

Eastern Europe

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I have been talking to you about the question of the destruction of and the transformation of the old social order and the old political order in Eastern Europe. And the point that I can make and the point that I would really argue is that that destruction and that transformation of the old social order was really overdue by the time you come to the eve of the Second World War — that you are talking, after all, about a crisis of underdevelopment in that particular area which, through the decade of the depression of the 1930s, really had gone to the breaking point. You are talking about a crisis of underdevelopment which, in that period of the occupation and the war in the early 1940s, had been driven, after all, to the point of no return. What you are talking about is something, ultimately, that was not only overdue but that really had to happen. And I underscore that because it seems to me that there is no sense of shedding tears about the loss of that particular social and political order in Eastern Europe — that essentially, after all, there was not very much in a society or in a zone of underdevelopment, in which the fear rich really fattened off the misery of the poor, there was very little to regret.

And the reason I bring that up is that, in our own country, for an entire generation after the Second World War, there were all kinds of tremendous tears that were shed about what was called the loss of dignity and freedom in Eastern Europe after 1945. And I would contend to you and argue the case, from now until the end of time, that there was no freedom and dignity that was lost in Eastern Europe because there was none to begin with — and that only the dignity in Eastern Europe which began to flicker a little bit, in that period between 1945 and 1947, in those two of three years, when it seemed possible that you might be able to make a peaceful transition to socialism, only when it flickered a little bit, in that particular period, was there any kind of glimmer of hope. And that, of course, was extinguished by the entire blaze of the Cold War.

And so you are really raising the question, not so much of why the revolution in Eastern Europe but what kind of revolution and under whose auspices? Or you are setting out the proposition that, ultimately, the revolutionary process in Eastern Europe really was a reflection of a very difficult, very ambiguous — at times, very, very strange — sort of transaction among several interests that were involved in that particular area. And you want to keep those interests rather clearly in mind.

There is the interest, in the first place, of Great Britain. And Great Britain and American

diplomacy in that area has really the desire to transform the countries of Eastern Europe but to do it within the framework of Western diplomacy. In other words, you want to be able to transform those governments-in-exile in London into the effective postwar governments with the aim, after all, first of all, of keeping the door open in that part of the world. That is very much the design of American policymakers. You aim to keep that "open door," economically, in Eastern Europe. And also, certainly, a very important part of American diplomatic calculation is to make of those Eastern European countries part of a sort of *cordon sanitaire* around the Soviet Union. In other words, to make them a barrier against any kind of undue Soviet aggression or Soviet expansion.

And, secondly, of course, the interest of the Soviet Union, which is an interest that comes out of what it considers to be her national security. There are, if you please, certain kinds of irreducible demands by the Soviet Union in that area. And that irreducible demand that is primary is the security of the frontiers of Russia. The demand that is negotiable, that is not irreducible, is revolution. The Russians really don't care very much about transporting social revolution into those countries. What they care about is national interest in the very precise sense of the word: that they should be able to adjust the frontiers of those countries. So that the frontiers provide them with what they think is a cushion of military security. And then to place friendly governments in those countries around the borders of the Soviet Union. Not necessarily revolutionary governments at all but friendly governments that will not create a kind of *cordon sanitaire*, a kind of hostile alliance system around the frontiers of the Soviet Union.

And the third interest, quite obviously, is the interest of the internal movements in those countries themselves. And we're talking, really, about the resistance movements that developed inside each of those Eastern European countries and that developed also in the emigration. And here you get a great deal of particularity, a great deal of specificity, and it differs from area to area. So that the movement in Poland, for example, is characterized very much by a very strong anti-Soviet bias which, ultimately, is inevitably going to bring in Soviet force and Soviet presence in order to guarantee that the government will not be, basically, a hostile anti-Soviet government. In Yugoslavia, the movement will be armed and autonomous — in other words, it will be a movement of revolution that will make the revolution on the basis of the armed struggle of the Yugoslavian people. And that will present the Russians with the very challenge of an autonomous communist regime in that area of the Balkans. In Czechoslovakia, where the movement will be very prudent and very cautious, a movement that will try to recognize the interest of both the East and the West and create some kind of bridge between them; a movement, in other words, to try to make a transition toward certain very real reforms inside Czechoslovakia, without however breaking, fundamentally, ties either with the Soviet Union or with the West. An effort, of course, that will die, ultimately, in that whole framework of the Cold War.

And finally, in those satellite areas, those countries that actually fought on the side of the Germans — namely, Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary — in those countries, very weak internal movements. And, consequently, the destiny of the postwar governments and regimes in those countries really will focus upon the presence of the Soviet army. It's in those countries that Soviet force, after all, will be the primary factor in creating some kind of a new order or new society.

And so you want to keep that kind of transaction or that kind of conflict in mind as you zero in on these countries. And you begin to talk about Poland. And lots of people were interested in Poland, besides the Poles. And there were the British. And the British, after all, wanted to maintain what they had always had which was a primary Western interest in Poland. But the British, after all, were relatively sophisticated about the facts of political life. And, consequently, though they wanted a friendly regime in Poland — one that should admit British interest into that country — they also recognized that the Soviet Union had a legitimate frontier interest in eastern Poland. And so, Churchill will show himself to be remarkably sensitive to that Soviet demand, and consequently urge a revision of the eastern frontier, as we will see.

