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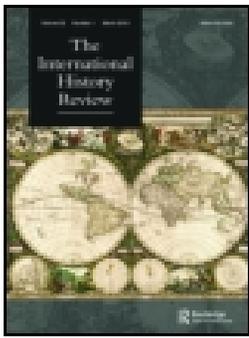
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## Nonalignment at the Crossroads: 'Castro Is a Brother, Nasser Is a Teacher but Tito Is an Example'\*

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# Nonalignment at the Crossroads: ‘Castro Is a Brother, Nasser Is a Teacher but Tito Is an Example’\*

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## ABSTRACT

Between March 1964 and April 1965, Ben Bella, the leader of newly independent Algeria, met twice with Josip Broz Tito, the Yugoslav President and co-founder of the nonaligned movement. The detailed account of the two meetings serves as an analytical platform to highlight the period when the future of the nascent Nonaligned Movement (NAM) hung in balance. In 1964 and 1965, the movement faced existential challenges, and the exchanges between the two leaders provide unique insights into the Third World’s dilemmas, hopes and aspirations. In March 1964, the time of the first meeting, there was still no certainty that there would be a follow-up to the First nonaligned conference, held in Belgrade in September 1961. Although successful, the Belgrade Conference ushered years of painful search for the identity of the new political movement. The second Tito – Ben Bella meeting, held in April 1965, underlined the extent to which the Second Nonaligned Conference, held in Cairo in October 1964, deepened divisions and revealed the absence of clear direction within the nascent movement. Examination of the Tito – Ben Bella meetings, based on inadequately researched Yugoslav transcripts, contributes to the historiography of the Nonaligned Movement and of the underdeveloped world in the Cold War.

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## Introduction

Between March 1964 and April 1965, Ben Bella, the leader of newly independent Algeria, met twice with Josip Broz Tito, the Yugoslav President and a co-founder of the Third World’s non-alignment movement. In addition, Ben Bella and Tito met briefly for a third time during the Cairo Conference of the nonaligned, in October 1964. The following detailed account of the two Tito-Ben Bella meetings serves as an analytical platform to highlight the importance of the period when the future of the nascent Nonaligned Movement (NAM)<sup>1</sup> hung in balance. In 1964 and 1965, the movement faced existential challenges and the exchanges between the two leaders provide unique insights into the Third World’s dilemmas, hopes and aspirations. In March 1964, the time of the first meeting, there was still no certainty that there would be a follow-up to the First Conference of the leaders of the nonaligned countries, held in Belgrade in September 1961. Although it had been successful, the Belgrade Conference ushered in a painful search for the

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\*Ben Bella to a French journalist, as quoted in David C. Gordon, *The Passing of French Algeria* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 107.

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identity of the new political movement that would last until 1970. The second Tito – Ben Bella meeting, held in April 1965, underlined the extent to which the Second Nonaligned Conference, held in Cairo in October 1964, deepened divisions and revealed the absence of clear direction within the nascent movement. Examination of the Tito – Ben Bella meetings thus contributes to the historiography of the Nonaligned Movement and of the underdeveloped world in the Cold War.

At the time of their meetings, an unprecedented aura surrounded the two leaders. Tito was one of the founders of the Movement and its driving force. Ben Bella was the President of the newly independent former French colony and the leader of the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) which, after a protracted and bloody war of independence, had brought French colonial power to its knees. The Algerians and their leader, Ben Bella had already become the most outspoken champion of African decolonization and the FLN was revered by those still under the colonial yoke as the model of a successful national liberation movement. It was thus not surprising that African decolonization was one of the main topics of the Tito – Ben Bella talks. The two leaders met for the first time in 1964, only two years after Algeria achieved its independence, and then again, a year later in 1965, a month and a half before Ben Bella was overthrown in a coup.

At the time, the international environment was volatile and precarious. Both global Superpowers were undergoing leadership successions. President Kennedy had been assassinated in November 1963 and the United States was increasingly ensnared in an escalating war in South East Asia. In October 1964, the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev was deposed by his colleagues in the Politburo. Ominously, the Sino-Soviet split had exploded into vicious acrimony and malevolent competition between the two leading Communist powers for primacy in the Third World. This was particularly destructive for the unity of the nascent nonaligned movement and the process of decolonization at the time when the Third World had become the main theatre of Cold War confrontation.

