgrade at the time of liberation to hold the country for the king. The protested that it was in both British and Yugoslav interests that Mihailović should be able to deploy sufficient

The 'specific military operations' Eden mentioned were not only to test Mihailović's willingness to act, but also to convince Peter that he should dismiss his minister and rely in future on British advice.³⁸ Cairo SOE set up the test operation convinced that Mihailović could not, or would not, carry it out, thus providing the justification they wanted for making a break.³⁹ The test required Mihailović's forces to destroy railway bridges in the Ibar and Morava valleys; he was asked to confirm his agreement before 29 December.⁴⁰

Cairo had underestimated both Mihailović's forces and the BLOs with them. An affirmative reply was received with a request for supplies of explosives and arms and for an extension of the deadline until mid-January, which was the earliest the operations could be accomplished because of the scale of planning needed. Cairo stated that they already had enough explosives in the country, and no extra sorties would be flown in connection with the operation, nor would matériel used in the job be replaced afterwards. Mihailović's agreement to carry out the operations caused consternation at the FO. A successful completion of the 'test' would be a potential source of embarrassment and the excuse for breaking with Mihailović would be void: therefore it had to be cancelled.

Cairo's signal to Armstrong telling him not to proceed with the operations, apparently on the grounds that it would be British and not Yugoslav people who would blow the bridges,⁴⁴ brought forth an explosive response. Armstrong berated Cairo for the dreadful position he and his officers had been placed in, and for a total lack of understanding of what was involved in planning the operations, which included wide-scale attacks by Mihailović commanders on a variety of enemy strongholds.⁴⁵ All the BLOs involved realized that this was a test,⁴⁶ and were certain that Mihailović knew too. They had pulled out all the stops, made plans and reconnoitres in fearful winter conditions, not without danger to themselves, while intelligence on rail traffic had been laboriously collected by Serbs. Now they were ordered to cancel the whole operation, having gone to these lengths also knowing that it was not even the optimum time to carry out these particular acts of sabotage.⁴⁷ It can only be assumed that the BLOs, whatever their individual views of Mihailović, thought highly enough of the forces they were with to try their utmost to pass the test.

The fact that the test operation was not a genuine last chance must have been glaringly obvious, since on 13 December Cairo SOE had sent a signal to all BLOs in Mihailović territory - 'at their discretion' - to leave the commanders they were with and join the nearest Partisan group.⁴⁸ Presumably this is an example of Cairo SOE jumping the gun and reacting

to Churchill's 10 December pronouncement to carry out their expressed desire to make an immediate break. It was an absurd signal, not least because for most of the BLOs concerned there were no partisans to join in their vicinity: even if there had been, some assessed this line of action as "the quickest way to get to get a knife in the back we could think of".⁴⁹ Subsequent signals confused the issue further, eventually leaving the BLOs with no idea of what was going on and unsure of whether they were to go or stay.⁵⁰ In addition to the cancellation of the test operation, other planned sabotage operations were halted at the last moment.⁵¹ A few BLOs took the signal seriously and left for the partisans. Bailey left in January, not to join the partisans, but in a last-ditch attempt to get out to Cairo and see what was actually going on.⁵²

The order for the BLOs in Serbia to pull out had been cancelled by the FO, who had finally caught up with the full implications of the AVNOJ declarations of 29 November at Jajce. ⁵³ Having thought that simply disowning Mihailović would enable King Peter to be recognized by Tito, ⁵⁴ the FO was now presented with the fact that the partisans had forbidden the king to return until allowed to do so by the people of Yugoslavia. Orme Sargent wondered what had happened since Maclean had left Yugoslavia: when he last saw Tito, Maclean had received reassurances that the latter was resolved not to raise the question of the monarchy at this juncture. Orme Sargent wondered whether it was due to Russian pressure, the military discussions at Alexandria leading Tito to conclude he was in such a strong position militarily that he could make political terms, or possibly that he had made some arrangement with the Greek communists. ⁵⁵ It might simply have been that Tito knew the British were ditching Mihailović, regardless of the negotiations over the monarchy. The message to the BLOs to desert to the partisans was sent on 13 December. At about the same time, Deakin took over as head of the Yugoslav desk in Cairo, and SOE had arranged with the partisans that any such BLOs coming their way would be given safe conduct. On 14

December partisan HQ instructed Velebit, head of the delegation to the Middle East, to pass on to the Allies the full text of the AVNOJ declarations, drawing their attention particularly to the part relating to the YGE and King Peter.⁵⁶

FO dismay increased when Maclean took the view that no useful purpose would be served by raising the question of the monarchy with the partisans.⁵⁷ Maclean also pointed out that the plan to send Peter to join Tito would be viewed as coming two years too late. The idea of sending King Peter to join the partisans is perhaps an indication of the desperation setting in as regards obtaining an agreement between him and Tito, before the latter was in such a strong position that he would be able to 'snap his fingers' at the British. The FO thought that if Peter could be returned to Yugoslavia the partisans would find it difficult to oppose him, given the fact that many of the partisans' followers were still monarchists at heart.⁵⁸

The clarification of the AVNOJ declaration and Maclean's opinions gave the FO pause for thought. They began to question the wisdom of abandoning Mihailović with the speed recommended by Stevenson and Maclean, especially as in the interim Mihailović had offered to come to an arrangement with Tito.⁵⁹ This had been dismissed by Stevenson as a delaying tactic,⁶⁰ and by Eden as a death-bed repentance:⁶¹ both felt that even bringing up the question with Tito would undermine his confidence in the British and scupper the plan to bring him together with the king. All suggestions for trying to bring pressure on Tito by, for example, threatening to withhold supplies had been vetoed in Cairo as counterproductive.⁶² The British were left with only one bargaining counter - Mihailović - and, by extension, the BLOs with his forces. Leaving them where they were, even if their position was hazardous, was part of the plan to persuade Tito to come to an agreement. If King Peter would give all-out support to the partisans, the FO reasoned, then many of his Serbian subjects would follow his example: the BLOs in Serbia would be able to facilitate this change. Conversely, if Tito would not make an agreement, then the whole policy regarding Mihailović might need to be

reconsidered, so the BLOs should remain where they were.⁶³ The men themselves eventually came to feel that they were being treated as expendable and that they had been abandoned by Cairo SOE. Whether Cairo SOE cared about their welfare or not, and there were elements who did not, the suggestion that their safety was worth the gamble was first voiced at the FO.⁶⁴ The BLOs were left in a state of limbo, kicking their heels in Serbia, receiving no sorties except for occasional drops of personal items, and with nothing to do, except for a few adventurous spirits who went in for some freelance sabotage.⁶⁵

Meanwhile, attempts to reach an agreement over King Peter's throne continued with an appeal to the Soviets to use their good offices to persuade the partisans to accept the king. In return, the FO would advise the king to dismiss Mihailović and get the chetniks to co-operate with the partisans. ⁶⁶ The Soviets, as usual, claimed that they did not know enough about the Yugoslav situation to interfere, and would prefer to wait until their own mission arrived there. ⁶⁷

Maclean's advice offered no comfort to the FO, until eventually someone there wondered if he and Stevenson were simply following a policy of total appeasement towards the partisans.⁶⁸ Maclean was certain that getting rid of Mihailović was essential, but equally positive that this would not sway Tito towards the king. However, once Mihailović had been dropped he thought there *might* be some chance of an agreement.⁶⁹ Maclean's opinion was seconded by Deakin and Stevenson; Randolph Churchill, who was about to join Maclean's mission, concurred. Their combined opinions convinced Churchill that this was the course to follow.⁷⁰ (The PM, with fond fatherly affection, thought that Randolph was *always* right an opinion not universally shared.) Churchill now perceived Mihailović not as a bargaining counter but "a millstone round the neck of the little king" - he had to go.⁷¹ Eden was not so taken with the advice the PM was receiving from Cairo. He commented: "Naturally to Maclean Tito is all white and Mihailović all black. I have a suspicion that grey is a more

common Balkan colour".⁷² The Foreign Secretary urged caution until an agreement had been reached with Tito, and the British had something concrete to offer the king in return for dismissing Mihailović. But Churchill also saw the question only in black and white, and was adamant that the solution lay with King Peter dismissing Mihailović immediately, rather than in the British simply disowning him.⁷³ Eden had warned that before any spectacular break was made with Mihailović, the "case against him for treachery must be unanswerable":⁷⁴ to fail to make this case would be a gift to German propaganda.

SOE Cairo produced the 'evidence' for the case, which was thin to say the least, resting mainly on contacts between Axis forces and various commanders Mihailović admitted to be "part of his military organization" and the fact that he had taken part in operations against the partisans. Stevenson rounded it off by re-running the Cope telegrams affair. The 'evidence' did not convince the FO, or change Eden's view of the question, but the initiative had moved to the authorities in Cairo who had Churchill's opinion behind them. Accordingly, the Commander-in-Chief Middle East decided that the BLOs with Mihailović were serving no useful military purpose, "but their presence with his forces reacts unfavourably on our military relations with the partisans".

It was also deemed unproductive to retain an intelligence-gathering mission with Mihailović, despite the military authorities' desire to do so, since without it there would be little or no intelligence emanating from central Serbia. Stevenson argued against this, on the grounds that it would have a detrimental effect on relations with Tito, and that Mihailović would use it as positive propaganda for himself. The information gained would anyway, Stevenson asserted, have little value since Mihailović would simply feed the mission what he wanted them to hear: therefore the disadvantages outweighed the advantages. There was, however, time to consider the matter as Armstrong was cut off from Mihailović's HQ by weather and Germans, giving Cairo a week's grace to consult Maclean on Tito's probable reaction, although he thought it likely that Maclean's conclusion would accord with his

own.⁷⁷ This seems more than a little fatuous: Tito was hardly likely to think it a reasonable idea for the British to keep *any* sort of mission with his great rival in view of his plans to move into Serbia.

The British were very concerned about the position of the Americans, fearing that they would insist on keeping an intelligence mission, which would not only embarrass the British, but give Mihailović scope for playing off the British and Americans against each other.⁷⁸ It was known that Mihailović had a wireless link to Fotić,⁷⁹ the Yugoslav ambassador in Washington, and that Mansfield was making his way out of Yugoslavia with messages for Eisenhower and Roosevelt.⁸⁰ SOE and OSS in Cairo had discussed the possibility that Mihailović was receiving encouragement from Washington, and both appreciated the inherent danger of a rift.⁸¹ Donovan was very much in favour of retaining an American presence with Mihailović, and the State Department had strong views on the necessity of securing intelligence from his territory.⁸² After much discussion, dispute and diplomatic pressure, the British prevailed and the Americans agreed to withdraw the last OSS officer along with the British missions.⁸³

Supporting Tito, who had plenty of admirers in OSS, was not at issue.⁸⁴ The main difference between the British and Americans was the question of abandoning Mihailović. Just before the Teheran Conference, Donovan had proposed to Roosevelt that both resistance movements should receive all possible aid. The president agreed, but did little to push the idea at Teheran in the face of Churchill's determination to obtain a declaration of full Allied support for the partisans.⁸⁵

Once Mansfield arrived in Cairo he produced a long and detailed report, which, although not uncritical of Mihailović's leadership, presented a very positive image of his movement's potential. On the strength of this, Donovan decided to send a larger OSS team to Serbia, but at the last moment the missions were stood down after Churchill had appealed to Roosevelt

to fall in with British policy for the sake of Allied unity.⁸⁷ Even so, SOE's suspicion that Donovan would attempt to send an intelligence-gathering mission of some sort to Serbia turned out to be correct.⁸⁸ On 26 August 1944 Lt.-Colonel Robert Macdowell arrived in Serbia, ostensibly on the purely humanitarian mission of arranging the evacuation of downed USAAF aircrew, but with the main function of intelligence-gathering. The resulting report, dated 23 November 1944, was very much at odds with British conclusions regarding the Serbian nationalist movement and Mihailović.⁸⁹

The final order to the BLOs in Serbia to leave was a total debâcle, largely due to Churchill and his efforts to save King Peter's throne. On 25 February 1944, Churchill, ignoring Eden's advice, sent a message to Tito through Maclean, informing him that the British missions were being withdrawn from Mihailović and pleading the case for King Peter. Two days later Philip Broad, who was now attached to Stevenson's embassy as an adviser, told Deakin that OSS were not to see the PM's message, adding a post-script about a delayed FO signal instructing SOE to tell Mihailović first. If it was not too late, Maclean should delay passing the letter to Tito until Armstrong's second-in-command, Howard, had received the order. Although Maclean received the warning in time, on 1 March he was told to deliver the letter to Tito, but to emphasize its secrecy. On the same day, the order arrived at Mihailović's HQ: both he and Armstrong were still absent, so Howard handed the message to one of Mihailović's senior officers.

By 7 March it had still not been possible to communicate the message to Mihailović. Nevertheless, Stevenson could "see no harm" in agreeing to Maclean's request for Tito to repeat the PM's message to his committee, "providing secrecy will be observed". 94 This was an unlikely proposition - the withdrawal of the British from Mihailović was too good a piece of propaganda for the partisans to pass up. It had, anyway, been in the air since mid December, and had undoubtedly strengthened the partisan's negotiating hand. If Tito was

telling the truth when he informed Moscow that Maclean had said that the British would not insist on the king,⁹⁵ then the partisans held *all* the cards. It was little wonder that the British were making no headway in gaining any concessions over King Peter's throne.

Before Armstrong or Mihailović returned to HQ, the message Howard had delivered produced a reaction from a group of Serb officers there. They told Howard that they opposed Mihailović's go-slow policy and, claiming a strong following both inside and outside Serbia, asserted that their main aim was to fight the occupiers while avoiding civil war with the partisans. They felt the only way to achieve this was to replace Mihailović and suggested Colonel Radović or Colonel Putnik as suitable candidates, emphasizing that for any replacement to enjoy sufficient authority in Serbia, he would have to be appointed by the king.⁹⁶

The idea of replacing Mihailović had first been mooted in November 1943, when some of the British sub-missions had been asked to assess the reaction of local commanders if Mihailović was to be removed. The mission in eastern Serbia - once they had recovered from the initial shock - replied that they thought things would fall apart unless the king himself took over and-or a great deal more support was forthcoming. Bailey and Armstrong had made detailed plans for Radović to return to Yugoslavia, possibly to set up a separate command in southern Serbia: they were uncertain as to what his attitude to the partisans might be - possibly, they thought, not entirely different to that of Mihailović Radović War and becoming simply a commander in Serbia, a suggestion which Purić was not inclined to go along with. Armstrong and Bailey's plans had become submerged in the Cope-Djurić affair, following which just getting rid of Mihailović became the main issue, rather than what would happen afterwards. The suggestion by some of the sub-missions that the king should come in to take over became submerged in Churchill's plan to engineer a partnership between Tito and King Peter.

The officers who had approached Howard made it plain that Serbia and the Serbian people would never accept a government headed by Tito. They did not support the YGE, but were universally loyal to the monarchy. These ideas had been expressed at the recent National Congress - organized by Mihailović in January 1944, in answer to the establishment of AVNOJ as an alternative government - at which a number of prominent political figures had met to discuss the future political orientation of the country. In addition, the officers were convinced that Maček, who was anti-communist and pro-monarchy, still enjoyed great support in Croatia. In view of this General Wilson concluded:

It is not possible to bring about a united anti-German Yugoslavian [sic] resistance movent. This does not mean however that it is impossible to develop matters in such a way that Serbs on the one hand, and the Partisans on the other, act independently to produce the maximum resistance against the Germans.¹⁰⁰

Wilson favoured the idea of replacing Mihailović with someone who was more active - providing he and Tito could reach an agreement - as it would be of enormous benefit in stretching the Germans to the limit. The military authorities still hoped for a similar agreement to that reached by the resistance movements in Greece.

When Bailey reached Cairo, he produced an appreciation on the possibility of the dissidents at Mihailović's HQ taking command. In this he asserted that while Tito was supreme in both a political and military sense in the greater part of the country, his writ did not - and would not - run in Serbia. Mihailović was unshakeable in his determination to fight partisans rather than Germans: once the Allied missions withdrew, Mihailović would concentrate on this, while Tito would endeavour to fight his way into Serbia. The ensuing protracted and indecisive fight would cancel out any military advantages the Allies might have from Yugoslav resistance. Bailey's solution was that, before the Allied missions departed, they should encourage the dissidents to take the law into their own hands by removing Mihailović and his immediate entourage. The dissidents should then reach a

territorial agreement with Tito and initiate action against the Germans, while abstaining from politics and concentrating on purely military activity. Meanwhile Tito should be advised to discontinue his efforts to fight his way back into Serbia. Arrangements should be made for the dissidents to maintain contact with the British in North Africa, and Bailey suggested that he should return himself to liaise with them.¹⁰¹ This was turned down by the Special Operations Committee,¹⁰² although the reason is difficult to understand, since, if the plan to replace Mihailović had been carried out, it would surely have obviated the need to withdraw the British missions.

The fact that Bailey wanted to return indicated that he felt he could work with Mihailović's successors to achieve something positive. In London on 14 March, Bailey attended a meeting with Churchill, Eden and high-ranking officials of the FO. It was recognized that while Mihailović's position was strong in Serbia, as long as he remained in control there was little chance of using his forces to further British interests. It was proposed that King Peter should be persuaded to dismiss his entire government, including Mihailović, and to send in a new commander-in-chief to take over. Bailey felt this plan was unlikely to succeed: he argued that Mihailović would probably refuse to obey the king's orders on the grounds that he was being seriously misinformed regarding the true situation within the country. The meeting concluded with Churchill instructing SOE to sound out the BLOs, in the utmost secrecy, on the possibility of the dissidents deposing Mihailović themselves, and of the BLOs own safety if the palace coup should fail.¹⁰³

One of the dissidents was in London at the time, as Mihailović's representative at King Peter's wedding. Lukačević suggested to Bailey the organization of a mobile force of about 3,000 men who would wear British uniform and come under the direct control of the Commander-in-Chief Middle East. Lukačević asserted that he could get this force off the ground within one month of his return to Yugoslavia and double its size within three months. It would need a British mission to provide technical expertise and liaison with the

C-in-C Middle East to carry out specific operations, such as the Ibar and Morava bridges scheme suggested in December. ¹⁰⁴ Lukačević had been one of the group of officers who had persuaded Mihailović to agree to that particular proposal and to make the offer of negotiations with Tito. At the time, Lukačević had been against any suggestion of replacing or dismissing Mihailović for fear of fragmenting the movement in Serbia. The dissenting officers' grievances against Mihailović stemmed from his inactivity and his pursuit of the civil war: they were willing to make non-aggression pacts with the partisans to facilitate actions against the Germans, but were not willing to join forces with the communists. ¹⁰⁵ The new force that Lukačević proposed would not fight the partisans, and would disregard any adverse orders it received from Mihailović.

Bailey felt that Lukačević's standing with Mihailović's staff, commanders and troops would meant that the plan stood a reasonable chance of success, and appears to have been in favour of giving it a try. ¹⁰⁶ However, at the FO, the plan was deemed to contain too many difficulties and political complications: these included the fact that as the British were at the time withdrawing their missions from Serbia it would be difficult to explain it to Tito. ¹⁰⁷

In Cairo SOE there was already an established preference for supplying and building up the partisans in Serbia, rather than trying to salvage what they could of Mihailović's organization. Stawell, who had replaced Keble in November 1943, co-ordinated the BLO's opinions, which indicated that the dissidents were not capable of deposing Mihailović, and added his own. He concluded that the partisans in Serbia should be supported, while W/T sets were left with the more dissatisfied commanders such as Djurić, Marković and Pavlović. Stawell must have been basing his judgement on the same exaggerated figures for partisan numbers in Serbia as Keble had used in his earlier reports: 110 the BLOs on the ground could have told him that the partisans were very much in the minority there, so either Stawell was not receiving all their information or he was ignoring it. When they finally

left Yugoslavia, some of the BLOs found areas they knew to be under Mihailović's control were classed as partisan-held territory. He alley had earlier stated that, even with British help, the partisans would not be able to stage effective action against the Germans in Serbia proper. Given Stawell's opinion that the dissidents owed their first loyalty to the king, but their second to Mihailović, while the corps commanders had imposed a discipline which ensured that their men obeyed faithfully, his recommendation could only lead to the civil war being stepped up just as Bailey had warned. Stevenson had previously asserted that the British should not interfere with internal Yugoslav politics: but to supply aid to the partisans in an area where they barely existed could only increase their chances of gaining influence there. Even if the British had given up on Mihailović himself, to give the partisans an entrée into Serbia - where all informed reports indicated that they enjoyed little popular support - was a blatant interference and can only be interpreted as taking sides in the civil war.

After the British missions had left Serbia, the dissidents tried in vain to contact SOE on the transmitters that had been left with them. They eventually concluded that "the broadcasts may not have been listened for at the correct time". In August Lukačević and four others wrote to Maclean asking him to arrange communications for them with the commander of the Allied forces in the Mediterranean and the Royal Yugoslav government. The officers also asked for Maclean's help in concluding a non-aggression pact between their forces and the partisans, so that both could concentrate on fighting the Germans and their allies. This approach, apparently without the knowledge of Mihailović, was welcomed by Macmillan and the Chiefs of Staff as a step towards unity and away from the threat of civil war. However, MO4 was anxious to know what Tito's reaction would be before the British took any action on the proposal. Maclean discussed it with Tito, who said that the "Chetniks must come under his operational control as part of his forces": Maclean and the others had made it plain, both in their letter to Maclean and on previous occasions, that they had no intention of joining the partisans, this was obviously an unsatisfactory reply for them. The opportunity

to use these officers - along with the 15,000 men they claimed to have at their disposal - to carry out the types of operation Lukačević had suggested to Bailey in London was missed.

Bailey's analysis, which had been greeted as sensible by both Selborne and the British military authorities, 117 contained the old problem of separate resistance forces in particular areas: official British policy now favoured a federal Yugoslavia, 118 which coincided with Tito's long-term plan for organizing the country after the war. The whole idea of replacing Mihailović apparently disappeared under the weight of successive preoccupations about Yugoslavia. These were the discussions with Tito about the composition of his Yugoslav government. Having already established AVNOJ as an alternative government, Tito had indicated that additional members might possibly be allowed to join, as long as they were not tainted by any association with Mihailović or the YGE. 120 Churchill had already accepted the advice of Maclean, Stevenson and Randolph that Tito would be the dominant factor in post-war Yugoslavia, and was conducting negotiations on that premise.

Stawell had judged that Mihailović would not endanger the lives of the BLOs: this was unusual, since most of Cairo SOE and various other organizations there were buzzing with the rumour that they were about to have their throats cut. ¹²¹ In fact, nothing could have been further from the truth. After an initial frisson of fear when Cairo SOE was sending messages about fleeing to the partisans, the BLOs were relieved - and somewhat humbled - to find that their hosts treated them with kindness and consideration for their well-being. ¹²² An atmosphere more sorrowful than angry seems to have pervaded the last days of the Allied missions with Mihailović's forces. Many were reluctant to leave the people they had worked with for the past year and whom, in some cases, despite frustrations, they had come to regard as friends. In addition, some of the BLOs felt that they were just beginning to make some headway in persuading their local commanders to become more active and that they were being pulled out at precisely the wrong time. ¹²³ A couple resorted to bypassing

Armstrong, who they felt no longer knew nor cared about what was going on, by sending urgent signals to Cairo SOE in the hope of making them aware of the true situation.¹²⁴ These signals seem to have fallen on deaf ears.

Mihailović accepted the withdrawal; his only conditions were that the missions should not go out through partisan territory and that Lukačević and Bačević - who had left with Bailey - should be returned. The Special Operations Committee found this reply satisfactory and agreed to the return of Lukačević and Bačević, but were in no hurry to send them back, preferring to wait and see if Mihailović would live up to his side of the bargain. However, the FO did not want to give him an excuse for 'running out' on his undertaking to evacuate the missions, and told Cairo to go ahead and return the two officers.

Despite the urgent messages that flew back and forth on the withdrawal of the BLOs, and the precipitate delivery of the final order, they were not evacuated until May.¹²⁷ The only set-back in the final evacuation was caused not by Mihailović attempting to 'run out' on the deal, but by the British themselves who relieved Lukačević and Bačević of some documents they were carrying to Mihailović. When Mihailović learned of this, he detained Armstrong and a few other officers until the documents were sent in on the following day.¹²⁸

When the BLOs arrived in Bari, southern Italy, where SOE had established its new base, they found that their troubles were not over. Far from being welcomed by the organization they had been attempting to serve in the field - often in the face of total incompetence on the part of that organization to say the least - they found themselves treated as pariahs for having been with the 'wrong side'. On a mundane level they were not issued with fresh kit for some days; on a much more serious level, some were not properly debriefed. Attempts to discover some explanation for what they regarded as "the whole mess", produced lame excuses. Attempts to correct information they knew to be erroneous, such as the fact that the areas they had just left and knew to be in nationalist hands were depicted on maps as under partisan control, were met with downright hostility. When some of the more hardy

- or perhaps naïve - souls volunteered to go to the partisans, where they felt their experience might be put to good use, they were informed that Tito had forbidden the return to Yugoslavia of anyone who had served with Mihailović's forces. They were surprised by the very pro-partisan atmosphere which pervaded the SOE office in Bari, and taken aback to be told that they had been brainwashed when they put forward a different opinion. The only friendly greeting they received came from a group of young women in the signals department, who implied that their messages from the field had been tampered with. 133

The BLOs who tried to correct what they perceived as a misguided view, first by sending desperate messages from the field and then by trying to put their case in Bari, essentially had been flogging a dead horse for some time. Once Mihailović had ceased to be a bargaining counter in the negotiations with Tito, his abandonment by the British was certain. The only remaining loose end was the question of King Peter's throne and to some degree the justification of leaving to his fate the leader who had been blown up into the hero of European resistance not so very long before. Thus in an attempt to convince King Peter that he must repudiate Mihailović, and to reassure the FO, the Americans and public opinion that the British were doing the right thing, the old chestnut of collaboration was brought into play in a big way. When the Soviets had first started their campaign against Mihailović in the summer of 1942, the FO had defended him against the allegation that links with the Nedić forces indicated treachery: penetration of Nedić's forces had been regarded as a useful ploy. ¹³⁴ It had, in fact, proved extremely useful for more than one BLO on the ground. 135 In November 1943 Bailey had refuted the idea of co-operation between Mihailović and Nedić, adding that the presence of agents in Nedić's forces and spies with Ljotić's men, were "no more proof of collaboration than the presence of British agents in Germany prove collaboration between us and Hitler". 136

Great play had been made of collaboration with the Italians. This was a trifle duplicitous

of the British, who had supplied gold to Mihailović for the express purpose of buying weapons from the Italians at a time when SOE had not been able to supply matériel themselves. ¹³⁷ Rendel had warned the FO that BBC broadcasts denouncing Slovene village guards for 'collaboration' with the Italians ran the risk of falling into a pit of communist propaganda, not least because Bailey himself had resorted "to various ruses to keep the Italians quiet". ¹³⁸

There appears to have been no hard evidence available to prove any collaboration between Mihailović and the Germans. Cairo SOE had talked of there being enough evidence to justify withdrawing support without the test operation, but although this was constantly promised to the FO, it never seems to have been forthcoming. 139 Interestingly, the one positive contact Mihailović had with the Germans before 1944, when he tried to obtain arms from them to fight the partisans in November 1941, seems to have passed by the British. 140 Subsequent attempts by the Germans and by Nedić to make some sort of deal with Mihailović were rebuffed. 141 Hitler regarded Mihailović as an enemy: a price was put on his head on numerous occasions, although when the same price was put on Tito's head this was given much more publicity in the Allied media. Some of the commanders in Montenegro and Dalmatia, who nominally came under Mihailović's command, and who had been the main instigators of co-operation with the Italians, made agreements with the German forces who replaced the Italians after September 1943, for much the same reasons that they had contacts with the Italians - namely fear of the communists. 142 None of the British officers attached to the commanders in Serbia witnessed any collaboration between the forces they were with and the Germans. 143

Deakin, who had been on the receiving end of Velebit's lessons in Mihailović's collaboration, noted that the partisan forces with which he left Split in September 1943, and a local Ustaša garrison, diplomatically ignored each other's presence.¹⁴⁴ It was a sensible arrangement, since neither wanted a fight at that point: a pragmatic accommodation to

survive. The partisans also had agents in the Ustaša organization, but this continued to be portrayed as a sensible and clever means of gleaning information, while similar tactics by Mihailović were used in evidence against him.

The appellation "collaborator" was allowed to be attached to his name, not necessarily out of conviction but for convenience. Mihailović could not be goaded into the sort of actions that would avoid embarrassment for the diplomats with the Soviets, or which would satisfy the immediate military aims of the Chiefs-of Staff. Churchill's attempts to reconcile Tito and the king further undermined Mihailović's position. That he could not be left to rot and drop off the branch resulted from a dual imperative - a combination of saving King Peter's throne and saving British face. It could not be admitted that support was being withdrawn from him and his movement simply because they were not as active as the partisans.

The case against Mihailović and his followers was summed up in a slim pamphlet, <u>The Chetniks: a Survey</u>, penned in the Bari office of ISLD.¹⁴⁵ It drew together a wide variety of sources, some of which were selectively edited to give the impression that the whole movement was totally useless and thoroughly compromised.¹⁴⁶

CHAPTER IX

BACKING THE PARTISANS: FROM ILLUSION TO REALITY

Following the Chiefs of Staff decision, at the Sextant Conference in Cairo at the end of 1943, to increase supplies to the partisans and to carry out limited operations across the Adriatic, SOE underwent another transformation. With the opening up of southern Italy, Bari became the headquarters of Special Operations Mediterranean (SOM) on 12 April 1944; its purpose was to co-ordinate all special operations organizations in the area. As part of the new unified command, MO4 became Force 133, jointly responsible to London SOE and to Allied Forces HQ. ISLD also moved to Bari to become part of SOM. In early June the Balkan Air Force (BAF) was established under the command of Air Vice-Marshal William Elliot. In July Maclean's mission became No. 37 Military Mission. The Special Operations Committee, chaired by Stawell, despite the FO preference for Philip Broad occupying that position, was responsible for allocating resources to the various missions in the Balkans.

At the meetings in Alexandria between the COS and the partisan delegation, Velebit and his companions had set out their requirements, under the impression that the British had an infinite supply of matériel available. While the Allies were discussing the arming of a guerrilla force, the partisan delegation was in the process of attempting to establish a regular modern army, and form an air force. Velebit later admitted that at that stage the partisans would have been unable to service heavy equipment, even if the British had been able to supply it; there was also a problem in taking delivery, as the partisans were not capable of holding a line against the Germans on the mainland.² Even so, the COS were obviously

impressed by the discussions, and decreed that from January 1944 the Yugoslav partisans should receive 80% of all available supplies.³ Doing their best to comply with Velebit's requests virtually cleared out all available SOE matériel in the Middle East, but the move to Bari meant that Italian equipment became available. Supplies were sent by sea and air to the partisans at a rate which astonished the BLOs returning from the Mihailović forces.⁴ As the scale of operations increased, so did the number of people working for SOE, many being drawn from the commandos or marines.

Both SOE and ISLD Yugoslav offices were largely staffed by people who had long been enthusiastic in their support for the partisans.⁵ The new recruits from the regular military bodies, who did not share the history of SOE dealings with Yugoslavia, were often inclined to cast a colder eye on the partisans. Many found that while the rank and file - and local populations - were friendly and welcoming, the political commissars were often suspicious and distant, if not downright hostile. It was also apparent that the politically-minded partisans much preferred the presence of the Soviet military mission to that of the British:⁶ there were, apparently, attempts to convince the local population that the supplies they received came from the USSR, rather than the Western Allies.⁷ The newcomers also noted - and resented - the fact that they were constantly kept under surveillance by the partisans, and their movements circumscribed "for their own protection". Some were not totally convinced either of the military prowess of the forces they were with.⁸

One reason for keeping a close watch on the members of the British mission was a general mistrust of their motivation, particularly in view of previous British support of Mihailović. The partisans felt that the British had made a choice between carrying out a landing and fighting the partisans or coming to an agreement with them on a mutually profitable basis. "They chose the latter, cautiously and without enthusiasm, while our own dogmatic ideological distrust kept us from understanding them, though it also preserved us from any hasty enthusiasm". Allied bombing of Yugoslav cities, especially of Belgrade which

was bombed on Orthodox Easter Sunday 1944, and again in September, aroused the suspicion that the British were aiming to make post-war reconstruction more difficult for the partisans.¹⁰

Another reason for limiting the movements of the Allied liaison officers was the partisans' desire to disguise the fact that the civil war was continuing. While it had been understood that Mihailović's main intention was to fight the partisans rather than the occupying forces, the fact that Tito's first concern was also to win the civil war took longer to sink in. In April 1944, Tito had issued a reminder to all his commanders that Serbia, and partisan strength there, was of primary importance to the entire National Liberation Movement in Yugoslavia.¹¹ The Americans were concerned about SOE expanding its missions with the partisans in Serbia, lest it should lead to the Allies becoming embroiled in Yugoslav internal troubles: OSS relayed the State Department's view that the complete elimination of Mihailović was undesirable.¹² Philip Broad had reassured the OSS representative that partisans in Serbia would only receive supplies as long as they used them against the occupiers: liaison officers had been instructed to halt supplies at the first hint of them being utilized in purely internal conflict.¹³ As SOE was just pulling out the BLOs with Mihailović, and the BLOs with the partisans were not allowed freedom of movement to make independent observations, this reassurance was somewhat meaningless.

Differences were beginning to become increasingly apparent between Britain and America on the future of the Balkans, fuelled by American suspicions of Britain's imperialistic ambitions in the area. While Washington was trying not to get too involved in Yugoslavia, Churchill's pro-partisan policy did not entirely suit the Americans, ¹⁴ so Donovan sent MacDowell into Serbia on 26 August 1944. ¹⁵ Speaking to some captured partisans, MacDowell discovered that while all had been engaged against 'Nationalist' forces, none of them had fought against Germans or Ustašas: nor had any of them seen any Allied liaison officers in the vicinity of engagements, although some were known to be at rear HQ. MacDowell

asserted that some BLOs and USLOs had reported that they had not been allowed to witness partisan actions, and suspected that rather than attacking the Germans, the partisans were hoarding arms supplied by the Allies for use in the civil war. Farish produced another report; this was very different in tone and content to his first one, which bore striking similarities to Maclean's blockbuster. By June 1944, after two months in Serbia, Farish had become aware of the tragedy befalling the ordinary people, and the fact that American-supplied guns were being used for the civil war rather than against the occupiers. The supplied guns were being used for the civil war rather than against the occupiers.

Having made no headway with his personal appeals to Tito on the question of the monarchy, Churchill decided to try another tack. On 17 May the PM informed Tito that, on British advice, King Peter had dismissed Purić's government - including Mihailović - and was about to form a new administration under Šubašić, Ban of Croatia. King Peter had agreed on 18 March to dismiss Purić, 18 but Eden cautioned that any hiatus in the YGE carried the risk of Tito declaring AVNOJ to be the legitimate government, and perhaps even being recognized as such by the Soviets. The latter might excuse themselves on the grounds that they had not been given prior warning of Purić's dismissal, and the result would be to leave the king in a worse position than ever. 19 What Churchill had in mind was that, on dismissing Purić, King Peter could form a small administration composed of "people not particularly obnoxious to Tito". 20 Šubašić was selected as someone who would "rally a certain force around him": 21 he was also one of the people Tito had named as possibly an acceptable candidate to join AVNOJ, as he was untainted by association with the YGE or Mihailović. 22 It was hoped that Šubašić would be able to negotiate the king's return to Yugoslavia.

Before a meeting could be arranged between Tito and Šubašić, the Germans launched an airborne attack, using gliders and paratroops, on Tito's HQ at Drvar. Martin Gilbert states that Enigma decrypts had indicated the German intention, but, for security reasons, no warning was sent to the British mission.²³ However, both Ralph Bennett and Hilary King -

who was in charge of communications at the British mission - say that the implications of the Enigma decrypts were not fully understood in time to give a warning, even if it had been desirable. Hing and the British mission had noticed a great deal of air reconnaissance and had assumed an attack was imminent, although they thought that it would be a bombing raid rather than an airborne landing, and had moved a few miles down the valley. Tito evaded capture, and a few days later was evacuated to Bari in a British aeroplane flown by a Soviet pilot. After a brief stay in Italy, Tito was moved to the island of Vis, which had been secured by British commandos and partisans, so that he would be on Yugoslav soil.

Macmillan, pondering the psychological effect this might have on Tito, noted: "In some ways it may be helpful because it should increase our hold over him". ²⁵ Churchill had spotted this too: "Tito as a mountain chieftain in the fastness of Yugoslavia, and Tito as our guest on an island protected by British armies are two totally different things". ²⁶ This was a godsent opportunity for King Peter and Šubašić to go at once to Vis and make an agreement for unifying all the forces within Yugoslavia. On 10 June the PM sent Wilson a telegram "in typical language", ²⁷ suggesting that King Peter should land at Vis and take possession of his kingdom. Wilson and Macmillan concluded that the PM was not entirely cognisant of the complications of this, and in the event, Šubašić went to Vis as "John the Baptist", ²⁸ while the king waited at Malta to be wheeled on if Tito was agreeable. ²⁹ Tito, it seemed, was not anxious to meet the king 'at present', ³⁰ in fact, Tito was not anxious to meet the king at all, and was constantly on his guard lest the British should engineer a surprise meeting.