Secondly, there was the American interest. And that's very hardnosed and very Jansenist. And, consequently, the American diplomatists look upon Poland as the possibility for a new American interest. And, consequently, they want no revision of those eastern frontiers even though State Department experts made an investigation, at the end of 1943, and did determine that — in those areas that the Curzon Line would have given to the Russians — that in those areas there were not primarily Poles, but there were primarily White Russians and Ukrainians and Great Russians. But the American diplomacy stood behind a no-revision policy, and, also, the policy of making a "free Poland," as it was called, part of a system of defense against the Soviet Union.

And then there was the Polish interest. And that was crystallized in that Polish government in exile in London. And that government in exile had been, until July of 1943, under the presidency of General [Władysław] Sikorski. And General Sikorski had been killed in a plane accident of July of '43, and he was replaced by [Stanisław] Mikołajczyk. And Mikołajczyk, who, after all, becomes the real representative of what is, ultimately, the interests of Polish nationalism, Mikołajczyk becomes the head of the Polish Peasant Party, the head of this government-in-exile. And the interest of these London Poles, as we call them, is the interest of preserving that eastern frontier and, also, of moving off into expansion in the west, to get certain compensations from Germany — in other words, to make a "Great Poland," and to make Poland the center of some kind of barrier against Soviet expansion into Central Europe.

And finally, there is the Russian interest. And the Russian interest is not revolutionary. The

Russian interest is safety. And the desire is to get the Curzon Line — in other words, to add those 70,000 square miles, to get those territories that the Poles had taken in 1920, and to get a friendly government in Warsaw no matter what its ideological complexion, but that should not turn against the Russians.

And it is, after all, a complicated story. And there is a certain kind of turning point in 1944, and 1944 becomes the "crisis year." And it begins with a recognition, after all, that the Russians are in Poland and will have an interest in remaining there. Because, on the 4th of January of 1944, the advanced contingents of the Red Army enter into the frontiers of what had been prewar Poland. In other words, the Russian Army is the greatest land army in Europe, is beginning in January of '44 to sweep into that country, and, consequently, its presence is there. Well, what does that mean? It means that, with the Red Army entering the country, they don't have to negotiate; they can simply take what is theirs for the taking. And the very fact that the Russians and Stalin did negotiate is rather a remarkable tour de force. And it commended itself to Churchill and the British.

And they're the British who lead the effort in the Allied camp, at the beginning of 1944, to get some negotiation that is reasonable on the Polish question. And so Churchill begins to twist the arm of these London Poles of this government in exile. And he gets Mikołajczyk to the Foreign Office, in February of 1944, the 6th of February, for what becomes a famous interview. And he says to Mikołajczyk, "Look, now the Russians are already sweeping into Poland. They can take whatever the hell they want. They seem to be willing to negotiate." There is Molotov who said, in October of 1943 at the Foreign Minister's Conference in Moscow, that the Russians didn't want a Bolshevik Poland, that all they wanted was a friendly Poland — independent, but nonetheless friendly to the Soviet Union. And there was Stalin saying to Edvard Beneš [president-in-exile of Czechoslovakia] in Moscow, in December of 1943, "In no way do we want to Bolshevize Poland. What we want is to negotiate the Curzon Line. We may even give up certain territories, but we must have a government that will ally with us in Poland that will be friendly and not an enemy on our frontiers after we have fought this war."

Now, that commended itself to Churchill. And he got Mikołajczyk before him and he said, "Look, you London Poles, that's the reality. Now, you've got to negotiate on the Curzon Line." But he didn't know his Poles at that particular time. And they refused. And he said, at the end of that long conversation, as he tells us in his memoirs — and it was a stormy session — he said, "In view of the blood they have shed, the Russians have every right, a moral right, to the security of their western frontiers." What he was telling the Poles was, "Your cause this way is a lost one."

But what the Poles had on their side was the Jansenism of American diplomacy. Because they knew that American diplomats might back them in their hard line. And, consequently, though Mikołajczyk agreed to go to Moscow in June and July of 1944 to try to debate with Stalin and to work out some kind of an agreement, he went to Moscow by way of Washington. And, consequently, went to see Roosevelt in June of 1944. Now, it's a great tragedy that we have no transcript record of what transpired between Roosevelt, [Secretary of State Cordell] Hull, and Mikołajczyk, but what we do have are Hull's memories or recollections of those meetings in his memoirs, in which he says this: "The President indicated to Premier Mikołajczyk that he could count on the moral support of the United States government in any effort that the Premier might make, in Moscow, to reach a satisfactory understanding for the Poles with the Soviet authorities." In other words, the Polish premier of this government-in-exile went off to Moscow thoroughly imbued with the idea that he was going to have the American backing in standing against any kind of viable revision of those eastern frontiers.

Well, he got to Moscow and he talked to Stalin. And we don't have a transcript of that either, which is really too bad. But it suffices to say that the talks broke down, that the Poles, with nothing in their hand, nothing to bargain with, the Poles said to the Russians — who were not only entering their country, but who had driven the Germans off Russian soil — told the Russians that, "No way, would they bargain on the Curzon Line."