There is surprisingly little in the English language historiography on the Nonaligned Movement in 1964 and 1965, which were critical years for the movement.<sup>2</sup> This period deserves scholarly interest as there was a unique convergence of the dilemmas and challenges confronting the nascent movement, at a time of prodigious uncertainties in the international environment. This article aims to fill this lacuna.

The two meetings between Tito and Ben Bella in 1964 and 1965 are presented separately and in chronological order to enable clearer insight into the grave changing circumstances facing the Third World and the nonaligned movement; furthermore, this approach highlights the evolution of the two leaders' positions on the issues that preoccupied them. Moreover, it facilitates our understanding as to whether such changes occurred because of the intellectual evolution of their ideological views, or whether the changes in the domestic and international circumstances in which they operated dictated the shifts in their outlook. Focus on the transcript of the meetings enables us to appreciate more how revolutionaries talked to each other – the importance of explicit reference and implicit meanings – and how emotionally invested they were when addressing issues. For this reason, the author has allowed several long quotes in the text. Ben Bella clearly acknowledged the unique contribution of some Third World leaders in the quote to the French journalist which is part of the title of this article. Surprisingly, apart from several mentions of Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser, Ben Bella did not make notable reference to other nonaligned leaders during his discussions with Tito.<sup>3</sup> The primary sources on which this article is based on – the Yugoslav transcripts and records of the talks between Tito and Ben Bella in 1964 and 1965, as well as the records of Tito's meetings with the Heads of State or representatives of the Liberation Movements during the Cairo Conference in October 1964, – have not been adequately researched hitherto.<sup>4</sup>

## **The uncertain future of the nascent nonaligned movement in 1964–1965**

The international context surrounding the two encounters was of exceptional importance. In 1964 and 1965, Cold War tensions were at an extremely dangerous point, following the recent

Berlin and Cuban Missile crises. The nuclear armament race was continuing unabated, despite the modest progress made with the Partial Test Ban Treaty of October 1963. Importantly, both Superpowers were experiencing a leadership crisis following the assassination of President Kennedy in November 1963 and the removal of Khrushchev from office a year later. Lastly, the conflict in Vietnam and the engagement of United States ground forces had escalated dramatically in autumn of 1964.

African decolonization, together with the issues confronting the nonaligned movement, occupied the central place in the talks. These issues included the growing defiance of white minority regimes and Portuguese colonial rule in Southern Africa; the vicious and protracted Congo crisis following the assassination of its first Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba in January 1961; and an increasing number of domestic political crises, border skirmishes or armed conflicts signaled changing dynamics of global insurrection in the international system.<sup>5</sup> The particularly worrying aspect of the deteriorating international environment was that it had slowed down or halted the processes of decolonization, one of the main goals of the nascent activism of underdeveloped countries. To both leaders, it was clear that the Cold War confrontation had spilled over to the global 'grey zones', namely the Third World comprising countries and newly independent states which were not aligned with either bloc. It was becoming painfully evident that the anti-imperialist struggle and invigorated effort of underdeveloped countries to escape poverty and dependency was being reversed, despite formal independence from colonial rule. Post-colonial states were experiencing a backlash from their former colonial oppressors and aspiring new masters. This contrasted with the extraordinary optimism of the Fifteenth General Assembly session of the United Nations (UN) in 1960 when seventeen newly decolonized states of Africa became members of the UN. However, the paralysis of the UN was becoming more and more evident. Obstruction by the two Superpowers and their allies had made the Organization's impotence all too evident. This was of particular concern as the UN was the main and often the only platform where the voice of the underdeveloped countries could be heard at a global level, which was considered vital for the continuation of the process of decolonization.