Tito's new location, combined with the fact that the long looked for second front had been opened in western Europe - which should have removed some of the British *angst* regarding Stalin - did not in fact increase the British hold over Tito. Maclean described the meeting between Šubašić and Tito as a great success, at which some real progress had been made:³¹ since *no* progress had been made hitherto in gaining anything in the way of a political agreement from Tito, *any* progress looked good. The main advance appeared to be

that Tito had assured Šubašić that he did not intend to impose communism on post-war Yugoslavia, and had agreed to the formation of a united Yugoslav government which might include elements of the YGE (now a very small body, headed by Šubašić). In return, Šubašić had recognized AVNOJ; he had also agreed to support the partisans and appeal to the people of Yugoslavia to do the same; he would not include anyone hostile to the partisans in his administration.³²

This last point put Topalović out of the running, because of his position as political adviser to Mihailović. Topalović had left Serbia with Bailey in order to put forward the ideas of the National Congress. Before going to Vis, Šubašić had a long discussion with him in Bari, during the course of which Topalović had explained ideas and proposals for ending the internal strife and for the future of a democratic federal Yugoslavia. Topalović had offered to support, and co-operate with, Šubašić's government. One of the proposals was that King Peter should establish himself at a neutral point in Yugoslavia and co-ordinate action between the forces there by acting as commander in chief.³³ However, Šubašić had agreed to Tito's proposal that the question of the monarchy should be left until after the war, which precluded this as a solution to the divisions. The British began to see that Šubašić, selected for his ability to negotiate with Tito, had done that all too well: the two were getting along far too nicely.³⁴ When Churchill eventually met Tito and Šubašić together, it was apparent that the former had 'swallowed' the latter.³⁵

The FO was not enthusiastic about the meeting between Tito and Šubašić on Vis, particularly because Tito had managed to slide away from meeting the king. Nor had their agreement come any closer to bringing about a modus vivendi between the partisans and the non-partisan Serbs: more ominous still, was Tito's confidence that the partisans were already so strong in Serbia that they could shortly obliterate the chetnik movement. This was not what was wanted at all. Eden and the FO had gone along with supporting Tito *only* for

pragmatic reasons with the constant idea that somehow all the potential resisters in Yugoslavia could be made to work together. Mihailović's failure in this department - combined with the policy makers constantly looking over their shoulders at the Soviets - had led the FO to look to Tito to form a united *military* organization. The results of the meeting on Vis made them finally wake up to the fact that Tito did not fulfil their desires either. The FO began again the lament of long-term interests being sacrificed to short-term military ones.

The FO continued to question Maclean's handling of the partisans, particularly with regard to their aims in Serbia. Eden was not happy to hear that Maclean:

lost no opportunity of reminding Tito that His Majesty's Government are most anxious both on military and political grounds to see him extend scope of his movement into Serbia and further increase his activities here. I have pointed out that apart from immediate strategic importance of Serbia, civil war there would be to the advantage of no-one.³⁷

Nor was Eden pleased with Tito's plan to send Lt-General Ranković³⁸ and Dr Ribnikar, vice-president of AVNOJ, to join Popović in Serbia. All three were Serbs, and their task was to establish a state council for Serbia, with Ribnikar as president. Maclean was sharply informed that, while increasing supplies to Tito's forces in Serbia had been considered as a way of getting Serbs to fight alongside the partisans,

We are not concerned to help Tito impose himself and his regime on the Serb people, which might produce bitter resentment and lasting ill feeling. Our policy is to build by agreement between Tito and the Government a system of co-operation between the Partisans and those Serbs who are willing to fight the enemy.³⁹

Maclean was, therefore, instructed to ask Tito to postpone despatch of Ranković and Ribnikar until the question of Serbia had been discussed by Tito and Šubašić, at their planned meeting with Wilson in Caserta. Tito turned down the invitation to meet General Wilson in July: according to Kljaković, this was because he was tipped off that the British intended to spring King Peter on him there.⁴⁰ If Tito did get a tip off it might have been that the British, probably responding to Topalović's proposals, were contemplating the despatch of an officer

to replace Mihailović in Serbia.⁴¹ This was not something to which Tito would have cared to agree. A few days after the meeting should have taken place, he apparently relented, but by that time Šubašić had returned to Britain, and it was decided that it would do Tito no harm to cool his heels for a while.⁴² The meetings were eventually rescheduled for the middle of August, and Churchill was to take part himself.

While the FO had never taken a rosy view of Tito, Churchill certainly had. The warm and friendly letters the PM sent to Tito through Maclean indicate that Churchill thought that here was someone he could do business with. It is difficult to ascertain the precise moment at which Churchill began to wake up to reality. Possibly the process began when Bailey and Hudson finally came out of Yugoslavia and began to present a much more complex view of the situation there - particularly with relation to Serbia - than that to which Churchill had previously been exposed. Bailey's comments on the Vis meeting were that Tito had allowed Šubašić to be at the helm outside the country in order to consolidate his own position within it, while the strength and solidarity of Mihailović's movement had either been ignored or underrated.

By the time Churchill met Tito in Naples on 12 August, the PM was aware that the partisans were using the bulk of Allied supplies to fight the Serbs, and took a fairly tough line on the question with the marshal. However, at the lunch following the meeting, Churchill made a laudatory speech, welcoming Tito as an ally; Pierson Dixon, who attended the meetings as the FO representative, felt this was a tactical mistake, which undid the good of the sermon at the conference. Tito assured Churchill that he had no desire to introduce communism to Yugoslavia, but when the PM asked for affirmation of this in a public statement, Tito demurred, claiming that to do so at this particular moment would create the impression that he was acting under duress. Eden was very uneasy, feeling that Šubašić, as a Croat, underestimated the Serb problem, and the long-term potential for civil war

inherent in this attitude.47

Churchill and Eden finally seem to have fallen into step with each other. Nevertheless, Eden's exasperation is almost palpable in his handwritten note on Churchill's 31 August memorandum to him, which stated:

It would be well to remember how great a responsibility will rest upon us after the war ends, with Tito having all the arms and being able to subjugate the rest of the country by weapons supplied by us. During the war we can put pressure on him to fight the Germans instead of his fellow-countrymen by the threat of stopping supplies, but this will have gone when the war is over. He will have the arms and the country at his mercy.⁴⁸

Eden felt that the FO hardly needed reminding of this: "It is PM who has persistently pushed Tito despite our warnings".⁴⁹ The foreign secretary duly sent the PM a reminder of the dire warnings he had issued regarding the question of persuading King Peter to drop Mihailović without first having a reciprocal concession from Tito. Much depended on the attitude of the 'Russians'; with the Red Army so close to the Yugoslav borders, Eden felt some straight talking with Stalin was in order.⁵⁰

While Eden was, to a certain extent, justified in taking this 'I-told-you-so' attitude to the PM, he was also being rather 'holier-than-thou' in regard to the FO position. He was quite right in saying that Churchill had pushed for the abandonment of Mihailović without any quid pro quo, but in turn London SOE's advice regarding long-term interests had been ignored, because the FO was so nervous of being at cross purposes with the Soviets.

Eden was a little late as regards straight talking with Stalin over the future of Yugoslavia. A few days later Tito 'levanted' from Vis to make arrangements for the Red Army to come over the borders to help him liberate Serbia. It took some time to discover exactly where he had gone, but this was the final straw for the PM.

Churchill's reservations regarding Serbian support for the partisans had made the

question of establishing the NLA in Serbia - always uppermost in Tito's mind - more pressing. Alive to the fact that his long-term plans were not in accord with those of the Allies, his solution was to present them with a fait accompli. Even before Tito returned to Vis after his meetings in Italy, operations to get back into Serbia were under way; once back on his island, he took personal control. At the end of August, with the Soviet army on the eastern border of Romania, and the likelihood of a Bulgarian withdrawal from Serbia, Tito issued a directive to his commanders to be ready for new developments and rapid troop deployment in Serbia.⁵¹ The partisans were aided in their plans by 'Operation Ratweek', in which the BAF, US 15th Army Airforce and the NLA combined to hinder the withdrawal northwards of German Army Group E.52 Maclean went to Serbia for the first time to take part in Ratweek,53 while BLOs with various NLA commanders directed the heavy bombers to targets specified by the partisans. The destruction, a great deal of which was in Serbia, was massive. Maclean had been surprised at Tito's ready agreement to the plan, but it gave the partisans the ideal opportunity to carry the civil war into Serbia under cover of the confusion of Ratweek. The scale of the bombing raids made by the Allies in support of partisan action also proved to be a useful recruiting sergeant for the NLA, as did King Peter's broadcast of 12 September, in which he described the partisans as "our National Army" and urged all Yugoslavs to support Tito.54

The Soviets obligingly made a swift detour into Yugoslavia to help the partisans gain control of Belgrade before sweeping on to Hungary. Maclean was pleased: he felt this precluded the onset of a lengthy civil war - Mihailović would be "on the run", and Tito, with the Red Army at his side and the arms supplied by the Western Allies, would be in an unchallengeable position. All that the British had to do was forego any 'humming and hawing', and drop the king and Šubašić, to capitalize on the goodwill they had been building up with Tito to save him from the arms of the Russian bear. Macmillan agreed with Maclean's thesis, although he was afraid that the FO would 'shilly-shally' and miss the bus.⁵⁵

Maclean and the "Tito fans", as Macmillan termed them, had seriously misread the signs: far from fearing the embrace of the Russian bear, the partisans had always looked to the Soviets as their most desirable ally; they had simply been making do with the Western Allies until they could come into the open. Tito had kept in touch with Moscow throughout his various dealings with the British, and sought Stalin's opinion on questions such as the monarchy and the negotiations with Šubašić. The Soviets had constantly advised caution not to upset the British on the one hand, but not to give away too much on the other. In addition to helping the NLA take Belgrade, the Red Army was used as a counterbalance to the Western Allies. Tito's appeal for aid had been turned upon its head to become a Soviet request for permission to pass through Yugoslav territory: this precedent meant that the Western Allies would also be obliged to seek permission for the entry of any of their forces. This gave Tito a very strong hand, and once he was established in Belgrade, the relationship with the British was not so important. By December, Churchill had realized that he had been nurturing a viper in his bosom. See

Tito was always careful to be diplomatic and conciliatory in his dealing with Maclean: for example, smoothing the ruffled feathers caused by the peremptory demand for the withdrawal of Floyd Force in January 1945.⁵⁹ The incident illustrates that while Tito and the partisans had achieved a good deal of what they were aiming for, they were still fearful of having it snatched away by military intervention. Some minor concessions were made to the Western Allies by the establishment of a regency and provisional government in March 1945, but it was quite clear that Tito was in charge. After Maclean left, by his own admission while the going was good,⁶⁰ the relationship between the provisional government and the British became much more formal. Stevenson and Deakin went to Belgrade to reopen the British Embassy, and Air Vice-Marshal Lee replaced Maclean in March. The special relationship was over, and problems and disputes began to develop; the situation was not helped by Tito's speeches on his visit to Moscow in April, which praised the USSR while belittling the help

The deteriorating relationship became increasingly apparent to the BLOs with the partisans: aggressive and confrontational incidents became more frequent as the partisan movement grew increasingly wary of Allied personnel on Yugoslav soil. To some degree this was understandable: by late 1944 virtually every British 'undercover' organization had at least one mission in Yugoslavia. In addition to the SOE missions, there was 'A Force', ostensibly in Yugoslavia to help extricate people escaping Nazi persecution, but in reality engaged on deception operations; the SAS, SBS and MI9 - the rescue service for escaped prisoners of war - were also operating in Yugoslavia. ISLD had five missions active in partisan territory, none of which knew what the other was up to.⁶² Despite the establishment of SOM, many of these organizations were operating independently of - and sometimes in competition with - the others, which often led to open hostility when they came into contact. The only thing any of them appear to have agreed on was that there were too many missions and that the others should not be there.

An example of both the inter-mission rivalry and a cause of suspicion regarding British intentions is SOE's Clowder mission, operating in Slovenia. The main purpose of the mission was to contact and build up if possible, any anti-German potential resisters in Carinthia and Austria. The Clowder mission had a couple of run-ins with rival ISLD missions:⁶³ in addition, they found the Slovene partisans to be quite amenable to accepting supplies, but not so co-operative when it came to attempting to contact potential resisters other than those who came under the influence of the Slovene National Liberation Army. At one point the Slovene partisans arrested and imprisoned an SBS operative; on another occasion, all the SOE BLOs in Slovenia were ordered to leave, although this was not put into practice.⁶⁴ Slovenia was a particularly sensitive area in view of Tito's expansionist plans in the north-west, where he wanted to add to Yugoslavia the 'Slav' regions of Italy and of Austria. In Naples, Churchill

had told Tito that all such questions would be left for the peace conference, 65 but Tito did not want to wait for that.

While waiting for Churchill to arrive, Tito had met General Alexander, who in June had formulated a plan for an advance through the Ljubljana Gap to Vienna as an alternative to 'Anvil', the Allied landings in southern France. Churchill had received this idea enthusiastically, but the Americans had preferred to stick to Anvil. 66 Nevertheless, by the end of his meetings in Italy, Tito was apparently convinced that Churchill was planning to land in Istria. 67 The independent force that the Clowder mission was trying to establish would have been useful to the Allies if they had decided to act on Alexander's plan. Both the Ljubljana Gap plan and the idea of a force not directly under Yugoslav partisan control were obstacles to Tito's plans for expansion, a factor which probably ultimately cost Hesketh-Pritchard of the Clowder mission his life. 68

The ever-increasing danger of Tito's expansionism caused great concern to the British in the early months of 1945, and eventually led to what has been described as the race for Trieste and Venezia Giulia. The Western Allies were coming up the western side of the Adriatic as fast as they could while the partisan raced up the eastern side: both were hampered by the Germans, who, despite everything, still had a great deal of fight left in them. In Yugoslavia, the Germans had a shorter front which was easier to defend, ⁶⁹ and their withdrawal from the Balkans was continuing in a fairly orderly manner. The situation for the partisans was complicated by the fact that the Germans were not their only enemies; the NLA was still carrying on the civil war, while at the same time trying to secure the Adriatic coastline against any possible landing from the west.

As the Red Army entered Serbia, Mihailović had ordered the *Ustanak*: he sent a number of messages to Wilson, asking for guidance to co-ordinate his forces' actions with Allied plans.⁷⁰ These messages were studiously ignored in Italy; to get involved with Mihailović

again would undermine the agreement Churchill had reached with Stalin concerning Yugoslavia, and the Tito-Šubašić agreement,⁷¹ even though the latter by that time was generally perceived by the British as hardly worth the paper it covered. Churchill's agreement with Stalin was written on the now notorious scrap of paper that the PM had pushed across the table to Stalin at the Moscow conference in October 1944, which carved up eastern Europe into spheres of influence with Yugoslavia being defined as "50-50" between the Soviets and the West.⁷² In his appeals to Wilson, Mihailović had included the Domobrans in the forces ready to act under Wilson's orders - these were the civil defence forces in Slovenia, who had been armed first by the Italians and then by the Germans. Although these had displayed collaborationist behaviour, he said, they were patriotic forces who had simply been biding their time:⁷³ this had now come.

As neither Mihailović nor these other organizations received any word of encouragement from the west, some began to move north-westwards to meet up with the Western Allies, to offer their services in person. This was both an embarrassment and a disappointment to the FO: it had been hoped that these forces would fight independently against the partisans and prevent them crossing over into Venezia Giulia and Carinthia. This would have been the ideal solution for the British, who could derive benefit from these people's opposition to the partisans while disclaiming any responsibility for it. The same people wanting to act in exactly the same way under Allied direction was not such a good thing. It was decided that they could not be handed back to Tito's people, or overtly made use of, and, therefore, the only other alternative was to disarm and intern them as surrendering combatants in the Yugoslav civil war. On 17 April, SOE had reported to the FO that the Domobrans were stronger than the partisans in Slovenia, but in the event of reinforcements from Croatia, there was likely to be a blood-bath. It therefore made sense for the Domobrans to head for the British, rather than wait. Orme Sargent did not think that there were any of Mihailović's forces among those heading for the north, as they were last heard of bottled up in southern

Bosnia,⁷⁷ where Mihailović had gone after leaving Serbia in September 1944. But in the following April, Damjanović, Mihailović's commander of his forces in Slovenia, also began to move west,⁷⁸ probably more in hope of linking up with the Americans than the British, an idea proposed by MacDowell before he left.⁷⁹ MacDowell appears to have made a suggestion in September, after hearing of the westwards moves of the Red Army, that the Mihailović forces - although they had lost the civil war - might yet win the political victory. This could be achieved with American backing if they concentrated on fighting the communists, whom the Americans now perceived as a major threat.⁸⁰

The Germans in Italy surrendered on 29 April: it was a purely military affair - Macmillan had kept out of the way in case the Soviets should suspect that political deals were being made. Himmler's offer of German surrender to the Western Allies only, had already been refused. The remnants of the German forces in the east, fearful of falling into Soviet hands, all made their way west to surrender to the Americans and British. In addition to the 100,000 prisoners in Italy, the Western Allies were attempting to cope with almost 400,000 German troops trying to surrender in southern Austria.⁸¹

The Allies lost the race for Venezia Giulia: Tito's troops arrived at the centre of Trieste on 1 May, one day ahead of the New Zealand Second Division, and on 3 May the partisans took Fiume. While negotiations over Venezia Giulia were being conducted with Tito, he was attempting another *fait accompli* by moving his forces into southern Carinthia, in a bid to add that province to Yugoslavia too. This time the Western Allies won the race, arriving at Klagenfurt a matter of hours before the partisans; nevertheless, the latter continued to pour into the area in an attempt to gain control. Everyone seemed to be converging on the same area of southern Europe: the Western Allies, the partisans, the surrendering Germans - along with Russians and Cossacks who had been fighting with them - Domobrans, chetniks, Ustašas, and straightforward refugees who, for various reasons, feared the communist takeover in Yugoslavia. Added to these were the Soviets and Bulgarians, the latter having

switched sides after the Red Army arrived in Bulgaria in August 1944. To complicate the situation further, the British commanders were now contemplating the possibility of having to fight against the partisans to make them leave. This was not an appealing prospect with the Soviets so close, the Americans hanging back, and their own forces believing first that the war was ended, and second that Tito's partisans were such wonderful allies.⁸²

There had been various, largely inconclusive, discussions during 1944 on what the future might hold for SOE.⁸³ As the war came to an end and the prelude to the cold war began to look just as dangerous, SOE's final role was transformed into one of damage-limitation and tidying up. One of the earliest arrivals in Klagenfurt was Peter Wilkinson, head of SOE's 'Sixth Force', which Barker describes as a "platoon-sized private army".⁸⁴ It was Wilkinson who had masterminded the failed Clowder mission. As the relationship with the partisans cooled, Hesketh-Pritchard had been ordered to cross the Drau/Drava river in a last-ditch attempt to recruit an independent force in southern Austria, *not* to aid the Ljublijana Gap scheme, which was long dead, but in order to have available a force which might counter Tito's push into Carinthia. Even if Hesketh-Pritchard had survived, this would have come to nothing anyway, since the Gestapo had already dealt with the limited potential resistance there.⁸⁵

Wilkinson left Klagenfurt after five days, leaving his 'private army' to the tidying up, which included organizing the repatriation of large numbers of the Yugoslavs who had come over the border to seek British protection. Many of the disarmed forces were sent back across the Yugoslav borders in closed trains, under the impression that they were bound for Italy, only to find the partisans waiting at the journey's end. The fate of those returnees - who were shot and flung into mass graves - has recently been well publicized, not least during the Aldington-Tolstoy libel case in 1989.86 The SOE officers who provided liaison between the British army and the partisans in May 1945 later claimed to have no idea that they were

sending these people to their death; they thought those accused of war crimes would have a proper trial and that the others would be "re-educated" by the partisans.⁸⁷ Perhaps they really did believe this at the time, but others on the spot were not quite so optimistic.⁸⁸

One aspect of the whole shabby episode has never properly been explained: this is *why* did the British return the Yugoslavs when most did not come within the terms of the Yalta agreement?⁸⁹ Nicolai Tolstoy, who has done much original and far-reaching research on the matter, is certain that it was the product of a conspiracy, although it is difficult to understand what would be the motivation of those he accuses of masterminding the conspiracy.⁵⁰ Darko Bekić has also done much research into the topic, and disagrees with Tolstoy's conspiracy theory.⁵¹ There was certainly more than enough confusion in the area in May 1945 for the tragic episode to have been yet another blunder. Whichever it was, the partisans saw the makings of a conspiracy. They apparently murdered the repatriated people - estimated at 24,000 - not simply for revenge, but also out of suspicion that the British had sent them back as a fifth column, to undermine the fledgling communist state. Perhaps that was the intention of Wilkinson's private army: the displaced persons could not be used to fight directly against Tito, but they might at least have been seen as potentially useful for causing confusion and chaos in north-western Yugoslavia when returned in such large numbers. Although this seems unlikely, if that was the plan, why disarm them?

In the event, the British did not have to fight their erstwhile Yugoslav allies. Tito's forces withdrew from Carinthia a few weeks later, probably due to lack of Soviet support for their claims to the province. King Peter never returned to Yugoslavia. Mihailović was captured, put on trial in Belgrade, and executed. The question of Venezia Giulia was finally settled in 1954. SOE was wrapped up shortly after the end of the war, its functions - and records - reabsorbed by SIS.

CONCLUSION

SOE was created time when British ability to act decisively against the Axis was limited by both physical and psychological factors. It might have seemed a good idea at the time, although there were many who doubted it from the start, but the whole concept was deeply flawed. The idea of creating secret armies was all very well in theory, but considering the fact that the British were hard pressed to supply their own forces at that stage of the war, it was over-optimistic to say the least. The idea of fomenting chaos and revolution to disturb the Axis occupation totally disregarded the consequences for the people in Europe who were supposed to stir up this chaos. Finally the concept of the whole anti-Axis population in Europe being directed and guided by SOE to dovetail their activity with British war-aims totally ignored the fact that those people might have their own ideas of how to resist - or survive - occupation and of how they wanted to organize their political systems after the war. All of these flaws are apparent in SOE's involvement with wartime Yugoslavia.

SOE's whole *raison d'être*, and justification for its existence, was constantly to be 'doing something'. After a rather fallow period following the overrunning of most of Europe by the Axis, when the majority of SOE agents had to beat a rather ignominious retreat, the Yugoslav uprisings in the summer of 1941 provided them with an opportunity to 'do something' there. Unfortunately, due to lack of resources - particularly aeroplanes - and, to a certain degree, lack of personnel, the 'something they could do' was very limited. The first tentative missions back into Yugoslavia reflect the lack of experience and organization in the initial stages of

SOE's active existence.

In the early days of the war Yugoslavia played no part in British strategic thinking: there was a brief flurry of interest at the time of the coup d'état, and again at the time of the uprisings. Other than that, the legend of Mihailović and his brave resistance movement was Yugoslavia's main contribution to the waging of the war as far as the British military was concerned. It was due to the image that had been created for Mihailović - which was one he never wanted - that the FO encouraged, or even pressed the YGE to make him their minister of war. At the time, the one SOE officer in Yugoslavia was incommunicado, and SOE was still trying to make contact with other elements of resistance. British recognition of Mihailović was based entirely on political, not military, grounds.

In late 1941 and during the first half of 1942, Mihailović admirably suited British needs. Regardless of the reality in Yugoslavia, he provided useful propaganda to encourage the British public and those inside 'Fortress Europe'. His policy of building a secret organization that could be called upon when needed was sensible. Although immediately following the summer uprisings, London SOE had been keen to encourage active resistance, the repressive German response had knocked it on the head, and the attitude to Yugoslav resistance reverted to encouraging sabotage rather than armed rebellion, especially after Selborne took over from Dalton in February 1942. Mihailović was also viewed as a bastion of order and continuity compared with the perceived threat of chaos posed by the communist movement in Yugoslavia.

Mihailović and his 'secret army' could have been left quietly alone to do small acts of untraceable sabotage and keep up the spirits of their own people and those of the rest of occupied Europe if it had not been for the developing paranoia of the British about the Soviets. In response to the Soviet propaganda campaign against Mihailović and his followers in summer 1942, the FO appeared to expect the Yugoslav minister of war actually to live up to the image that had been created, and were sadly disappointed to discover it was a false

one. Mihailović was not a super-hero, ready to throw himself and his followers against the might of the Axis regardless of the cost. The YGE and its minister of war had their own conception of how opposition to the Axis should be carried out; it was essentially a defensive policy, to spare the civilians - particularly the Serbs - from unnecessary loss so that they would still be there and still have the strength to oppose the occupiers when it was sensible to make a major move. Some of the BLOs who went into Serbia in 1943 agreed with this policy; they felt that the scale of reprisals carried out by the Germans in retaliation for acts of sabotage that had little long-lasting effect held the danger of totally demoralizing the population.¹

The increased action that the FO wanted Mihailović's people to carry out held no long-term benefit for Yugoslavia; in fact, although portrayed as being of use to the Allies in North Africa, its main purpose was to mollify the Soviets. By the time Bailey arrived to pull the chestnuts out of the fire, it was almost too late to do so: the quarrel with Hudson, the failure to provide any reasonable amount of military supplies, and the arrival of the totally unsuitable and disruptive Robertson-Radojević, had already led Mihailović to question the wisdom of getting involved with SOE. Bailey *might* have been able to save the situation if SOE had the capacity to provide adequate - or even just more - aid after his arrival. As it was, Bailey was left trying to obtain more from Mihailović than the latter thought reasonable to give, without being able to produce the level of support that might have overcome the detrimental effect of reprisals. By the time that SOE had increased manpower and resources available, it was turning away from Mihailović and towards the partisans.

Tito and the partisans, despite attempts to contact them, had the good fortune during the early part of the war *not* to have an SOE mission attached to them. Although they later complained that they had been ignored and received no help from any quarter while they continued their struggle alone,² they were able to make their mistakes out of sight of SOE.

While Hudson and Bailey sent long and sometimes conflicting reports about Mihailović and company, which veered from the totally positive³ to the negative,⁴ the partisans went about achieving their own particular aims unreported. By the time that SOE made contact with the partisan movement it had toned down its extreme revolutionary character - with a few sharp prods from Moscow - and had transformed itself into a national liberation movement. As a result, Cairo SOE was able to describe it as a predominantly military organization which, although headed by communists, was mainly composed of people who were essentially politically moderate. The idea that SOE missions with the partisans would enable the British to capitalize on their military prowess, while possibly guiding the rank and file towards a more democratic future, entirely missed the basic nature of partisan resistance. The very reason that they were more active than Mihailović's forces was that they were engaged in a revolution.

From the middle of 1942, British policy towards Yugoslav resistance was increasingly governed by the relationship with the USSR. The continuing postponement of the second front in western Europe left the Western Allies vulnerable to charges of bad faith from the hard-pressed Soviets who felt they were bearing the brunt of the war in the bloody battles on the eastern front. This factor raised the spectre of a separate peace if the Allies could not provide some relief for the Soviets. With the continuing Soviet propaganda campaign against Mihailović, the FO and the British military also became increasingly worried about being at odds with the USSR over Yugoslavia. What the British were unaware of was that the Soviets were also prey to the same fears of a separate peace, and, certainly in the early stages of the war, of Tito fomenting social revolution in Yugoslavia, which, they felt would put them at odds with the west. That was one of the reasons why Tito was instructed to co-operate with the nationalist resistance and concentrate on fighting the common enemy rather than play politics. The Soviets, however, had a better poker-face than the British, constantly denying

any contact with, or control over the Yugoslav partisans. Everyone knew that this was not true, but seemed unable to do anything about it in the face of denial or silence. However, the British might have paused to wonder why it was that the Soviets made no attempts to send any missions to the partisans until long after SOE had contacted them, established missions and commenced large-scale supply of military aid. The Soviet mission only arrived once the British had decided - and declared - that they were abandoning Mihailović.

The idea that switching support from Mihailović to Tito was the result of a communist plot in Cairo SOE has been extensively dealt with by both David Martin and Michael Lees.⁵ James Klugmann, a communist and apparently a long-time Soviet agent has long been suspected of being the mastermind of these machinations. In addition to Klugmann, there were plenty of fellow travellers who were inclined to support the communist resistance rather than that recognized by the royalist government.⁶ This was also the case in other organizations, where the pro-Tito climate was as strong as - or even stronger than - that in Cairo SOE: MO4 could not have put over the idea of supporting the partisans without the complicity of ISLD, PWE and the BBC.

In addition, as the war progressed, it became not only a fight *against* fascism, but a fight *for* a brave new world, particularly for the younger people involved. In the process, the USSR had ceased to be portrayed as the great eastern menace of the 1920s and 1930s and had become a heroic ally: Stalin moved from being the orchestrator of show trials, purges and persecution and became instead "Uncle Joe". It is perhaps not surprising that Mihailović was perceived as representing the old order while Tito appeared to be surging forward to the brave new world. By a combination of plotting and prejudice, a situation developed in which all the cards were stacked in favour of Tito and the partisans.

Nevertheless, all the plotting and colouring of opinion in Cairo would have come to

nothing without the massed conservative forces of the FO, Churchill and Fitzroy Maclean. While Basil Davidson claims the credit for the 'Children of Light' moving the immovable by setting in motion the plan to contact the partisans, he misses the point that the FO - because of its nervousness about the Soviets - had been preparing to override London SOE's objections on this point for some considerable time. The FO had begun to move in this direction before Davidson arrived at Cairo SOE. The major achievement of MO4 was the capturing of Churchill's attention. It seems fairly likely that Deakin was selected to be the first official link with partisan headquarters in order to ensure the continuation of that attention. In the long-term Deakin was much more influential than Klugmann or any of the other fellow travellers. His reports not only confirmed the idea of the partisans as a mighty guerrilla force, but also set in train the thought that it was not worthwhile to back both resistance forces and the one to choose was Tito's.

Deakin set the scene, and the tone, which led to Churchill taking a personal hand in matters by appointing Fitzroy Maclean as leader of the mission to the partisans. Although Eden later queried Maclean's judgement, and at times wondered what course he was charting with the partisans - certainly not the one favoured by the FO - in the summer of 1943, the foreign secretary was as eager for Maclean's appointment as the PM, backing him up in overruling Selborne's objections. Maclean was the most unexpected factor of all. Who, in their wildest imaginings, would have foreseen an ex-member of the FO and Conservative MP going all out to aid the establishment of a communist regime? Certainly the 'Children of Light', whatever else they managed to achieve in terms of cooking the books and slanting the evidence, could not have had any influence in Maclean's appointment. Maclean's instant judgement - that the partisans were destined to be the future rulers of Yugoslavia - turned into a self-fulfilling prophesy. The ambassador-leader outshone the 'Children of Light' and relegated them to a back-up organization for his mission.

When the idea of backing both sides was first raised, Baker Street had cautioned that this would mean falling between two stools and, inevitably, a choice would have to be made: on political grounds they claimed that this could *only* be Mihailović. They were overruled on the first count by arguments of military necessity, which, in turn had been born out of the relationship with the USSR. They were overruled on the second by the advent of Maclean.

The British military - which also tends to be a rather conservative body - claiming no interest in matters political, pushed for short-term military advantage. In response to the Chiefs of Staff's March 1943 directive, SOE had managed to co-ordinate opposing guerrilla forces in Greece, where the National Bands agreement produced considerable military benefit; the Chiefs of Staff thought that SOE could do the same in Yugoslavia. Although the National Bands agreement was short-lived, it demonstrated that it was possible to make use of both resistance movements: since they could not be united they could at least be run in tandem. This was the thinking behind the telegram they prevailed upon Glenconner to send to Mihailović instructing him to move to the east of the Ibar. It was also why the Chiefs of Staff were in favour of Mihailović being deposed and continuing support of his organization under another leader.

However, the situation in Greece was quite different to that in both Yugoslavia and Albania. The SOE missions in Greece operated as a single unit under the command of C M Woodhouse, and were not attached to particular rival guerrilla groups. This gave them the advantage of being able to move between groups at will, and of having a single finger on the pulse. Because Woodhouse had an all-round picture of what was going on, he was able to rebut allegations that Zervas was collaborating and, later, that he was refraining from harassing the Germans in the summer of 1944. In the latter case, Woodhouse discovered, Zervas was doing so because he had been instructed by the staff at SOE to conserve his forces for the final push. In addition, Greece was strategically more important to Britain than was Yugoslavia, and ultimately short-term military advantage was not allowed to take

precedence over long-term political interests.

By contrast to Greece, there were two distinct missions in Yugoslavia, operating independently and employing two distinct styles of liaison. Maclean, supported by SOE Cairo/Bari, at times seems to have functioned as the partisans' ambassador to Churchill rather than the other way about. He appears to have been ready to offer total support to the partisans without making any serious attempt to gain anything in return for aid and political recognition. At the other end of the scale was Armstrong's mission, which was more or less disastrous from the outset, not least due to the failure of back-up and the sometimes bizarre activity of Cairo SOE and the BBC. The differences between the two missions was compounded by the fact that there was no liaison or communication between them; the original plan when the two high-level missions were being organized, which envisaged close co-operation and co-ordination between the two, went out of the window as soon as Maclean arrived in Yugoslavia.

By the time that the Chiefs of Staff wanted to continue to make use of Mihailović's putative successor, Maclean's opinions on the future of Yugoslavia had superseded the policy of backing both sides. Having asserted that the communists would be the dominant factor in Yugoslavia, he advised that the only possible course for the British government was to be with them not against them. The fund of goodwill built up by giving Tito all-out support, he argued, would assure a continuation of British influence in post-war Yugoslavia. He also painted a picture of a reconstituted federal Yugoslavia, in which the divisions between the various groups would be healed because of the multi-ethnic composition of the partisan movement. In

The FO had never fluctuated in their aim of reconstituting Yugoslavia after the war; otherwise, it was felt, the small states that would emerge would not be strong enough to survive on their own. By 1943, it was obvious that Mihailović could not deliver this: the

accusations of narrow pan-Serbism were not justified on a personal level, but the actions of some of his commanders and advisors left him open to this. 12 Serbia was perceived by the FO - and by Tito - to be the lynch-pin of Yugoslavia: this was the terrible dilemma - Tito held the military potential, while Mihailović held Serbia. The FO agonized over the question: despite Maclean's exaggerated claims for partisan strength in Serbia, and attempts by SOE to build them up there, the partisans had only a limited constituency in Serbia. By the time that Eden and Churchill began to become seriously concerned about communism being imposed on Serbia, it was rather late in the day. The combination of Ratweek and the Red Army settled the question.

Being minuster of war was a major drawback for Mihailović: the post had been thrust upon him largely because of the early propaganda campaign. He was certainly not a politician, by contrast with Tito whose greatest asset was his political skill and ability to see - and take - the clearest path to achieving his political ends. Nevertheless, Mihailović took his role as minister of war seriously, and felt, probably in an exaggerated way, that he was actually in command of the various local leaders who remained loyal to the king. Mihailović's dealings with his SOE liaison officers was also coloured by the fact that he was the official representative of his own government in his own country, and, therefore, entitled to follow his own path. This did not make the relationship any easier; the BLOs noted that, because of his position, Mihailović felt that he could do what he wanted, assuming that all would be forgiven and his reputation redeemed by the *Ustanak*. If the Allies had planned an invasion of Yugoslavia, this might have been the case: as it was, Mihailović - in conjunction with the YGE - was still following a policy that had long ceased to be considered useful.

For their part, the commanders, particularly those outside Serbia, while willing to acknowledge Mihailović as the representative of the king, did not necessarily come under his direct control; some because they were at too great a distance, others because they wanted

to run their own show. The arrangements some of them made with the Axis forces left Mihailović open to accusations of collaboration. Whether he approved of their actions or not, he was constrained to retain their loyalty so that he would have them available to secure the country for the king at the time of the *Ustanak*. He could not afford to follow the advice proffered by SOE and denounce them to save his own reputation.

When the time came for the parting of the ways, this proved to be extremely useful. The British abandoned Mihailović because he would not fall in with their plans to fight the occupiers, but it could not be admitted that he was being thrown over simply because he was not as active as the partisans. While Cairo SOE claimed to have evidence of Mihailović's collaboration, the FO was never convinced of it. Nevertheless, when support was switched to Tito the publicly stated reason was that some of his commanders had been in collaboration with the enemy. This was probably enough to establish the idea of guilt by association in the mind of the British public to justify the transformation from super-hero to has-been. The British, who were fortunate enough not to have had to live under occupation, were probably unable to distinguish between collaboration and accommodation. Had Britain been occupied, there would have been no shortage of Petains or Nedićs, but no-one was willing to acknowledge that at the time. The only British who did come under occupation were the Channel Islanders; instances of their collaboration were later swept under the carpet as unsuitable for public consumption.