Well, the 23rd of July of 1944, the Russian armies got as far as the city of Lublin, and two days later, on the 25th of July, in the way the Russians gave their answer, because they established what was called the Committee of National Liberation in the city of Lublin, or what is sometimes called the Lublin Committee. And in that Lublin Committee there were, obviously, a high composition of Communists. The Polish Communist Party which had been lost as a result of all of that devastation of the 1930s began to crop up again, not only in the underground inside Poland but on Russian soil. And now, under the leadership of [Władysław] Gomułka, this government of Lublin — this provisional government, this Committee of National Liberation — really has a high representation of Communists in it, what the Russians are saying is, "If the London Poles don't play ball, we'll have our own government. We don't want to make a Bolshevik revolution there, but, you know, we have cards in our hands."

And consequently, by that point it was perfectly obvious that the Poles were going to make a desperate move or give in. And they made a desperate move. Because it's in that framework of the creation of the Lublin government, of the threat by the Russians to impose their own kind of government in Poland, that you get on the 1st of August 1944, that incredible event known as the Warsaw Uprising — an uprising by the Poles inside the city of Warsaw, which is still held by the Germans, an uprising of the Home Army — 44,000 in that Home Army by August of '44, under

the command of General Bór [Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski]. And General Bór calls for this uprising here in August with the assent of the London Committee.

And what is behind it? What is behind it, obviously, is a desire to wrest Warsaw from the Germans, but there is something else. It is a desire to take that city of Warsaw before the Russians get there: in other words, to make a *fait accompli* to the Russians, to tell them we have taken the city of Warsaw. And it was a desperate and absolutely fruitless move. Because those 44,000 ill-armed men couldn't possibly cope with the Germans who were throwing everything into the city of Warsaw. And ultimately, they would be crushed if they didn't have allied help — specifically, Russian help.

And it all opens up a vast historical question over which a great debate has raged. It opens up the question of whether the Russians could have helped the Poles, in their uprising in Warsaw that lasted 63 days and that saw 166,000 Poles die, could the Russians have relieved that city — sitting, as they were, on the other side of the Vistula River? If they did not, why not? And with what consequences?

And, you see, the controversy is about political motivations on the part of the Russians. The Allied diplomats constantly accused the Russians of deliberately not fording the Vistula and entering Warsaw with idea that they would get rid of the Polish officer corps, they would get rid of that Home Army, they would get rid of a lot of Poles who opposed them and, consequently, would oppose their kind of government, and they just let them bleed. And it seems to me that, in reviewing a lot of that evidence, that that really was the rhetoric of the time, and the rhetoric that really pursued that question for many years afterwards — that, in effect, that if the Russians had a political interest in not going into Warsaw in the fall of 1944, it was far outweighed by a military concern that was very serious and very profound — that, after all, the armies of the Soviet Union had made immense strides since the beginning of 1944. They had been in an immense campaign in the month of July: they had moved 300 miles and the point was that, militarily, they were overextended. They had gone beyond their supply lines, and behind the lines that they had taken, the Germans were beginning to recoup, and they had to turn around. The idea, then, of facing Warsaw, of going across the Vistula, of fighting another major battle with the Germans before they had consolidated themselves in the area east of the Vistula, that was incredible to them from the military point of view.

All of this evidence has been magnificently sifted by one of the few very, very intimate and close friends I have had in these past twenty years, Alexander Werth, in his great book *Russia at War*. And Werth, you can take it from me, was an absolutely integral guy and did not make a conclusion on these questions. He happened to be there at the time, the correspondent for the

BBC on that front, and consequently was these with his own eyes. But then sifted, in this great book *Russia at War*, all of this evidence so very carefully. And came to this kind of conclusion — he cites from three different sources — he cites, for example, from the official Russian military history of the war, which gives their view of the question: "People who say this have never taken the trouble to study the possibilities of the Red Army at the time of the Warsaw rising. Here are the real facts: In the second half of July, the troops of the 1st Byelorussian — that is, [Konstantin] Rokossovsky's army — and of the 2nd Ukrainian — or [Ivan] Konev's army — entered Polish territory and began to advance toward the Vistula. At the end of July, even before the beginning of the Warsaw Uprising, the tempo of this offensive had greatly slowed down. The German high command had by this time thrown very strong reserves against the main sectors of our advance. German resistance was very strong, very stubborn. It should also be considered that tank corps had suffered massive losses in previous battles, the artillery and the supply bases were lagging behind, and that the troops were short of both petrol and munitions. Consequently, after a 45-day offensive, with enemy resistance much stronger than it was, our troops could not maintain the high tempo of the advance and give any kind of immediate help to the Warsaw rising."

Then Alex goes to an interview, a very long interview that he had on the 26th of August of that year with Rokossovsky, who was in charge of the major Red Army then invading into Poland. And this is how that off-the-record conversation with Rokossovsky goes:

General: "I can't go into any details, but I'll just tell you this. After several weeks of heavy fighting in Byelorussia and eastern Poland, we finally reached the outskirts of Grochów about the 1st of August." (That's right across the Vistula from Warsaw.) "The Germans, at this point, threw in four armored divisions, and we were driven back."

Werth: "How far back?"

General: "I can't tell you exactly but I should say roughly a hundred kilometers," or sixty-five miles.