The two encounters between Tito and Ben Bella in 1964 and 1965 reveal the extent to which the future of the nonaligned movement hung in the balance in the mid-1960s. Tito and Ben Bella considered themselves and were widely acknowledged to be leading champions of the Third World's awakening. Both leaders were preoccupied with the need to find ways to overcome a multiplicity of problems for the sake of the consolidation of the nonalignment. At the time, there was a lack of agreement among the nonaligned whether a second Conference should take place, as a follow-up to the Belgrade meeting. Even India was not enthusiastic about the formal institutionalization of the movement. Nehru firmly believed that a formal association contradicted the spirit of true nonalignment.<sup>6</sup> The alternative to a follow-up to Belgrade was a second Afro-Asian conference, as a successor to the Bandung meeting in 1955. To the Yugoslav leader and other like-minded supporters, such as Egypt's Nasser, a second Belgrade meeting of the nonaligned represented a more universalist concept that avoided racial and regional constraints and allowed for wider membership based on true nonaligned principles. In contrast, a second Bandung was seen by the Yugoslavs as a more sectarian concept, limited to non-white or selective membership based on the 'revolutionary, anticolonial' credentials, as advocated by China and its sympathizers, such as Indonesia's President Sukarno, Burma – and, as Tito feared, increasingly Algeria. The Yugoslavs were in no doubt that the Chinese stance was a direct product of their confrontation with the Soviets. They were convinced that Beijing's aim was to radicalize the underdeveloped world through the ideological postulate of the implausibility of peaceful co-existence. In Tito's opinion, this would destroy nonalignment.<sup>7</sup>

At the outset, the Yugoslav President was particularly interested in securing Ben Bella's support for the second Conference of nonaligned countries.<sup>8</sup> Barely a week before they met, on 28 February, Tito, Nasser, and Sirimavo Bandaranaike, Prime Minister of Ceylon, had sent out invitations for a conference in Colombo that was to prepare the second Conference based on the

Belgrade concept.<sup>9</sup> The Yugoslav leader hoped to solicit Algerian support against Sukarno's dangerous radicalism. Tito regarded Sukarno's concept of 'new forces' in the Third World and insistence on the convening of an Afro-Asian conference as a tool, inspired by the Chinese, to split the nonaligned movement. With the Algerian help, the Yugoslavs hoped to postpone the follow-up to Bandung until after the Second Conference of the nonaligned. As will be seen, Tito was convinced that the second Bandung meeting would simply collapse, due to the proliferation of conflicts among countries in Asia and Africa; in his mind, this would have catastrophic implications for the nascent nonaligned movement.<sup>10</sup>

From the standpoint of securing a stable trajectory for the nonaligned movement, Algerian standing in Africa was of particular interest to the Yugoslavs. During his two tours of Eastern and Western Africa in 1958 and 1959, the Yugoslav President had become convinced that the battle for the future of the nonaligned movement would take place in Africa. Following his two trips, Tito established a close rapport with Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Ahmed Sékou Touré of Guinea, and Modibo Keita of Mali. As a result, Yugoslavia was establishing an impressive diplomatic and intelligence network throughout the continent. However, it still lacked inside knowledge of many of the national liberation movements and of the real situation in many countries of sub-Saharan Africa. The Algerians, conversely, had developed relations with almost all revolutionary movements in Africa and their prestige and standing among them was second to none. As such, the Algerians presented themselves as an invaluable potential ally to Yugoslavia's efforts to further strengthen its presence in the continent.<sup>11</sup> For their part, the Algerians, perceived in Africa as the vanguard of the anti-colonial struggle and inspiration to liberation movements throughout the continent, were determined to sponsor African decolonization. Consequently, Ben Bella and the FLN leadership saw themselves as entitled to equal standing among the founders of the nonaligned Movement. Close association or even partnership with Tito would, arguably, legitimize Algeria's special position in the Third World.