Glenconner's warning in late 1942, that to attempt to back both sides would merely serve to fan the flames of civil war, proved to be totally accurate. By the time that SOE was operating with the two resistance movements in Yugoslavia, both Mihailović and Tito were well aware that the Germans were ultimately heading for defeat, and accordingly both set about winning the civil war. Mihailović was determined to ensure that the communists would not take over when the occupation ended, while Tito was equally determined to

complete the revolution and be in a position to establish a communist state. For all the debate over long-term political interests being sacrificed to short-term military ones, the British did not in fact obtain very much in terms of the latter. The main beneficiary was the German occupier. The deception plan did little in the way of drawing German troops away from the Russian front, and the Germans who were in Yugoslavia could almost sit back and allow their opponents to do their job for them. When either side actually did engage them, the Germans stood a fair chance of the opposing side attacking the attackers in the rear. The Germans were able to take advantage of the civil war right to the end, when they facilitated the movement of Mihailović's forces and the rag-bag of other anti-communists to the north-western borders; the conflict this produced allowed them to continue their withdrawal in fairly good order.

Once Tito had been recognized and began to receive material aid, he concentrated most of his energy on his domestic rivals, particularly on the drive to get back into Serbia. By the time Churchill woke up to what Tito was really about, it was too late to make another 180 degree turn. Apart from the problem of getting the public to swallow such a move for the second time, there was also the proximity of the Red Army. To challenge Tito at that late stage would have been tantamount to throwing down the gauntlet to Stalin, whose true colours had also become more visible at the time of the Warsaw uprising. In addition, Churchill was more concerned about the future of Greece, in which British interests were much stronger than Yugoslavia; he needed Stalin to stick by the 90%-10% agreement there, 17 and as Tito's new state was independent - after all, it was Churchill who had laid the foundations for the Tito-Šubašić agreement - he could not claim that Yugoslavia had turned out to be other than "50-50". It was all very well for Churchill to say that SOE had cooked the books and that he had been misled, 18 but his own misplaced faith in Tito and his personal involvement in trying to establish a hybrid monarchist-communist system in Yugoslavia could hardly be laid at the door of SOE.

The same pattern of high expectation - particularly the expectation inherent in the original concept of SOE, that they could organize and deliver the required outcome from resistance movements - is visible in both the relationship with Mihailović and Tito. Having failed to bend Mihailović to their will, SOE put forward the idea that a few British officers on the spot could solve all the problems and maximize the potential of the communist resistance. Laying aside the implications of conspiracy, the fact that this idea found credence is indicative of the echoes of imperialism that are to be found in the whole concept of SOE. Decisions were taken by all British bodies concerned which would affect the future of the people of Yugoslavia without any reference to the aspirations of those people themselves.

At the end of the war, most of the British who had helped turn a collection of hardy and hunted guerrillas into a government went home, leaving the people of Yugoslavia to make what they could of Tito's concept of democracy. They were all rather quiet until 1948, when the Tito-Stalin break allowed them to claim that their judgement had been vindicated. Tito was a good chap after all; they had been right in thinking that he was his own man and not Moscow's. Over the succeeding years the "Tito fans" found their way into print, and established what Mike Lees termed "the received wisdom". Tito, always the consummate politician, came back into the fold.

- 1. Prince Paul was one of three regents, but his membership of the Yugoslav royal family conferred on him a pre-eminent role in government: thus he was usually referred to as the Prince Regent.
- 2. Ben Pimlott, ed., <u>The Second World War Diary of Hugh Dalton 1940-1945</u>, Cape, London, 1986, p.178, entry for 28 March 1941 although in his diary, Dalton did acknowledge that the air attaché had played a part.
- 3. David Dilks, ed., <u>The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan 1938-1945</u>, Cassell, London, 1971, p.289, entry for 25 May 1940.
- 4. WP(49)168, CAB 66/7, discussed at WM(40)141 of 27 May 1940, CAB 65/13. The "certain eventuality" was the fall of France.
- 5. Bickham Sweet-Escott, Baker Street Irregular, Methuen, London, 1965, pp.40-41.
- 6. Ben Pimlott, <u>Hugh Dalton</u>, Jonathan Cape, London, 1985; Papermac, London, 1986, p.295. Pimlott tells us that the most likely source of Dalton's information on the new organization was Gladwyn Jebb. Jebb had been Dalton's private secretary when he became under-secretary of state at the FO in 1929.
- 7. David Stafford, <u>Britain and European Resistance 1940-1945</u>, Macmillan, London, 1980, p.11.
- 8. Pimlott, The Diary of Hugh Dalton, p.52, entry for 1 July 1940.
- 9. Pimlott, <u>Hugh Dalton</u>, p.296; Dr Dynamo was the "half-mocking, half-appreciative nickname" coined by Jebb for Dalton, ibid. p.306.
- 10. Dilks, Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan, p.312, entry for 11 July 1940.
- 11. This much-quoted phrase seems to have derived from a fairly popular concept at the time; for example, Cadogan described Corbin, the French ambassador, as being enthusiastic about setting Europe ablaze, ibid. p.294, entry for 5 June 1940.
- 12. M R D Foot, <u>SOE 1940-1946</u>, BBC, London, 1984, p.20.
- 13. The Memoirs of Lord Gladwyn, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London, 1972, p.100.
- 14. Dilks, <u>Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan</u>, editor's note p.313.

- 15. Memoirs of Lord Gladwyn, p.101.
- 16. See Sweet-Escott, <u>Baker Street Irregular</u>, pp.41-44, for an account of SOE expansion in London.
- 17. Kim Philby, My Silent War, Macgibbon and Kee, London, 1968, pp.23-26.
- 18. Memoirs of Lord Gladwyn, p.101.
- 19. Ivor Porter, Operation Autonomous, Chatto & Windus, London, 1989, p.67.
- 20. Sweet-Escott, Baker Street Irregular, p.106, footnote.
- 21. Stafford, Britain & European Resistance, p.40.
- 22. Memoirs of Lord Gladwyn, p.106.
- 23. Pimlott, Hugh Dalton, p.307, quoting interviews with Sweet-Escott and George Taylor,
- 24. Churchill to Ismay, 10 February 1944, PREM 3 185/1.
- 25. Interview with Pamela Bisdee, Midhurst, 9 September 1986. Mrs Bisdee worked for ISLD in Cairo and Bari: ISLD Inter Services Liaison Department was the cover name for SIS in the area.
- 26. Nigel Clive, A Greek Experience, Michael Russell, Salisbury, 1985, p.41.
- 27. HM Minister in Budapest had Section D's secret supply of explosives thrown into the Danube when he discovered it hidden in the legation cellars, Basil Davidson, <u>Special Operations Europe</u>, Victor Gollancz, London, 1980, pp.78-79.
- 28. Sweet-Escott, <u>Baker Street Irregular</u>, p.24; HM Minister in Belgrade was rather more sympathetic and helpful, especially after Tom Masterson, who was well-known and respected in the Balkans, went to Belgrade to head the SOE mission there in November 1940. His presence restored the confidence of the legation which had been "shaken by some of the wilder spirits who had been led by 'Caesar' [Julius Hanau]", ibid., p.52. Julian Amery, viewed as one of the 'wilder spirits', was expelled at the behest of HM Minister in Sofia for plotting behind his back with Bulgarian opposition politicians. Amery was almost excluded from SOE, but was reinstated after Dalton intervened as a favour to Amery's family, Pimlott, <u>The Diary of Hugh Dalton</u>, pp.96 and 102.
- 29. Pimlott, The Diary of Hugh Dalton, pp.29 and 139-140.
- 30. 'SOE Activities in Yugoslavia', 31 December 1940, R153/114/92, FO 371/30212.
- 31. Memoirs of Lord Gladwyn, p.102.
- 32. Pimlott, <u>Hugh Dalton</u>, pp.328-334. Churchill announced the creation of PWE in the Commons on 11 September 1941, and the first meeting of PWE took place at the FO on 17 September. The conflict between Dalton and Bracken continued until Lord Wolmer (later Earl

of Selborne) replaced Dalton in February 1942.

- 33. Dilks, <u>Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan</u>, editor's note, p.166, quoting Cadogan's May 1939 summary. After events in Czechoslovakia, the British guarantee to Poland was designed to deter Germany from further acts of aggression or to face war on two fronts. Denying Germany the resources of Central and Eastern Europe would aid Western Europe: however, to be successful this required a friendly or at least neutral USSR.
- 34. Ibid., p.226.
- 35. Porter, Operation Autonomous, p.32.
- 36. Maurice Pearton, Oil and the Romanian state, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1971, p.249.
- 37. Sir Llewellyn Woodward, <u>British Foreign Policy in the Second World War</u>, HMSO, London 1970-1976, 5 Vols, Vol I, p.537.
- 38. Pimlott, <u>Hugh Dalton</u>, p.309, quoting interview with Taylor; and <u>The Diary of Hugh Dalton</u>, p.139, entry for 8 January 1941.
- 39. Report to SO from AD and DH/Y on 'Certain Activities in Yugoslavia', 24 June 1941, AD/JU/306: George Taylor's Papers, King's College, London.
- 40. The Yugoslav government recognized the Soviet Union in June 1940 and diplomatic relations were established between the two states for the first time, with legations in Belgrade and Moscow. A non-aggression treaty was signed between the two on 5 April 1941: Stafford Cripps to Eden, 6 April 1941, 'Soviet-Yugoslav Relations', giving text of Friendship and Non-Aggression Pact, N1393/1392/38, FO 371/33490. Before the treaty was ratified the Axis invasion of Yugoslavia took place and the Yugoslav legation was sent away as the country no longer existed. Following the invasion of the USSR and the Yugoslav revolts in summer 1941, the Soviets resumed the relationship with the Yugoslav government-in-exile. In August 1942 the two governments raised the status of their diplomatic representations to embassies.
- 41. Campbell, British minister in Belgrade, to FO, 23 February 1941, reporting a discussion between Tupanjanin and the Yugoslav prime minister: Tupanjanin was convinced that Yugoslavia would eventually fight, despite delaying until the last possible minute. R1525/73/92, FO 371/3025.
- 42. Report to SO from AD and DH/Y on 'Certain Activities in Yugoslavia', 24 June 1941, AD/JU/306, George Taylor's Papers.
- 43. Ibid.
- 44. The ministers were Cubrilović and Budisavljević, of the SPP and Independent Democrats respectively, both of which were subsidized by SOE, and the independent Konstantinović. The latter immediately had second thoughts and withdrew his resignation.
- 45. Report to SO from AD and DH/Y on 'Certain Activities in Yugoslavia', 24 June 1941, AD/JU/306, George Taylor's Papers.

- 46. Ibid.
- 47. Dilks, Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan, p.365, entry for 24 March 1941.
- 48. Report to SO from AD and DH/Y, 24 June 1941, AD/JU/306, George Taylor's Papers.
- 49. Ibid.; Milan Deroc in <u>British Special Operations Explored: Yugoslavia in Turmoil 1941-1943 and the British Response</u>, Eastern European Monographs, Columbia University Press, New York, 1988, p.3, points out that the coup has been interpreted as an air force affair because of Simović and Mirković's positions in the air force, while in fact both were originally army men, and it was the army connection they used at the time of the coup. Simović was an army general and Mirković a brigade-general, the equivalent of a full general and a major-general respectively in British terms.
- 50. Interview with Tom Mapplebeck, London, September 1988.
- 51. This phrase, which was taken up with great enthusiasm by the British press, was supplied by Cadogan who, a few days earlier had been lamenting the fact that the Yugoslavs appeared to have sold their souls to the Devil, Dilks, <u>Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan</u>, pp.365-366.
- 52. Ibid., p.336.
- 53. Report to SO from AD and DH/Y, 24 June 1941, AD/JU/306, George Taylor's Papers.
- 54. Robert St John, From the Land of Silent People, Harrap, London, 1942, gives a vivid account of the bombing and ensuing chaos and flight; Klaus Jürgen Müller, "A German Perspective on Allied Deception Operations in the Second World War", in Intelligence and National Security, Vol.2, No.3, July 1987, p.317: Hitler was afraid of a British landing in Norway, and on 26 March 1941 he had ordered substantial reinforcements to Norway. These fears possibly coloured his judgement regarding Yugoslavia, although the new government did not repudiate the pact, Hitler probably judged it better to crush Yugoslavia fast to be sure that it did not pose an extra threat.
- 55. 'Kazan', Cadogan's report to Churchill, 21 February 1941, R1379/G, FO 371/30212.
- 56. 'Interference with German Oil Supplies', SOE memorandum, 8 January 1941, COS(41) 3(0) in CAB 80/56.
- 57. Sweet-Escott, Baker Street Irregular, p.52.
- 58. Report to SO from AD and DH/Y, 24 June 1941, AD/JU/306, George Taylor's Papers.
- ⁵⁹. Campbell to FO, on behalf of SOE, 19 February 1941, R1379, FO 371/30212.
- 60. Campbell to FO, giving his own views, 19 February 1941, FO 371/30212.
- 61. Churchill to Prince Paul, 22 February 1941, R1379/G, FO 371/30212.
- 62. 'German Oil Supplies: Blocking the Danube', SOE memorandum, 8 January 1941,

COS(41) 3(0) in CAB 80/56.

- 63. FO to Campbell, 22 February 1941, R1379/G, FO 371/30212.
- 64. Report to SO from AD and DH/Y, 24 June 1941, AD/JU/306, George Taylor's Papers.
- 65. The 'other means' included bribery, which was generously budgeted for in SOE operations.
- 66. Report to SO from AD and DH/Y, 24 June 1941, AD/JU/306, George Taylor's Papers.
- 67. Pimlott, The Diary of Hugh Dalton, p.185.
- 68. Report to SO from AD and DH/Y, 24 June 1941, AD/JU/306, George Taylor's Papers.
- 69. Ibid.
- 70. Pimlott, The Diary of Hugh Dalton, p.192.
- 71. Ibid., p.227.
- 72. Elizabeth Barker, <u>British Policy in S.E.Europe in World War II</u>, Macmillan, London, 1976, p.40.
- 73. Alexander Glen, <u>Footholds Against a Whirlwind</u>, Hutchinson, London, 1975, p.61. Glen was officially an assistant naval attaché, but this was a cover for his work in naval intelligence.
- 74. Ibid.,p.70.
- 75. St John, Land of Silent People, p.64.
- 76. Sweet-Escott, Baker Street Irregular, p.64.

- 1. It has often been claimed that the Yugoslav coup d'état, and the resulting attack on Yugoslavia, so delayed Operation Barbarossa that it caused the eventual defeat of the Germans at Stalingrad. There is little real evidence of this however; the sidestep into Yugoslavia did not delay Hitler's plans by more than a few weeks. Hitler and, indeed, everyone else underestimated the ferocity and determination of the Red Army and the Soviet people. When the USSR was first attacked, Western estimates were that the Red Army might last out for only a few weeks. The Germans were labouring under a similar delusion. For example, Ribbentrop confidently claimed: "if we attack, the Russia of Stalin will be erased from the map within eight weeks", <u>Ciano's Diary</u>, 1939-1943, William Heinemann Ltd, London, 1947, p.559.
- 2. Deroc, <u>British Special Operations Explored</u>, pp.26-31.
- 3. The Ustašas had long been a source of trouble in Croatia, and had been responsible for the assassination of King Alexander in October 1934. During the 1930s, Pavelić and his followers had taken refuge in Italy, where they had received aid and training from the Italian fascists.
- 4. The Italians also attempted to make the Duke of Spoleto King of Croatia: see Stevan K Pavlowitch, <u>Unconventional Perceptions of Yugoslavia,1940-1945</u>, East European Monographs, Columbia University Press, 1985, Chapter IV, "The King Who Never Was", pp.107-124.
- 5. Copy of Official Report received by the Yugoslav Legation in London, dated 28 April 1941, FO 371/30210.
- 6. Deroc, British Special Operations, p.37.
- 7. Orme Sargent minute, 14 October 1941, discussing the report from Yugoslavia, R/9244, FO 371/30220.
- 8. Sir M Palairet, Athens, to FO, 16 April 1941, R4013, FO 371/30209; and Lampson, Cairo, to FO, 23 April 1941, FO 371/30210.
- 9. 'Resistance in Yugoslavia', P Dixon, 3 October 1941, R9010/G, FO 371/30220.
- 10. Rendel to Douglas Howard, 29 April 1942, R2882, FO 371/33455, and Minutes of Yugoslav Cabinet meeting, 30 January 1942, FO 371/33459.
- 11. 'Resistance in Yugoslavia', minute by Douglas Howard, 6 October 1941, R9010/G, FO 371/30220.

- 12. Angora Chancery to FO Southern Department, 27 August 1941, enclosing memorandum by Dr Burr, E M Rose minute, 28 September 1941: the two great objections to removing Simović were that he stood for Yugoslav unity, and there was no one to replace him, R8438/73/92, FO 371/30210; 'The Yugoslav Government', minute by P.Dixon, 14 September 1941: as Simović was perceived as the leader of the coup, it would be "little short of disaster to remove him", R8389/G, FO 371/30292; Rendel to Orme Sargent, 5 December 1941: at a meeting with vice-premier Jovanović, Rendel had told him that displacing Simović would create a very bad impression on both HMG and international opinion, since he was regarded as the symbol of the coup d'état, R10472; Orme Sargent to Rendel, 24 December 1941: FO policy was to support Simović, to avoid worse confusion, R10545/4906/92, FO 371/30295.
- 13. Orme Sargent minute, 14 October 1941, R9244, FO 371/30220.
- 14. Ralph Murray [Political Intelligence Department] to P Dixon, 6 December, enclosing an extract from Seton-Watson's letter, dated 26 October, R10442/162/92, FO 371/30221. Alexander Glen recalled that in the atmosphere of tension prevailing in Yugoslavia immediately before the war it was very easy to take sides: he had taken the Serb side, which led him into disputes with Hugh Seton-Watson and Stephen Clissold, Footholds Against a Whirlwind, p.54.
- 15. For a detailed account of the various risings, see Deroc, <u>British Special Operations</u>, pp.35-52.
- 16. Sir R Campbell, Lisbon, to FO, 25 July 1941, R7294/114/92, FO 371/30214.
- 17. 'Special Operations Executive', Report by the Joint Planning Staff, 9 August 1941, JP(41)649, CAB 79/13.
- 18. P Dixon to I A Kirkpatrick, 4 September 1941, R7887/114/92, FO 371/30215.
- 19. Michael Stenton, "British Propaganda and European Resistance in the Second World War", mss. part IV, chapter 1, p.32.
- 20. P Dixon minute, 28 March 1942, FO 371/33491. Yugoslav Premier Jovanović was also worried about the stories; he told Rendel that they were not emanating from the YGE, but he thought that some came from Istanbul via the USA, Rendel to Howard, 14 April 1942, FO 371/33491.
- 21. Discussion with Mark Wheeler, Leeds, September 1992.
- 22. Glenconner to Brooks, 13 November 1941, FO 898/157.

- 23. Pimlott, ed., <u>The Diary of Hugh Dalton</u>, p.304, entry for 4 November 1941: "Summons for Juggery...PM in good mood, we have a useful discussion. All possible is to be done to help the guerrillas. A further conference at lower level with the Admiralty tomorrow."" Dalton was pleased, hoping that it would mean more resources and influence for SOE. Eden to Archibald Sinclair, undated [November 1942?], discussing the possibilities of stimulating the insurgents to further action, FO 371/30249.
- 24. Gladwyn Jebb to Douglas Howard, 2 December 1941, R10336/162/92, FO 371/30221.
- 25. Djonović had been delegated by the Yugoslav government to organize propaganda and communications within the country, Simovic to Minister of Finance, 4 June 1941, attaching Djonović's memorandum on policy, copy in FO 371/30291. Djonović's plans were very similar to SOE ideas at the time.
- 26. For a full account of Rapotec's experiences, see "Reserve Infantry Lieutenant Rapotec: His Missions to and from Occupied Yugoslavia", in Stevan K Pavlowitch, <u>Unconventional Perceptions</u>, East European Monographs, Columbia University Press, New York, 1985, chapter III.
- 27. Deroc, British Special Operations, pp.58-60.
- 28. Ibid., p.59.
- 29. Ibid.
- 30. Julian Amery, <u>Approach March: a Venture in Autobiography</u>, Hutchinson, London, 1973, p.239.
- 31. Ibid., p.240.
- 32. Ibid., p.259.
- 33. Deroc, British Special Operations, p.195.
- 34. St.K Pavlowitch, <u>Unconventional Perceptions</u>, p.70.
- 35. Ibid.
- 36. Deroc, <u>British Special Operations</u>, p.195.
- 37. Ibid., pp.194-204, gives full account of the "Russian Project".
- 38. Ibid., p.199.
- 39. Pimlott, ed., <u>The Diary of Hugh Dalton</u>, entry for 26 May 1941, p.215. In addition to the problems in the Middle East, SOE in London was still involved in its own disputes: the row between SO1 and SO2 continued, and the rivalry between SOE and the Ministry of Information deepened after Brendan Bracken took over as head of the latter, ibid., pp.256-261.

- 40. Bickham Sweet-Escott, Baker Street Irregular, pp.70-71.
- 41. Pimlott, ed., <u>The Diary of Hugh Dalton</u>, entry for 14 July 1941, p.251. Brigadier Taverner had originally been selected to investigate the situation in SOE in the Middle East, but his 'plane had been shot down on the way and he spent the rest of the war as a prisoner of the Germans, ibid., editor's note, p.253. Before Maxwell's appointment, another banker had been suggested: he accepted the job, but Dalton had deemed him unsuitable, Sweet-Escott, <u>Baker Street Irregular</u>, p.71.
- 42. The Memoirs of Lord Chandos, Bodley Head, London, 1962, p.239, footnote.
- 43. Pimlott, ed., The Diary of Hugh Dalton, entry for 30 July 1941, p.263-264.
- 44. Sweet-Escott, Baker Street Irregular, pp.74-75.
- 45. Ibid., p.73; C M Woodhouse also gives a picture of the confusions, rivalries and mistrust prevailing in Cairo SOE, where: "the multiplicity, perpetual flux, deficiency of internal cohesion which characterised the organization...account for the unconscious vagaries of policy", <u>Apple of Discord</u>, Hutchinson, London 1948, p.45.
- 46. Sweet-Escott, <u>Baker Street Irregular</u>, p.79. Sweet-Escott gives a detailed account of the reorganization in Cairo on pp.75-80; General Sir Charles Richardson, <u>Flashback: a Soldier's Story</u>, William Kimber, London, 1985, also describes the amalgamation as seen from the military side, pp.81-84.
- 47. Deroc, British Special Operations, p.63.
- 48. Amery, Approach March, p.246.
- 49. Interview with Jasper Rootham, Wimborne, 2 June 1988.
- 50. Simović to Churchill, 14 August 1941, enclosing two reports, one of which was based on information from Rapotec, PREM 3 510/12.
- 51. St.K Pavlowitch, <u>Unconventional Perceptions</u>, p.71.
- 52 Elizabeth Barker, British Policy in S.E.Europe, p.157.
- 53. F W D Deakin, <u>The Embattled Mountain</u>, Oxford University Press, London, 1971, p.126, note no.34.
- 54. Deroc, British Special Operations, p.194.
- 55. Amery, Approach March, p.247.
- 56. Conversation with Dominic Flessati, Hudson's biographer, 15 January 1992.
- 57. Amery, Approach March, p.247.

- 58. Milan Deroc, "The Serbian Uprising of 1941 and the British Response" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of New England, 1985), Chapter 9, p.9.
- 59. Just before embarking on the Bullseye mission, Amery heard that the airborne mission was to leave ten days later, <u>Approach March</u>, pp.247-248.
- 60. Deroc, British Special Operations, pp.202-204.
- 61. Rendel to Eden, 13 September 1941, R8389, FO 371/30292.
- 62. 'King Peter of Jugoslavia and General Simović', 19 September 1941, R8669/G, FO 371/30265.
- 63. Deroc, British Special Operations, pp.197-198.
- 64. Deakin, Embattled Mountain, p.129.
- 65. Amery, Approach March, p.244.
- 66. Conversation with Dominic Flessati, 15 January 1992.
- 67. Hudson to Cairo, 26 September 1941, No.5, WO 202/128, and P Dixon to R E Brook (MEW), 4 December 1941, R10311/162/92, FO 371/30221.
- 68. Flessati says that the fact Pavlović and Mihailović were named in the SOE telegram to Hudson indicates that he had not been briefed to contact Mihailović; if he had been, then Mihailović would have been referred to more obscurely for security. If Hudson had been told to contact Mihailović, then he would have gone straight to his HQ, as Ostojić and Lalatović did. Hudson's brief had been to contact all resistance forces and to report on the situation. Conversation with Dominic Flessati, 15 January 1992.
- 69. Deroc, "The Serbian Uprising of 1941 and the British Response", chapter 9, p.2.
- 70. Hudson to Cairo, 26 September 1941, WO 202/128.
- 71. Deroc, "The Serbian Uprising of 1941 and the British Response", quoting a taped interview with Popović, chapter 9, p.11.
- 72. Amery, Approach March, p.250.
- 73. Deakin, <u>Embattled Mountain</u>, p.129. The partisans were later convinced that the secret instructions were for Mihailović to liquidate the partisans, and claim that the arrival of Ostojić and Lalatović coincided with the start of the civil war, Vladimir Dedijer, <u>With Tito through</u> the War: Partisan Diary 1941-1944, Alexander Hamilton, London, 1951, p.40.
- 74. Deroc "The Serbian Uprising of 1941 and the British Response", chapter 9, p.11.
- 75. 'Memorandum on Propaganda', Hugh Dalton, 6 December 1941, FO 898/11.
- 76. Amery, Approach March, p.253.

77. Deroc reproduces an extract from Commander Woods' report, detailing the equipment supplied from the Triumph, <u>British Special Operations</u>, p.246

- 1. Conversation with Dominic Flessati, 15 January 1992, and St.K Pavlowitch Interview with D T Hudson, London, 25 November 1983, Pavlowitch Papers.
- 2. Christie Lawrence, Irregular Adventure, Faber and Faber, London, 1947, pp.95-134.
- 3. Tito wanted commissars to be attached to all joint chetnik-partisan units; Mihailović insisted that partisans should retain the rank they had achieved in the Yugoslav army, Deakin, Embattled Mountain, pp.75-76. The partisan leaders Christie Lawrence met were all peacetime communists who were "fanatical and ruthless" and took every available opportunity to spread communist propaganda among the peasants who had joined their ranks simply to fight the Germans. The Yugoslav government and king were particular targets for the propaganda. Irregular Adventure, pp.113-114.
- 4. Lawrence, Irregular Adventure, pp.142-143.
- 5. When Tito and Mihailović met on 19 September 1941, Mihailović proposed that the uprising should be brought to an end because it was bringing such disaster to the civilian population; he also demanded that the partisan forces come under his command as leader of the remnants of the Yugoslav army. Tito refused the latter proposal, but wanted the two forces to unite and continue the uprising. Simon Trew, "No Pity Distilled: Britain and the Chetniks, 1941-1942" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Keele, 1991), p.86.
- 6. St.K Pavlowitch Interview with D T Hudson, 25 November 1983, Pavlowitch Papers.
- 7. Hudson, despite Mihailović's objections, had attended the peace parleys which turned out to be fruitless. Hudson told Mihailović that he would receive supplies provided he did not attack the partisans. One drop of arms had been made to Mihailović on Ravna Gora, although Hudson had warned Cairo that hostilities were developing between the two forces. Mihailović had attempted first to convince Hudson that the partisans had started the internal fighting, and secondly to prevent Hudson reporting it; but "by ruse" Hudson cancelled the next delivery. Hudson 'Series B' Telegrams, April 1943, FO 536/31.
- 8. Lord Glenconner to Dixon, 15 November 1941, R9874, FO 371/30220, and Glenconner to Brigadier Brooks, 13 November 1941, FO 898/157.
- 9. Mihailović telegram No.36, of 22 November 1941, WO 202/128.
- 10. Simović conveyed Mihailović's message to Eden on 26 November; Dalton welcomed the news and felt that as Mihailović had "composed his quarrel" with the communists, SOE was now justified in requesting the Air Ministry to divert bombers to deliver supplies to Yugoslavia. A message was to be sent to Mihailović from the British government, promising

all possible help, "but he must clearly realize [it is] dependent upon maintenance of a united front [...] under Colonel Mihailović's leadership." Dalton to Eden, The Yugoslav Revolt', 26 November 1941, R10199/162/92, FO 371/30221. Rather ironically, in view of his deteriorating relationship with Mihailović, and the fact that the quarrel was far from composed, Hudson was given some of the credit for the two sides having reached an agreement (this probably reflected Dalton's desire to demonstrate the usefulness of SOE). War Cabinet Defence Committee (Operations), 'Yugoslav Revolt', 14 December 1941, Extract from letter, Dalton to Churchill, 11 December, PREM 3/510/1.

- 11. 'The Yugoslav Revolt', P Dixon, 26 November 1941, FO 371/30221.
- 12. For example: Jebb to Douglas Howard, 2 December 1941, R10336/162/92, FO 371/30221.
- 13. Chiefs of Staff to Commander in Chief, Middle East, 15 October 1941, WO 165/53.
- 14. Dalton to Eden, 26 November 1941, R10199/162/92, FO 371/30221.
- 15. 'The Yugoslav Revolt', P Dixon minute, 1 December 1941, R10404/162/92, FO 371/30221.
- 16. FO Aide Mémoire on message from Mihailović to Simović, 24 November 1941, 207/A/25, FO 371/30221.
- 17. In October, the Germans shot 1,755 people in Kraljevo, and nearly 2,500 in Kragujevac. Hudson saw something of the aftermath just after he arrived: "Morning and night was the most desolating atmosphere because the women were out in the fields and every sunrise and sunset you would hear the wails ... lamentations for their dead. This had a very strong effect on Mihailović", Transcript of "The Sword and the Shield", BBC television documentary, screened 4 September 1984.
- 18. Simon Trew, "No Pity Distilled", p.91.
- 19. Deroc, using German sources, gives a full account of the meeting and quotes Mihailović's statement to the German negotiators. He also produces evidence to suggest that the YGE was aware of the negotiations, <u>British Special Operations</u>, pp.187-193.
- 20. Mihailović telegram No.39, received 2 December 1941, stating that the Germans were attacking, the communists had evacuated Užice and were withdrawing: "I am passing into complete guerrilla warfare", WO 202/128.
- 21. Mihailović explained to Christie Lawrence that he had reluctantly sent his men to serve with Nedić, who "has always been my enemy, even when he was War Minister and I was a colonel on the General Staff"; but Mihailović felt that this had been the only way to keep some of his companies intact. Those who had joined the Nedić militia, however, provided useful information and protected Mihailović's remaining numbers from both Nedić and the Germans. He went on to say that the reprisals following the action in the autumn had made him resolve "never again to bring such misery on the country, unless it could result in total liberation", Lawrence, Irregular Adventure, pp.231-232. While on the face of it, sending his men into the Nedić militia was a useful ploy, it held long-term dangers in that it left scope for allegations that Mihailović was collaborating with Nedić and, thereby, with the Germans. In late 1941, Mihailović decreed that his forces were no longer to be called "chetniks", but the

- "Yugoslav Home Army" to distinguish them from others who went under the name of chetniks, ranging from Kosta Pećanac's openly collaborationist organization, to outright bandits. Even so, "chetnik" continued to be used as shorthand for Mihailović's forces.
- 22. Mihailović radioed that Hudson, on 28 November, went to the communists in Užice to get his radio station, and had not returned so far, Mihailović telegram No.39, received 2 December 1941, WO 202/128
- 23. Hudson, 'Series B' Telegrams, April 1943, FO 536/31.
- 24. St.K Pavlowitch Interview with D T Hudson, 25 November 1983.
- 25. In April 1942, Christie Lawrence heard of Hudson and Mihailović's rift from Ron Jones, an Australian with whom he had made his original escape from the Germans. Apparently, relations had been strained from the first because Hudson would not give Mihailović the British wireless codes for transmitting his messages. In addition, after one small supply drop, Hudson had cancelled the next, as he felt the arms would be used to fight the partisans, but did not tell Mihailović and his forces that he had done so until they had waited for the whole of one night for the sortie to arrive. To make matters worse, they had delayed their departure from Ravna Gora on which the Germans were closing in specifically to receive the supplies. It was after Mihailović realized that no more supplies were to be forthcoming that he disbanded his forces and sent some of them into Nedić's militia. Lawrence, Irregular Adventure, pp.226-228.
- 26. Deroc, <u>British Special Operations</u>, p.214. Hudson had formed a high opinion of Tito and his immediate circle on first meeting them, Hudson 'Series A' telegrams, April 1943; but after the Germans had chased Tito out of Užice on 27 November, Hudson's impression of demoralization and lack of the partisan leadership's authority had led him to conclude that British aid might be best concentrated on Mihailović "if he still existed independent of Nedić", Hudson 'Series B' telegrams, April 1943, FO 536/31.
- 27. Hudson, 'Series A' telegrams, April 1943, FO 536/31.
- 28. 'Message from HMG to Colonel M, to be sent via SOE', 26 November 1941, FO 371/30221.
- 29. Deroc, British Special Operations, p.215.
- 30. St.K Pavlowitch interview with D T Hudson, 25 November 1983.
- 31. St.K Pavlowitch, Unconventional Perceptions, p.80.
- 32. Ibid., p.74; the first team was led by Colonel Luka Baletić, and the other by Lieutenant Rapotec.
- 33. Eden had thought it might be a good idea to use some of the Yugoslav pilots in the Middle East to supply the insurgents; it would be good for the morale of the latter and help the credibility of the YGE, Eden to Sir Archibald Sinclair, 3 December 1941. Sinclair replied on 8 Dec that there were "insuperable technical difficulties" the Yugoslav aircraft did not have the range, and training the Yugoslav pilots to fly the two aircraft available to SOE

would take too long, R10225/2235/92.

- 34. Pavlowitch, <u>Unconventional Perceptions</u>, p.74.
- 35. Mišo Leković, "Cinjenice o Misiji Majora Terenza Atertona" [The Facts of the Mission of Major Terence Atherton], serialized in <u>Politika</u>, Belgrade, 21 May 5 June 1986.
- 36. Pavlowitch, Unconventional Perceptions, p.74.
- 37. Hydra was to report on the situation in Montenegro; Henna was to report on Slovene patriotic organization; Commander in Chief, Middle East to War Office, 1 December 1941, R10257/162/92, FO 371/30221.
- 38. Atherton had escaped from Yugoslavia after the Axis invasion with Robert St John, who relates their experiences in <u>From the Land of Silent People</u>, pp.137-247.
- 39. A fourth member, Sargeant-Major Djekić, did not land; Atherton had decided during the submarine voyage that Djekić was unreliable and, as the mission had a W/T operator, sent him back to Egypt much to Djekić's chagrin, Pavlowitch, <u>Unconventional Perceptions</u>, p.146, note 22.
- 40. Mihailović reported that they had been captured by the Ustaša, Bullseye telegram No.103 (576A), 18 March 1942, WO 202/128. Apparently a report of what the members of the Disclaim mission told interrogators was passed to the partisans by a Ustaša colonel who was a partisan agent, Michael McConville, <u>A Small War in the Balkans: British Military Involvement in Wartime Yugoslavia, 1941-1945</u>, Macmillan, London, 1986, p.41.
- 41. Mihailović heard that two parachutists had been dropped near Novi Pazar, and that they had been captured by Moslems and handed over to the Germans. He asked if this was true, and if it was, it highlighted the dangers of sending people in without making arrangements with him first. Telegram No. 153 1014A, 5 May 1942, WO 202/128.
- 42. Leković, "Cinjenice o Misiji"; McConville says that Atherton was briefed to contact the partisans, <u>A Small War in the Balkans</u>, p.39; but according to Leković's account, Atherton's briefing was more general and exploratory. He had been assigned to Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro and told to co-operate with the force that was most active against the occupiers.
- 43. Mišo Leković, "Boravak Britanske Vojne Misije na Oslobodjenoj Teritoriji Crne Gore i Jugoistočne Bosne" [The Visit of the British Military Mission to the Liberated Territory of Montenegro and SE Bosnia], <u>Istoriijski Zapisi</u>, Vol.XXVIII, No.1-2, Titograd 1971, pp.301-328.
- 44. Vladimir Dedijer, <u>With Tito Through the War, Partisan Diary, 1941-1945</u>. Alexander Hamilton, London, 1951, entry for 16 February; a courier had arrived with the news from Sarajevo the night before, p.69; see note 40, above.
- 45. Leković, "Boravak Britanske..."
- 46. Dedijer, With Tito Through the War, p.71 and p.75. On 8 April, Tito wrote to the Croatian C.P. Central Committee, warning them against 'English' missions, who were not only stirring up trouble between the partisans and chetniks, but would probably also be

trying to link up with the Croatian Peasant Party and Independent Democratic Party to attempt to demolish partisan influence. This was not for public dissemination, however: the alliance of 'England', the USA and USSR was to be emphasized, the West was to be referred to as an ally while its agents' designs were to be defeated. Leković, "Boravak Britanske".