Werth: "Are you still retreating?"

General: "No, we are now advancing but very slowly."

Werth: "Do you think, on August 1st, that you could have taken Warsaw within a few days?"

And, of course, Rokossovsky says, "Impossible at that point. It would have been a disaster for the Russian arms." Then Werth quotes [Heinz] Guderian, who was the German commander, who really makes much the same account of the fact that the Russians at that time were being driven back.

The point is an important one in these two senses: In the first place, because it indicates that the uprising by the Warsaw Poles was really an uprising that was politically motivated. It was a desperate effort to take a city that the Russians only at the greatest risk could have helped them to take. And, in the second place, that no matter what the Russians might have done, the reality is that really the old order of Poland committed suicide in Warsaw. Because whatever was left of it really was made rubble as a result of this 63-day battle. So, what was left of the Polish officer corps died. So, the property of the Warsaw bourgeoisie was simply in rubble. And what is left? And that's the important point when you try to think of what that country will become. What really is left?

What is left, first of all, are the problems of the pre-war regime that have never been solved: the problem of land division, the problem of the minorities. Secondly, the problems that the war have created: of devastation, of tremendous human tragedy. In the third place, a great deal of misery and, consequently, of radicalism. And in the fourth place, the Red Army. And so you are really dealing with the reality of a revolutionary situation. There can't be anything but great structural changes, great reforms within that country, given those particular and peculiar circumstances.

And so the Allies ultimately had, in some way, to recognize the Russian interest in Poland. And, certainly, when Churchill was in Moscow in October of 1944, in that famous session with Stalin in which they attempted to divide up the world, he saw Mikołajczyk again. At that particular session and in that interview, of October, here is this Polish leader still not agreeing to the Curzon Line, or the revision to the eastern frontier. And this is how Churchill describes that particular meeting with Mikołajczyk in October of '44, in Moscow, in his memoirs — and Churchill cites what he said — now, he says to Mikołajczyk: "Now, look, unless you accept the frontier, you are out of business. The Russians will sweep through your country and your party will be liquidated. Do you understand? Now, you are no government if you are incapable of making this decision. You are callous people who want to wreck Europe. You have only your own miserable selfish interest in mind. I will have to resort to those other Poles, if necessary. This Lubin gang may very well become a government. It will be the government." And so it was a threat. And the threat, in a sense, carried out at Yalta.

Yalta is held, of course, the conference in February of 1945, and the Polish question is very much on the agenda at Yalta. And you must understand the context of that particular meeting. Because, by the time the Big Three meet at Yalta, Russian armies have done incredible things. From the beginning of the year, they have taken Warsaw. They have swept into Silesia. They have swept into eastern Russia. They are on the move toward Berlin. They really have knocked out 400,000 German troops. It really is an offensive of a primary sort. And that was at the very

time when the Western Allies are having one hell of a difficulty with the German offensive in Belgium. And, consequently, it's the Russians, really, that are saving the war. And that's the context, after all, for the meeting at Yalta. And when one thinks of all of that rhetoric about having "sold the Poles out at Yalta," it really is incredible — if you think, really, about what that context of that particular meeting was.

And so they met at Yalta. And, quite obviously, the British and the Americans had to agree that the Lublin Committee — in other words, the Committee National Liberation — existed, and that it really had to be the core of what a postwar Polish government was. And so what was decided at Yalta was the best that the Americans could do. What was decided was that the Lublin government should become the kernel of a new Polish postwar government but that it should be enlarged: enlarged to include some of the London Poles and that there should be the guarantee of "free elections," in Poland, as soon as those were practicable. So, the final communiqué on Poland at Yalta reads, "The provisional government now functioning in Poland" — that's the Lublin Committee — "should be organized on the broader democratic basis with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland now living abroad." And what the Yalta Conference did was to set up a committee of three — namely, the American ambassador to Russia, Averell Harriman; the British ambassador to Moscow, Clark Kerr; and Molotov, the Russian foreign minister — to work out the terms of that broadening of the base, as it were, of this particular Polish government.

Now, quite obviously, Yalta is full of ambiguities. For the Americans, Yalta is full of ambiguities. For the Americans, Yalta always meant that there would be a new government created, that there would not be the Lublin committee as the basis of a government. They interpreted Yalta to mean, all through 1944-1945, that a wholly new government was to be established. The Russians, on the other hand, interpreted that communiqué of Yalta to mean that the Lublin committee itself could veto any additions to its particular governmental structure. And, consequently, it almost was doomed to create difficulties and tensions.

But, you see, that Lublin Committee, acting as a provisional government, really had a lot of potential in 1945. It acted in a very moderate way. It didn't take on the Church, for example, attack the Church frontally. In regard to land, when it broke up the land, it didn't say collective farming or collectivist agriculture, but it tried to take some of the land from big landowners and give it to the landless poor. It acted, in other words, really in a popular way. And, in the second place, some of the Poles who had been up in London began to come down and join this government and give it their support volitionally — and that particularly the socialists, the Polish social democrats. And I'm talking about Osóbka, who becomes terribly important in this story in giving his particular support — Edward Osóbka, who became really an important figure in the

postwar Polish construction — and various members of that Polish Socialist Party figured that this was, after all, the basis for a new Polish government.

