

## LETTER

TO THE EDITOR:

The omissions in the abridged English version of Veljko Mićunović's *Moscow Diary* (Doubleday, 1980) deserve our close scrutiny. After praising *Moskovske Godine, 1956/1958*, the complete Serbo-Croat edition of Mićunović's book (*Slavic Review*, 38, no. 4 [December 1979]: 681–82), I was puzzled by the pro-détente slant of the content of the English version.

To find what was missing in this abridged, excellently translated, aptly annotated, and indexed book was a relatively easy task. All the photographs (several giving priceless glimpses of Soviet leaders at unofficial meetings with Yugoslavs) and about seventy pages of Mićunović's observations are not included in the English edition. In the author's preface to the English edition, Mićunović explains that he "made cuts in an effort to relieve the non-Yugoslav reader of details which . . . concern Yugoslav policy"—an admirable diplomatic cover-up.

My analysis confirms that perhaps one-third of the excluded text is, indeed, of no great value to the Western reader. The remaining cuts, however, are not only relevant, but extremely important for non-Yugoslav readers. Most frequently the excised material is embarrassing for the USSR, Yugoslavia, and, occasionally, even for the United States and the West. These intentional omissions are in part explained by the need of post-Tito Yugoslavia to protect its interests vis-à-vis the USSR and the West by stressing its nonaligned status. But since the altered version of *Moscow Diary*, adorned with favorable introductory remarks by George Kennan and David Floyd, appears in the West at the time of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, one is entitled to question the significance of the alterations for policy makers in the West.

To find out who is responsible for the cuts and why they were made has been a far more difficult task. An employee at Doubleday was unhelpful. Nor do I know George Kennan's thoughts about the matter, since my seven pages of comments and quotations about the book were not forwarded to him. Doubleday did forward my comments to David Floyd, who confirmed my view that Mićunović is an honorable man, willing to record the truth as he sees it. However, Doubleday's insistence that only a shorter version of the *Diary* could be a profitable venture, apparently forced Mićunović to compromise. The Yugoslav editors then did the cutting, and my guess is that Doubleday's editors did not insist upon their right to verify what was omitted. Further editing by Floyd removed only repetitious passages. The major content changes were the work of Yugoslav editors.

Here are some of the major themes and entries omitted from the abridged English edition:

### *Embarrassing for Yugoslavia.*

"Tito's demand that the Russians explain to the comrades from East Germany Yugoslavia's inability to recognize the DDR immediately because of its economic interest in West Germany; this recognition is to come soon, however. Secondly, Tito officially promises the Russians cancellation of the American military aid to Yugoslavia later in 1956. Thirdly, *Yugoslavia agrees with the Soviet foreign policy* [emphasis added]. Fourthly, the USSR, Czechoslovakia and East Germany will aid Yugoslavia with the construction of its aluminium industry" [9/7/'56]; Khrushchev's pressure upon Yugoslavia to rejoin the Soviet bloc [10/31/'56]; Khrushchev's charge that Yugoslavia's coexistence policy is "helpful to the American reactionaries" [12/14/'56]; the Yugoslav request to produce under license or buy the MIG-19 planes [12/22/'56]; the Soviet charge that the Yugoslav workers' councils are anarchistic in their nature [3/12/'57]; the bad relations with the West weaken Yugoslav independence [3/11/'58]; the Yugoslav attempts to please the Soviets [4/11, 4/25/'58].

### *Embarrassing for the USSR.*

Khrushchev's secret de-Stalinization drive fails to see that "Stalin's cult of personality was the product and essential characteristic of the Soviet system rather than something independent of that system" [3/14/'56]; the USSR wishes to exacerbate the Middle Eastern crisis [8/25/'56]; the lack of unity in the West is helpful for the USSR [11/11/'56]; the Soviets favor German Christian Democrats over Social Democrats as the ruling party for West Germany [6/14/'57]; the reintroduction of the law giving the Soviet authorities the

right to forcibly remove undesirable citizens from big cities [4/13/'57]; Khrushchev's liberalization drive as an attempt to shore up his position following the ouster of the anti-Party group of Malenkov-Molotov-Kaganovich [10/31/'57]; the Soviet uneasiness about growing Yugoslav-Polish friendship [10/1/'57]; a partial restoration of Stalin [12/30/'57]; the chronic headaches of Soviet agriculture [1/26/'58]; Khrushchev's bitterness and anger at the Americans for catching up with the Soviets in the outerspace race [2/4/'58]; the Soviet attempt to split the West by spreading rumors of "the secret correspondence with the United States" [4/5/'58]; the Soviets seek the Polish [Gomulka's] approval for the execution of the Hungarian Premier Imre Nagy [6/30/'58]; Khrushchev's attack upon Tito and Yugoslavia [7/14/'58].

As a result of numerous substantive deletions, attempts at cosmetic enhancement of the USSR, and exclusion of Mićunović's valuable personal observations about world politics, the clear diplomatic mirror of *Moskovske Godine* is clouded, perhaps even cracked, in *Moscow Diary*. Despite such flaws (including missing criticisms of the West), however, this book will be carefully read for many years by historians, diplomats, and, above all, intelligent readers throughout the world.

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