- 47. Leković, "Boravak Britanske".
- 48. Dedijer, With Tito Through the War, p.77; Simon Trew says that Nedić had written to the officers on Ravna Gora, proposing joint operations against the communists: these documents had fallen into partisan hands and were used to demonstrate Mihailović's 'collaboration', "No Pity Distilled", p.86.
- 49. Leković, "Boravak Britanske".
- 50. Leković, "Cinjenice o Misiji".
- 51. Leković, "Boravak Britanske".
- 52. Mihailović telegram no.197 1134.\(\Lambda\), 24 May 1942, WO 202/128.
- 53. The story that Atherton had been killed for the gold is the one usually given in accounts of his mission, for example, McConville, <u>A Small War in the Balkans</u>, p.42; Another version is given by Nikola Bojović: after leaving the partisan, 25 people were sheltering in a cave, among them General Novaković and Dakić, who were hiding from the partisans. Atherton, growing nervous and impatient, wanted to make a break; Dakić, afraid Atherton would give them away, took him outside and shot him. Dakić later admitted this to Bojović, who told Mihailović. Dakić was court martialled and acquitted. St.K Pavlowitch interview with David Martin, 4 December 1976, Pavlowitch Papers.
- 54. Leković, "Boravak Britanske".
- 55. When the exploratory missions arrived in April 1943, and while negotiations were underway for the Typical mission, the Atherton affair was very much in the minds of the partisans. For example, Dedijer mentions Atherton in his diary entry for 6 April 1943 (this was probably written at a later date, since the first two missions did not arrive until 20/21 April), with the clear implication that it was Mihailović's followers who were responsible for his murder, With Tito Through the War, pp.302-303.
- 56. For a full account of Rapotec's mission, see Pavlowitch, <u>Unconventional Perceptions</u>, pp.67-105.
- 57. Part of Rapotec's briefing from Ilic was to establish links with Mihailović that bypassed the British, ibid., p.75.
- 58. The first report, dated 11 July 1942, written by Basil Davidson in Istanbul, was "very discursive", partly a narrative of Rapotec's movements, and ran to 37 paragraphs without any headings. Correspondence with C M Woods, SOE Adviser, FCO, 20 February 1985.
- 59. Rapotec had a short meeting with Davidson in Istanbul, and a slightly longer one with SOE in Cairo; neither meeting constituted a debriefing, and Rapotec certainly did not give Davidson enough information to fill up a 37 paragraph report. Rapotec therefore concluded

that Perić, Popović and Gligorijević, who were in close touch with the British, had filled in the gaps from what he had told them. St.K Pavlowitch interview with Stanislav Rapotec, Southampton, 18 August 1987, Pavlowitch Papers.

- 60. 'Supplementary Report on Interrogation of Lieut. Rapotec', Major J J M Stevens, 30 July 1942, Correspondence with C M Woods, SOE Adviser, FCO, 20 February 1985.
- 61. St.K Pavlowitch interview with Rapotec, 18 August 1987. In addition, a member of ISLD [James Millar] took lodgings with the same Slovenian family that Rapotec stayed with in Cairo, which seems more than pure coincidence. Pavlowitch, <u>Unconventional Perceptions</u>, p.150, note 54.
- 62. Ibid., p.104.
- 63. Ibid., p.105.
- 64. 'Diary of Events in the Early Stages of the Dispute Concerning the Yugoslav Forces in the Middle East, 11 January 15 September 1942', gives a potted history of the affair, R6360/972/G, FO 371/33461.
- 65. Sir Ronald Campbell (Washington) to Orme Sargent, 1 July 1942: Campbell had heard from Ninčić that the "British sabotage section" [SOE] had been encouraging Mirković and the other dissident leaders in their aim to overthrow the Yugoslav government in London. Campbell had also heard that SOE was influencing the attitude of the British military authorities in the Middle East. Having had experience of SOE in Belgrade, this all had a "familiar ring" and Ninčić's version did not seem at all impossible. Campbell was at a loss to understand why it was that the FO was unable to enforce their view on the British command in the Middle East, R4518/G. Orme Sargent's reply on 16 July 1942 admitted that the whole affair had been badly bungled by the British military in Cairo, but refuted the allegations regarding SOE, R4518/3533/G, FO 371/33490; On 2 September 1942 Rendel sent Douglas Howard a memorandum on the Yugoslav army crisis which gave details of British secret services' support for the 'mutineers' and instances of anti-Yugoslav government attitudes; it is peppered with FO marginalia on the lines of "surely not?" and "Nonsense!", R5840, FO 371/33485.
- 66. 'Yugoslav Army Crisis', minute by Orme Sargent, 12 March 1942,FO 371/33452.
- 67. Rendel to Orme-Sargent, 18 July 1942, R4821, FO 371/33458.
- 68. Leković, "Boravak Britanske", quoting a Knežević memorandum to Jovanović, 23 February 1942.
- 69. Leković, "Cinjenice o Misiji".
- 70. Rendel to FO, 12 May 1942, R3081, FO 371/33455.
- 71. Rendel to Howard, 27 May 1942, FO 371/33455.

- 72. Rendel to Douglas Howard, 8 July 1942, enclosing a letter from Jovanović to Rendel 26 June 1942, R4580/G, FO 371/33458.
- 73. Rendel to Jovanović, 1 July 1942; Rendel also suggested that, as the letter probably went by diplomatic bag, the problem lay more with the Yugoslavs than with the British, FO 371/33458. See note 84, below.
- 74. See Chapter VI: Contacting the Partisans.
- 75. Rendel to Douglas Howard, 28 May 1942, R3632, and Rendel to Howard, 11 June 1942, FO 371/33456; Rendel to Dixon, 15 June 1942; thanking him for the FO view that it would be better not to consult Mihailović about the Middle East crisis, but warning that the FO would have to take responsibility later when Mihailović was sure to complain at being kept in the dark, R4055; Howard to Rendel, 24 June 1942, the FO did not want to consult Mihailović, as it would be embarrassing if he came out in favour of Mirković. Once a decision had been taken, "we might consider informing Mihailović of what has occurred", R4055/972/G, FO 371/33457.
- 76. 'The Yugoslav Army Crisis', Orme Sargent minute, 10 March 1942; Cadogan minute, 10 March; Eden minute 10 March, FO 371/33452.
- 77. Report by Colonel T Thompson, 28 April 1942, WO 208/2014.
- 78. An appeal by Jovanović to Churchill on 9 April 1942 for independent communications had been vetoed by the Chiefs of Staff, who expressed the strong opinion that communications should remain in British hands, L C Hollis to Churchill, 14 April 1942, PREM 3 510/12. The British wanted to retain control of communications so that they could also retain control or so they thought of the direction of the resistance forces. For example: Rendel to Howard, 16 July 1942, enclosing two telegrams from Mihailović to Jovanović, dated 7 July 1942, asking for clarification on the situation in the Yugoslav forces outside Yugoslavia, and for independent communications. Rendel had agreed with SOE not to pass on these telegrams to Jovanović for the present, as it was considered that Jovanović's reply would not best serve British plans, FO 371/33458.
- 79. Pavlowitch, <u>Unconventional Perceptions</u>, pp.103-104; Mihailović seems to have used the codes, but Hudson told him that they had not been deciphered; Mihailović said that the messages were for the Yugoslav prime minister and military cabinet, and that they would be able to decipher them. He also made the point that Hudson had his own special code for contacting his superiors, and, in the same way, Mihailović himself needed direct and uncontrolled contact with his commander-in-chief and King Peter. Telegram No. 315 1371A, 19 July 1942, WO 202/128.
- 80. Morton to Orme Sargent, 28 April 1942, enclosing Jovanović's memorandum of 23 April 1942, FO 371/33455.
- 81. MO4 [Cairo SOE] to Philip Broad, 26 October 1943, WO 202/144.
- 82. Rendel to Howard, 18 July 1942, and Rendel to Howard, 23 July, R4894/G, FO 371/33458.

- 83. Kim Philby, My Silent War, p.38.
- 84. Wing Commander Glanville, Air Ministry, sent Dixon a package of letters, on 4 March 1942, that had been received from Knežević to be sent by air to the Yugoslav HQ, Middle East. Although apparently such packages were 'usually sent on and not censored', this had been opened and translated; it turned out to include papers on the case against Simović and various discussions on the situation in the Middle East. Some days later, Dixon returned the package, and it was sent on in the usual way, R1726/151/92, FO 371/3352. It was Glanville who had misunderstood the YGE'S requests in February and March that confidential letters were to be delivered into the hands of Colonel Lozić (appointed acting C-in-C, Yugoslav forces Middle East), and given them instead to the dissidents, Rendel to FO, 12 May 1942, R3081, FO 371/33455.
- 85. Pavlowitch, <u>Unconventional Perceptions</u>, pp.19-21.
- 86. Eden memorandum, 28 February 1942, R1351/178/92, FO 371/33465. Eden had already recommended in December that SOE should have its own flight of long-range bombers, based in Malta, to operate exclusively in Yugoslavia, Eden to Churchill, 7 December 1941, PREM 3 510/1.
- 87. The fall of Singapore caused a major crisis in the British government: in the ensuing reshuffle, Dalton moved to the Board of Trade, and was replaced at the Ministry of Economic Warfare/SOE by Lord Selborne.
- 88. Martin Gilbert, <u>Road to Victory</u>, <u>Winston S Churchill 1941-1945</u>, Heinemann, London, 1986, p.75.
- 89. Report by Major D Talbot Rice, MI3b, 15 March 1942, WO 208/2014.
- 90. Report by Colonel B L Deeds, 18 April 1942, WO 208/2014.
- 91. 'Transmission of Help to General Mihailović', FO Report, 11 May 1942, setting out the 'immense difficulties', including lack of aircraft and the fact that Mihailović was constantly on the move. Total sorties to date were nine: it was impossible to say how much of the material had actually come into the hands of Mihailović, FO 371/33493. It is obvious from Mihailović's telegrams in April and May that many supply drops were going astray or being stolen, Nos. 150-152, WO 202/128.
- 92. The FO had tried to discourage this visit, for example: FO to Washington, 6 May 1942, R2383/G, FO 371/33479; Rendel to Eden, 7 July, It was obvious that King Peter had been pursuing the question of obtaining 'planes in the USA- "we will want to put the brakes on shortly", FO 371/33458..
- 93. Rendel to Dixon, 28 May 1942, R3629/G, FO 371/33456.
- 94. Rendel to Dixon, 3 June 1942, R3630, FO 371/33456.
- 95. Rendel to Dixon, 28 May 1942, R3629/G, FO 371/33456.
- 96. David Stafford, Camp X: SOE and the American Connection, Viking, London, 1987, p.136.

- 97. Sweet-Escott, Baker Street Irregular, pp.136-140.
- 98. For example: Ninčić to Eden, 11 May 1942, R3139/G, FO 371/33455.
- 99. P Dixon to R Murray, 18 June 1942, R3868/175/G, FO 898/157.
- 100. Murray to Kirkpatrick, 21 June 1942, FO 898/157.
- 101. Brooks, CIGS, to Churchill, 16 June 1942, explaining that all arrangements for supporting Mihailović were in SOE's hands. Communications with Mihailović were not entirely reliable, and for a long time Hudson apparently had not been allowed to send his own messages. In March, two long range Liberators had been allocated to SOE, but one was lost in a bombing raid in April and was replaced by one with a shorter range. Two more were being modified, but were not yet available to SOE. Between 30 March and 3 June, 16 sorties had been flown. Since Mihailović had begun his campaign, SOE had introduced: four English officers; 12 Yugoslavs (most of whom had been captured or killed); seven W/T sets; 43 machine guns; 24 Tommy guns; 880 grenades; 50,000 rounds of ammunition: 15,500 gold sovereigns; 12,000 paper dollars; 5 million lire, and various items of food, clothing, skis and medicine, PREM 3 510/12.

- 1. 'General Mihailović and the Partisans in Yugoslavia' 6 October 1942, R6882, FO 371/33471.
- 2. Overseas Press Summary, Stockholm 21 July 1942: <u>Nya Dag</u> in Sweden on 20 July 1942 carried a report of a Radio Free Yugoslavia broadcast, accusing Mihailović of being a collaborator. R5461/178/92, FO 371/33469.
- 3. Pearson to Howard 24 August 1942, enclosing an article from the <u>Daily World</u> New York 26 July 1942, and a translation of an article in <u>Ludovy Denik</u>, a Polish language communist paper in the USA, FO 371/33469.
- 4. The Zagreb transmitter had been established by the Comintern in January 1940, to make contact with the party in Yugoslavia and all its neighbours, becoming fully operational by summer 1940. V Cenčić, <u>Enigma Kopinić</u>, Belgrade 1983, Vol.1, p.117.
- 5. St.K Pavlowitch, <u>Tito, Yugoslavia's Great Dictator</u>, C Hurst & Co.,London, 1992, p.36. On 22 June 1941, the Comintern had told the Yugoslav communists that they should "take into account that at the present stage, the issue is liberation from fascist oppression, and not socialist revolution". <u>Izvori za Istoriju SKJ: Documenti Centralnih Organa KPJ, Nor i Revolucija 1941-45</u>, Belgrade 1985, Vol.1 p.63.
- 6. Mark Wheeler, "Pariahs to Partisans to Power: the Communist Party of Yugoslavia" pp.132-3, in <u>Resistance and Revolution in Mediterranean Europe 1939-1948</u>, Ed: Tony Judt, Routledge, London, 1989.
- 7. Geoffrey Swain "The Comintern & the Popular Front", Paper presented to Conference on European Unity in Context, University of Hull, 20-24 September 1988.
- 8. Report by Maj D Talbot Rice, MI3b, 15 March 1942, WO 208/2014
- 9. Report by Capt B L Deeds, 18 March 1942, WO 208/2014
- 10. FO to Kuibyshev, 7 August 1942, R4788/175/G, FO 371/33468
- 11. Martin Gilbert, Road to Victory, p.111
- 12. Ibid., pp.113-114; COS Directive 12 May 1942, 'SOE Collaboration in Operations on the Continent', COS(42) 133(0), CAB 80/62.
- 13. Gilbert, <u>Road to Victory</u>, p.120, note 1: Aide-Mémoire 10 June 1941, Cabinet papers 120/684.

- 14. The FO had initially been enthusiastic supporters of a demonstration of friendship and unity between the Soviet and Yugoslav governments, as a way of creating confidence in the latter in their homeland, and counteracting communist propaganda there: 'Yugoslav-Soviet Relations' 24 March 1942, R1990. However, the proposed Treaty of Mutual Assistance between the two, was the FO felt, going too far, and did not fit in with the British plan for a Balkan Confederation. On 28 May, Orme Sargent pointed this out in conversation with Milanović; and the fact that in such Great Power-Small Power treaties the latter was always the weaker partner. Milanović argued that a treaty would be a check on any Soviet tendencies to make a separate peace with Germany, but Sargent dismissed this notion as the result of German propaganda to sow dissent among the Allies. R3628/1990/92. FO 371/33490. The fear of a separate peace was, in fact, a very real fear, not only for the Western allies, but also in Soviet thinking.
- 15. Churchill, <u>The Second World War</u>, 6 Volumes, Cassell Ltd, London, 1948-1954, Vol.4, p.428.
- 16. A copy of the memorandum, which was also presented to Eden by Maisky, is enclosed with a minute from the Foreign Secretary to the Southern Department of 7 August 1942, R5212/G, FO 371/33490.
- 17. Rendel to Howard, 29 January 1943, R949, FO 371/37578.
- 18. The British were in fact in charge, but did not want to admit as much to the Soviets. See, for example, FO to Moscow, 24 February 1943, R1190/2/G, FO 371/37579.
- 19. Aide-Mémoire, 3 August 1942: consisting of 11 closely typed pages plus three substantial supplements; in the minutes Coverley-Price noted "this has probably given the Russians a headache"; Dixon "indigestible...but convincing"; Howard "The Russians will find it difficult to substantiate their allegations". R5798/G, FO 371/33469.
- 20. Murray to Dixon 29 August 1942, enclosing the letter from Jovanović to Bogmolov, R5760/G, FO 371/33469, also in FO 898/157. Collaborators were named in BBC broadcasts with a 'Z' attached to them as a means of identifying them in Yugoslavia as targets for assassination. Later there was some dispute over whether Mihailović was using this against communists; FO to Rendel 31 October 1942, R7027/178/G, FO 371/33471. However, Bailey reported that Mihailović had assured him that this was not so, and had agreed to discuss each case with him. Bailey stated that he thought the propaganda value of the 'Z' scheme was considerable, and recommended its continuation: Pearson to Howard, 11 February 1943, R1377/G, FO 371/37579. From the lists of people Mihailović named, it was clear that he was not using the scheme against communists.
- 21. Foreign Secretary minute to Southern Department 7 August 1942, R5212/G, FO 371/33490.
- 22. 'Assistance for Mihailović' 19 August 1942, minute by A V Coverley-Price, R5427, FO 371/33469. When Pearson sent Howard the articles from the <u>Daily World</u> and <u>Ludovy Denik</u>, (see note 3, above) he suggested proposing to the Americans that a counter-propaganda offensive might be launched in the USA. However, Coverley-Price noted "We certainly do not want to start an Anglo-Soviet war of propaganda in the US. The sooner we can obtain reliable information about Mihailović's real intentions the better, even if we have to change

our opinion of him". R5640/G, FO 371/33469.

- 23. Since March 1942 intelligence reports, which included information provided by intercepted German signals, had indicated that there was considerable activity in areas known to be outside Mihailović's control, while Serbia was fairly quiescent. The reports, while acknowledging the potential usefulness of partisan activity against the occupiers, were hedged about with warnings of the political dangers inherent in the partisans playing the leading role in resistance, WO 208/2014.
- 24. 'The Situation in Yugoslavia', DMI Report, 2 June 1942, including maps indicating all activity in Yugoslavia in May and the disposition of Axis divisions. PREM 3/510/12
- 25. A summary of the 8 August meeting is given in 'Relations between General Mihailović and His Majesty's Government', by Hugh K Grey, 27 July 1944, R12712/8/G, FO 371/44276.
- 26. Maj Pearson to Howard, 20 & 23 August 1942, R5538/178/92, FO 371/33469
- 27. Jovanović had just sent Mihailović a telegram, assuring him that Hudson and his organization were in no way to blame for the troubles in Cairo, and urging him to co-operate as closely as possible with Hudson: Jovanović to John Greenway, 19 August 1942, R5531/178/92, FO 371/33469. The fact that Jovanović had to send such a message is indicative of the mistrust and confusion caused by the decision not to give Mihailović the full story of the Cairo mutiny, or to seek his opinion on it (see Chapter III): it had obviously not helped Hudson's position.
- 28. Howard's handwritten comments in the margins of Pearson's letters, see note 26, above.
- 29. Howard minutes, 21 August, after meeting Pearson; it was agreed that Hudson had answered many of the questions the FO originally wanted to pose. R5538/178/92, FO 371/33469.
- 30. For example: Boyle, Inter-Services Liaison Bureau [aka SOE?] to P N Loxley, 18 August 1942: 'Vacul: Secret Yugoslav Organization', "You can rest assured that our policy is solely to support General Mihailović and that as Vacul is made up of ex-officers and communists are debarred from membership, it seems quite clear that any support given to Vacul, will, in fact, be a form of support to Mihailović." R5562/178/92, FO 371 33469; Pearson to Howard, 21 August 1942: SOE had not sent any help to the Slovene Freedom Front, as they thought it a partisan organization; SOE was hoping to send aid to Slovenia in the autumn, but only to people Mihailović acknowledged as his followers. R5488/G, FO 371/33469.
- 31. DMI Report and map, 23 August 1942, WO 208/2014.
- 32. Notes on the Partisan-Mihailović Issue, R Murray, 19 August 1942, R5474/178/92, FO 371/33469, also in FO 898/157.
- 33. PWE's information came from monitoring foreign press and broadcasts, both neutral and Axis; extra reports were provided by censorship, personal contacts within the YGE, and "certain private sources of our own". Something to bear in mind, in relation to Axis and satellite sources is that the Germans consistently referred to all elements who opposed them in any way both in Yugoslavia and elsewhere as 'communists'. PWE later went on to

establish its own intelligence-gathering network in Germany, to enable it to assess the impact of propaganda, and to modify it if necessary.

- 34. DMI Report 23 August 1942, WO 208/2014.
- 35. The Enigma decrypts were treated as ultra-secret, because profligate use of the information would have given the game away to the Germans; the distribution was not only extremely limited, but the content was also heavily disguised when action was to be taken on it. Interview with Jean Howard, London, July 1988. Churchill received a daily box of Ultra; apart from him only about 30 others in Whitehall those most closely concerned with running the war were in the know, at the FO only Cadogan and Victor Cavendish Bentinck, chair of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) were included. Christopher Andrew, Secret Service, Heinemann, London 1985, p.449.
- 36. John Cairncross, in 1964, claimed to have passed Ultra documents to the USSR for four years, and later claimed that he was not the only mole at GCHQ, Bletchley, John Costello, Mask of Treachery, William Morrow & Co, New York, 1985, p.411. Peter Calvocoressi gives an account of the official means whereby information derived from Ultra reached the Soviets: he notes that, while the Soviets were generally suspicious of everything emanating from the West, they never either directly or indirectly probed Eden or anyone else on the subject of Ultra, Top Secret Ultra, Cassell, London, 1980, pp.94-95.
- 37. Notes on Partisan-Mihailović Issue, Murray, 19 August, R5474/178/92, FO 371/33469; also in FO 898/157
- 38. Pearson to Murray, 23 September 1942, 'Use of the word Partisans in broadcasts', PB/JU/806, FO 898/157.
- 39. Sweet-Escott, Baker Street Irregular, p.155. SOE Cairo also became known as 'MO4'.
- 40. Dixon to Pearson, 9 October 1942, apologizing for taking so long to reply to his letter to Howard of 8 September asking for FO views on Hudson's estimate. The delay was due to the fact that the FO had been studying all available material, in view of which they now felt bound to accept Hudson's estimate. R5973/178/G, FO 371/33470.
- 41. At the end of August Eden had sent a letter to Maisky, putting the case for a united resistance through the co-operation of the British and Soviet governments: by 6 October, no reply had been forthcoming. 'General Mihailović and the Partisans' 6 October 1942, R6882, FO 371/33471.
- 42. Dixon to Pearson, 9 October 1942, R5973/178/G, FO 371/33470.
- 43. For example: In January 1943 Jovanović raised once again the question of direct communications with Mihailović, Rendel to Howard 29 January 1943, R949; Howard replied that the FO was considering the matter afresh, but deferring any decision until Bailey's reports were received and digested, R949/2/G, FO 371/37578.
- 44. Dixon to Pearson 9 October 1942, R5973/178/G, FO 371/33470. The FO was particularly alarmed by Hudson's reports of Mihailović's contacts with the Bulgarians: in early June 1942, Sargent had produced a long policy document on confederations in eastern and south-eastern

Europe, in which he stated that the Soviet Union's two 'natural allies' in the Balkans were Bulgaria and Serbia. Any plan for Soviet hegemony in the area would be based on a union, or close association, of the two; once the Germans were defeated, Bulgaria - whose population was pro-Russian - would be the spearhead for Soviet penetration of the Balkans. This would produce a bloc across the Balkans which would isolate Greece, leaving that country powerless against such a large state on its northern border. Pan-Slavism, Sargent concluded, was a menace to the independence of Balkan states, R3793/43/67, FO 371/33134.

- 45. 'Situation in Yugoslavia' 26 March 1942, P L Rose minuted that the letter had originated with a member of the Slovene clerical party, and was obviously anti-communist; but it was generally judged to give a fairly accurate picture. FO 371/33466. However, the SOE report of 11 July 1942, from Istanbul based on Rapotec's information stated that the partisans in Slovenia used Mihailović's name "to dupe the rank and file into loyalty". Correspondence with C M Woods, SOE Adviser, FCO, 20 February 1985.
- 46. For example: 'The Croat Problem', FO analysis 12 October 1942, R6875/12/92. FO 371/33471.
- 47. Glenconner Report, 18 November 1942, WO 202/132A
- 48. Dixon to Pearson, 9 October 1942, R5973/178/G, FO 371/33470.
- 49. Eden to Churchill, 15 September 1944, FO 371/33503.
- 50. Vane Ivanović noted that during 1942 the British encouraged guerrilla activity in Yugoslavia in the hope of impeding supplies to the Germans in North Africa: he doubted that the route through Yugoslavia and Salonika was more useful than the direct route through Italian ports, LX: Memoirs of a Jugoslav, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London, 1977, p.234; for an account of Rommel's problems with supply, see Martin Van Creveld, Supplying War, Cambridge University Press, 1977, pp.181-201.
- 51. FO to Moscow, 24 February 1943, R1190/2/G, FO 371/37579.
- 52. For example: Eden told King Peter and his mother that Mihailović's increased activity was partly due to British exhortations. Eden to Rendel, 11 December 1942, R8605/374/G, FO 371/33503.
- 53. Deroc, <u>British Special Operations</u>, on p.241 reproduces the memorandum of the meeting between Ilić and Masterson on 25 September 1941.
- 54. For example: Mihailović's Villa Resta telegrams No. 651, Malta to Cairo 16 Sept, & No. 636, 14 September 1942, WO 202/128.
- 55. Hudson telegrams GESH 229, 230 & 251, 8 December 1942, WO 202/356.
- 56. P Dixon to Murray, 18 June 1942, R3868/175/G: Murray to Kirkpatrick, 21 June 1942, FO 898/157. Complaints about Harrison's broadcasts, and the Yugoslavs he used, continued to be an issue, for example, the Howard-Rendel correspondence on the question in February 1943, FO 371/37579.

- 57. Mihailović Villa Resta No.209, 26 May 1942, WO 202/128.
- 58. Eden to Rendel, 11 December 1942, R8605/374/G, FO 371/33503.
- 59. 'General Mihailović, HMG Attitude', Rendel 31 December 1942, R2/2/G 92, FO 371/37578.
- 60. Ibid., minute by P L Rose, 2 January 1943.
- 61. St.K Pavlowitch interview with Peter Boughey, 29 October 1976, Pavlowitch Papers.
- 62. Brig C S Vale to Gen M Radovitch, 1 December 1942, 0168/1372/DDMI (0) FO 371/33474. This was, apparently, "little more than a routine message" [or at least this was how Brigadier Vale had accounted for it when taken to task by the FO because the YGE was taking "unfair advantage" of it.], Orme Sargent to Brigadier Vale, 14 January 1943, R172/2/G, FO 371/37578.
- 63. Eden, 3 January 1943, minutes on 'Mihailović- Partisan Dispute', brief for discussion with Sir A Clark Kerr for December 31 1942, concerning British attempts to persuade the Soviets to work towards a united resistance in Yugoslavia, R3/2/G 92, FO 371/37578. Eden to Churchill, 17 December 1942, discussing his meeting with King Peter and his mother, and proposing the message to Mihailović, PM/42/308, FO 371/33474.
- 64. Cadogan minute, 4 January 1943, R3/2/G 92, FO 371/37578.
- 65. 'Function of Radio Karageorge', Orme Sargent minutes, 20 January 1943, R398/G, FO 371/37602. SOE Cairo were operating their own freedom stations into other Balkan countries besides Yugoslavia, and into Italy, Hungary and Austria. There had been a great deal of trouble in summer 1942, when left-wing broadcasters on the "Voice of Free Greece" had made uncensored broadcasts very critical of the Greek exiled government. After El Alamein, SOE finally surrendered control of the network to PWE. Ewan Butler, <u>Amateur Agent</u>, Harrap, London, 1963, pp.66-67.
- 66. Eden to Sargent, 1 February 1943: "How long has Bailey been there, has nothing come in yet?", FO 371/37578.
- 67. Selborne to Eden, 22 January 1943: at the bottom of the letter, Eden wrote a note to Sargent, complaining that SOE were treating the FO like irresponsible children. R745/G, FO 371/57578.
- 68. Eden to Selborne, 2 February 1943, R745/2/G, FO 371/57578: Selborne replied on 4 February that he quite realized the particular interest Eden had in Bailey's mission and that the FO was already getting all the information except domestic details. He assured Eden that he had nothing to hide from him. R1097. Eden was somewhat mollified, but emphasized that he wanted the full text of Bailey's messages, not paraphrases, Eden to Selborne, 17 February 1943, R1097/2/G, FO 371/37608.
- 69. Cadogan, when denying all knowledge of having agreed with Eden on a change of attitude to Mihailović, went on to argue against sending a strongly worded message to him, on the grounds that Bailey had just arrived in Yugoslavia, and his chances might be

prejudiced "if we now chide Mihailović". 4 January 1943 minute, R3/2/G 92, FO 371/37578.

- 70. Pearson to Dixon, 16 November 1942, R7826, FO 371/33472; also in FO 371/33474.
- 71. Orme Sargent to W J Keswick, 29 January 1943, R683/2/G, replying to, J Keswick to Sargent, 22 January 1943. Bailey had reported that Mihailović and his staff were complaining about BBC broadcasts referring to the partisans, and asked that this should be suspended for six to eight weeks to gauge the result. Keswick had wanted to go along with Bailey's recommendation, R638; Keswick to Sargent, 24 January 1943, R638/2/G, FO 371/37578.
- 72. Bailey Report, 2 February 1943, FO 371/37579.
- 73. Bailey Report, 8 January 1943; Jovanović to Eden, 11 January 1943, R447/G, FO 371/37579.
- 74. Bailey telegrams, 5 February and 26 February 1943, detail the problems being caused by lack of supplies, including the fact that this was being interpreted as a lack of confidence in Mihailović's movement. Bailey was finding it hard to convince Mihailović and his forces that British interest was really serious, FO 371/37580.

- 1. For a detailed account of the Casablanca Conference, see Martin Gilbert's <u>Road to Victory</u>, chapter 18. It was at the Casablanca Conference that the policy of unconditional surrender was agreed, partly to allay American fears that the British would withdraw once Germany was defeated: the spectre of a separate peace haunted not only the East-West Allied relationship but also the Anglo-American one.
- 2. One of the most famous of these was 'Operation Mincemeat', when a corpse bearing false documents on the Allied plans was floated ashore in Spain in the hope that the documents would be forwarded to Berlin and there taken for genuine plans.
- 3. 'The Balkans' COS memorandum, 20 March 1943, COS (43) 142 (0) in CAB 80/68.
- 4. For example: David Mure, <u>Practise to Deceive</u>, London 1977; F H Hinsley *et al.*, <u>British Intelligence in the Second World War</u>, HMSO, London, 1984 and 1988; Ralph Bennett, <u>Ultra and Mediterranean Strategy</u>, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1989.
- 5. "A German Perspective on Allied Deception Operations in the Second World War", Klaus Jürgen Müller in <u>Intelligence and National Security</u>, Vol.2, No.3. July 1987. Special issue on Strategic and Operational Deception in the Second World War.
- 6. Vladimir Dedijer, With Tito through the War Diary entries for 13 December 1942, p.245, and 23 January 1943, p.258: in both these entries Dedijer notes the expected landing and the partisan attitude to it. The YGE was also expecting an Allied landing in the near future: an example of this was the urgency which Jovanović pressed for a decision on the despatch of Yugoslav officers to Mihailović, given the fact that it would take two months to give them parachute training. The purpose of sending them was to strengthen Mihailović's organization in readiness for actions in concert with the landings. Jovanović to Rendel, "The Despatch of Officers for Yugoslavia", 16 February 1943, PVK 444/43, FO 371/37580. Bailey was enthusiastic about these officers being sent in, as it would improve Mihailović's organization, Bailey to Cairo 19 February 1943, FO 371/37581. The FO agreed, but once again the shortage of aircraft made it impossible, FO to Pearson, 4 March 1943 R 1827//2/G FO 371/37580.
- 7. Hudson, in his Series 'A' telegrams, describes the "republic" as barren territory, threatening no important exploitation, save a small timber railway. Pearson to Howard, enclosing Hudson's telegrams, 9 April 1943, R3367/2/G, FO 536/31.
- 8. For an account of the Bihać republic and the composition of the first meeting of AVNOJ see St.K Pavlowitch's Tito, pp.36-38.
- 9. Marko Milivojević, <u>The Yugoslav People's Army: The Military Dimension</u>, Bradford Studies on Yugoslavia, No.12, University of Bradford 1988, pp.3-5.

- 10. Sava Bosnitch, review of Martovski Pregovori 1943, by Mišo Leković, in The South Slav Journal, Vol 11/No.2-3 (40-41), Summer-Autumn 1988; St.K.Pavlowitch, The Improbable Survivor: Yugoslavia and its problems, 1918-1988, C Hurst & Company, London, 1988, gives a full list of sources dealing with the March negotiations, pp.140-141.
- 11. Milovan Djilas was a member of the Politburo and commander of the First Proletarian Division; Koča Popović had experience in the Spanish civil war and became the first postwar Yugoslav Army Chief-of-Staff; Vlatko Velebit was a lawyer and member of the partisan Supreme Staff who spoke German and Italian, had negotiated with the Germans previously, and was to become ambassador in London. Djilas gives his own account of the negotiations in Wartime, Secker and Warburg, London, 1987, pp.232-244.
- 12. Bosnitch, in his review of Martovski Pregovori 1943, tells us that Hans Ott subsequently had dealings with British and Soviet intelligence agents attached to the partisans and carried out espionage assignments for the Soviets. Later he confessed to being a British spy. At the end of the war, Bosnitch claims, Ott and some of the other participants in the March negotiations were liquidated by the partisans "to assure that they would tell no tales." Of the other Germans involved, Glaise von Horstenau committed suicide, Ribbentrop and Kasche were hanged, and Loehr was executed by firing squad.
- 13. One of these was Tito's common-law wife who was released from a Gestapo prison, Pavlowitch, Tito, p.30, fn.
- 14. Hitler was not happy about local accommodations: in February he had written to Mussolini, complaining about the Italians in Yugoslavia arming the chetniks against the partisans and warning of the dangers of trying to play the two off against each other. Hitler to Mussolini, 16 February 1943, quoted by David Martin in The Web of Disinformation, pp.74-75. On 21 April 1943, Ribbentrop sent Kasche a telegram pointing out that, having succeeded in rallying the Duce to the German view that the partisans and chetniks must be annihilated, the Germans could hardly use the tactic of playing off one against the other, Walter R Roberts, Tito, Mihailović and the Allies, 1941-1945, Duke University Press, Durham, 1987 (originally published by Rutgers University Press, 1973) p.111.
- 15. Pearson to D Howard, 12 February 1943, enclosing 'Colonel Bailey's Review of the Partisans in Serbia and Bosnia', FO 898/157.
- 16. Bailey to Cairo, 5 February 1943, warning that the shortage of aircraft was being interpreted by Mihailović and his commanders as simply an excuse to explain away high-level unwillingness to send arms or funds on an adequate scale, and was perceived as a vote of no confidence in their movement. Bailey thought this feeling might be used to goad Mihailović into more action, but cautioned that to attempt this and then get no improvement would cause even more damage. On 26 February Bailey wired that, as Mihailović had received only two aircraft loads for the whole country in the space of five months, "I can no longer convince him that our interest is serious". Until he was assured that the supply situation would radically improve, Bailey felt that he could not accept the responsibility for negotiating with Mihailović regarding future work. pp.73-74, FO 371/37580.
- 17. Glenconner to FO, 28 February 1943. He went on to say that if anything worthwhile was to be achieved "our policy must be consistent", at which point the unidentified FO hand has written in the margin: "This from SOE of all people!" FO 371/37580. The dispute over

broadcasting and propaganda was continuing apace, with the YGE and Mihailović protesting at the amount of coverage the partisans were receiving. Following a BBC broadcast in Serbo-Croatian on 21 February, which stated that the partisans were the only active fighting force in Yugoslavia, the minister of state in Cairo [on behalf of Vellacott] asked London PWE if this denoted a change in policy "announcement is naturally causing some sensation here". Elizabeth Barker, of PWE, explained to E M.Rose that this was a mistake by the BBC and that she was reprimanding them. Minister of state Cairo to PWE, 27 February 1943 and note by Rose, 2 March, R 225/117/92, FO 371/37580. Vellacott was assured that policy had not changed and was still to show sympathy to both Mihailović and the partisans, the recent imbalance being due to an absence of news from Mihailović and a flood about the Axis offensive against the partisans. The offending broadcast of 21 February had been "badly drafted". FO to Cairo, 5 March 1943, No 709 FO 371/37580.