The problem was — the problem was with the Peasant Party, with Mikołajczyk. And, basically, the problem was with the Americans. Now, you see, Roosevelt was pretty suspicious of the Russians. But he was, after all, a kind of opportunistic guy. He did have his fingers wet all the time to find out which way the wind was blowing. And, consequently, you could expect a bit of flexibility from him. But then Roosevelt goes and really messes up the Polish question in the first week of April of '45: he dies. And, consequently, in dying, passed on the mantle to Harry Truman. Now, Harry Truman didn't have his fingers wet. And he didn't know which way the wind was blowing, but he was getting a lot of advice because Averell Harriman [*inaudible*] with paranoia at that particular time. And they were telling Truman that you had to really put your foot down somewhere. And here, in April of '45, Truman decides he's going to enter this Polish question and really support Mikołajczyk and these London Poles right up to the hilt.

And so what happens is that a lot of these foreign diplomats begin to gather in the United States in April, in preparation for the San Francisco meeting to found the United Nations. So Molotov and Anthony Eden [Churchill's foreign advisor] both happened to be in Washington on the 22nd of April of 1945. And Truman sees Eden, and he says, "You know, I'm going to see this Molotov tomorrow," that the 23rd, "and I am going to tell him in words of one syllable," as Truman used to say, "in words of one syllable what they have been doing, what we will let them do and what they can no longer do." And so the next day Truman saw — he had been president for two weeks at that time — Molotov. And it must have been an extraordinary session because Molotov was not accustomed to this. He sat there while Truman, in words of one syllable, ranted on, basically, about the crimes that the Russians had committed. And then very bluntly said, "You go on in this way, you get no Lend-Lease, you get no relief, you get no economic help from us." And then he handed Molotov a note to send to Stalin.

Stalin answered it the next day. He got very busy. And, consequently, in the answer that Stalin sent, on the 24th of April of 1945, he really goes to the heart of the matter. And it is something that even Truman should have understood. And he says in this note, "The Soviet people's blood, freely shed on the fields of Poland for the liberation of that country from the Nazis, warrants assurance that the borders of their country will be safe." It was as blunt as that. And he went on to note that the Russians had never been consulted about the composition of the governments either in Greece or in Italy. And they had perfectly well accepted that.

Well, the result is, of course, that finally the British intervened and twisted Truman's arm. And so Mikołajczyk had to negotiate to go into postwar coalition government. He did negotiate, and

the government was finally announced on the 21st of June of 1945. It was a government that really was a leftwing coalition government. The president of the new Polish republic would be a Communist named [Bolesław] Bierut. And Bierut would have that position, saying, as he took that position, that Poland wanted to keep friendly relations both with the East and the West. The prime minister was to be Osóbka, the socialist. And there were to be two assistant prime ministers: one of them to be Mikołajczyk of the Polish Peasant Party, which party got one-third of all of the ministerial places, and the other to be Władysław Gomułka, who was, of course, the great political chief of the Polish Communist Party. What you get is essentially a pro-Communist government, but a very mild one; one, in other words, that can move in a transitional way toward some of the structural reforms. That particular regime, constructed as it was, really had some potentiality.

What it seems to me, given, let us say, the structure of 1945, what really is the tragedy — what bogs it down — is, first of all, the Polish Peasant Party. Mikołajczyk — who really never had confidence in this government and never wanted to participate in it — really felt that, if there were free elections, or if the Americans intervened, that somehow or other, could oust this particular left-wing government. But the second thing, it seems to me, are the Americans. Because the United States agreed to accept this regime. It recognized it on the 6th of July of 1945. But having recognized it, already ringed in that recognition with a lot of ambiguities. It sent as its ambassador a man named Arthur Bliss Lane, who was bitterly opposed to the accords of Yalta, bitterly opposed to this particular regime in Poland, and who really, if you read his book *I Saw Poland Betrayed*, worked from the very first day — well, it's not a totally sensitive title for somebody who goes to a war-torn country as an ambassador — but at any rate, Arthur Bliss Lane worked from the very first day, as his own memoirs tell us, really for the undermining of this particular regime.

And then you get the State Department stating, in a memorandum of July of 1945, what its basic minimum for Poland is. And that really will get into all kinds of problems in the immediate future because the State Department memo reads, "In assisting in the physical reconstruction of the Polish economy, through credits and otherwise, we should insist on acceptance, by Poland, of a policy of equal opportunity for the United States in trade and investment. No other formula will be acceptable." In other words, the "open door" economically, to all areas of Poland, became the *sine qua non* for American collaboration or for American cooperation. And within the framework of a revolution, that might be very difficult.

Well, you see the problem. The problem with Poland, quite obviously, was the problem that the Russians were there to help the regime install itself. And they were there for a specific reason, namely, their security. But that is distinguished from the problem of Yugoslavia. There the

Russians are not there and that creates the problem. Because there, the liberation of the country was an autonomous revolutionary movement, and the Russians were very upset.

Now, I want you to understand this. It really is an important part of our history. Well, you see, the Yugoslavs were making their own liberation. By 1942, they had established a partisan army under the leadership of Communists, but that was a very broad army. And they had established an anti-fascist Council of National Liberation. In other words, they have the outlines by 1942 of a fighting arm and of a new government. And the point is that Tito and his partisans, right from the very beginning, had no cooperation from the Russians.