- 18. MI3(b) produced 'A Short History of the Revolt in Yugoslavia' on 27 April 1943. Under the heading 'Montenegrin Chiefs', it states that before Mihailović arrived Djurisić and Stanisić were in contact with the Italians who supplied them with food and with arms to use against the partisans. While this compromise on paper appeared so close to treason, it was accepted without ethical qualms by both sides. It had been a useful move to restore and keep order, while there was no doubt of the use to which the weapons supplied by the Italians would ultimately be put. By contrast, General Popović had followed a policy of complete collaboration with the Italians, as a result of which he was regarded with contempt. WO 201/1599. The Italians were well aware of the long-term danger posed by the chetniks, but without sufficient forces to quell them had no choice but to come to an arrangement, Ciano's Diary, entry for 6 January 1943, p.534.
- 19. Pearson to Howard 9 April 1943, enclosing Hudson's Series A and Series B telegrams, FO 536/31 R3367/2/G. A printed summary of Hudson's telegrams, dated 18 May 1943, is to be found in FO 371/37585, R4441/2/G. The telegrams combine Hudson's diary from his arrival in Yugoslavia including the periods when he was out of touch with Cairo with an updated appreciation of the current situation.
- 20. Churchill wrote to Jovanović on 29 March 1943, warning that unless Mihailović changed his policy, the British might no longer favour him to the exclusion of other resistance movements, Jovanović regretted the anti-British expressions used, but thought this was only 'a temporary mood' and had sent a telegram to Mihailović pointing out that the principal enemies of Yugoslavia were the Germans and Italians. Jovanović to Churchill, 6 April 1943, R 3107/2/G FO 371/37583. The FO wanted the telegram to Mihailović to take a much tougher line than Jovanović thought justifiable, but eventually the text of a 'stiff note' was agreed, Rendel to Orme Sargent, 3 April 1943, enclosing draft of Jovanović's message to Mihailović R 3105, and FO minutes, 7-8 April 1943, R 3107/G, FO 371/37583.
- 21. More than two months later Rendel was still arguing that the christening speech was not sufficient to justify the conviction of Mihailović's disloyalty in British official circles. Rendel to Howard, 6 May 1943, R 4206, FO 371/37585.
- 22. DMI MI3(b) report, 27 April 1943, WO 201/1599. On 5 May, Grol had protested to Rendel about recent telegrams from Mihailović (Bullseye Nos 1446 and 1459) which had a very anti-Croat tone. Rendel had told Grol that as Mihailović had been away from his HQ when they were sent it was unlikely he had a hand in drafting them. Rendel's impression was that they were attributable to Colonel Vasić, who was known to be a Pan-Serb and who

had on more than one occasion shown a total lack of balance. Rendel to Howard, 7 May 1943, R 4207, FO 371/37585. Although Grol was a Serb, he had increasing reservations about Mihailović; Grol was a Democrat, and later returned to Belgrade to become a member of Tito's provisional government.

- 23. Rendel to Eden, 30 March 1943, R293/G FO 371/37582; Mihailović to Jovanović 16 April 1943, defending himself against what he regarded as a misinterpretation of his words. No 1483, FO 371/37584.
- 24. Lucien Karchmar, <u>Draža Mihailović and the Rise of the Četnik Movement 1941-1942</u>, 2 Vols, Garland, New York, 1987, Vol II, pp.769-770.
- 25. Bailey to Cairo, 16 March 1943, copy in FO 371/37582.
- 26. Bailey to Cairo, 23 March 1943, copy in FO 371/37582.
- 27. Ljotić was the leader of a group of Serbian fascists who collaborated wholeheartedly with the German occupiers. Ljotić and his followers all had 'Z' attached to their names by Mihailović.
- 28. Bailey to Cairo, 22 March 1943, copy in FO 371/37582
- 29. Mihailović had reported that on 26 February the Germans had asked him to meet Lieutenant Krieger, the commander in Gornji Milanovic; Mihailović had replied that "while you shoot and imprison innocent Serbs" there could be no negotiation. On 1 March he had received a radiogram from a confidential agent, saying that the Gestapo chief in Yugoslavia had asked if Mihailović would meet Hitler's special envoy: the deal he was offering was that all German and Bulgarian troops would withdraw from Yugoslavia, leaving Mihailović in charge as long as free rail passage to the south and to Bulgaria was guaranteed. Mihailović replied "True to the cause of the Allied nations I decline all negotiations." Mihailović to Jovanović, 2 March 1943, Tel No. 1382. Mihailović's opinion was that the Italians and Germans were attempting to exploit the adverse publicity he had been receiving in Allied countries. Mihailović to Jovanović, 10 March 1943, Tel No. 1399, FO 371/37583.
- 30. On 3 April Bailey reported that Mihailović had been absent for three weeks and had ignored all requests for a meeting "I have virtually been dismissed by him". At the request of the FO, Jovanović sent a telegram instructing Mihailović to receive Bailey at once. FO to Minister of State Cairo, 8 April 1943, R 3031/2/G, FO 371/37583. Bailey reported that this had been very much taken to heart by Mihailović, relations were greatly improved and Bailey was looking forward to closer collaboration. Part of the reconciliation was an agreement to modify BBC broadcasts, which had been one of the factors which had provoked the christening incident. Bailey had taken credit for the change in broadcasting, but on 22 April there had been great praise for the partisans once again. Bailey wanted to know if the change of policy was to be permanent. Copy of telegram from Bailey, undated [April 1943], FO 371/37584. The agreement was supposed to be still in place, but was simply not being adhered to by the BBC: Hambro to Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart, 13 April 1943, protesting at the new policy ruling from PWE being ignored by the BBC and warning of the detrimental effect this could have on Bailey's mission. R3451/G, FO 371/37584.

- 31. Rendel to Douglas Howard (and copy to Boughey), 22 May 1943. One of the partisan general staff spokesmen was named as 'Dr. Miloš Marković, professor at the technical faculty at Zagreb university', which was the alias used by Djilas. R 4598/G, FO 371/37586. Hudson's Series A telegrams discussed the first issue of the monthly Ravna Gora which contained an article warning that the Gestapo were releasing communists to sabotage Mihailović, but among Hudson's dismissive descriptions of other articles, the point was probably missed that this one contained a germ of truth. (This might refer to the earlier prisoner exchanges between the Germans and partisans.) 9 April 1943, R 3367/2/G, FO 536/31. A lengthy draft on 'Guerilla Warfare in Yugoslavia' mentions the partisan negotiations with the Germans: unfortunately the details were contained in a separate note, which is not included in the file. The draft itself though contains very detailed information on the partisans, including the names of commanders in each area and the arms they possessed, even down to the number of pistols, which might indicate that it was prepared by an ISLD agent on the spot. Undated [April 1943] WO 202/132A.
- 32. Rendel to Howard, 14 December 1942, commenting on Hudson's telegram. Rendel described SOE policy as being one of goading Mihailović and anyone else in Yugoslavia into some kind of action. SOE was, he claimed, prepared to use support of the partisans as a lever with Mihailović, ignoring the high price that might have to be paid at a later date. R 8628/G, FO 371/33472. The policy Rendel criticises here was not of SOE making, but had been urged upon SOE by the FO and PWE at the 8 August meeting in 1942. See chapter IV.
- 33. Pearson to Howard, 13 January 1943, enclosing a résumé of Bailey's telegrams. R 384, FO 371/37607. In February Bailey produced an analysis of Mihailović's movement in which he described it as "a military organization of great potential usefulness" and set out a clear plan for improving its effectiveness. This included the infiltration of the senior Yugoslav officers that Jovanović was keen to despatch (see note 6, above) to improve the calibre of the staff at Mihailović's HQ. Bailey to GHQ Middle East, 19 February 1943, FO 371/37581.
- 34. 'SOE Policy towards Yugoslavia', 15 January 1943, The handwritten comments in the margin indicate that this was *not* what the FO wanted to do at all. FO 371/37607.
- 35. Basil Davidson, Special Operations Europe, pp.141-152.
- 36. Peter Wright claims that James Klugmann was not simply a party activist, but a talent spotter and recruiter for Soviet intelligence, <u>Spycatcher</u>, Heinemann, Richmond, Australia, 1987, pp.222, 248, 249 & 264.
- 37. Keble had previously worked for MI4.
- 38. Davidson, Imperial War Museum Sound Archives, Tape recording 10505/3.
- 39. Teleprints of raw 'Enigma' material were only sent to London. Apart from that only very heavily disguised synopses were sent to military heads if any of the information was relevant to their theatre of operations. Therefore whatever Keble received could not have originated at Bletchley, but was probably Abwehr or SS W/T traffic. Interview with Jean Howard, London, 14 July 1988. Deakin gives the source of information as a listening station near Cairo, the material being known as 'local decrypts'. Interview with Sir William Deakin, London, 23 September 1988.

- 40. This may not be beyond the bounds of possibility, since Soviet intelligence had at least one agent in Bletchley Park, see chapter IV.
- 41. Basil Davidson, Special Operations Europe, pp.154-155
- 42. Deakin had worked with Churchill on his <u>Life of Marlborough</u>. In 1941 Deakin had been in the USA, working with the British Security Council to promote anti-German and anti-Japanese sabotage in central and south America, until the Americans called a halt to this. He returned to London in early 1942 and worked on the Yugoslav desk of SOE there under Boughey, moving to Cairo SOE in December 1942.
- 43. Basil Davidson, noting the fortunate factors which allowed Keble a mere brigadier to get an interview with the PM includes Deakin being a personal friend of Churchill, Deakin's knowledge of the intercepts and his being in favour of helping the partisans. "A fourth is that his G2 [Davidson himself] discussed an idea with him. One cannot order one's junior to go to the prime minister over all the intervening hierarchy, but there is no law against encouraging two friends to meet; nor is there any limit, if one of them happens to be prime minister, upon what they may legitimately talk about." Special Operations Europe, pp.156-157. Officially the report should have gone via Glenconner and been discussed by the service chiefs, the FO and London SOE. Thanks to Deakin being in the right place at the right time, all these were bypassed.
- 44. Martin Gilbert, Road to Victory, p.137.
- 45. 'Operations in Yugoslavia' 30 January 1943, B1/2//1/13478, FO 371/37579.
- 46. For example: Glenconner's report of 18 November 1942, WO 202/132A, and the DMI report on 'The situation in Yugoslavia' produced at Churchill's behest on 2 June 1942, PREM 3/510/12. In autumn 1942 Churchill had asked for a report from Bletchley on which resistance was doing most to disrupt the Germans: the report had concluded that it was the partisans causing most trouble for the Axis at that time. Interview with Jean Howard, London, 14 July 1988.
- 47. Martin Gilbert, <u>Road to Victory</u>, pp.312-313, quoting Prime Minister's Personal Telegram, T.74/3 25 January 1943: Churchill papers, 20/127. Stalin expressed his disappointment at the timetable decided at Casablanca in a telegram to Churchill on 16 February, pp.339-340, quoting 'Personal and most secret', 16 February 1943: Churchill papers 20/106.
- 48. Ibid. p.313, quoting 'Stratagem' No.255, 26 January 1943, Churchill papers, 20/127.
- 49. Ibid. p.338 and p.356.
- 50. Winston Churchill, The Second World War, Vol IV, p.736.
- 51. CD [Sir Charles Hambro] to Orme Sargent, 22 February 1943, Hambro gave the Axis divisions as 19 Italian, seven German and five Bulgarian. He told Sargent that Keble's report did not suggest that the partisans alone were holding 30 Axis divisions. R1521, FO 371/37579. Although, in fact, that was exactly what was claimed in 'Operations in Yugoslavia', 30 January 1943, B1/2/1/137478, FO 371/37579.

- 52. L.C Hollis 'Support of Operations in Yugoslavia' 11 February 1943. Churchill had shown Eisenhower Keble's report in Algiers on 5 February 1943. R1513/G, FO 371/37579. After his meeting with Deakin and Keble, Churchill had flown to Turkey, then to Cyprus, back to Cairo, on to Eighth Army HQ in Tripoli and stopped at Algiers before returning to Britain on 7 February. The prime minister's new interest in Yugoslavia was manifested in conversations he had with the Turkish premier and the telegram he sent to Stalin in early February. Martin Gilbert, Road to Victory, pp.322-328.
- 53. L C Hollis 'Support of Operations in Yugoslavia', 11 February 1943, the COS committee was in favour of continuing exclusive support for Mihailović. Their figure for Axis divisions in the whole of Yugoslavia was also 31: six German, 19 Italian and six Bulgarian (plus 3 Hungarian divisions), of these, three German and six Bulgarian divisions were occupying Serbia. R1513/G, FO 371/37579.
- 54. C.R Price to Orme Sargent, 7 March 1943 setting out conclusions of the COS meeting of 4 March. R2091/G, FO 371/37581.
- 55. There had been attempts to contact the partisans, but since the early days of Hudson's mission, these had come to nothing. Atherton had made contact with the partisans, but had not managed to radio out his favourable impressions before he was murdered, see chapter II. Subsequent attempts to send 'Captain Charles Robertson' to the partisans had also failed, see chapter VI.
- 56. Hambro to Orme Sargent, 22 February 1943, R1521, FO 371/37579.
- 57. Orme Sargent to Hambro, 23 February 1943, R151/2/G, FO 371/37579.
- 58. Pearson to Howard, 12 February 1943, enclosing reports from Bailey, R1384, FO 371/37579.
- 59. Hambro to Orme Sargent, 11 March 1943, enclosing memorandum from SOE Cairo 'General Mihailović and the Partisans', 6 March 1943, R2221/2/G, FO 371/37581.
- 60. Ibid. Douglas Howard minute, 13 March 1943.
- 61. 'Telegrams received from Colonel Bailey in reply to SOE Questions', undated, March 1943, FO 371/37582.
- 62. Pearson to Howard, 12 March 1943, 'Provisional Minutes of 14th meeting FO-SOE Committee', held 9 March. R2330/G, FO 371/37581.
- 63. PWE Cairo 'Memorandum on Policy towards Yugoslavia', 7 February 1943, 123571, WO 202/132A.
- 64. Keble to Ralph Murray, 9 February 1943. As well as wanting modifications made to the draft, Keble warned that the document would have no value in London if it was thought there to have been prepared by SOE staff: presumably therefore it was a joint effort between SOE and PWE in Cairo, with SOE taking the lead. Ref.COS/100/1A/547, WO 202/132A.
- 65. Rendel to Orme Sargent, 9 March 1943, R2224/G, FO 371/37581.

- 66. Rendel to Howard, 13 March 1943, R2342/G, FO 371/37581.
- 67. Selborne to Orme Sargent, 30 March 1943, enclosing four pages of sabotage reported to have been carried out by Mihailović forces since 1 October 1942. R2973, FO 371/37582.
- 68, It is difficult to discern Bailey's motivation in reporting the incident in the way he did: was it simply a reflection of his bad relations with Mihailović, or was it an attempt to illustrate the problems of lack of adequate supplies, and to galvanize the British into improving the situation? If it was the latter, the ploy backfired.
- 69. For example: 'Yugoslav-Soviet Relations: Republication of Article in "Time" on "Eclipse of Mihailović", E M Rose minute of 5 January 1943 argued that while Mihailović might be the right horse to back in Serbia, there was no reason not to back other horses where his writ did not run simply to avoid offending the YGE. Douglas Howard's minute of 6 January agreed: the FO had no intention of irrevocably committing itself to Mihailović, and could back any guerrillas it wanted. Both were pleased to learn that Simić, the Yugoslav minister in Moscow, shared this opinion. R121/G, FO 371/37606. Simić, however, did not regard the partisans as communist, simply as traditional fighters of a rather primitive kind, with a history of fighting for independence. Lambert, Kuibyshev to FO, 2 February 1943, R987/G, FO 371/37578.
- 70. Military developments in the Mediterranean and Ukraine had made the question more urgent at the turn of the year. Douglas Howard, 30 December 1942, 'Mihailović-Partisan Dispute', brief for Sir Archibald Clark-Kerr for 31 December. R3/2/G 92, FO 371/37578.
- 71. Sir A Clark-Kerr to FO, 22 February 1943, R1609, FO 371/37579.
- 72. FO to Moscow, 24 February 1943, R1609/2/G, FO 371/37579.
- 73. FO Report 'General Mihailović and Resistance in Yugoslavia', 8 March 1943, FO 371/37581.
- 74. The establishment of communism in east-central Europe was something the FO was anxious to avoid: eg., Rendel to Orme Sargent, 3 February 1943, R1141/G, FO 371/37579.
- 75. Sir A Clark-Kerr to Orme Sargent, 3 April 1943, R3250, FO 371/37583. Douglas Howard warned him against taking such a simplistic view of the situation, Mihailović was as far from black and reactionary as the partisans were from being all red. Howard to Clark-Kerr, 15 April 1943, R3250/2/G, FO 371/37583.
- 76. L H Manderstam with R Heron, <u>From the Red Army to SOE</u>, William Kimber, London 1985, pp.146-149. Manderstam describes Hill as a very shady character, with close links to the NKVD. "Clark-Kerr appeared to be completely taken in by Hill and gave his seal of approval with the words 'whatever Brigadier Hill says, goes'."
- 77. H L Baggallay, Kuibyshev, to Clark-Kerr, Moscow, 17 March 1943, Tel.Nos. 64 & 66, FO 371/37583.
- 78. Douglas Howard 'Mihailović-Partisan Conflict', 29 April 1943, Eden's note in the margin "Did he Try?", R3994/G, FO 371/37584.

- 79. 'Special Operations Executive Directive for 1943', Chiefs of Staff memorandum of 20 March 1943, COS(43) 142(0) in CAB 80/68.
- 80. David Stafford, Britain and European Resistance, p.105.
- 81. For example: 'Guerilla Warfare in Yugoslavia', undated [April 1943], 123571, WO 202/132A.
- 82. 'A Short History of the Revolt in Yugoslavia', MI3(b), 27 April 1943, used a wide variety of sources including Hudson's telegrams, 124104, WO 201/1599.
- 83. Selborne to Orme Sargent, 9 April 1943, R3246/G, FO 371/37583.
- 84. On 12 April SOE had produced a memorandum on points to be included in the directive to Mihailović with a lengthy covering letter from Pearson. This was not uncritical of Mihailović and acknowledged that the partisans might look better in terms of active resistance to the Axis but warned that long-term they held less potential for the British than did Mihailović. If a choice had to be made and Pearson was sure that this would be the case since there was no chance of running the two in harness- there was no question of it being other than Mihailović. R3368/G, FO 371/37584.
- 85. Ibid. E M Rose (minute, 16 April) did not agree with this, arguing that Mihailović was not a Yugoslav, but a Pan-Serb. Howard (minute, 20 April) was in favour of continuing to support Mihailović, but only as long as he lived up to British expectations.
- 86. Hambro to Glenconner, 2 April 1943, George Taylor Papers, King's College, London.
- 87. Douglas Howard 'Mihailović-Partisan Conflict', 29 April 1943, R3994, FO 371/37584.
- 88. Bailey telegram, 6 April 1943, copy in FO 371/37584.

- 1. Conversation with Dominic Flessati, Hudson's biographer, 15 January 1992.
- 2. Bailey 'Note on the Despatch of Captain Charles Robertson to Yugoslavia' 16 July 1946, R10672/170/92, FO 371/59469.
- 3. Conversation with Dominic Flessati, 15 January 1992.
- 4. Julian Amery, <u>Approach March</u>, p.262, recounts Robertson being beaten up in Cairo and implies that it was at the behest of Klugmann, because Robertson had renounced his communism. This idea was still current in 1975: when questions were asked about Klugmann in the House of Lords the case of 'Robertson' was used to illustrate Klugmann's misdeeds in Cairo, Lord Clifford speaking on House of Lords motion on 'Subversive and Extremist Elements', <u>Hansard</u>, 26 February 1975. David Martin in <u>The Web of Disinformation: Churchill's Yugoslav Blunder</u>, Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch, New York, 1990, pp.117-118, suggests Robertson might have been assaulted in Cairo and possibly subsequently murdered by the partisans because he was a Trotskyist, but gives as an alternative scenario Robertson being murdered by chetniks simply because of his communism. Michael Lees in The Rape of Serbia: The British Role in Tito's Grab for Power 1943-1944, Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch, New York, 1990, pp.192-193, thinks it not beyond the bounds of possibility that Robertson had *himself* beaten up to prove that he was no longer a communist.
- 5. Conversation with Dominic Flessati, 15 January 1992.
- 6. Mihailović Telegram No. 967, 14 November 1942, WO 202/509.
- 7. Telegram from Cairo 31 August 1943, repeating Bailey's telegram of 28 August 1943, FO 371/37590.
- 8. Mike Lees felt that he had a lucky escape when he found at the PRO Major Rupert Raw's report in WO 202/164, which stated that Robertson had attempted, but failed, to establish W/T contact with Lees in October 1943 as a link to Cairo SOE. This followed the arrest of Major Neil Selby who had set out to contact the partisans in the company of Robertson, but only Selby and his W/T operator were captured. Lees felt that Robertson was attempting to draw him into his own intrigues, Rape of Serbia p.193. Selby had left for the partisans on the instructions of Cairo SOE, with a view to preventing local clashes between them and the Mihailović forces,
- 9. Michael Lees, <u>Rape of Serbia</u>, p.191, Robertson was instructed to speak French on arrival in Yugoslavia by some unspecified 'higher authority'.
- 10. Boughey to FO, 5 November 1942, R7571/178/92, FO 371/33472

- 11. David Martin The Web of Disinformation, p.109, wonders if Cedric Belfrage, one of Stephenson's senior staffers who was later identified as a Soviet spy, might have played some part in recruiting communists. He also says that Charles Ellis, Stephenson's deputy, was 'suspect to certain elements in British intelligence'. Philip Knightley in The Second Oldest Profession, Pan Books, London, 1987, pp.83-84, claims that Ellis was first a victim of his own poor judgement and of overplaying the double-cross game, and later, p.361, a victim of the 'great mole hunt'.
- 12. Lees, Rape of Serbia, p.49.
- 13. C M Woods, SOE adviser at the FCO, correspondence 5 May 1988.
- 14. Mark C Wheeler "Resistance from Abroad: Anglo-Soviet Efforts to Co-ordinate Yugoslav Resistance, 1941-1942.", paper presented at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, 16 February 1990.
- 15. Sweet-Escott, <u>Baker Street Irregular</u>, p.128, compares Donovan's relationship with the State Department with that of Section D and the FO in the early days of D's existence. David Stafford <u>Camp X</u>, p.31 and p.52. tells us that before Pearl Harbor there was a distinct antagonism to any hint of American involvement in the European war. Although Donovan had the personal support of Roosevelt, his activities and contacts had to be secret.
- 16. Todorov had spent much of the 1920s and 1930s in political exile in Belgrade, so he was presumably well-known to Bailey when the two met again in Canada. SOE agents in pre-war Yugoslavia had close links with all the Balkan peasant parties. Todorov himself was certainly not a communist, but an Agrarian; he was in Jerusalem in May 1941 and possibly met Bailey there before the latter went to Canada.
- 17. Wheeler "Resistance from Abroad."
- 18. Stafford, <u>Camp X</u>, p.171, Drew-Brook used Eric Curwain to do the leg-work, to conceal his own identity.
- 19. Stafford has Lethbridge beginning his recruitment in January 1943, <u>Camp X</u>, p.197, whereas Wheeler says that after Bailey had found the second party, Lethbridge took over and recruited the third party in summer-autumn 1942. The latter must be accurate, since one of the first groups of these men who were sent to the partisans in April 1943 spoke of 'Lesbric' enlisting them: there would not have been time to recruit, train and transport them across the Atlantic between January and April. Lethbridge was a passport officer also working for Section D/SOE in pre-war Belgrade.
- 20. Wheeler "Resistance from Abroad."
- 21. Stafford, <u>Camp X</u>, p.198.
- 22. Robert Lethbridge to Stevan K Pavlowitch, 2 February 1975, Pavlowitch Papers.
- 23. Wheeler "Resistance from Abroad".
- 24. Stafford, Camp X, p.173

- 25. See chapter III.
- 26. Deakin, Embattled Mountain, footnote, p.209.
- 27. Stafford, Camp X, p.173.
- 28. Correspondence with Nikola Pasić, Toronto, December 1986: Pasić has done extensive research on the Camp X recruits, and here quotes from a cable from partisan HQ Croatia, to Tito, 23 April 1943.
- 29. Atherton's mission was to explore all potential resistance, including the partisans. According to the official historian of SOE and Yugoslavia, SOE did not really warm to Mihailović and give him their whole-hearted support until some time early in spring 1942, conversation with M.C.Wheeler, 25 September 1992.
- 30. Stafford, Camp X, p.176.
- 31. Wheeler "Resistance from Abroad".
- 32. Deakin, Embattled Mountain, p.207.
- 33. Alexander Simić-Stevens, "Pathfinder Fungus" in <u>Journal of the British-Yugoslav Society</u>, Winter 1984. Simić-Stevens puts his meeting with Bailey as 'the early part of 1942', but as Bailey left for the USA in December 1941, the meeting must have been at the end of 1941. Simić-Stevens had worked for five years in Belgrade as Atherton's assistant editor on the <u>South Slav Herald</u> and other publications. According to the first missions to the partisans, Simić-Stevens had volunteered to go into Yugoslavia with Atherton, but had backed off after being warned by a 'student antifascist organization'. Cable from Partisan GHQ to Tito, 23 April 1943, correspondence with N Pasić, December 1986. Simić-Stevens himself does not mention this in his recollections.
- 34. Bailey was not in overall charge of the recruiting. Alex Halpern, a White Russian who had been called to the English Bar, and who was an expert in central European affairs, was overseeing the whole operation, Bickham Sweet-Escott, <u>Baker Street Irregular</u>, p.131.
- 35. Simić-Stevens, "Pathfinder Fungus" in Journal of the BYS, Winter 1984.
- 36. Ibid.
- 37. Simić-Stevens, "Pathfinder Fungus" Journal of the BYS, Spring 1985.
- 38. Cable from partisan GHQ Croatia to Tito, 23 April 1943, correspondence with N Pasić, December 1986. Serdar, George Diclić and Milan Družić arrived near Sekovic in eastern Bosnia, just north-east of Sarajevo, Roy Maclaren, <u>Canadians Behind Enemy Lines</u>, University of Columbia Press, Vancouver, 1981, p.139. According to Deakin, this party did not manage to get a signal out until 11 May; they had made contact with the Bosnian partisans, but were on the run. Tito's HQ had no radio link with Bosnia, so no details were immediately forthcoming. <u>Embattled Mountain</u>, pp.213-214. The information from eastern Bosnia in London was scant, Pearson told Howard that the party did not seem to have been successful in contacting the local partisan HQ until about 16 May, Pearson to Howard, 25 May 1943,

R4708/G, FO 371/37586.

- 39. Dušan Biber, "The Communist Party of Yugoslavia and its Attitude to England, 1939-1943", paper presented to the British National Committee for the History of the Second World War, Anglo-Yugoslav Colloquium, 13-15 December 1982 at the Imperial War Museum, quoting Zbornik, 11/19 No.125, p.159.
- 40. Dedijer, With Tito through the War, p.302-3.
- 41. Dušan Biber, "The CPY and its Attitude to England", quoting ACKSKJ (Archive of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia), CK KPJ KI, 1943/118.
- 42. Correspondence with N Pasić, December 1986.
- 43. Dušan Biber "The CPY and it Attitude to England", quoting ACKSKJ, CK KPJ KI 1942/91 '(wrongly put in 1942)'.
- 44. Ibid., quoting Zbornik, II/9 No.108, p.307.
- 45. William Jones, <u>Twelve Months with Tito's Partisans</u>, Bedford Books, London, 1946, captures his enthusiasm. The admiration seems to have been reciprocated in this case, Jones appears to have found a place in partisan affection, eg. Dedijer's Diary entry for 26 August 1943, <u>With Tito</u>, p.359. Also Roy Maclaren <u>Canadians behind Enemy Lines</u> p.148. quotes Dedijer's description of Jones as "the most popular Allied officer in Yugoslavia". Jones' enthusiasm was not so well received in Cairo, to whom he apparently sent telegrams of such great length, and written in such hyperbolic terms, that MO4 eventually gave up deciphering them. Jones later moved on to Slovenia, Stafford, <u>Camp X</u>, p.181.
- 46. Deakin, Embattled Mountain, pp.219-221.
- 47. Dušan Biber, "The CPY Attitude to England", quoting <u>Zbornik</u>, II/9, No.213, p.291. It is doubtful anyway whether SOE could have extracted any representatives from the partisans at that stage: parachuting agents into Yugoslavia was one thing, getting them out was quite another before the Allies had moved into Italy.
- 48. Ibid., quoting <u>Zbornik</u>, II/9, No.193, p.264.
- 49. Deakin, Embattled Mountain, p.219.
- 50. Dedijer, With Tito, entry for 24 May, p.316.
- 51. Ibid., pp.320-321.
- 52. Davidson in <u>Special Operations Europe</u>, pp.164-166, says that Keble had already selected someone "Major-General Coppers" as Davidson calls him. It appears that Davidson managed to put him off the mission in the process of briefing him: much to Davidson's relief it seems, as 'Coppers' was not the one he wanted to send to Tito. Davidson wanted to go himself, but says Deakin's claim was "a much stronger one", although he does not specify the reasons for this. Could it have been Deakin's Churchill connection?

- 53. Interview with Jasper Rootham, Wimborne, Dorset, 2 June 1988.
- 54. Deakin, Embattled Mountain, p.214.
- 55. Ibid., p.214.
- 56. The confusion over what, if any, supplies Deakin and Stuart might take to the partisans, however, was possibly an indication of the continuing pro and anti-partisan battle, rather than of inefficiency. On arriving at Derna airfield, Deakin and Stuart discovered that a message from Cairo concerning the medical supplies they were to take with them had not been repeated to Derna. Just before they left, a message was received from Cairo ordering them to leave behind the medical supplies, leading them to wonder if 'in certain British quarters' there was the thought that the failure of their mission would save many complications. Their journey to Derna by train and lorry, rather than by 'plane, was not so inexplicable: this was the route all the BLOs took from Cairo, ibid. pp.220-222.
- 57. Morton to Orme Sargent, 8 June 1943, Morton did not know what had prompted Churchill to ask for Deakin but, explaining the relationship between the two, thought it might simply have been 'a friendly desire' to see Deakin. R5070/G, FO 371/39609. Deakin had written to Churchill before leaving on 21 May, Gilbert, Road to Victory, p.411, but his letter had not reached the PM by 28 May.
- 58. Dedijer, <u>With Tito</u>, entry for 24 May, p.316. There was some suggestion later that the mission had been deliberately delayed so that the partisans would be destroyed, Dušan Biber, "The Communist Party of Yugoslavia".
- 59. Deakin, Embattled Mountain, p.22.
- 60. Ibid., p.216. The other members of 'Typical' were Corporal Walter Wroughton, W/T, Sergeant John Campbell and Sergeant 'Rose', who was Stuart's W/T operator. 'Rose' was actually Peretz Rosenberg, who was also working for the Jewish Agency. SOE and the Jewish Agency had a reciprocal arrangement: agents of the latter were often natives of occupied countries who spoke the language and knew the terrain, so were obviously useful to SOE; for the Jewish Agency these agents were able to gather information on what was happening to the Jewish population in Axis-occupied areas.
- 61. Lees, Rape of Serbia, p.39.
- 62. Dedijer, <u>With Tito</u>, entry for 12 July, pp.345-6. Deakin and Dedijer's accounts of this early period and the arrival of supplies make an interesting contrast. Deakin comments on Dedijer's Diary that it is "an invaluable record, open in places perhaps to friendly dispute in its references to the British" Embattled Mountain, p.61.
- 63. "The Partisan authorities, whose realistic scepticism about imminent British material aid on a significant scale was tempered by a marked appreciation of the propaganda value of our presence", Deakin, Embattled Mountain, p.62.
- 64. Lt.'Tommy' Thompson, who spoke Serbo-Croatian, Lt. Mackay, an explosives expert and Sergeant Crozier, W/T, ibid., p.56.

- 65. Syers was a 'Cambridge Communist', and had worked for the British Council in Ljubljana, Belgrade and Nis immediately before the war. Interview with Pamela Bisdee, Midhurst, 9 September 1986. Doctor Mackenzie arrived on the same 'plane, and his orderly arrived on the following night with Davidson.
- 66. These included Greenlees who joined Bailey in March; 'Excerpt' mission, led by Greenwood (who finally arrived in mid-April after trying to get in since January) went to the Homolje area in eastern Serbia commanded by Pavlović; 'Roughshod' mission, Sehmer arrived 19 April at Djurić's HQ in central-eastern Serbia and was joined on 1 June by Captain Purvis and sergeants Shenton and Faithfull; captains Moore and Wade with sergeants Rochester and Belic arrived 20 April in central Serbia, commanded by Keserović and Cvetić; 'Enamel' mission, Rootham, Hargreaves and Hall (W/T) arrived in the Homolje area on 20 May, and were joined on 15 June by Nash, Scorgie and Russell; Selby arrived in Keserović's area on 25 May; 'Fugue' mission arrived in June, Lees, Smith, Thompson and Tomlinson were meant to go south, but remained in Djurić's area after the Bulgarian attack which killed Smith and Thompson and injured Tomlinson, Lees, Rape of Serbia, p.114.
- 67. Dedijer, With Tito, entry for 8 June, p.328.
- 68. Deakin, Embattled Mountain, p.62.
- 69. Dedijer, With Tito, entry for 1 June, p.324.
- 70. Deakin, Embattled Mountain, p.70. Deakin did not seem to be aware that the Axis action was not directed only at the partisans, but was a general mopping up operation. Also within the circle were various chetnik groups, including those of Djurisić, Stanković and Bačević. Mihailović himself was in the circle at one stage, but managed to get out and head towards Serbia. 'The Yugoslav Revolt', minute by E.M.Rose, 26 May 1943, R4959/G, FO 371/37587. Bailey's telegrams E1/51 of 17 May and E1/52 of 18 May 1943 described the problems involved in getting out of Montenegro, FO 371/37586.
- 71. Dedijer, With Tito, p.360.
- 72. Deakin, Embattled Mountain, p.72. Deakin seems to have taken a fairly 'hands-off' approach as regards obtaining first hand intelligence: in September he was formally requested by the partisan staff to send an eye-witness to see Mihailović chetniks fighting under German command in Herzegovina, but refused as he had no-one available "and also felt that further credence of this sort is unnecessary". Deakin telegram, 10 September 1943, copy in FO 371/37612. When Syers asked him to interpret in the interrogation of 12 captured Germans, Deakin refused on the grounds that it was not his job to get involved in that sort of thing, he was only there to advise. The Germans were executed by the partisans without Syers having obtained any information from them. Interview with Sir William Deakin, London, 23 September 1988.
- 73. Interview with Sir William Deakin, 23 September 1988.
- 74. Basil Davidson, Partisan Picture, Bedford Books, Bedford, 1946, p.12.
- 75. Lees, Rape of Serbia, p.217.

- 76. Pearson to Howard, 25 May 1943, R4708, FO 371/37586.
- 77. MO4 to Bailey, 24 May 1943, copy in FO 371/37586.
- 78. Boughey's opinion was that Novak was in a very difficult position in Slovenia, where there were large numbers of German and Italian forces which he was probably forced to deal with while violently hating them. He felt it dangerous to judge too hastily or denounce so vehemently as MO4 had done on the incomplete evidence available. Boughey to Rendel, 6 June 1943, R4707, FO 371/37586. Novak was in considerable difficulty in Slovenia: partisan activity there had led to the formation of village guards to protect the population from reprisals; these had been perceived as useful by the occupiers who, in some cases, had armed them. In the spring of 1943 Mihailović had ordered Novak to make a major recruiting drive: his appeal for money and propaganda to facilitate this was rejected by MO4, and he was included in the commanders Mihailović was supposed to denounce. Without this aid, Novak had little hope of increasing his forces since he was in disagreement with the Catholic Party in Slovenia, who had the most influence over the village guards who would have made up his extra forces. Novak, a regular officer in the Yugoslav army, although a Slovene, was a centralist-minded Yugoslav; whereas the Slovene People's Party, the Catholic - and, before the war, the majority party in Slovenia - was federalist. Bogdan C.Novak [no relation], Trieste, 1941-1954, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1970, p.79.
- 79. 'SOE Activities in Yugoslavia', 10 June 1943, R5068, FO 371/37608. The text of the telegram is repeated in Mihailović to Jovanović, No. 1598 of 1 June 1943, in 'General Mihailović', 15 June 1943, R5203/G, FO 371/37588.
- 80. Bailey to MO4, 29 May 1943, copy in FO 371/37586.
- 81. MO4 to Bailey, 31 May 1943, ibid.
- 82. 'SOE Activities in Yugoslavia', minutes by Douglas Howard, Orme Sargent and Eden, 10 June 1943, R5068/G, FO 371/37608. There had been considerable discussion at all levels over the wording of this directive following Selborne's reaction to the COS directive in March, Selborne to Orme Sargent, 9 April 1943, R3246/G, FO 371/37583. For example: Pearson had produced a lengthy memorandum on the proposed directive on 12 April, R3368/G, FO 371/37584; the COS had discussed it on 6 May 'Yugoslav Directive to General Mihailović', Extract from COS (43) 95th Meeting (O) of 6 May 1943, R4080/G, FO 371/37585; Rendel and Jovanović had agreed on its importance, and the need to send it as soon as possible, on 8 May, Rendel to Orme Sargent, 9 May 1943, R412/G, FO 371/37585; Jovanović had sent the final text to Eden on 11 May, R4186/G, FO 371/37585. By the time it was finally despatched Mihailović was on the move following the renewed Axis drive and Bailey was ill with malaria, with the result that the directive and Glenconner's telegram reached Mihailović at almost the same time.
- 83. 'General Mihailović', minute by Douglas Howard, 15 June 1943 on Mihailović's telegram to Jovanović, No.1598 of 1 June. Mihailović repeated the whole text of Glenconner's telegram and pointed out that it was completely contrary to the communication sent by the YGE on 12 May. He was furious at this 'foreign interference', and had no intention of leaving the rest of the country to Tito and the partisans. R5203/G, FO 371/37588.

- 84. 'SOE Activities in Yugoslavia', minute by Douglas Howard, 10 June 1943, R5068/G, FO 371/37608.
- 85. Rendel to Dixon, 8 June 1943, R5119/G, FO 371/37587.
- 86. Mihailović to Jovanović, Telegram No1588 of 29 May, R5119/2/G, FO 371/37587.
- 87. Rendel to Orme Sargent, 10 June 1943, Rendel had the impression that King Peter had heard of the missions to the partisans from Colonel Putnik in Cairo, rather than from Jovanović. R5151/G, FO 371/37609.
- 88. Howard thought it likely that Mihailović's telegrams, when received and translated in Cairo, might easily have come into the hands of Colonel Putnik, who then telegraphed them to the YGE. Hambro was detailed to look into this and ensure that the YGE would not in future receive Mihailović's communications before SOE itself. 'Situation in Yugoslavia', minute by Douglas Howard, 10 June 1943, R5070/G, FO 371/37609.
- 89. Martin Gilbert, Road to Victory, p.422.
- 90. Richard Casey, (Minister of State in Cairo) to Sir Andrew Cunningham (Admiral of the Fleet), 1 June 1943, enclosing a memorandum 'for the eye of your guest', PREM 3/510/7, 124298.
- 91. Morton to Orme Sargent, 8 June 1943, R5070/G, FO 371/37609. Morton consulted the FO and SOE on 9 June, who agreed that the facts, recommendations and conclusions were not only spurious, but opposed to the policy of the FO, SOE, the YGE and the COS. No one knew who had written it, but it was certainly not Deakin. SOE already thought "that something has gone very wrong with their head man in Cairo", and he had been recalled to explain himself. Morton to J M Martin, 10 June 1943, PREM 3/510/7.
- 92. A fresh report was to be prepared by Gubbins of SOE, who would obtain the concurrence of Orme Sargent and the DMI before it was presented to the PM, Morton to Mr Rowan, 15 June 1943, PREM 3/510/7, 12498. 'The Situation in Yugoslavia' was produced after a meeting between Orme Sargent, Hambro, Gubbins, Rendel, Boughey and Howard on 9 June 1943, R5070/G, FO 371/37609.
- 93. Selborne to Churchill, 18 June 1943, PREM 3/510/7.
- 94. Ibid. On 29 June Selborne was able to tell Churchill that SOE had heard from Deakin, who was with partisan HQ "in Serbia", and that although Deakin and Tito had been wounded and Stuart killed, the partisans 'after most bitter fighting' had broken out of the German ring. Selborne to Churchill, 29 June 1943, PREM 3/510/7.
- 95. Churchill minute of 22 June, 'Situation in Yugoslavia', L C Hollis for COS Committee, 23 June 1943, PREM 3/510/7.
- 96. Selborne to Churchill, 18 June 1943, PREM 3/510/7.
- 97. L C Hollis to Orme Sargent, 6 May 1943, enclosing 'Extract from COS (43) 95th Meeting of 6 May 1943', R4080, FO 371/37585.

- 98. Eden thought it was, noting in the margin "Curiously enough we had thought of them!", ibid. Only a few days earlier 29 April 1943 Douglas Howard's paper on 'The Mihailović-Partisan Conflict', had opened with the statement that the Soviets had been consistently unco-operative over Yugoslavia, denying any contact with the partisans and saying they had no wish to interfere. FO 371/37584.
- 99. Morton to Rendel, 8 June 1943, R5070/G, FO 371/37609.
- 100. Howard minute on 'Yugoslavia', 21 June 1943, FO 371/37609.
- 101. Eden to Churchill, 24 June 1943. A handwritten note tells us that Churchill agreed over the telephone on 27 June, PREM 3/510/13.
- 102. Eden to Churchill, 24 June 1943, PREM 3 510/13.
- 103. COS to MEDC, 27 June 1943, PREM 3/510/13.

- 1. Hambro to SOE Cairo 3 July 1943, informing Bailey of the new policy and asking for his opinion, R6004/G, FO 371/37589.
- 2. Simić-Stevens claims that he distinctly remembers radioing this to Cairo, although he is aware that SOE records give a different version, "there is no doubt that I conveyed Tito's view and warning to the Cairo authorities at this time." Alexander Simić-Stevens, "Pathfinder Fungus", in Journal of the British Yugoslav Society, Spring 1985.
- 3. Selborne to Eden, 6 August 1943, R7150, FO 371/37610.
- 4. Bailey to Cairo, 6 July 1943, copy in FO 371/37589.
- 5. The original suggestion of Fitzroy Maclean as political adviser to the partisans came from Orme Sargent, Orme Sargent to Sir F Bovenschen, 27 June 1943, FO 371/37609.
- 6. There are two versions. 'Brief for Captain Fitzroy Maclean', undated, is presumably the first draft. There are a number of hand-written modifications to this: most of the references to "partisans" have been changed to "non-Mihailović resistance movements", "the various resistance movements" and "resistance movements other than those under General M." In addition, a paragraph telling Maclean that while he will be a member of SOE, he will consider himself in political matters to be a member of the Secretary of State's Cairo office, has been deleted, copy in FO 371/37590. 'Brief for Colonel Maclean' 20 July 1943, has all the references to "partisans" and the paragraph about Maclean being a member of the Secretary of State's Cairo office restored. There are five additional paragraphs, covering the relationship with Bailey, etc. R6619/G, FO 371/37610.
- 7. These included a bogus telegram to Churchill purporting to come from Wilson to the effect that he considered Maclean unsuitable for the job, a 'whispering' campaign in Cairo that Vellacott was told to set in motion, to the effect that Maclean was a homosexual and a drunkard, and a concerted effort to delay his departure for Cairo. Lees, Rape of Serbia, pp.62-63.
- 8. Churchill to Eden, 28 July 1943, R7050, FO 371/37610.
- 9. FO minute, 1 August 1943, p.78, FO 371/37610.
- 10. Eden to Selborne, 2 August 1943, p.84, FO 371/37610.
- 11. Selborne to Eden, 5 August 1943, R7150, FO 371/37610.
- 12. Hambro to SOE Cairo, 3 July 1943, R6004/G, FO 371/37589.

- 13. Bailey to SOE Cairo, 6 July 19043, FO 371/37589.
- 14. FO minute, 1 August 1943, p.78, FO 371/37610.
- 15. Selborne to Eden, 6 August 1943, R7150, FO 371/37610.
- 16. Churchill to General Wilson, 3 August 1943, T1190/3, FO 371/37610.
- 17. Eden to Wilson, draft [undated] August 1943. Howard minuted on 4 August that this new set-up might be unfair to Bailey, and that it might be necessary to change the plan of the Mihailović mission too. FO 371/37610.
- 18. David Wallace, political adviser to Eddie Myers in the British mission to Greece, had sent a series of telegrams which SOE had never delivered to Rex Leeper, British ambassador to the Greek government-in-exile. Then Eddie Myers brought out six Greek guerrillas, who demanded that the Greek king should not return to the country until there had been a plebiscite on the future of the monarchy: the guerrillas had also demanded that three members of the Greek resistance forces should have places in the exiled government. Bickham Sweet-Escott, <u>Baker Street Irregular</u>, pp.173-175.
- 19. Deputy Minister of State, Cairo to the FO, informing them that at a meeting of the Yugoslav Committee it had been decided to refer to both parties in Yugoslavia by their proper names, and also that MO4 was to be the deciding authority, 26 July 1943, R6858/G, FO 371/37610.
- 20. FO to Minister of State Cairo, 31 July 1943, R6858/G, FO 371/37610.
- 21. FO to Pearson, 1 August 1943, R6916/2/G, FO 371/37610.
- 22. Orme Sargent to Eden, 1 September 1943, FO 371/37611, p.139.
- 23. Maclean to Orme Sargent, 30 August 1943, R8196/G, FO 371/37611. In the event Maclean arrived in Yugoslavia a few days before his counterpart with the Mihailović mission. Maclean arrived, without a hitch, on 16 September, while Armstrong arrived on 23/24 September at his fifth attempt.
- 24. This was at a meeting on 28 August between Wilson, Minister of State Lord Moyne, Sir Arthur Rucker, Philip Broad, Glenconner and Maclean. Maclean to Orme-Sargent, 30 August 1943, R8196, FO 371/37611.
- 25. Orme Sargent to Eden, 1 September 1943, Eden minuted on 4 September that he saw no objection to Orme Sargent trying to obtain Selborne's agreement for Maclean to have communications that were 'essential'. FO 371/37611, pp.139-140.
- 26. Glenconner attempted to persuade Maclean to withdraw his critical remarks, especially those concerning Keble and Tamplin, who, Glenconner claimed had ceased to work against him from 17 or 18 August, but Maclean would have none of it. Maclean to FO, 3 September 1943, FO 371/37612, p.13.

- 27. Major-General Sir Colin Gubbins to Mountbatten, 1 October 1943, thanking him for his help in ensuring that SOE Cairo would be maintained. The two had discussed the matter on 15 September. Mountbatten replied on 2 October that he was pleased SOE Cairo was to continue, since their presence in the Middle East was important for his position in south-east Asia. SC3/408/G, Mountbatten Papers, University of Southampton. Gubbins had taken over as executive head of SOE in September 1943, when Hambro left to take up a post in Washington.
- 28. Bailey to Cairo, 10 June 1943, giving a list of missions already established and those planned, which, if implemented, would cover all lines of communication in Serbia, except for Macedonia, and "will also have completely organized Serbia for long-term action." Bailey realized his plan was ambitious, but felt that the spirit he had met in Serbia convinced him it was worthwhile: "please do not penalize excellent rank and file for Mihailović political shortcomings". E1/87, FO 371/37588.
- 29. SOE sent in officers and transmitters without enough people in Cairo to encipher and decipher the wireless traffic this engendered. Bickham Sweet-Escott, <u>Baker Street Irregular</u>, p.173. The shortage of personnel in Cairo led to the men in the field receiving "extraordinary replies, if any" to their cables, War Diary of Maj.J.Sehmer from 19 April 1943 to 13 December 1943, WO 202/162; All communications between sub-missions went to Cairo first, and were then relayed back to Yugoslavia. The communications situation was further complicated by a lack of charging motors for the W/T batteries, which meant hours of hand-charging or pedalling before the BLOs could send any signals. One enterprising SIS man in Slovenia ordered a fishing line and tapped in to the overhead electric lines to send his signals, Interview with Arthur Marlow, Eastbourne, 14 July 1992.
- 30. Jasper Rootham on 7 June 1943 received a signal from Cairo telling him that all sorties for June were cancelled, but they were sending one 'plane with personnel only, including a "flaming Pole", who was going to pretend to be an Englishman. Rootham was not taken with this idea, and had already sent Cairo a strong telegram on the subject on 26 May. Cairo sent the personnel, with a few supplies, but the sorties they promised did not materialize, causing Rootham considerable embarrassment, and, he felt, a loss of British prestige. Jasper Rootham War Diary, Tonbridge School Library. ISLD further complicated the situation by sending their agents before proper agreements had been made on intelligence gathering. Two ISLD men arrived against Sehmer's advice, and without W/T sets, and subsequently spent a considerable time hanging about with nothing to do. Sehmer War Diary, WO 202/162. The 'Geisha' mission was sent to the partisans without first obtaining Tito's approval and were confined to quarters and only allowed to communicate via 'Fungus' until the situation was cleared up. Fungus to Cairo, 17 October 1943, In Message Operational Log, WO 202/140. Presumably their communications were sent through Fungus because the partisans controlled all Fungus messages (see chapter VI).
- 31. 'Roughshod Report', 1 June 1944, Captain Robert Purvis' briefing in Cairo had been "vague to the extent of saying nothing", WO 202/162. Jasper Rootham, in discussion with another officer in Serbia, found he shared Rootham's embarrassment at the "vague and contradictory nature of instructions given to him about his work", Rootham Diary, entry for 18 June 1943.
- 32. C M Woods SOE adviser at the FCO, correspondence, 5 January 1988.

- 33. For example: Major Jack, who arrived at the same time as Armstrong, was told not to worry about politics; his was purely a military job. Interview with Archie Jack, Haute-Savoie, June 1988.
- 34. CD to Orme Sargent, 6 September 1943, enclosing telegrams between Bailey and Cairo, R8471, FO 371/37590.
- 35. Deakin's directive from the Yugoslav Section of SOE in Cairo stated that he was not to be under Bailey's command and that he should not have any contact direct or indirect with Bailey. Deakin, Embattled Mountain, p.63. However, Deakin's directive, of 20 April 1943, was before Bailey had been appointed senior political representative in Yugoslavia: although Maclean's promotion had made rather a nonsense of this in practical terms, the fact remained that Bailey was still officially the senior adviser and therefore in theory entitled to contact other missions and the partisans. Bailey had turned down the chance to be brigadier to Mihailović's HQ specifically to allow himself freedom of movement both physically and politically. It would have been logical, in the light of this, to update Deakin's directive accordingly.
- 36. For example: Turnpike via Pikestaff to Cairo, 20 October 1943. "The weather has changed from cold to damn cold and the attitude of PARTISAN Staff Fourth zone has changed from cool to cooler. Reason for latter might be the absence of promised sorties." In Message Operational Log, Sheet No.68, WO 202/140. When Sehmer arrived on 19 April 1943, he was not received warmly by Djurić, who was not enthusiastic about committing sabotage because of the reprisals, but the promise of arms was "greeted jubilantly". Sehmer War Diary, WO 202/162.
- 37. For example: Angelica to Cairo, 30 October 1943. Moore complained that in spite of his local commander Marković carrying out acts of sabotage and not fighting the partisans, a larger number of sorties had been dropped to another commander who was doing the opposite. In Message Operational Log, Sheet No.88, WO 202/148.
- 38. In late July 1943 Sehmer, in accordance with instructions, warned Djurić that if he continued his attack on the partisans on the Radan then air support would cease. Cairo immediately sent four sorties. Sehmer War Diary, WO 202/162.
- 39. Cairo to Bailey, 17 August 1943. Selby and Bailey were also told not to inform the other British personnel of this plan. Selby was supposed to negotiate a local truce with the partisans and Djurić's men, and promise 'generous air support' if they would be sensible and fight the Axis, not each other. EI/111, FO 371/37611.
- 40. Sehmer felt that Djurić was not entirely without justification in his actions against the partisans; he was not, however, very impressed by the showing of Djurić's forces against the partisans, despite numerical superiority. This he put down to "bad leadership, bad training and total lack of discipline amongst his commanders." Djurić's plan to call in reinforcements to drive the partisans from the Radan were cancelled due to a reported German-Bulgarian expedition in the area, rather than any influence by the British mission. Sehmer War Diary, WO 202/162.
- 41. Selby and his W/T operator set out in the company of Radojević, aka 'Robertson', but the latter managed to elude Selby's captors. (See chapter V.)

- 42. Cairo to Bailey, repeated to London 5 September 1943, CD to Orme Sargent, 6 September 1943, R8471, FO 371/37590.
- 43. Bailey to Cairo, repeated to London 4 September 1943. CD to Orme Sargent, 6 September 1943, R8471, FO 371/37590.
- 44. Minister of State Cairo to FO, 6 September 1943, "Particularly unsatisfactory is the passage demanding no aid should be sent to other elements of resistance in Yugoslavia." R8470, FO 371/37590. Yet on 4 September Cairo had sent to London Bailey's report which stated: "Mihailović accepts our right to support other elements of resistance", CD to Orme Sargent, 6 September, R8471, FO 371/37590.
- 45. 'Mihailović', Eden minute, 9 September 1943; Howard agreed with Eden and was also convinced that SOE Cairo and the minister of state were definitely against reaching an agreement with Mihailović, Howard minute, 9 September; Orme Sargent "I agree" 9 September, R8470/2/G, FO 371/37590.
- 46. Michael Lees, Rape of Serbia, pp.160-162.
- 47. Sehmer War Diary, WO 202/162.
- 48. Middle East Defence Committee to Chiefs of Staff, 21 July 1943, R6627, FO 371/37321.
- 49. If the Germans needed any confirmation, their interception of Churchill's telephone call to Roosevelt on 28 July 1943 concerning the proposals for the Italian armistice, would have provided it. Martin Gilbert, <u>Road to Victory</u>, pp.454-455.
- 50. Deakin to Cairo, TY/24 of 14 August 1943, FO 371/37611.
- 51. Sir William Deakin, "The British and the Italian Surrender in Yugoslavia", paper presented to the British National Committee for the History of the Second World War, Anglo-Yugoslav Colloquium, 13-15 December 1982 at the Imperial War Museum, quoting a note prepared by Keble and presented at a War Office meeting on 11 August 1943, in WO 208/2026, and signals to 'Typical' and 'Fungus' missions in WO 202/436. Deakin says "There is no evidence of a similar warning in July to the Bailey mission at Mihailović's HQ, but the latter was fully aware of the Italian military mission in Yugoslavia". The meaning of the second part of this sentence is unclear: is Deakin implying that it was acceptable for Cairo SOE not to repeat the signal to Bailey? Deakin also quotes a signal to 'Typical' of 2 August, asking his opinion of partisan reaction to Italian commands contacting BLOs with a view to surrendering to guerrillas if safe conduct could be assured. He again says that no such signal seems to have been sent to Bailey, but also says that he has no personal recollection of either message and, therefore, either Cairo did not despatch them or they were never received.
- 52. Great secrecy surrounded the exact date for fear of a German move against Badoglio's government in Rome: the French were not given advance notice much to the chagrin of De Gaulle. A state of high tension existed among the British and Americans in the Middle East over whether Badoglio *would* broadcast his announcement of the armistice as agreed, and contingency plans made in case he did not. Harold Macmillan, <u>War Diaries</u>, <u>The Mediterranean 1943-1945</u>, Macmillan , London, 1984, pp.207-211.

- 53. Cairo to Fungus and other missions, 8 September 1943, WO 202/438.
- 54. Deakin, Embattled Mountain, pp.114-116
- 55. Ibid. pp.114-115, quoting an account of the interview written by Tito in 1951.
- 56. Ibid. pp.234-237. A group of young Italian officers from the Bergamo Division met the Yugoslav partisan command in the presence of Deakin and Benson, the OSS officer with Deakin, and offered to fight against the Germans, with the proviso that they remained as independent units with equal status as allies. This was rejected; the partisans would only accept them as individuals under partisan command.
- 57. Armstrong to Cairo, 14 October 1943, SE/10, R11668/G, FO 371/37615.
- 58. Armstrong to Cairo, 17 October 1943, reminding Cairo of a signal sent to them more than 14 days earlier which requested that Tito restrain his troops from moving into the Sanjak and Montenegro. R10656/G, FO 371/37613.
- 59. According to the version Seitz of the OSS heard from General Oxilia later, force of arms preceded persuasion: the partisans attacked the Italians who eventually surrendered after a pitched battle. Albert Seitz, <u>Mihailović, Hoax or Hero?</u> Leigh House Publishers, Columbus, Ohio, 1953, p.117. Similar situations occurred in Albania: after the Italian capitulation, Abas Kupi, the nationalist guerilla leader, took over an Italian garrison and persuaded the Italians to come over to his side, but the Albanian partisans turned up shortly afterwards and took both the Italian arms and position. Interview with Ishan Toptani, New Forest, 16 January 1988.
- 60. Armstrong to Cairo, 17 October 1943, R10656/G, FO 371/37613. Armstrong had just received a letter from Mihailović in which he stated that a British colonel and major had informed the Italian commander that the only Allied army was that led by the partisans who must be considered as allies.
- 61. Lees, Rape of Serbia, p.101.
- 62. Sir William Deakin, "The British and the Italian Surrender in Yugoslavia".
- 63. Dedijer, With Tito Through the War, pp.365-366.
- 64. Lees, Rape of Serbia, p.101.
- 65. Armstrong to Cairo, SE/1 of 3 October and SE/2 of 4 October 1943. Armstrong described Mihailović as "more pugnacious against the Germans", and gave details of the fighting and sabotage. He was at Ostojić's HQ, waiting for the attack on Višegrad at 03.00 hrs on 5 October: if the town was taken and Ostojić cut the throat of the German commander Armstrong a teetotaller had promised to drink a glass of raki: "Don't like Raki, but like Germans less", copies in FO 371/37615.
- 66. Mansfield, an OSS officer who had joined Bailey on 18 August 1943, recorded that the Yugoslavs thought it would all be over by Christmas; some did not hesitate to repeat this to the Germans and were shot, 'Report of Captain W.R.Mansfield, USMCR on Mission to

General Draga Mihailović', 1 March 1944, reproduced in David Martin's <u>The Web of Disinformation</u>, pp.326-362. The partisans also thought this would mean an Allied invasion, Dedijer diary entry for 8 September 1943, <u>With Tito</u>, pp.363-364.

- 67. Major Jack laid the charges for the bridge demolitions and estimates that Mihailović's forces killed about 100 Bulgarians at Mokra Gora and about 200 Germans at Višegrad before the remains of the German garrison were driven off. The span of Višegrad bridge was 150 metres, making it the longest bridge to be blown up in south-eastern Europe during the war. Interview with Archie Jack, 27 June 1988.
- 68. Jasper Rootham Diary, entry for 31 August 1943.
- 69. For example: Erik Greenwood described the quality of the supplies as quite good when he first arrived, but as the year wore on he had the impression that the quartermasters in Cairo were simply packing anything that came to hand. Imperial War Museum Sound Archives, Tapes 11374/4.
- 70. Rootham Diary entry for 8 December 1943: Cairo told him that his area would receive only one 'plane per month until spring, and that Tito was only getting "negligible sorties".
- 71. Once Maclean arrived, the lion's share of supplies went to the partisans: this may have been due to deliberate machinations by the pro-partisan element in SOE Cairo, but might in part be attributable to the fact that SOE had already received a bloody nose from Maclean and were anxious not to cross him again.
- 72. Between May and October 1943 Mihailović's forces received: 1804 rifles, 238 pistols, 16 MMGs, 1025 SMGs, 92 anti-tank rifles, 3 anti-tank guns, 34 mortars, 7000 grenades, 190 LMGs, 45 mines, and 661,000 extra small arms ammunition. Cash sent: 5,770 sovereigns (1,290 lost), 2,015 napoleons (500 lost), 7,946,000 lira (70,900 lost), 81,600 dollars (22,737 lost), 16,027,000 leva (4,487,000 lost), 1,065,000 lei (51,000 lost) and 13,600,000 dinars (535,750 lost). In addition, 17,000,000 dinars requested between June and November were sent by courier through Istanbul. Figures supplied in response to Božidar Purić [Yugoslav premier] to R.C.Skrine Stevenson [British ambassador to YGE] 11 November 1943, No.3396/44, FO 371/37618. During the whole of 1943 air sorties to Mihailović forces numbered 141, carrying 228 tons; sorties to the partisans [from June to December] numbered 130, carrying 224 tons. Bari to Resident Minister's Office, Central Mediterranean, Caserta, 11 January 1945, R09592, FO 371/48805. Sea-borne supplies to the partisans in October 1943 totalled 650 tons, including 9988 rifles, 103 LMGs, 68 MMGs, 31 mortars, 50 anti-tank rifles, 6 anti-tank guns, 3,372,000 small arms ammunition, 4,800 mortar bombs, 628 units of anti-tank ammunition, plus clothing, boots, food and medical supplies. Sea-borne supplies to the partisans in November 1943 totalled 1,400 tons. Ismay to Churchill, 3 December 1943, PREM 3/510/13. Maclean had recommended an initial shipment of 5,000 tons in November, followed by 2,000 tons per month, 'Sea Supplies to the Partisan Forces', [undated] November 1943, WO 201/1581. In addition to the imbalance in supplies, the partisans received more help in other ways, for example: Armstrong was told that it was impossible to give Mihailović forces bombing support on the Dalmatian coast and that a similar telegram had been sent to the mission at partisan HQ, Cairo to Armstrong, SE/6 of 2 October 1943, FO 371/37615. Yet the 'Yugoslav Situation Report' for week-ending 5 November 1943 noted that Maclean stated that the partisans were delighted with recent RAF bombing of enemy targets on the coast, FO 371/37616.

- 73. There is some evidence of this, Deakin refers to the arrival of a supply of anti-malaria drugs Embattled Mountain, p.81. Lees was anxiously awaiting these, Interview with Michael Lees, Milton Abbas, June 1987.
- 74. Sehmer War Diary, WO 202/162.
- 75. Roughshod Report, Captain Purvis, 1 June 1943, WO 202/162.
- 76. Elizabeth Barker "Yugoslav-Bulgarian Relations through British Eyes, 1940-45", paper presented to the British National Committee for the History of the Second World War, Anglo-Yugoslav Colloquium, 13-15 December 1982 at the Imperial War Museum. Mostyn Davies, and later Frank Thompson (brother of the late E.P.Thompson) both lost their lives in the attempt to contact the Bulgarians. Bickham Sweet-Escott, <u>Baker Street Irregular</u>, pp.193-194, describes Mostyn Davies' mission.
- 77. Cairo to Rapier (Hudson), repeating message to Cavern from WIX (Armstrong) 16 September 1943: two missions Paprika and Cucumber were too close to debatable ground to receive supplies of arms, B1 Operational Log, Out messages, WO 202/139. Dugmore had been sent to the partisans in Serbia to ensure a British presence there if or when the BLOs were withdrawn from the Mihailović forces, Lees, Rape of Serbia, p.234.
- 78. On 13 October the BBC announced that the partisans had taken Berane, omitting to mention that they had taken it from Mihailović's forces, not the Axis: the actions at Mokra Gora and Višegrad were also attributed to the partisans, much to the chagrin of the BLOs who had taken part in both, Interview with Archie Jack, 27 June 1988. This was despite the fact that the correct information was available: Minister of State Cairo to FO, 8 October 1943, giving details of the operations and "please see that the BBC credit M. forces", R9263/117/92, FO 371/37603.
- 79. For example: Dedijer, <u>With Tito</u>, pp.349-350, entry for 3 August 1943, expressing indignation at 'Radio London' radiating lies by attributing partisan action in Istria to Mihailović's forces.
- 80. Armstrong to Cairo, SE/6 of 12 October 1943, reporting that the Germans and Bulgarians were taking reprisals and rounding up all men over the age of 18yrs: 150 people had been shot at Čačak. SE/12 of 14 October the BBC had broadcast a story about four Norwegian hostages who had been shot, but failed to mention the far greater number of hostages killed as a result of sabotage in Serbia, which made the Serbian population feel that their efforts were not fully appreciated. FO 371/37615.
- 81. Mansfield Report, in Martin, The Web of Disinformation, p.335.
- 82. Mihailović had not mentioned the BBC broadcast about the partisans disarming the Venezia Division. Armstrong and Bailey thought this meant that Mihailović intended to pursue his own policy, without consulting the British, but pointed out that he had received grave provocation. Armstrong to Cairo, SE/10 of 14 October, FO 371/37615. Moljević, one of Mihailović's advisers, told Bailey in a private conversation that Mihailović and his staff intended to deal with the partisans themselves as they were justified to do in self-defence. Armstrong to Cairo, SE/9 of 17 October 1943, R10656/G, FO 371/37613.

- 83. Mansfield Report, Martin, The Web of Disinformation, pp.336-338
- 84. Lees, <u>Rape of Serbia</u>, p.276. Jasper Rootham had heard Armstrong was the "worst type of Col. Blimp, fussy and domineering", but was pleasantly surprised when he finally met him, "although he was clearly a fish out of water in this mainly political job". Rootham diary, 22-24 April 1944.
- 85. Fitzroy Maclean, <u>Eastern Approaches</u>, Jonathan Cape, London, 1949; reprint ed.,The Reprint Society, Edinburgh, 1951, p.227 and p.269.
- 86. Churchill gave Maclean a copy of the directive describing his role as "Ambassador-leader to these hardy and hunted guerrillas". Maclean's background reading seems to have reinforced the romanticized and idealized conception of the people he was about to join. Ibid, pp.227-228.
- 87. For example: one of Maclean's early reports made it clear that the partisans were "a far more considerable military and political force than we had imagined" and likely to be "the decisive factor in Yugoslavia". In the light of this Maclean urged that the go-ahead be granted for a partisan delegation to come to the Middle East, otherwise the British risked offending the partisans and missing their chance of strengthening their position with them. Stevenson to FO, 5 November 1943, R11248/G, and Maclean to Cairo, MA of 30 October 1943, R11740, FO 371/37616.
- 88. The texts of Armstrong's letters were repeated to London. Stevenson to FO, 30 November 1943, R12829, and 6 December 1943, R13063, FO 371/37591.
- 89. Stevenson to FO, 9 October 1943, enclosing memorandum on conclusions of Defence Committee meeting, Cairo, 6 October, R11248/G, FO 371/37616.
- 90. Cairo to Armstrong, SE/7 of 21 October 1943, FO 371/37615.
- 91. Cairo to Armstrong, 21 November 1943, R12290, FO 371/37616.
- 92. 'The Partisan Movement in Yugoslavia', Report by Brigadier F.H.R.Maclean, commanding Allied Miliary Mission to the Partisan Forces in Yugoslavia, 6 November 1943, R11589/2/G, FO 371/37615.
- 93. Maclean to Cairo, MA/9 of 20 September 1943: Maclean had promised Tito a minimum of 60 sorties for October and was discussing plans for seaborne supplies, FO 371/37612.
- 94. Maclean's journeys take up three complete chapters in Eastern Approaches, pp.272-305.
- 95. Ibid., p.307.
- 96. 'The Partisan Movement in Yugoslavia', 6 November 1943, R11589/2/G, FO 371/37615.
- 97. The original estimate of 65,000 by British sources was made before the losses incurred in breaking out of the Axis ring, which decreased the number: the numbers then increased following the Italian capitulation. Maclean's early reports gave the number of partisans as 180,000: on 20 September he stated that there had been an increase of 60,000 in the partisan

forces since 8 September [i.e. 5,000 recruits per day], bringing the total to 180.000, MA/9, FO 371/37612. By the time he wrote the blockbuster this had increased to 220,000. In Eastern Approaches, Maclean gives the strength as "over 100,000", p.239, and then "about 150,000, perhaps more", p.262. In Disputed Barricade, London 1957, Maclean quotes German figures for partisans as 111,000, p.248. Major Linn Farish, of OSS, gives the figure claimed by the partisans themselves as 18,000, 'Preliminary Report on a visit to the National Army of Liberation, Yugoslavia', 29 October 1943, FO 371/37616. Deakin's Embattled Mountain, p.106 gives a figure of 75,000 organized into regular military units, in addition to a swarm of local detachments. Basil Davidson, Partisan Picture, p.15 gives the figure for August as 150,000 fighting men and women, whose "numbers were liable to increase rapidly". Stevan K Pavlowitch in Yugoslavia, Ernest Benn Ltd, London, 1971, p.154, fn.53, quotes a correspondent of the London weekly The Tablet ('Tito's Military achievement: The Legend and the Fact', 28 April 1945, pp.196-7], whose analysis of partisan and enemy communiqués produced a total of 60,000 - 80,000 partisans at the end of 1943. Jean Howard, reading German signals, which in turn were based on information from intercepted partisan and chetnik signals, estimates that partisan numbers had increased to 100,000 by November 1943. Conversation with Mrs Jean Howard, 25 November 1993. Walter R.Roberts in Tito, Mihailović and the Allies, 1941-1945, Duke University Press, Durham 1987 (originally published by Rutgers University Press, 1973) p.338, n.21, quotes the German order of battle for 4 October 1943 as estimating partisan strength at 90,000.

98. 'The Partisan Movement in Yugoslavia', 6 November 1943, R11589/2/G, FO 371/37615.

99. Mihailović claimed to have 57,440 men mobilized, and that he could mobilize a further 472,900 aged between 18 and 40 years for active service, 169,600 saboteurs aged 40-55 years and 58,520 aged over 55 years for homeguard duties. Mansfield's figures - put together from memory as Seitz had all the detailed notes - from what he had seen travelling around Serbia was that Mihailović had 35,000 men with arms mobilized. This was based on the number of troops inspected on the tour of central Serbia, which totalled 3,804 with arms and 9,625 without arms. Mansfield Report in Martin, The Web of Disinformation, pp.338-339. Seitz says that travelling through one quarter of Mihailović's territory, he saw the larger part of 10,395 armed men and 238 officers, plus 71,767 unarmed but trained. On the basis of this he estimated that if the Allies provided arms then Mihailović could field 300,000 men. Seitz, Mihailović, Hoax or Hero?, p.81. The Germans estimated that Mihailović had 30,000 under arms and a further 100,000 standing by, Conversation with Jean Howard 25 November 1993. Roberts, Tito, Mihailović and the Allies, p.338, n.21, also gives German estimates as 30,000. All contrast with Maclean's figure of 15,000, as quoted by Stevenson to FO, 27 October 1943, R10900, FO 371/37614.

100. Major H B Dugmore, Monkeywrench mission with the partisans in eastern Serbia, gives the number as 1,700 armed partisans in November 1943: 400 east of the Nis-Skoplje railway, 800 in the Radan and 500 in the Jastrebac. 'Notes on central and eastern Serbia for period 29 November 1943 to 20 June 1944', WO 202/155. Dugmore attached Appendix 1 'Serb and Macedonian order of battle', in which partisan divisions number between 2,000 and 2,500 men, ibid, which puts a different complexion on Tito's claim "that he has upwards of a Division in southern Serbia, practically amongst Mihajlović's forces" repeated in Keble's 'Balkan Politico/Military Situation', 28 September 1943, COS/100/2A/104, WO 201/1581. (The nominal strength of a British infantry division at the time was about 17,000). It was admitted that the partisans were "not yet seriously contesting Mihailović's predominance in Serbia, but their forces in Macedonia are increasing rapidly". Stevenson to FO, 27 October

- 1943, R10900/2/G, FO 371/37614. The last statement was erroneous: when the 'Brasenose' mission arrived at the Second Macedonian Brigade on 2 January 1944, they found "an extremely wretched crowd of about 200 soldiers, including many girls, dressed in old German/Bulgarian/Italian uniforms, many barefooted...all with little or no equipment and all very dispirited". By August 1944 the BLOs had "Slowly built them up to a 1,000 strong fully equipped unit", clad in British uniforms and boots. Correspondence with S Johnson, W/T operator with Brasenose mission, 4 November 1986. Deakin later also gave the number of partisans in Serbia in November 1943 as 1,700, probably basing his figure on Dugmore's report, Philip Broad to Harold Macmillan, 28 July 1944, enclosing Deakin's 'Memorandum on the Military Position of the Partisans in Serbia', 12 July 1944, WO 202/196.
- 101. CD to Orme Sargent, 6 September 1943, enclosing copies of telegrams that had passed between Bailey and Cairo and Cairo and London, R8471, FO 371/37590.
- 102. 'The Partisan Movement in Yugoslavia', 6 November 1943, R11589/2/G, FO 371/37615. This last point was exactly what Selborne had argued, but in reverse: both were wrong because they took too simplistic a view of the motivation of the two resistance movements. Some Mihailović people did go over to the partisans later, but the withdrawal of British support did not mean the end of his movement.
- 103. Mansfield Report, Martin, Web of Disinformation, p.345. Tito was also celebrated in romantic song and verse, such as 'Tito, the earth and the river' and 'Tito, little white violet' St.K.Pavlowitch, Tito, p.43.
- 104. Armstrong Report, dated 23 November 1943, R12645/G, FO 371/37617.
- 105. British Embassy to Yugoslavia to FO, 27 November 1943, FO 371/37617. This was despite the fact that, when it had been agreed that Maclean should have a direct line of communication with Stevenson in Cairo, similar arrangements were *supposed* to apply to political telegrams to and from Bailey, Minister of State Cairo to FO, 27 September 1943, R9308, FO 371/37612.
- 106. Interview with Archie Jack, 27 June 1988.
- 107. 'Brigadier Maclean's Report', minutes by E M Rose, Orme Sargent, Eden, Cadogan and Douglas Howard, 17-20 November 1943, FO 371/37615.
- 108. Martin Gilbert, Road to Victory, p.556.
- 109. Ibid. pp.557-559. Churchill seemed to think that this was the fault of the Americans and the imaginary line down the middle of the Mediterranean which relieved Eisenhower of responsibility for activity on the Dalmatian coast and in the Balkans. The Chiefs of Staff told the PM that, rather than open a bridgehead on the Dalmatian coast, just as much could be achieved by smuggling matériel in along the coast and by air, thus avoiding an unlimited commitment.
- 110. Ibid. pp.561-562.
- 111. Ibid. p.564.