The Russians were hassled, to be sure, in 1942, by the Allies who kept telling them to pressure Tito to support the Chetniks of [Draža] Mihailović — in other words, that Serbian resistance movement in central Serbia that was very conservative and very monarchist. And the Russians, in order to keep their alliance with the Western allies, dutifully did that job. And they kept telling Tito to collaborate with Mihailović. And in all of the Russian propaganda, the leadership of the resistance movement inside Yugoslavia is always attributed to Mihailović. But it's worse than that because what the Russians do is to deny military help to Tito and his partisan army all through 1942. Tito had requested it, and it had been denied. And it had been denied on the logistical grounds that it was impossible to send military help at that particular time.

But, by the fall of 1942, the Russians had sent a military attaché to Mihailović and the Chetniks and had also begun to send military aid. And that is the basis, of course, for the famous telegram that Tito sent to Stalin of October of 1942, which read simply, "If you can't send us assistance, then at least don't hamper us." And, according to [Bulgarian Communist Party chair Georgi] Dimitrov, who was there when Stalin had that telegram, he said Stalin stamped his feet with rage. Well, of course, Tito had caught him in something that was very serious. It wasn't that he was staying out, but that he was helping this monarchist sector of the resistance movement.

By the end of 1943, however, Tito and the partisans really take matters into their own hands. And you have to understand two factors in knowing why they take the moves that they do in November of '43. You have to understand, first of all, that the military success of the Yugoslavs was absolutely terrific. What they did in 1943 was to keep twenty-five German divisions at bay, eight Bulgarian divisions. They won success after success, militarily. But, secondly, they began to win a significant diplomatic success because, by the middle of 1943, the British — who really had an interest in maintaining their prewar interest in Yugoslavia — the British began to calculate that Mihailović would never get popular support and that you had to support Tito. And, consequently, Churchill gambled, in 1943, in a rather remarkable way: he sent an emissary to Tito, a man named Fitzroy Maclean. And Maclean — who was a conservative Member of

Parliament, who had training in the Foreign Office — was a significant emissary. And, in the wake of that mission to Tito to see whether he would collaborate with the British, the British began to send military aid, to drop military aid in to Tito and the partisans.

All of that is the framework for the rather remarkable thing that Tito and his partisan group did in the fall of 1943. Now, when the foreign ministers of the Big Three met in Moscow in October of '43, they still said that King Peter in exile in London was the head of the Yugoslavian government, that his government-in-exile was really the head. And what Tito did in November of 1943 was to turn that antifascist Council of National Liberation, really, into a new provisional government. Because, toward the end of November in the ancient capital of Bosnia, there was held a meeting in which representatives came from these really bona fide, authentic liberation committees all over Yugoslavia. And those representatives did two things. First of all, they declared that the Yugoslavian monarchy was finished, that King Peter was deposed. And they turned that antifascist Council of National Resistance into a democratic republic to be based upon the diffused power of these national Liberation Committees. And they, then, informed the world of that.

And Stalin's reaction has been recorded by [Yugoslav partisan and Communist activist Vladimir] Dedijer in a very classic way, because Dedijer kept a diary about this. And listen:

"Moscow learned about the Anti-Fascist Council's decision, including the decision to strip the royal government-in-exile of its legitimacy and forbid King Peter to return, after they had been passed, that is, from the message of November 30, 1943. The first reaction in Moscow was sharp. The Free Yugoslavia radio station got orders not to broadcast the resolution forbidding King Peter to return to Yugoslavia; our man in that radio station [Veljko Vlahović] was reprimanded and all his broadcasts for Free Yugoslavia were placed under censorship. [Comintern official Dmitry] Manuilsky delivered Stalin's message to him. Stalin was known in a small circle then as Khozyain, and Khozyain, according to Manuilsky, is very angry. He considers this a knife in the back of the Soviet Union and a blow to the Tehran decisions."

In other words, at Tehran in December of 1943, the Big Three were going to divide up spheres of influence. Suddenly, the Yugoslavians — people by themselves — were taking matters into their own hands, and the Russians were irate. By the beginning of 1944, however, the British were sending sizable military help to the partisans, and consequently, Stalin began to send that help too.

Now, the question is: What was the British ploy and how did Tito outflank Churchill? And the

British ploy — because Churchill, incidentally, in his memoirs, it really is a complement, he says, in effect — I mean I'm really putting words in Churchill's mouth — but, in effect, what he said was that he was really conned only once and that was by Tito. And it is literally true that British ploy didn't work. You see, what the British were doing in 1943 and 1944, and, especially, in 1944, was to play for the fact, first of all, that Tito and the partisans were much more Yugoslav nationalists they were Communists — in other words, that they would not fall into the socialist revolution, fundamentally. And secondly, that it was possible to make a good alliance with Tito so that, if the British planned for an invasion of the Balkans — that famous offensive or front that Churchill always wanted to mount — that it would be much more successful with such an alliance. But what was crucial was Churchill's belief that he co-opt Tito: in other words, that he could bring Tito into a kind of an alliance with that government in exile in London.