112. Ibid. p.579.

113. Document no.132: "Military Conclusions of the Teheran Conference, 1 December 1943", Hans Adolf Jacobson and Arthur L Smith, World War II, Policy and Strategy, Selected Documents, Santa Barbara and Oxford, 1979, p.282.

114. Sir Alan Brooke, Chief of British Imperial Staff, told Marshal Voroshilov, Stalin's military adviser, that there were 21 German divisions in Yugoslavia. When Voroshilov disagreed Brooke said this was the figure provided by British intelligence, and he would ask them to check. Churchill quoted the same number, but Stalin claimed that there were only eight German divisions in Yugoslavia. The German order of battle for 4 October 1943 showed 14 divisions, several under-strength, in the whole of the Balkans, with no more than eight in Yugoslavia. Roberts, Tito, Mihailović and the Allies, pp.169-171. Maclean had claimed 14 Reichswehr divisions in Yugoslavia in 'The Partisan Movement in Yugoslavia', 6 November 1943, R11589/2/G, FO 371/37615. Jean Howard, who has recently re-read some of the relevant German documents, concludes that there was only the equivalent of about five and a half divisions in Yugoslavia: the confusion arose from the fact that they were mixed and while many divisional names were there, the bodies that went with them were not. For example: Kriegstagebuch, showing the German order of battle for 4 October 1943, shows that 2 SS Panzer HQ in Yugoslavia had no panzers, while other divisions were only at half strength or on 'rest' from the eastern front. Correspondence with Jean Howard, 25 November 1993.

115. St.K Pavlowitch, <u>Tito</u>, pp.43-44. Stalin was more concerned with the conduct of the war than spreading social revolution and had dissolved the Comintern in May 1943 as a conciliatory gesture towards the Western Allies. At AVNOJ II, Tito became marshal of the partisan army.

116. Elizabeth Barker, of PWE, explains that initially this was due to Soviet censorship of the Radio Free Yugoslavia report, and then to her own mishearing of the full version. <u>British Policy Towards Wartime Resistance in Yugoslavia and Greece</u>, Phyllis Auty and Richard Clogg, eds. London University Press/Macmillan, London 1975.

117. Maclean, Eastern Approaches, pp.310-315.

118. The original delegation was headed by Ivo-Lola Ribar, a member of the partisan supreme staff and an important figure in the Yugoslav communist party; he was also the son of Dr Ivan Ribar, the non-communist chairman of AVNOJ. The other members were Velebit and Miloje Milojević with two young officers who were to be in charge of communications. Growing impatient at Maclean's delayed arrival, the party attempted to fly out of Glamoč airfield in a captured aircraft on 23 November, but was bombed from the air by a German reconnaissance 'plane. Ribar and two partisans were killed, and Milojević wounded. Two members of the British mission, Major Whetherley and Captain Knight were also killed. Maclean arrived on 3 December and flew back to Brindisi with Deakin, Velebit, Milojević and a captured German, Captain Meyer. Deakin, Embattled Mountain, pp.249-258.

119. FO to Stevenson, 10 November 1943, asking him to discuss arrangements for Armstrong and Bailey's evacuation, Tel. No.57, FO 371/37616. E M Rose felt that it would be useful for Armstrong and Bailey to be in Cairo at the same time as Maclean to provide a clear picture of the situation in Serbia, 'Brigadier Maclean's Report', minutes, 17 November 1943, FO

371/37615.

- 120. Stevenson to FO, 16 November 1943: the Special Operations Committee had met that morning, and while agreeing it would be profitable to bring out Armstrong and Bailey, it was impossible to pick them up by air. This left three options for their exit: a) through partisan territory. b) through the chetniks in Montenegro and southern Dalmatia but they were collaborationist. c) through Albania. Apparently c) was the favoured route, but would take two or three months. R11863/G, FO 371/37616. In the event, the partisan delegation did not go to Cairo anyway, but had to remain in Alexandria on the instructions of the FO who, according to Velebit, were fearful of antagonizing the YGE. This seems to have offended the members of the delegation. Vladimir Velebit "The First Military Mission of the National Liberation Army to the British High Command", paper presented to the British National Committee for the History of the Second World War, Anglo-Yugoslav Colloquium, 13-15 December 1982, at the Imperial War Museum.
- 121. Stevenson to FO, 24 November 1943: the Special Operations Committee was considering the possibility of Bailey coming out through partisan territory, but needed to obtain Mihailović's agreement first as SOE had warned that it would be too dangerous otherwise. R12321, FO 371/37616.
- 122. Stevenson to FO, 3 December 1943, giving details of Special Operations Committee meeting to discuss future policy regarding Mihailović. R12701, FO 371/37617.

- 1. Deakin, Embattled Mountain, p.263.
- 2. Churchill to Stevenson, 10 December 1943, WO 201/1581.
- 3. Elizabeth Barker in <u>British Policy towards Wartime Resistance in Yugoslavia and Greece</u>, Auty & Clogg, eds., p.40.
- 4. Rendel to FO, 28 May 1943: Jovanović was attempting to get all members of the Yugoslav cabinet to agree on a declaration of policy on support for a united Yugoslavia. Šubašić had publicly repudiated the authority of the YGE, and Jovanović was trying to persuade him to issue a statement to the effect that this had been misinterpreted. Šubašić wanted concessions in return for this, including the dismissal of Fotić, Yugoslav ambassador in Washington because he had earlier supported "pan-Serb" ideas there. R735/G, FO 371/37593.
- 5. King Peter's own solution to the divergent opinions was to have a cabinet reshuffle in which the ministers who objected to his marriage would be dropped. Rendel to Orme Sargent, 1 June 1943, R4833, FO 371/37593.
- 6. For example: Eden to Rendel, 13 May 1943, R4377/198/G, FO 371/37598, and Rendel to Orme Sargent, 12 July 1943, R6016/G, FO 371/37595; Stevenson was very much against the idea. He argued that Peter would be the first reigning monarch to marry outside the country, and warned against the possible psychological effects on his subjects, and propaganda value to his enemies, Stevenson to FO, 15 November 1943, R11792, FO 371/37626.
- 7. Rendel told Orme Sargent on 14 June 1943 that he suspected Princess Aspasia was behind King Peter's plan for the reorganization of the cabinet. R5216/G, FO 371/37593.
- 8. Eden to Churchill, 13 June 1943, 'The Yugoslav Government'. Eden felt that the YGE was in total disarray and its stock which had never been high had dropped to nil. The discredit, he thought, was threatening to extend to the king and the conception of Yugoslavia itself, which had long-term implications for a "satisfactory reorganization of the Balkans" after the war. Eden had given some thought to how the British might use their influence "to save young King Peter, who is now our only hope, from the bog in which his present government will land both himself and his country". Eden's solution was to get Peter to move to Cairo with a small cabinet. PM/43/162, FO 371/37593.
- 9. Rendel to Eden, 4 August 1943, 'The Yugoslav Situation', R7276/2/G, FO 371/37611. The FO had decided that it was a heaven-sent opportunity to rid themselves of the YGE and all its problems. Instead of trying to patch up the crisis, they would give Peter the advice approved by the PM and cabinet that he should go to the Middle East. Douglas Howard 'The Yugoslav Cabinet Crisis', 16 June 1943, R5271/G, FO 371/37593.

- 10. Purić was a career diplomat; the cabinet consisted of one Croat, one Slovene and four Serbs, including Mihailović. All except the latter were virtually unknown within Yugoslavia and were all career civil servants. Howard minuted on 11 August 1943 that this was a government of officials who represented no-one and would do nothing to solve the problems but "on the other hand we are all sick to death of the old bunch of Yugoslav politicians". FO 371/37596.
- 11. 'Brief for Colonel Maclean', 20 July 1943, sets out in detail the line to be taken, by which the British hoped to ensure Peter's image as a unifying force throughout the country. R6619/G, FO 371/37610.
- 12. E M Rose, 2 November 1943, minute on 'King Peter of Yugoslavia' The old politicians were discredited by their "bickering and idleness", while Mihailović was a source of division and strife. It was felt that King Peter's position would be greatly strengthened if Maček could be brought out to join the YGE. Having discussed the question with Orme Sargent and Nichols, Rose drafted a telegram to Stevenson on 3 November, setting out the FO thoughts. Although it was uncertain whether Maček could be persuaded to leave, or whether it was possible to rescue him from the Germans, Stevenson was instructed to discuss the possibility with SOE. R11458, FO 371/37615.
- 13. FO to Stevenson, 18 November 1943. As Maček had been under arrest since the Axis invasion, and consistently refused to collaborate with Pavelić, the FO could not understand why the partisans regarded him as a traitor. Their antagonism suggested that he was still important in Croatia, which was even more reason to get him out. Stevenson's reply to the FO telegram of 3 November (see note 12, above) had not made clear whether SOE thought the rescue of Maček a practicable proposition. 11735/2/G, FO 371/37615.
- 14. Elizabeth Barker to E M Rose, 8 November 1943, R11667/G, FO 371/37615.
- 15. Stevenson to FO, 30 November 1943, R12595, FO 371/37617.
- 16. 'Brigadier Maclean's Report', E M Rose minute, 17 November 1943. Nevertheless, at a meeting of the COS, JIC and Chief of Air Staff, when the latter asked if Maclean was "a reliable observer, or like many people who go on similar missions, a fanatic?" Cavendish Bentinck defended Maclean as "a former member of this Office, shrewd, hard-headed and rather cynical." The Chiefs of Staff regarded Maclean's report to be more important than the situation in Greece which the cabinet was meeting to discuss that evening (16 November); they therefore intended to make recommendations to the cabinet on the basis of the report. V Cavendish-Bentinck minute, 16 November 1943. FO 371/37615.
- 17. 'Brigadier Maclean's Report', Douglas Howard minute, 17 November 1943, FO 371/37615.
- 18. Ibid. Orme Sargent minute, 17 November 1943. Eden noted in the margin "very likely". Eden had also noted in the margin of Howard's minute, next to the sentence about Mihailović representing the majority of the Serbs "I wonder if he does?" Eden's minute, 18 November, took a rather gloomy view on the possibility of making some agreement between the king and the partisans.

- 19. Stevenson to FO, 16 November 1943, repeating Armstrong's views, R11921/G, FO 371/37616.
- 20. 'Yugoslavia Brigadier Maclean's Report', Douglas Howard minute, 22 November 1943, R12204, FO 371/37616.
- 21. Cope to SOE Cairo, HA/38 of 11 November 1943, stating that Mihailović had issued orders to mobilize against the partisans. R1192/G, FO 371/37616. Cope to SOE Cairo, HA/39 of 17 November, Djurić had just informed Cope that Mihailović had ordered him to co-operate with Nedić's government in action against the partisans. FO 371/37614.
- 22. Cope to SOE Cairo, HA/42 of [undated] November 1943, Text of Mihailović's order, FO 371/37616.
- 23. Stevenson to FO, 20 November 1943. The Special Operations Committee had met to discuss Cope's telegram, and had concluded that if his information proved to be true "It is only one step from collaboration with the Germans themselves and a small step at that". R12036, FO 371/37616. By 28 November, Stevenson still had not received the full text of Mihailović's directive, but was quoting truncated passages which came "close to collaboration with the enemy". Stevenson to FO 28 November 1943, R12482, FO 371/37617.
- 24. Bailey to SOE Cairo, SE/28 of 26 November 1943, adding his comments to Armstrong's report, emphasizing that these were his own views, FO 371/37619.
- 25. Djurić had been the subject of a number of complaints, the most recent in late October when Stevenson relayed to Purić the grievances of the British military authorities had against a number of Mihailović's commanders. One of the named commanders was Djurić, who was deemed incapable of initiating action against the enemy, or even of protecting the stores sent for sabotage operations. He was also, although operating in Serbia itself and therefore ostensibly under direct command of Mihailović, apparently not obeying orders from Mihailović, and not co-operating with the British liaison officers in his area. Stevenson to Purić, 22 October 1943, FO 371/37614. (This communication is interesting in that, as well as accusing Djurić and Stojanović of the above misdemeanours, it names a number of other, more distant, commanders as being in collaboration with the occupiers and suggests that it would be in Mihailović's interest publicly to denounce them. It echoed the signal which SOE Cairo had sent to Bailey in May 1943, independently of Baker Street or the FO, also advising Mihailović to denounce most of his regional commanders. MO4 to Bailey, 24 May 1943, copy in FO 371/37586. See chapter VI.) Djurić had also caused Cairo SOE much concern when he was fighting the partisans: SOE's attempt to sort out the clashes in summer 1943 had indirectly caused the capture of Selby, see chapter VII. Another cause for suspecting Djurić's reliability had been provided in October, in the form of his relationship with Vera Pešić, ex-mistress of the German General Bader, and allegedly a Gestapo agent. She had come into the hands of Djurić as prisoner, but he had subsequently refused to allow the British officers with him to interrogate her and had, instead, struck up a sexual liaison with her, apparently coming under her influence. British mission at Mihailović HQ to SOE Cairo, SE/17 of 17 October 1943, FO 371/37615. Vera Pešić was only the latest in a long line of Djurić's mistresses and had been preceded in July by "a Russian lady doctor who had been suspected of being a German spy", War Diary of Major John Sehmer from 19 April to 13 December 1943, WO 202/162.

- 26. Armstrong had discussed with Mihailović the question of Djurić reaching a working agreement with the partisans following a series of unprovoked attacks on Djurić's forces by the partisans. Mihailović had not been enthusiastic as he held Djurić's "conciliatory attitude to the partisans" to be the root of the problems in Djurić's area: partisans had left other areas of Serbia where local commanders had been more vigorous in dealing with them. Mihailović considered that the British had been dilatory in securing Tito's co-operation in keeping the partisans out of the Sanjak, and until they demonstrated their good faith in representing his interests to Tito, he was not inclined to make concessions to the partisans in Serbia. It was possible that Djurić might lose his command as a result of negotiations with the partisans, an eventuality assessed to be disadvantageous to the British. In the light of the above, the mission thought that the view of Djurić as anti-partisan should be reviewed. British Mission at Mihailović HQ to Cairo, SE/20 of October 1943, FO 371/37616.
- 27. Bailey felt strongly that Djurić's allegations were exaggerated, and that it would be ill-advised to take any actions based on them. He also did not rule out the possibility that Djurić might be intriguing against Mihailović. Bailey to Cairo, SE/28 of 26 November 1943, FO 371/37619. In March 1944 Mihailović sent orders for the arrest of Djurić, but he escaped and fled to the partisans where he became a senior officer. Michael Lees <u>Rape of Serbia</u>, pp.145-146.
- 28. Stevenson to FO 3 December 1943, FO 371/37617.
- 29. Djurić had been discussing with Cope and Raw the possibility of Mihailović being replaced by Radović, but he did not want his involvement in these discussions to be made known to the YGE in case they were backing Mihailović in 'his action'. Partisan HQ in Serbia had informed Djurić that no collaboration with him was possible until he openly denounced Mihailović. It was Cope's opinion that Mihailović was a stumbling block to any agreement with the partisans. When Cope wrote this he was not in possession of the full text of Mihailović's directive, but Djurić had agreed to send the actual text in the original Serbian to Cairo. Cope to SOE Cairo, HA/41 of 20 November, FO 371/37616.
- 30. Cope to SOE Cairo, HA/42 of [undated] November 1943, FO 371/37616. When Stevenson received the full text, he was still under the impression that there was a separate order from Mihailović on collaboration with Nedić. This was not the case: the whole basis of Cope's misunderstanding was only Djurić's interpretation of this order. Nevertheless, Stevenson quoted selected passages from the mobilization order which he interpreted as coming "close to collaboration with the enemy." Stevenson to FO, 29 November 1943, R12482, FO 371/37617.
- 31. Bailey to SOE Cairo, SE/28 of 26 November 1943, FO 371/37619.
- 32. Stevenson to FO, 2 December 1943, R12681, FO 371/37617.
- 33. From DO to governments of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, 6 December 1943, D.No.1062, FO 371/37617.
- 34. For example: a report by Armstrong, transmitted on the same day as Bailey's comments 26 November, was seen by Stevenson on 8 December; on 14 December he had apparently despatched the text to the FO. However, Stevenson's telegram was not received until 28 December. This is an inordinately long time span between despatch and receipt: the majority

of telegrams between Cairo and the FO were received on the same or the following day, some have a time delay of up to three or four days: this is the only one that I have found with a gap of 14 days. Stevenson to FO, 14 December 1943, R13823. It is uncertain how long Bailey's comments took to be transmitted, but on 5 January 1944, Eden wrote to Winant, British Ambassador in Washington, giving Bailey's explanation (wrongly attributing it to Armstrong) of why Mihailović could not be considered to be in collaboration with Nedić. R13825/2/G, FO 371/37620. Even so, on 7 January 1944, Stevenson was sill quoting Mihailović's order as "coming close to collaboration with the enemy", Stevenson to Eden, R65653, FO 371/44244.

- 35. In November Maclean had had a private meeting with King Peter, without any members of the YGE being present. The king had been interested in the partisans and expressed his willingness to meet the delegation Maclean was planning to bring to the Middle East. Although both Stevenson and Maclean privately thought that Tito would not want the delegation to meet the king. Stevenson to FO, 11 November 1941, R11528, FO 371/37615.
- 36. SOE argued that from incoming SOE telegrams it was clear that while Mihailović enjoyed great prestige in eastern Serbia, he was not acceptable as Commander-in-Chief to other resistance elements. The partisan reception of the SOE liaison officers had demonstrated a pro-British sentiment. It might be possible to gain partisan co-operation while avoiding a clash with their communist aspirations, even perhaps replacing their communist ideology with a "vigorous agrarian" one. But the most important step towards this would be to remove the possibility of the partisans accusing the British of being committed to support someone they considered a "reactionary collaborationist" ie. Mihailović. Minister of State Casey suggested that this might enable the British to "nobble" the partisans. Minister of State Cairo to FO, 20 June 1943, R5384/G. The FO sympathised with the suggestion, but the majority of Yugoslav ministers were strongly opposed to dropping the general, FO to Minister of State Cairo, 6 July 1943, No. 2126, FO 371/37609.
- 37. Eden [in Cairo] to FO, 8 November 1943, giving details of the meeting, R1141/G, FO 371/37591.
- 38. Mihailović's reaction to the test operation might provide a most convenient peg on which to hang a British decision to withdraw support from him and to demand that the YGE dismiss him from their cabinet. Stevenson envisaged that this might provoke the YGE to resign, but such an outcome would allow the British to advise the king to accept their resignation, and by implication make him more amenable to other British advice. Stevenson to FO, 8 December 1943, R12926, FO 371/37591.
- 39. The Special Operations Committee met on 2 December, and decided that "as most of the evidence regarding Mihailovitch's collaboration with the enemy could not be published, it was desirable to strengthen the case against him by calling upon him to carry out by a given date some specific operation known to be in his powers, in the certain knowledge that he would fail to do so." Stevenson to FO, 3 December 1943, R12701/G, FO 371/37617.
- 40. Stevenson to FO, 8 December 1943, R12861, FO 371/37619. Cairo SOE to London, 13 December 1943, The message had been sent to Armstrong on 8 December. Mihailović had refused to meet Armstrong, but had asked for the Commander-in-Chief's message to study. Out Message Operational Log, Jugoslavia, sheet 33, WO 202/139, also in R13297, FO 371/37618.

- 41. Armstrong to Cairo, 26 December 1943, giving the contents of Mihailović's written reply. Mihailović pointed out that the magnitude of the operations and the fact that the targets were so well defended meant that to ensure success proper plans would need to be laid. He also stated that the prospect of success would be enhanced if an adequate supply of ammunition and special weapons for attacking pillboxes could be sent in: promised sorties which had failed to materialize had recently prevented the accomplishment of planned actions. Armstrong added that he had carefully made no suggestion that help or replenishment of supplies would be sent following the attacks, but that he would like confirmation from Cairo that replenishment would, in fact, be forthcoming. WO 202/136. Apparently Mihailović had at first been reluctant to agree, but had been persuaded by some of the younger officers at his HQ, Armstrong to Cairo, SE/33 of 30 December 1943, FO 371/44245.
- 42. 'Telegram from Cairo 175 of 1 January 1944', giving paraphrase of message sent to Brigadier Armstrong on 31 December, FO 371/44242.
- 43. The possibility of Mihailović carrying out the 'test' operations and then having support withdrawn would leave the British open to the charge of bad faith. Stevenson thought this could be explained away by telling Mihailović the operation had been essential on military grounds and that the withdrawal was due to his long-term non-co-operation and to the collaboration of his commanders; in addition, the situation in occupied Yugoslavia meant that it was not always possible to act with "strict punctilio". Stevenson to FO, 24 December 1943, R13633/G. The FO was not entirely happy with this: Orme Sargent minuted on 24 December that he had "always thought the test operation a silly device which was bound to land us in difficulties.", FO 371/37619. By 5 January Sargent, Cadogan and Eden felt it safer to call off the test operation altogether, FO to Stevenson, 5 January 1944, R13887/2/G, and minute by Orme Sargent, 3 January, FO 371/37620.
- 44. Cairo to Armstrong, 4 February 1944, Out Jugoslavia, no. X 682, WO 202/145.
- 45. Armstrong to Cairo, 7 February 1944, In Jugoslavia, no. X 752, WO 202/143.
- 46. Armstrong had been told at the outset that it was a test, but that he was not to inform Mihailović. He had also been told that a final decision on future policy depended on the extent to which Mihailović complied with the request to carry out the operations. Stevenson to FO, 8 December 1943, R12861, FO 371/37619. Armstrong and the BLOs with him were, therefore, under the impression that some gain might be made by complying with the request. This was not the case: a meeting was held on 18 December 1943 between Deakin, Steele (political adviser to SOE), Page of PWE, Stevenson and Philip Broad of the British Embassy to Yugoslavia, and representatives of the Chief of General Staff and Directorate of Military Intelligence. The object of the meeting was to discuss the timing of military and political action in connection with breaking off relations with Mihailović. The minutes note that he had called a conference on blowing up the bridges, but there is nothing to indicate the outcome would make any difference. WO 201/1581.
- 47. Interview with Archie Jack, Haute Savoie, June 1988. Major Jack, as he then was, was involved in the planning of the operations as he was going to lay the charges on the bridges in the Ibar valley. He still has his detailed technical drawings of the bridges and their defences, hand-drawn contour maps of the area, and the railway timetables that were surreptitiously copied in stages on railway platforms. The plans had been laid to the last detail: Armstrong had even made notes on which of the men involved would have time to

shave. Jack was convinced that Mihailović and the other Yugoslavs were fully aware of the fact that it was to be a trial, although they did not say so to the British. He felt at the time that the operations were premature, and that the best time to destroy the bridges in the Ibar and Morava valleys would have been when the Germans were withdrawing their forces from Greece. The highly organized and detailed plans contrast with the 'Summary of Proposed Attacks by MVIC Forces on Bridges over the Morava and Ibar' produced in Cairo, which dismisses the whole plan as "cumbersome and slow", adding that even if it succeeded it would exhaust Mihailović's forces and was "NOT what is wanted", undated, WO 202/136.

- 48. Cairo to Neronian mission, 13 December 1943, Out Jugoslavia, no.X 355, WO 202/145. Rootham noted 13 December "The worst...looks as if the balloon going up and we left holding the dirty very dirty end of the stick". Jasper Rootham Diary, Tonbridge School.
- 49. Interview with Jasper Rootham, Wimborne, Dorset, 2 June 1988.
- 50. Rootham Diary. On 17 December he could not make out from wires from Cairo if the British were breaking with Mihailović or not, the signals kept changing and he felt that he could only wait and see. By 8 and 9 February there was still no clear sign of a decision on "whether we go or stay".
- 51. Ibid, entry for 29 January 1944. In addition, the local commanders in Rootham's area had agreed to do some rail sabotage "in case the other op does not come off"; however, Pavlović did not seem to be getting anywhere in trying to send messages to Mihailović via Cairo concerning these plans, entries for 21-28 January. Michael Lees was about to attack an aerodrome when the order came through and, to his later regret, he cancelled the plan; Lees, Rape of Serbia, pp.246-247.
- 52. Rootham welcomed the news that Bailey was on his way out, "I feel someone talking on the spot may have an effect". Diary entry for 28 January 1944.
- 53. 'Policy Towards Yugoslavia', A R Dew minute 21 December 1943, in which he noted the curious disparity between the Radio Free Yugoslavia broadcast and the text of the AVNOJ declarations which the partisan delegation had with them in Alexandria. R13467/G, FO 371/37619. The FO should not have been quite so surprised: the partisans had made it clear to Maclean at an earlier date that they were not inclined to entertain formal relations with the king. Stevenson to FO, 14 November 1943, R11783, FO 371/37616.
- 54. The FO felt that it was becoming apparent that the partisans were moving rapidly towards independence. Before this went too far, it was necessary to make the conciliatory gesture of getting rid of Mihailović in order to unite the partisans, the chetniks and the king. FO to Stevenson, 6 December 1943, R12701/2/G, FO 371/37617.
- 55. 'Collaboration of Tito with King Peter', Orme Sargent minute, 22 December 1943, R13491/G, and Orme Sargent to Stevenson, 24 December 1943, R13491/2/G, FO 371/37619.
- 56. Partisan HQ to Velebit, MA/83 of 14 December, FO 371/37619.

- 57. 'Collaboration of Tito with King Peter', A.R.Dew minute, 21 December 1943, R14491/G, Stevenson to FO, 21 December 1943, giving Maclean's views and adding that this had been the partisan stance since Maclean first arrived; the AVNOJ declaration simply repeated it. R13491/G, FO 371/37619. Before returning to Yugoslavia, Maclean wrote a long, personal and confidential letter, setting out his objections to raising the question with Tito, and warning that it might seriously damage his mission, Maclean to Orme Sargent, 27 December 1943, R4083, FO 371/48810.
- 58. FO to Stevenson, 23 December 1943, R13491/2/G, FO 371/37619. Maclean had hitherto been negotiating on an unofficial basis; the FO now wanted a more positive, and possibly tougher, approach in view of the 'provocative action' taken by Tito with regard to the question of the monarchy. FO to Stevenson, 25 December 1943, No.155, FO 371/37619.
- 59. 'Mihailović', minute by A R Dew, 28 December 1943, 371/37620.
- 60. Stevenson to FO, 26 December 1943, giving text of Armstrong's telegram of 23 December: Mihailović had expressed a desire to stop the civil war and to fight the Axis. He proposed a meeting between his representatives and those of the partisans with the British acting as intermediaries. Stevenson's personal view was that this should not be entertained without first consulting the Soviets; he also felt that it was pointless, since Tito regarded Mihailović as a war criminal, so raising the matter would merely "court a snub from Tito". R13731/G, FO 371/37620.
- 61. Eden to Stevenson, 28 December 1943 (repeated to PM, 29 December). Eden was quite willing to consider a total withdrawal from Mihailović, although he was still waiting to see the evidence of collaboration, and felt that the king should be approached with a view to dismissing Mihailović once it was certain that Tito would collaborate with the king. Mihailović's offer to negotiate with Tito made no difference to Eden's view, and he did not think it appropriate in the circumstances that the British should act as intermediaries. FO 371/37620.
- 62. Stevenson stated that there was no pressure the British could bring to bear on Tito, since cutting off supplies would be "against our own military interests". Stevenson to FO 1 December 1943, R12681. The FO agreed on the question of supplies but suggested that there were other possibilities especially after the elimination of Mihailović such as the Yugoslav ships recaptured from the Italians, and the Yugoslav personnel found in Italy. FO to Stevenson, 6 December 1943, R12681/2/G, FO 371/37617. The FO then weakened its own bargaining position in trying to get Tito to agree to King Peter joining the partisans by pointing out that this would give them the benefit of the YGE's assets, and the Yugoslav personnel in the Middle East. FO to Stevenson, 23 December 1943, R13491/2/G, FO 371/37619.
- 63. FO to Stevenson, 26 December 1943, R13633/2/G, FO 371/37619.
- 64, E M Rose, minute, 24 December 1943, R13633, FO 371/37619.
- 65. Interview with Michael Lees, Milton Abbas, June 1987.
- 66. Cadogan to Balfour (Moscow), 22 December 1943, asking him to approach Molotov with the proposition, R13491/2/G, FO 371/37619.

- 67. Balfour, to FO, 31 December 1943, giving text of Molotov's reply, No.1666A, FO 371/44242. The Soviets were about to send a mission to the partisans; Eden had discussed this with Molotov at the Moscow conference.
- 68. 'Situation in Yugoslavia', minute by Dew, 26 December 1943, R13715/G, FO 371/37620.
- 69. Churchill to Eden, 30 December 1943, R214/G, FO 371/44243.
- 70. Churchill to Eden, 29 December 1943, quoting a note that Randolph had left for the PM on 25 December, R213, and Churchill to Eden 30 December, R214, FO 371/4423. Randolph Churchill was about to join Maclean's military mission with the partisans. The partisans were initially honoured to have the British PM's son with them, despite the idea that he might have been "the grey eminence of the mission", but they soon perceived him to be a secondary figure, with more interest in alcohol than the partisan war, Milovan Djilas, Wartime, p.369. Popović was less polite than Djilas, describing Randolph as "a chronic drunk", while Ranković concluded that Churchill had sent him to Yugoslavia "to sober up, and not to cause scandals over there", Koča Popović, Beleske uz Ratovanje, B.I.G.Z., Belgrade 1988, pp.203-204.
- 71. Churchill to Eden, 2 January 1944, R216, FO 371/44243.
- 72. Eden to Churchill, 19 January 1944, urging him not to press King Peter to sack Mihailović until some return from Tito was assured. He added that reports from the BLOs showed that Mihailović still commanded wide support in Serbia, and that to drop Mihailović before an agreement was reached between Tito and the king held the risk of losing the Serbs. PM/44/5, FO 371/44245.
- 73. Churchill to Eden, 22 January 1944, R1115, FO 371/44245, and Churchill to Eden 17 February 1944, R2571, FO 371/44247.
- 74. Eden to Churchill, 1 January 1944, R214, FO 371/44243. Eden set out the situation as he saw it in a memorandum for the War Cabinet, 'The position in Yugoslavia', 10 January 1944, R739/G, FO 371/44244.
- 75. Stevenson to Eden, 7 January 1944, R656, FO 371/44244. Included in the evidence was a document provided by the German Abwehr officer who Deakin and Maclean had brought out at the same time as the partisan delegation. Headed 'Collaboration of Bosnian Chetniks with the Germans', it was a note from German HQ Banja Luka, dated 29 November 1943, to Rade Radić, Commander Chetnik Units, protesting at 350 of his men shouting "Long Live King Peter II, Queen Mary and London". Incidents of this kind, it was pointed out, were likely to disturb the excellent relations existing between Radić's men and the German armed forces. A note had been added in Cairo, saying that Radić had been "in touch with Mihailović towards the end of 1942. On 25 December 1942 a reference occurs to an order received from MVIC [Mihailović] counselling non-aggression against the Germans. On 1 March 1943 a letter states that a formal agreement between delegates from MVIC and those of the Bosnian Chetniks had been drawn up at the village of Kokovi on 13 February". A FO hand (possibly that of E.M.Rose) has underlined the word 'letter' and asks "from whom to whom", and added the comment "This is not really hard evidence of collaboration by Mihailović". Copy in FO 371/44243.
- 76. Stevenson to FO, 14 February 1944, No.155, WO 201/1583.

- 77. Stevenson to FO, 24 February 1944, at a meeting of the Special Operations Committee that morning the military representatives had argued that to keep a small intelligence-gathering mission with Mihailović would be beneficial. Stevenson disagreed, but if the Americans insisted on keeping a presence which he sincerely hoped they would not there would be strong political reasons for the British to follow suite. No.187, WO 201/1583.
- 78. Stevenson to FO, 23 February 1944, No.184, WO 201/1583.
- 79. Mansfield had told Bailey this while they were both at Mihailović's HQ, Mansfield Report, 1 March 1944, full text given in David Martin, Web of Disinformation, pp.326-362.
- 80. Bailey had told Stevenson that Mansfield and Captain Todorović had been sent out of Yugoslavia, without consulting Armstrong, in the hope that they would reach the outside world before Bailey and put the case for Mihailović. Stevenson to FO, 20 February 1944, No.173, WO 201/1583.
- 81. Ibid. There was one remaining OSS officer with Mihailović, Muselin, and Donovan had ordered him to remain in the event of a British evacuation. The OSS representative at the Special Operations Committee had agreed to ask Donovan to bring Muselin out with the British.
- 82. Washington to FO (and Copy to Stevenson), 25 February 1944, Donovan was not in accord with British policy, and the British ambassador in the USA wanted urgently clarification on what would be the position regarding intelligence-gathering in Serbia to counteract Donovan's reservations. No.6, WO 201/1583.
- 83. Stevenson to FO, 1 March 1944, No.208, WO 201/1583.
- 84. Richard Harris-Smith, OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency, Los Angeles and London, 1972, pp.131-143. One of the admirers was Major Louis Huot who made an unauthorised visit to Tito while delivering seaborne supplies to the partisans: he was later suddenly posted to other duties, apparently for treading on British and particularly Maclean's toes. Roberts, <u>Tito, Mihailović and the Allies</u>, pp.148-151.
- 85. Huot had brought Farish out with him, so that he could write a report on the partisans for Roosevelt before the Teheran conference, ibid, p.150. It appears that the president was highly impressed by Farish's report, and showed it to Stalin, ibid. p.170.
- 86. Mansfield Report, 1 March 1944, full text in David Martin, Web of Disinformation, pp.326-362.
- 87. Roberts, Tito, Mihailović and the Allies, p.256.
- 88. Stevenson to FO, 21 February 1944, No.177, WO 201/1583.
- 89. The McDowell Report, 23 November 1944, full text in Martin, <u>Web of Disinformation</u>, pp.378-411.
- 90. Churchill to Maclean, 25 February 1944, No.67, WO 201/1583. Churchill had already sent a message to Tito on 5 February, asking whether dismissing Mihailović would aid King

Peter's cause with the partisans, FO to Stevenson, with text of PM's message for Tito, 5 February 1944, No.93, WO 201/1599.

- 91. Philip Broad to Deakin, 25 February 1944, WO 201/1583.
- 92. British Embassy to Yugoslavia to FO, 1 March 1944, WO 201/1583.
- 93. British Embassy to Yugoslavia to FO, 1 March, No.201, WO 201/1583.
- 94. Stevenson to FO, 7 March 1944, No.225, WO 201/1583.
- 95. Stevan K Pavlowitch, Tito, p.44.
- 96. 'Situation in Yugoslavia', C-in-C Middle East Force, 12 March 1944, 02/1031/5, WO 201/1583.
- 97. Rootham Diary, entry for 29 November 1943.
- 98. Bailey to SOE Cairo, SE/28 of 26 November 1943, FO 371/37619.
- 99. Purić consistently resisted British pressure to dismiss Mihailović, his attitude was that it "was utterly impossible to abandon Mihailović who was not so much a man as a symbol the symbol of Serbia", Stevenson to FO, 3 December 1943, R12747, FO 371/37606. When Churchill had urged him on 10 December to dismiss his minister of war, Purić had protested strongly, Stevenson to FO, 11 December 1943, R13053, FO 371/37618.
- 100. 'Situation in Yugoslavia', C-in-C Middle East, 12 March 1944, 02/1031/5, WO 201/1583.
- 101. Correspondence with Gervase Cowell, SOE Adviser at the FCO, 14 November 1988, and British Embassy to Yugoslavia to FO, 19 February 1944, No.168, WO 201/1583.
- 102. British Embassy to Yugoslavia to FO, 17 February 1944, No.162, WO 201/1583.
- 103. Draft telegram to Force 133 from SOE (Bailey to Cairo SOE), undated, [14 March 1944] R4149, FO 371/44250.
- 104. Draft telegram, Bailey to SOE Cairo, undated, R5436. Lukačević had come out of Yugoslavia at the same time as Bailey: he had been interrogated by British security in Cairo about collaboration with the Germans, and had been cleared, but London security authorities still had doubts. Bailey had faith in Lukačević and his plan. Douglas Howard minute, 29 March 1944, FO 371/44252.
- 105. Armstrong to SOE Cairo, SE/33 of 30 December 1943, FO 371/44245.
- 106. Draft telegram, Bailey to SOE Cairo, undated, R5436, FO 371/44252.
- 107. Orme Sargent had turned down the plan, and Bailey was instructed to redraft his telegram to Cairo, Howard minute, 29 March 1944, FO 371/44252.