That government-in-exile in London at that time was under King Peter and also a man named [Ivan] Šubašić. And Šubašić was kind of a conservative Yugoslav. And it was his government that was to be, after all, a partner with Tito, within this design that the British had.

Now, in the spring of 1944, the British got some leverage, because for the first time the partisan armies began to suffer serious defeats. The Germans counterattacked. And Tito himself in May of 1944 had to escape the mainland to a little island — the island of Vis in the Adriatic — and put himself under British protection. Now, it's at that point that the British use clout. And they say, "Alright, we will protect you, but you will make an agreement with Šubašić, and consequently make a new coalition government." And Tito agrees. And consequently, in July of 1944, there is an agreement between Tito and this government in exile which says, "We'll talk about what happens to the king after the war, but we will have some kind of coalition government." And Tito, in the memoirs that [Yugoslav partisan leader Milovan] Djilas writes, Tito really explains why it was he did that and what it was he thought he was going to get: "We accepted the agreement, and at the moment when we needed British support, because we knew our real popular strength, and because we had the mass of our people behind us, and because we had an army much greater than our rivals could ever have imagined or could ever have raised." In other words, what Tito did was play for time. He made an agreement that, fundamentally, he never expected to keep.

The problem was: Would he get Russian support? Would he get Russian recognition for really turning Yugoslavia into a socialist state, for really making this revolution? Well, not if you go, for example, on the interview between Tito and Stalin in September of 1944. Tito has to go to Moscow in September of '44, and, by that time, Stalin was very angry. He was very cross with the Yugoslav. He had told Djilas just a week before this, "You know, the Yugoslavs are impossible. First of all, it isn't a question that you don't conceal your revolutionary intentions.

The question is that you have them at all. And that really is very abrasive from the point of view of our relations with the powers in the West. What you're going to do is muck up great power diplomacy and you shouldn't do that."

And then Stalin zeroed in on this discussion with Djilas, zeroed in on something incredible. He said, in effect, "Now, look, you've got these partisan soldiers out in the field and they're wearing red stars. Now what in the hell are they wearing red stars for?" Well, for Stalin to ask that is a bit odd. So Tito gets there anyway in September of 1944, and it's just ridiculous. And Stalin says to Tito, "Look, you must accept the king; you must have a compromise with the Serbian bourgeoisie; you must compromise with that London government." And Tito refuses that demand on all scores. Then Stalin said to him, "Well, what will you do if the British land an army there to crush you?" And Tito says, "We will fight them with all of our might." And, according to Tito, there was no answer from Stalin at that. But, you see, this is only three weeks before Stalin meets Churchill in that famous October meeting in Moscow. And when the world was divided up into those spheres of influence, in which Greece was to be British, and Romania was to be Russian, and Yugoslavia and Hungary were to be fifty-fifty — that there was to be 50% British interest and 50% Russian interest. And Stalin was miffed at the Yugoslavs.

And so it went that way. And the Russians and the British suddenly combined. And in December of 1944, the Russians and the British together forced Tito to make more specific terms with the government-in-exile in London. And it was agreed that, once there was a government established, that Tito would be prime minister and Šubašić would be the assistant prime minister and so forth. Then came February of 1945, and the British and the Russians together handed notes to Tito and his partisans in Belgrade. And they said, "Alright, the war is moving toward an end. You have been very successful. But it is now time to establish the new government of Yugoslavia." And what the terms of February of 1945 was, that the antifascist National Council should now be turned into a constituent assembly — but it should be turned into a constituent assembly by including into it all members of the last Yugoslavian assembly of 1938 who had not collaborated with the Nazis. Well, for Tito and the partisans who had fought to liberate their country, this was fantastic because that last parliament had been a very pro-Nazi parliament. And what was it that the British and the Russians were demanding of them. Secondly, they said that there would be a government in which the London group would have a very prominent place in the ministry. And Tito, simply to calm the British and the Russians, accepted the terms.

And Šubašić and the Londoners knew that in March of 1945, and they were put into the government in various ministries. But the point is that Tito had the police, he had the army, and he had all the key ministries. In three months, these guys are out.

And in November of 1945 come the elections. And they're fantastic elections because they are basically free. And over 90% of the Yugoslavians are eligible to vote, and 91% vote for the united front that Tito and the partisans have established at those elections. And we have this remarkable insight about that from Phyllis Auty, Auty who writes a book called *Central and Southeastern Europe* for the Royal Institute for International Affairs, a quite remarkable book. And she writes in that about those elections: "Tito, the partisans, and the whole program of the popular front were almost universally supported in all regions of the country. Those Yugoslav elections of November of '45, in fact, constituted a unique event in Eastern Europe after the war: a genuine and profound mass support for a communist regime which had come to power authentically and by its own struggle." By the beginning, then, of 1946, there was a Yugoslavian republic to the left, basically, under Communist leadership, although with a coalition structure.

The Americans hated it. And American diplomacy between 1946 and 1949 was very hostile to Yugoslavia. It was considered that Yugoslavia was going socialist and, consequently, inimical to the interest of the United States. The Yugoslavs, likewise, hated the Americans. And they spared nothing about that. The United States sent an ambassador to Yugoslavia named Richard Patterson. And he was accused by the Yugoslavs of several things that he, in fact, did do, as he admitted — that he was running a network of spies from the American embassy in Belgrade, that he was certainly arming an underground against the Tito regime. Those relations were very bad.