- 108. 'Appreciation regarding the military situation in Serbia so as to determine what in the future should be our military policy', 19 November 1943, recommending that Mihailović should be dropped, the British missions withdrawn, and that BLOs should be sent in to the partisans in Serbia to arrange reception of supplies for them. WO 201/1581.
- 109. Correspondence with Gervase Cowell, SOE Adviser, 14 November 1988. Rootham had suggested to Pavlović the possibility of replacing Mihailović, and all resistance being co-ordinated under British leadership: Pavlović agreed to go to the Middle-East to discuss this with the British as long as they would guarantee his return to Serbia. Rootham exchanged a number of messages with SOE Cairo regarding this, but there seems to be no trace of them in the files, either at the PRO or FCO. Nothing came of Rootham's plan because of the order to withdraw. Interview with Jasper Rootham, Wimborne, 2 June 1988. Rootham felt there was clearly plenty of opposition to the leadership, but no real forum for it, largely due to a lack of faith in the British "owing to the scandalous performance of MO4...promising more than they could give.", Diary entry for 3 February 1944.
- 110. 'Balkan Politico/Military Situation', Keble 28 September 1943, WO 201/1581.
- 111. Interview with Jasper Rootham, Wimborne, 2 June 1988.
- 112. British Embassy to Yugoslavia to FO, 19 February 1944, No.168, WO 201/1583.
- 113. Correspondence with Gervase Cowell, SOE Adviser, 14 November 1988.
- 114. Letter from Chetnik Leaders to Brigadier Maclean, undated [14 August 1944], copy in FO 371/44262. The five were Lukačević, Ostojić, Bačević, Novaković and Krivosić.
- 115. Annex I, draft telegram from Resident Minister for the Central Mediterranean, August 1944. Annex II, copy of draft telegram to Resident Minister from Bari, 24 August 1944, FO 371/44262.
- 116. Maclean to Chiefs of Staff, 24 August 1944, giving Tito's reply and his own reply to Lukačević, R13202, FO 371/44262.
- 117. Correspondence with Gervase Cowell, SOE Adviser, 14 November 1988.
- 118. 'Yugoslavia: HMG's Policy', undated [mid 1943?], R10918/1874/92, FO 371/37636.
- 119. Correspondence with Gervase Cowell, 14 November 1988.
- 120. Stevenson to FO, 3 March 1944, Maclean had enquired what fresh elements he should propose Tito include in his government. The partisans said it was already very representative, but that they might consider people from outside if they had a "clean record": they were well-disposed towards Šubašić and General Simović. WO 201/1583.
- 121. Interview with Pamela Bisdee, Midhurst, 9 September 1986.
- 122. Interview with Archie Jack, Haute Savoie, June 1988. After the news from the Teheran Conference, one of Mihailović's commanders remarked that he hoped the British had got a good price for selling out Mihailović's forces, and that it would be worthwhile, "this was said

politely and without rancour", but Major Jack got the message and felt ashamed and perplexed himself. After the order to withdraw came, all the people he was with behaved like perfect gentlemen. Jack was especially sorry to leave the local commander who went under the name "Chika Pera" ["Uncle Pera"]; Jack had worked closely with him and thought very highly of him.

- 123. Rootham Diary, entry for 6 April 1944: he had just heard that Pavlović had been appointed commander of the Sixth Corps, "would happen just as we're going away". Rootham regarded Pavlović as one of the most able and active leaders.
- 124. Ibid, entry for 7 May 1944. Rootham and Greenwood sent a long cable to Cairo: "Someone must tell some sort of truth about the situation the lies from radio London are pretty bad."
- 125. British Embassy to Yugoslavia to FO, 11 March 1944, No.235, WO 201/1583.
- 126. FO to Stevenson, 16 March 1944, WO 201/1583.
- 127. The plan for evacuation was sent on 19 February 1944, Cairo SOE to Armstrong, No.34; on 6 March Armstrong was told that flying would be delayed, as bad weather had been forecast for the next five weeks [a very long-range weather forecast], WO 201/1583.
- 128. Erik Greenwood tape recording 11374/4, Imperial War Museum Sound Archives.
- 129. Interview with Jasper Rootham, Wimborne, 2 June 1988. Deakin was aware that the BLOs from Serbia had been treated shabbily: he had personally debriefed Hudson, who had come out through partisan territory, but had been away sick when the rest of them returned. Interview with Sir William Deakin, London, 23 September 1988.
- 130. Major Jack had persuaded Klugmann, an old schoolfellow of his, to meet some of the BLOs in Jack's hotel room to explain to them what had happened. Klugmann had apparently agreed only reluctantly, and made some very unconvincing apologies and explanations for the situation. Interview with Archie Jack, Haute-Savoie, June 1988.
- 131. Jack and Rootham visited the map-room in Bari and found partisan flags on areas they had just left and knew to be controlled by Mihailović forces. When they tried to explain this no-one would listen, until Rootham became so furious that he swept all the flags from the map. After this all BLOs who had been with Mihailović's forces were banned from the map room. Interview with Archie Jack, Haute Savoie, June 1988. MacDowell also found, on his arrival in Serbia, that areas depicted on British maps as partisan 'liberated territory' were, in fact, no such thing, MacDowell Report, Martin, Web of Disinformation, pp.378-411.
- 132. Interview with Michael Lees, Milton Abbas, June 1987.
- 133. Interview with Jasper Rootham, Wimborne, 2 June 1988.
- 134. FO to Kuibyshev, 7 August 1942, R4788/175/G, FO 371/33468.
- 135. When Major Jack was reconnoitring the bridges in the Ibar valley, he was driven past German patrols by one of Nedić's men, and was similarly aided on a number of occasions.

Interview with Archie Jack, Haute Savoie, June 1988.

- 136. Bailey to SOE Cairo, SE/28 of 26 November 1943, FO 371/37619.
- 137. Extract of letter from Dalton to Churchill, 11 December 1941. Dalton was discussing the supply of sovereigns to the insurgents in Yugoslavia to buy supplies, "and even, I am assured, buy arms off the Italians." DO(41)36, 14 December 1941, PREM 3/510. Stevenson to Orme Sargent, 26 February 1944: two SOE people had told him that Mihailović had been encouraged by SOE to make arrangements with the Italians at a time when they were unable to furnish him with any real aid. There are hand-written notes in the margin: Eden thought the PM should see this, while Cadogan and Orme Sargent decided that no action was necessary. FO 371/44250.
- 138. Rendel to P Dixon, 3 June 1943, R4952, FO 371/37602.
- 139. FO minute, undated, January 1946, R1474/58/92, FO 371/59408.
- 140. Milan Deroc, British Special Operations Explored, pp.187-193.
- 141. Mihailović to Jovanović, 10 March 1943, Tel No. 1399, FO 371/37583.
- 142. Mansfield Report, 1 March 1944, Martin, Web of Disinformation, pp.326-362.
- 143. 'Report on Conditions in East and Central Serbia', Maj.J.Rootham, 18 April 1944. Rootham had never seen any direct co-operation with Germans, Bulgarians or Ljotićists in eastern Serbia. One Brigade commander had been shot on the orders of Pavlović for writing to the Germans to say that if they left the chetniks alone, he would not attack the Germans. It was clear from his reluctance to act that Major Petrović, of the Djunis bridge area, had made some sort of non-aggression pact. The Nedić police worked in full co-operation with Mihailović's organization and facilitated travel both by them and the British through enemy-controlled localities. Copy of report in Tonbridge School Library. Captain Moore found the accommodations with the Nedić forces more sinister, although Marković, the commander he was with in the Kosovo area, consistently turned down overtures from the Germans to become 'legalized chetniks', AN/5, undated, Cairo's 3504 of 3 December 1943, and AN/6 of 9 December, FO 371/37618.
- 144. Deakin, Embattled Mountain, p.239.
- 145. 'The Chetniks, A Survey' [written by Stephen Clissold of ISLD, assisted by Pamela Bisdee] AFHQ G2 (PB), September 1944, WO 204/8109.
- 146. One of the sources was a diary kept by H C Mueller, a German veteran of the First World War, who opposed the Nazis, and found himself trapped in Yugoslavia by the war. He joined Mihailović's forces and eventually worked with Archie Jack, who brought Mueller out with him in May 1944, against the orders of SOE Bari. Mueller was temporarily imprisoned while his story was checked: while he was in prison, his diary must have been "borrowed" by ISLD. Interview with Archie Jack, Haute-Savoie, June 1988. Extracts from reports by BLOs in Serbia which were critical of the forces were with were also used: later some of them regretted the fact that they had been quite so truthful.

- 1. Harold Macmillan, <u>War Diaries, The Mediterranean 1943-1945</u>, Macmillan, London, 1984, entry for 28 May 1944, p.448.
- 2. Vladimir Velebit, "The First Military Mission of the National Liberation Army to the British High Command", paper presented to the British National Committee for the History of the Second World War, Anglo-Yugoslav Colloquium, 13-15 December 1982, at the Imperial War Museum.
- 3. E B Haslam, "British Aid and Supplies to the National Liberation Army, January 1944 to March 1945", paper presented to the Anglo-Yugoslav Colloquium, 13-15 December 1982, at the Imperial War Museum.
- 4. Jasper Rootham, Miss Fire: the Chronicle of a British Mission to Mihailovich, 1943-1944, Chatto & Windus, London, 1946, p.214. Rootham noted that on one occasion 60 sorties were flown to the partisans in one night, while the missions he was with in eastern Serbia had received 27 sorties in 12 months.
- 5. Deakin had moved to Bari as head of the Yugoslav desk, but seems to have left that post in early May, joining Philip Broad on Macmillan's staff on 15 June 1944. Correspondence with C.M.Woods, SOE Adviser, FCO, 24 March 1988. After Deakin left, the back-up for Maclean's mission was run by Gordon Frazer, aided by James Klugmann; Frazer told Vane Ivanović that he had communist sympathies. Ivanović also states that all the officers in Bari ISLD, except one, were either communists or fellow travellers; they had told him so themselves. Vane Ivanović to Kirk Ford, Jr., 26 October 1973. (Ivanović worked for PWE) Pavlowitch Papers.
- 6. The Soviet mission arrived on 23 February 1944. It was made up of two generals, several colonels and an NKVD representative. The mission was headed by General Korneyev, and despite all the "brass" was not a very high-powered mission; it seems simply to have been there to provide a Soviet presence and liaison with Moscow, Roberts, <u>Tito, Mihailović and the Allies</u>, p.203.
- 7. Interview with Nigel Watson and Arthur Marlow, Eastbourne, 14 July, 1992. The Soviets were not in a position to provide any material help to the partisans, although they appear to have been trying to create the impression that they were doing so. On 7 July Bogomolov (who was now a member of the Allied Advisory Council for Italy) approached Macmillan with a request for three ships to send 'Russian' stores to the partisans: as the ships were British, the air cover they would need was British, and the stores American, this was turned down. On 25 July, Macmillan noted that the "Russians want to give Tito two of the Dakotas we allowed them to put at Bari. This seems rather an impertinence, considering the Dakotas are lend-lease articles which the Russians obtained from America!", Macmillan War Diaries,

p.482 and pp.491-492.

- 8. Captain Brian Parker, who was seconded to SOE from the marines, was not very impressed by the partisans' fighting abilities: he found they were likely to run off and leave him in the lurch in case of trouble and were rather unpredictable and not guaranteed to show up for planned and agreed actions. He got on well with the ordinary partisans, but "the more political they were, the less friendly". Parker met Tito a few times and assessed him as a very strong and reliable character, although the men around him were not so impressive, displaying a "mixture of swagger and kidology". Interview with Brian Parker, Poole, 21 October 1986.
- 9. Milovan Djilas, Wartime, p.348.
- 10. Ibid., p.399.
- 11. Vojmir Kljaković, "Tito's Talks in Italy and Moscow, August and September 1944", paper presented to the Anglo-Yugoslav Colloquium, 13-15 December 1982, at the Imperial War Museum.
- 12. Philip Broad, Bari, to Algiers, repeated to FO, 11 May 1944, No.20, FO 371/44255.
- 13. Broad to Algiers, repeated to FO, 12 May 1944, giving text of directive to Allied liaison officers, No.21, FO 371/44255.
- 14. Macmillan noted that the honeymoon period between Churchill and Roosevelt had ended, and differences regarding the Balkans were becoming more apparent, especially with regard to the attitude of OSS towards Mihailović. Macmillan, <u>War Diaries</u>, entry for 5 June 1944, p.455.
- 15. Churchill protested to Roosevelt about Macdowell being sent in, warning that it might upset the last chance of saving the king. Roosevelt replied on 3 September that it had been a 'mistake', and that he was instructing Donovan to recall MacDowell. MacDowell did not return until 1 November. Roberts, Tito, Mihailović and the Allies, p.257.
- 16. The text of MacDowell's report, 23 November 1944, is given in Martin, Web of Disinformation, pp.378-411.
- 17. The text of Farish's report, 28 June 1944, is in Martin, Web of Disinformation, pp.371-377. When the BLOs with Mihailović's forces were withdrawn, Major John Henniker-Major, who was part of Maclean's mission, was selected to go to the partisans in Serbia; Farish went with him. It was impossible to go overland, so they returned to Bari and parachuted in to southern Serbia on 16 April 1944. Shortly afterwards they moved to central Serbia, to the area of the Radan mountains, where first Stambolić, and then Popović, were building up partisan strength for the civil war. Farish left Serbia in mid-June, after which there was no OSS officer with the partisans in Serbia until October, Roberts, Tito, Mihailović and the Allies, pp.205-207. Although Roosevelt had been impressed by Farish's first report, which the president had received on the way to Teheran, he was not entirely convinced of Mihailović's collaboration, and attached a Serbo-Croatian speaking American officer to Farish before he returned to the partisans in January 1944, Transcript of interview with Eli Popovich for BBC "Timewatch" programmes on Tito, broadcast on 28 February and 4 March 1992.

- 18. Churchill to Eden, 19 March 1944: King Peter had wanted a period of four weeks to form a new government, to give the best chance of unity. R4533, FO 371/44250. Purić and the king had remained in London after King Peter's wedding, as MI5 had judged that his life would be at risk because of the marriage if he returned to Cairo, FO to Chargé d'Affaires to Yugoslav government, Cairo, 6 April 1944, R5504/G, FO 371/44305. Broad to Eden, 8 April 1944, giving outline of the response of Yugoslavs in Cairo to the marriage, R5605/439/92, FO 371/44305.
- 19. Eden to Churchill, 21 March 1944, R4533/8/G, FO 371/44250. The Soviet government was informed on 14 April 1944, Churchill to Molotov, No.1130, FO 371/44309.
- 20. Churchill to Philip Broad, 12 April 1944, T790/4, FO 371/44305.
- 21. Churchill, Second World War, Vol.5, p.416.
- 22. Stevenson to FO, 3 March 1944, WO 201/1583; Roberts says that it was Donovan who first suggested Šubašić to Churchill, <u>Tito, Mihailović and the Allies</u>, p.224; On 14 April 1944, Stevenson discussed the new government with King Peter who suggested recalling Jovanović, who, he was sure would serve with Šubašić. Stevenson suggested that the king should send an urgent message to the USA to bring the Ban to London: even if Jovanović would not serve with him, Šubašić was perceived as an essential element in any future government. 'Record of conversation between Mr Stevenson and King Peter of Yugoslavia', 14 April 1944, R6007/8/G, FO 371/44309.
- 23. Gilbert, Road to Victory, p.779.
- 24. Hilary King, "The British Mission at Drvar", and Ralph Bennett, "Ultra and Drvar", papers presented at the Anglo-Yugoslav Colloquium, 13-15 December 1982, at the Imperial War Museum.
- 25. Macmillan, War Diaries, entry for 4 June 1944, p.454.
- 26. FO minute, 12 June 1944, R9247, FO 371/44290.
- 27. Macmillan, <u>War Diaries</u>, entry for 10 June 1944, pp.461-462. King Peter and his party, which included Subašić, Stevenson, Bailey and the king's ADC, were all leaving London that night by air. Macmillan and Wilson sent urgent telegrams to all the places where the aeroplane would stop on the way, to ask Stevenson to see them both before proceeding to Vis.
- 28. Stevenson to Eden, 6 June 1944, on the PM's minute regarding Šubašić and the king going to Vis, Eden added a handwritten note on 7 June, proposing that Šubašić should go to meet Tito ahead of the king, M685/4, FO 371/44291.
- 29. Macmillan, War Diaries, entry for 11 June 1944, pp.462-463.
- 30. Ibid., entry for 19 June 1944, p.469.
- 31. Ibid.

- 32. The Tito-Šubašić Agreement was reached on 16 June 1944.
- 33. Eden's Memorandum, 'Yugoslav Affairs', 5 July 1944, records the discussions between Topalović and Šubašić, and the conversation between Šubašić and Dr Janciković, who was a representative of the Croat Peasant Party and had been a deputy in the pre-war parliament. WP(44)361, CAB 66/52.
- 34. Eden to Churchill, 15 August 1944, R12754, FO 371/44315.
- 35. Gilbert, Road to Victory, p.893, quoting Pierson-Dixon's account, and Churchill to Eden, 15 August 1944, "I have felt that the Ban and Tito get on almost too well together", R12832, FO 371/44315.
- 36. FO to Stevenson, 21 June 1944, R9675/8/G, FO 371/44312.
- 37. Resident Minister, Bari, to Resident Minister, Algiers, repeated to FO, 2 July 1944; Eden underlined the part about Tito extending his political scope in Serbia and noted "Are we? I didn't know it...I don't know what hand Maclean is playing; it has little relation to our needs." R10399/8/G, FO 371/44259.
- 38. Ranković headed Tito's intelligence and secret police services.
- 39. FO to Bari, 5 July 1944, with request to pass the message urgently to Maclean, No.228, FO 371/44259.
- 40. Vojmir Kljaković, "Tito's Talks in Italy and Moscow, August and September 1944", Kljakovic does not say who told Tito this.
- 41. The meeting was planned for 12 July. While Wilson was to emphasize that the British regarded the partisans as a purely military movement, Šubašić was to make a agreement with Tito on the future of the various peoples of Yugoslavia. Particular emphasis was put on getting Tito to agree not to impose communism, which was felt to be an essential reassurance for the people of Serbia. Stevenson hoped that once such an agreement had been reached, it would strengthen the hand of the officer who would replace Mihailović. Stevenson 'General Wilson's Conference with Tito and the Yugoslav Prime Minister at Caserta', 3 July 1944, R10599, FO 371/44259.
- 42. Macmillan, War Diaries, entry for 16 July 1944, p.485.
- 43. For example: 'Summary of Lieutenant-Colonel Hudson's Report and Recommendations', 21 April 1944, circulated by Eden 1 May 1944, WP(44)234, CAB 66/49.
- 44. Roberts, Tito, Mihailović and the Allies, p.233.
- 45. Gilbert, <u>Road to Victory</u>, p.890, quoting Pierson Dixon's account. As a backdrop to the talks, the Warsaw uprising had just begun, with appeals to the Soviets to help the Poles receiving no response. It coincided with the Soviets making tremendous advances in Romania and Bulgaria. From August 1944, Churchill began to regard 'Uncle Joe' and communism with more caution.

- 46. Ibid. It appears that Tito was eventually prevailed upon to give his agreement, although possibly with no intention of adhering to it: Dixon to Eden, 13 August 1944, giving a brief account of the Churchill-Tito-Šubašić discussions in Naples: Tito had agreed to insert the passage on communism asked for by the British, R12705, FO 371/44315.
- 47. Eden to Churchill, 15 August 1944, R12754, FO 371/44315.
- 48. Churchill to Eden, 31 August 1944, R13994/G, FO 371/44263.
- 49. Ibid., Eden's handwritten comments.
- 50. Eden to Churchill, 15 September 1944, R14140/G, FO 371/44263.
- 51. Vojmir Kljaković, "Tito's Talks in Italy and Moscow".
- 52. E.B.Haslam, "British Aid and Supplies to the National Libration Army", 'Ratweek' began on 1 September 1944; its object was to halt all enemy traffic through and within Yugoslavia for one week. There were four major targets for the Allied bombers: the Zagreb-Brod-Belgrade railway; the Belgrade area, especially the Danube bridges; the Belgrade-Nis-Skoplje-Athens railway; and rail tracks between the Sava and the Adriatic coast.
- 53. Maclean joined Henniker-Major at Popović's HQ on the Radan, for Maclean's account of 'Ratweek', see <u>Eastern Approaches</u>, pp.364-381.
- 54. Despite the fact the FO and the PM were by this time harbouring serious doubts about Tito, the king was persuaded to broadcast this message to Yugoslavia. In addition to calling for support for Tito he condemned anyone who had misused his name to justify collaboration with the enemy. 'Speech in Serbo-Croat by HM King Peter of Yugoslavia, Broadcast on 12 September 1944 at 20.00 from the BBC', copy in FO 371/44306. This was not received favourably by Serbs in London: Dr Milan Grol, who was not in the "Pan-Serb" camp, told Stevenson that he could not possibly support a government whose policy was that of imposing the National Liberation Movement on Serbia by force of arms. While Grol favoured compromise, and was not an adherent of Mihailović, he stated that the people of Serbia were bitterly opposed to the NLM; he based his conviction on the statements of Topalović and Pribičević. Stevenson to Orme Sargent, 14 September 1944, R15034, FO 371/44317.
- 55. Macmillan, <u>War Diaries</u>, recording the conversation he had with Maclean when the latter came to see him in Naples on 25 September 1944, p.533.
- 56. Vojmir Kljaković, "Tito's Talks in Italy and Moscow"; St.K Pavlowitch, tells us in <u>Tito</u>, p.48, that Tito and the partisans had been rather surprised at the behaviour of the Red Army, which contrasted sharply with the Yugoslavs' idealized view of their Soviet communist comrades, but their brief stay on Yugoslav soil, coupled with the powerful military aid, made up for any shortcomings.
- 57. St.K Pavlowitch, Tito, p.47
- 58. Churchill to Eden, 19 December 1944, R363, FO 371/48805.

- 59. Maclean received a note from Bakić, demanding the withdrawal of Floyd Force, Maclean, Belgrade, to FO War Cabinet Distribution, 12 January 1945, R937. Maclean took up the question with Tito, who apologised for Bakić's letter. Even so, he pointed out that there was no need for Floyd Force, as there were no Germans in their vicinity, and the fact that they were receiving reinforcements had naturally made the local authorities assume that Floyd Force were planning some armed action against them, Maclean to FO, 14 January 1945, R1898/G, FO 371/48808. For a full account of Floyd Force, see Michael MacConville, <u>A Small</u> War in the Balkans.
- 60. Maclean, Eastern Approaches, p.407.
- 61. Air Vice-Marshal Arthur S. Gould Lee, <u>Special Duties</u>, Sampson Low Marston & Co, London, 1947, pp.293-294.
- 62. Interview with Nigel Watson and Arthur Marlow, Eastbourne, 14 July 1992. Their ISLD mission was engaged in intelligence gathering, particularly on naval bases at the head of the Adriatic where parts for the V2 rockets were being made: they tracked these as they were shipped north. Watson and Marlow also supplied information on rail movements, which were analyzed in Bari to plot German movements. They were also trained to 'land' Lysanders by radioing back word pictures of suitable landing sites. They did not know what other ISLD missions were engaged in: for example, they knew that John Ennals and his W/T operator Evans had gone in to Yugoslavia for two weeks, but not the purpose of the flying visit.
- 63. In mid-June the seven-man Clowder mission encountered an ISLD mission, headed by a 'Captain Smith', who was not observing partisan security rules. When the ISLD radio operator, of Austrian origin, was captured, he gave away the Clowder mission. They managed to escape, but there were reprisals and the SOE mission obviously held ISLD responsible. Thomas M Barker, Social Revolutionaries and Secret Agents: the Carinthian Slovene Partisans and Britain's Special Operations Executive, E European Monographs, Boulder, Columbia University Press, New York, 1990, p.32. On another occasion Watson and Marlow ran into Charles Villiers, who was one of the Clowder team, and had rather a contretemps with him when Watson discovered his real identity when he was using an assumed name; they were highly suspicious of Villiers and what he was doing. Interview with Watson and Marlow, 14 July 1992.
- 64. Barker, Social Revolutionaries, p.49.
- 65. Gilbert, Road to Victory, p.893.
- 66. Macmillan, War Diaries, pp.469-476.
- 67. Vojmir Kljaković, "Tito's Talks in Italy and Moscow", although apparently warned (again, Kljaković does not say by whom) that Churchill might attempt to convince him of this, Tito's unnamed source said that the Americans would not go with the plan. Nevertheless, after speaking to Alexander and Churchill, (Kljaković says) Tito was convinced that the British intended to take this option.
- 68. The partisans he was with swore that he fell in battle, but investigators concluded that Hesketh-Pritchard had been assassinated by his companions, probably on instructions from a higher political quarter, Barker, <u>Social Revolutionaries</u>, p.49.

- 69. Lee, Special Duties, p.275.
- 70. Villa Resta, No.5 of 10 December 1944, referring to a message sent to Wilson on 8 November, copy in FO 371/48808.
- 71. Macmillan, <u>War Diaries</u>, entry for 23 October 1944, p.562; Topalović had sent on the message from Mihailović. On 24 October Macmillan noted that at the SAC meeting "we managed to kill the Mihailović business, although the Americans hanker after him still", p.563.
- 72. Hungary was also 50-50; Romania 90-10, and Bulgaria 75-25, both in favour of the Soviets; Greece was 90-10 in favour of the British and Americans. Gilbert, Road to Victory, p.993. This took place on 9 October 1944 at the Moscow Conference, at which Roosevelt who did not favour spheres of influence was not present, although at Yalta, the president tacitly if unhappily agreed that they did exist.
- 73. Villa Resta, No.5 of 10 December 1944, FO 371/48808.
- 74. Stevenson to Macmillan, repeated to FO, Washington and Rome, 27 April 1945, R7601, FO 371/48812.
- 75. Orme Sargent to Churchill, 29 April 1945, Draft minute, PM/05/45/40, FO 371/48812.
- 76. Nicolai Tolstoy, <u>The Minister and the Massacres</u>, Century Hutchinson, London, 1986, p.24, footnote.
- 77. Orme Sargent to Churchill, 29 April 1945, Draft minute, PM/05/45/40, FO 371/48812.
- 78. Tolstoy, <u>The Minister and the Massacres</u>, p.5. General Damjanović had been chef de cabinet to Nedić while a "principal confidant" of Mihailović. In October 1944 Mihailović had ordered him to Bosnia, then appointed him commander of the Yugoslav Home Army units in the Ljubljana area in March 1945.
- 79. Roberts, Tito, Mihailović & the Allies, p.306.
- 80. Unsigned account of conversation with Major Radovan Milinkovich (a Chicago-born Yugoslav) Wartime Intelligence Chief on Mihailović's Staff on 12 November 1944. If the record of what MacDowell said to Milinkovich on 23 September is accurate, then MacDowell was following a policy at odds with that of the British, and with official American policy. It seems unlikely that MacDowell was acting independently, in which case the proposal might have come from Donovan. November 13, 1944, copy in FO 371/48810.
- 81. Macmillan, War Diaries, pp.746-757.
- 82. Although both political and military leaders had become increasingly disillusioned with and wary of Tito, the fact had not been made public, and propaganda had continued to portray the Yugoslav partisans as brave allies. The majority of the military who had fought their way up the western side of the Adriatic were unaware that they had been engaged in a race with the partisans. After VE Day, on 8 May 1945, there was a general expectation that it was all over bar the shouting; no-one had an appetite for a fresh round of conflict in

Europe. There was also the recent experience in Greece to be borne in mind: the conflict there between British forces and the communist resistance had caused much controversy in Britain.

- 83. For example: On 23 June 1944, Macmillan had met Selborne to discuss the use of SOE in the period immediately following the war. Macmillan had prepared a paper on this topic, which Selborne was enthusiastic about Macmillan does not give details of his ideas, but there was resistance to them "both active and passive". Macmillan War Diaries, p.473. On 19 August, Macmillan had a meeting with Stawell, Douglas Dodds-Parker and another member of SOE to discuss the future of the organization, but it had been "many words, no results", ibid., p.504.
- 84. Barker, Social Revolutionaries, p.61.
- 85. Ibid., p.35.
- 86. Lord Aldington, formerly Brigadier Toby Low, who was in Carinthia in May 1945, sued Nicolai Tolstoy and Nigel Watts for distributing a pamphlet which claimed that Lord Aldington was responsible for illegally returning the Yugoslavs and non-Soviet Russians. After a lengthy court case, which aroused much interest and controversy, Aldington was awarded record damages of £1.5million: as Tolstoy promptly went bankrupt, the damages remain unpaid. Tolstoy's The Minister and the Massacres gives a detailed account of the situation in Carinthia in May 1945: unfortunately, this is now difficult to come by, as, following the libel case it was withdrawn from all libraries, although it was not the subject of the court case.
- 87. Robert Lockhead, testifying in the Aldington-Tolstoy case, reported in <u>The Independent</u>, 24 October 1989, and Charles Villiers testimony, reported in <u>The Independent</u>, 2 November 1989. Both Lockhead and Villiers were members of Wilkinson's SOE set-up.
- 88. Arthur Marlow, who claims to have been the first Briton in to Klagenfurt, says that what awaited those being sent back was fairly common knowledge, certainly among the secret services, Interview with Arthur Marlow, 14 July 1992.
- 89. At the Yalta conference in February 1945, the foreign ministers of Britain, the USA and USSR signed an agreement that all liberated prisoners of war should be returned to their home countries: although it was a rather confused document on the question of whether those POWs who did not want to return home should be forced to do so (this applied especially to Soviet POWs), it did not cover the case of the Yugoslavs in Austria, who had been predominantly combatants in a civil war, or who were civilians.
- 90. Tolstoy, in The Minister and the Massacres, lays the blame at Macmillan's door.
- 91. Dr Darko Bekić, interview in Danas, Zagreb, 18 August, 1990.

NOTES FOR CONCLUSION

- 1. Interview with Archie Jack, Haute Savoie, June 1988.
- 2. Vladimir Velebit, discussing the arrival of the first SOE missions to the partisans, says that while Tito "did not forget the two frustrating years during which he was entirely left to himself, ignored by the western allies" he was, nevertheless, a shrewd enough politician to welcome the contact when it was finally made. "The First Military Mission of the National Liberation Army to the British High Command", paper presented to the Anglo-Yugoslav Colloquium, 13-15 December 1982, at the Imperial War Museum.
- 3. Pearson to Howard, 12 February 1943, enclosing 'Colonel Bailey's review of the Partisans in Serbia and Bosnia', FO 898/157.
- 4. Bailey to Cairo, 16 March 1943; a few days later Bailey sent another telegram, indicating that Mihailović would have no truck with the Germans, Bailey to Cairo, 22 March 1943, copies in FO 371/37582.
- 5. David Martin's <u>The Web of Disinformation</u> and Michael Lees' <u>The Rape of Serbia</u> both give a detailed account of how Cairo SOE misinterpreted and delayed messages, redirected supplies, misattributed resistance activities, and generally distorted the picture of what was happening in Yugoslavia to the benefit of the partisan movement.
- 6. For example, Dr Mark Wheeler, official historian of SOE and Yugoslavia, states that the Mihailović myth-making could not possibly be attributed to the Istanbul office of SOE, because at the time it was run by Hugh Seton-Watson and Basil Davidson. As this was at a time when little was known about either Mihailović or the partisans and long before the issues of collaboration or inactivity on Mihailović's part were raised it indicates a pre-disposition to the communist resistance from the start. Conversation with Mark Wheeler, Leeds, September 1992.
- 7. Basil Davidson, Special Operations Europe, pp.141-152.
- 8. For example: the allegation that Mihailović's forces were inactive is refuted by Martin who gives a chronological list of actions taken by those forces between August and December 1943, The Web of Disinformation, pp,129-148.
- 9. C.M.Woodhouse, The Apple of Discord, Hutchinson, London, 1948.
- 10. Macmillan, War Diaries, entry for 25 September 1944, p.533.
- 11. 'The Partisan Movement in Yugoslavia', Report by Brigadier F.H.R.Maclean, 6 November 1943, R11589/2/G, FO 371/37615.

NOTES FOR CONCLUSION

- 12. The disputes between the Pan-Serb and Yugoslav-minded Serbian exiles further heightened the fears of the FO on this question. The personal prejudices of people involved in Yugoslav affairs also probably played some part; Alexander Glen noted that the British could not seem to help either taking the side of the Serbs or the Croats he was inclined to take the former, while Hugh Seton-Watson took the latter, Footholds Against the Whirlwind, p.54. Macmillan noted, after a conference with Deakin and Broad on 4 September 1944, that Deakin was "not blind to the great merits of the Serbs and is not so prejudiced as I feel Fitzroy Maclean to be", War Diaries, p.515.
- 13. For example: 'Yugoslav Situation Report', week-ending 5 November 1943, Armstrong reported that Mihailović considered that his authority extended to the whole of the country, and never consulted Armstrong on operational questions, regarding the British mission's role as being simply to supply stores. FO 371/37616.
- 14. The publicly projected image of occupied people fell neatly into two divisions: collaborators, who were shabby misfits often motivated by monetary gain, and the majority brave self-sacrificing people, displaying all the traits of the English conception of fair play. A good example of this is the 1943 film "The Hangman Also Dies": a fictionalized account of the assassination of Heydrich (and the only screenplay by Bertold Brecht), in which the citizens of Czechoslovakia from well-heeled intelligentsia to peasant vegetable-vendor were portrayed as enormously good and brave. It was a good film to fortify people on the home front, but a million miles from the reality of occupied Europe.
- 15. Whitehall documents released on 1 December 1992 revealed the extent of collaboration between the administrations of Jersey and Guernsey and the occupiers, and the fact that no action had been taken against those involved. Reports in The Independent, 2 December and 7 December 1992.
- 16. Stevenson to Macmillan, repeated to FO, Washington and Rome, 27 April 1945, reporting the movement of the various non-partisan forces, and the fact that this was being connived at by the Germans, R7601, Fo 371/48812.
- 17. Gilbert, Road to Victory, p.993.
- 18. Lees, The Rape of Serbia, p.48.

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FO 371: General Correspondence, Southern European Department

FO 536: Embassy and Consular Archives Yugoslavia Correspondence

FO 898: Political Warfare Executive

War Cabinet Papers

CAB 65: War Cabinet Minutes

CAB 66: War Cabinet Memorandum WP & CP Series

CAB 67: War Cabinet Memorandum WP(G) Series

CAB 80: War Cabinet, Chiefs of Staff Committee, Memorandum

Prime Minister's Papers

PREM 3: Operational Papers; Files of the Prime Minister's office kept at the War Cabinet offices, dealing with defense and operational subjects.

War Office Papers

WO 105: War Diaries, War Office Directorates

WO 201: Military Headquarters Paper, Middle East Forces

WO 202: Military Headquarters Paper, Military Missions

WO 208: Directorate of Military Intelligence

ii. Documents held at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London

Correspondence with SOE Adviser concerning SOE Archives

iii. Collected Papers

Mountbatten Papers: University of Southampton

Pavlowitch Papers: private collection

Jasper Rootham, War Diary and documents: Tonbridge School Library

George Taylor Papers: King's College, London

2. INTERVIEWS

Pamela Bisdee: liaison officer with the Yugoslav air force, Cairo 1942-1943, then worked for SIS in Bari 1943-4. West Sussex, September 1986.

Sir William Deakin: first official SOE mission to Tito, head of Yugoslav desk in Cairo/Bari, then B.A.F. Italy. Royal Overseas League, London 23 September 1988.

Jean Howard: worked at Bletchley Park, writing reports on situation in occupied Yugoslavia based on intercepted information from Enigma decrypts. London, 14 July 1988.

Archie Jack: liaison officer with Mihailović forces in Serbia, September 1943 to May 1944. Haute-Savoie, June 1988.

Mike Lees: liaison officer with Mihailović forces in Serbia, June 1943 to May 1944. Milton Abbas, Dorset.

Tom Mapplebeck: assistant air attaché in Belgrade 1941, associate of coup makers. London 22 September 1988

Arthur Marlow: ISLD W/T operator Slovenia 1944. Eastbourne, 14 July 1992.

Brian Parker: seconded to SOE from the commandos, worked with partisans on the Adriatic islands and Montenegrin coast, later Greece & Corfu 1943-44. Poole, 21 October 1986.

Jasper Rootham: liaison officer with Mihailović forces in eastern Serbia. Wimborne, 2 June 1988.

Ishan Toptani: Albanian guerilla leader, close to SOE agents there, including Amery. New Forest, 16 January 1988.

Nigel Watson: ISLD, with partisan forces in Slovenia 1944. Eastbourne, 14 July 1992.

3. CORRESPONDENCE

Mrs Jean Howard.

S Johnson, SOE W/T operator with 'Brasenose' mission to Macedonian partisans.

Mike Lees.

Nicola Pasić: a member of a group of student Democrats at Mihailović's HQ, engaged upon research into the SOE 'Camp X' recruits.

4. TAPE RECORDINGS

Imperial War Museum, Department of Sound Archives:

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Eric Greenwood: 11374/4

Archie Jack: 10640/4

Michael Lees: 11085/8

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Zvonimir Vucković: Mihailović forces

Merrill Walker: USAF