The Yugoslav problem is that the relations with the Russians became just as bad. And they should have known that on the basis of the war, and they should have known it over Trieste in April and May of 1945. The partisans, the Yugoslav partisans, had taken the city of Trieste — but Trieste! The gateway to Italy, the gateway to Vienna. No, no. The Allies will not permit that. And so they threaten force in April and May of '45 against the Yugoslavs. And the Russians don't lift a finger. And then, all the way down to January 1948, and one should have suspected that that split was going to come because then Tito and Dimitrov, the Bulgarian, held a meeting in which they said, "You know what would be a great thing for us popular democracies? To have a federation — to have a federation of popular democracies, here, in the Balkans — so that we can pool our resources and really discuss our independent, individual ways to socialism." Well, well. Molotov called the Yugoslav foreign Minister to Moscow the very next month and he said, "Never, never, must you make a statement about foreign policy without clearing it with the Russians." What the Russians were saying is there would be no Balkan federation of popular democracies. That was too autonomous. It was too much away from the protection of the Russians.

So Poland, with its Russian presence, move off toward the left. Yugoslavs, with their revolution, move off toward the left. And both of them head into those very uncharted seas of the Cold War.

And the real victims turned out to be the Czechs. Because the Czechs saw it all the time. They knew they had to keep some kind of balance between East and West or they would get clobbered. And Beneš saw that all through the war. And Beneš is a bourgeois. And he's the head of what's called the National Socialist Party, which has nothing to do with German National Socialism. It's a mild, reformist party that was willing to accept certain nationalization of industries, that was willing to accept an agrarian reform, certainly a comprehensive reform of welfare. And by 1943, he recognized that there were two facts that were crucial. One is the presence of the Russians — and they have great prestige, and they have an army — and the other fact is that Europe is going to the left, and Czechoslovakia is becoming more radical. And so what he decides to do, and he urges the Western diplomats to understand what he's doing.

So he talks in 1943 to Averell Harriman, he talks to Anthony Eden, and he says, "Don't you understand, we have to have good relations with the Russians or the Russians will impose their relations upon us." He understood that. And so he went off on his path, and he went to Moscow in December of 1943, and struck that famous twenty-year friendship treaty with the Soviet Union in which both parties agreed they neither would ever enter into a hostile alliance against the other.

S, by the time you come to the end of the war, for American policymakers — who are really Jansenists, who are really hardnosed — Czechoslovakia is going the wrong way. It's much too friendly to the Soviet Union. But the Czechs simply follow that path. And Beneš goes back to Moscow in March of '45, and he gets the promise of Stalin. And one can believe that promise: that the Russians are not interested in a Bolshevik Czechoslovakia. They're not interested in imposing any kind of Communist rule there; they're interested in a friendly regime. And so Beneš and his provisional government go back on Czech soil at the beginning of April of 1945.

And I want you to recognize something, as in practically every place, when you come toward the end of the war: people are acting very spontaneously. They're really making factory councils; they're making local political councils; they're taking power into their own hands. And, in fact, if it hadn't been for the Czech provisional government and if it hadn't been for the Czech Communist Party, things might have gone much more radically in Czechoslovakia than actually did.

And so the provisional government goes back on Czech soil at the start of April [1945]. And what Beneš does is to make a very broad leftwing front in which he includes the Communist leader Klement Gottwald, in which he includes seven Communists in the twenty ministries — and, consequently, makes really an overture to the Russians and to the growing Communist movement. Because the Communists are picking up strength. They're becoming a mass party.

They're winning on the basis of Russians prestige, on the basis of the demand of Czech people for great reforms in the period after the war. And then a program is adopted by this government, and the program is for wide-scale nationalization, for a deep agrarian reform, for comprehensive social insurance — in other words, to move toward some kind of socialist solution. And then, you see, came the elections. The elections are held at the end of 1945, and in those elections the Communists become the first party of Czechoslovakia. Because they get 38% of the votes — a plurality. And they chose not to vie for power but to stay within the framework of the coalition. You see what I am saying.

The whole point is that for a certain short moment in those years 1945 and 1946 and 1947, there was a chance really to build something in a vacuum. There was a chance to put together some rubble. There was some reasonably good will by the Communist parties. The Russians were keeping their distance. There was a profound popular support for wide changes. Those people in that area of the world, about as benighted an area as you can imagine, those people really had a chance; they really had a chance! And then, you see, in the framework of the Cold War, what chance do they have? The Russian will tighten the vise. The Americans will call them enemies. And, consequently, to sustain regimes in that area that will not be anti-Soviet, all of this coalition, all of this peaceful transition will change. And that, you see, becomes the tragedy. The turning point will be Czechoslovakia in '48, the break between Tito and Stalin. But you see those things aren't just Russian. The Russian have a record that's not very revolutionary and not very genial. But, my gosh, the American view of what ought to happen in those parts of the world was just terrible. But then anybody that lives in a Third world country can tell you all about that.

One can really feel badly about those years '45 to '47. So much happened, you know, in those three years: 32 million hectares of land were redistributed in that area to 20 million people. It was a terrific period for a moment. [*applause*]