During their talks, Tito and Ben Bella paid particular attention to the questions of race and colour. On the one hand, this was instigated by Beijing's efforts to present itself as the 'natural' leader of the Third World on the basis of being non-white, and as a fellow victim of European colonial exploitation during the 'hundred years of shame'. On the other hand, because of their struggle against white domination, anti-colonial leaders and champions of Third World political activism were faced with the need to define the role of race and colour in international relations. The international community and its institutions, as well as the international political economy, were framed by a racialized hierarchy with American and European 'white' colonial powers at their apex. Moreover, post-colonial leaders needed to prove to their domestic audiences that, having been 'anti-white' during their liberation struggle, they were not seeking to perpetuate racial discrimination in the form of passive acceptance of structural neo-colonial economic and political domination.

As the Tito-Ben Bella discussions confirm, the question of race and colour – white, black, Arab, Chinese – was very much present and actively debated at this time in the Third World, and thus, deserves greater attention and more rigorous scrutiny in Cold War historiography.<sup>12</sup> The process of de-colonization has placed race as the most important issue in international relations at this time. Together with the choice of the post-colonial development model the issues of colour and race were an integral part of the new, post-colonial identity and activism. Formal independence was increasingly seen as only the first step for the racially exploited to break free from the long shadows of the colonial past. In support of its ideological and geo-strategic interests, in the early 1960s Beijing launched an offensive to appropriate the nonaligned movement. Manipulation of the issue of race and colour, as well as radical Leftist ideology became the main tenets of this strategy. The allure of the Chinese narrative points to the intersection of the battle of race and class within the anti-imperial struggle. The allure of revanchism or black exceptionalism was understandably appealing to those recently liberated from decades or centuries of subjugation based on racial supremacy. Thus, to counter China's corroding influence in the

nonaligned movement, Tito deemed it important to address issues of colour and race, as well as the nature of the Sino-Soviet split in his discussions with Ben Bella.

The Sino-Soviet split figured prominently during the talks, prompting Tito to reveal his personal view that the rupture was responsible for the change of leadership in the Kremlin. The split unquestionably inspired Chinese concerted efforts to appropriate the nonaligned movement. To this end, they exploited the issue of race and colour. Leadership of the underdeveloped world would present China with an ideological victory over the Soviets. It would confirm the attraction of Maoist interpretations of Marxism – Leninism. By this time, both Beijing and Moscow had recognized the Third World as the new revolutionary ‘reservoir’. Moreover, an ideological victory would immensely enhance the CCP’s credibility within the international communist movement and might even put it on the leadership pedestal. In turn, the competition for a larger following among the underdeveloped nations further fueled the Sino-Soviet acrimony and rivalry. Given that most post-colonial leaders viewed socialism as the natural choice of appropriate development model for their impoverished underdeveloped countries, ideological competition between China and the USSR became a prominent feature of the Third World in the early 1960s. Their keen appreciation of the disastrous consequences of this rivalry on the conduct and outcome of national – liberation struggles in Africa explains why the issue preoccupied Tito and Ben Bella, the champions of decolonization.

The two leaders also addressed an issue that was almost taboo among revolutionaries in the post-colonial Third World at the time. This was the question of nationalism and conflicts between the newly liberated countries in Asia and Africa. As was the case with the issues of race and colour, nationalism was a legacy of colonialism. Ironically, it was only after liberation that many in former colonies became aware of the devastating burden of this legacy of artificial borders and the demands of creating national identity among disparate ethnic groups. The reality of 1964 and 1965 was involved border confrontations and wars between newly liberated, poverty-stricken countries. Open conflicts in the Third World had proliferated since the 1961 Belgrade Conference: the Algerian–Moroccan war; the Sino-Indian conflict in 1962; the Indonesian–Malayan confrontation and skirmishes over Borneo which had been on-going since 1962; and the unravelling Congo crisis. The newly formed Organization of African Unity (OAU), in whose creation Algeria had invested much of its diplomatic energy and prestige, was experiencing a crisis after the Ministerial Conference in Lagos, only weeks before Ben Bella’s trip to Belgrade. Similarly, the formative Conference of the Arab League, held in January 1964, failed to fulfil the hopes and expectations of true Arab unity. As records of their conversations show, both leaders struggled to find an explanation for the sad reality of discord and violence in the Third World. Arguably, both had realized that the increasing Cold War Superpower rivalry in the Third World and former colonial powers’ efforts at neo-colonial control were not the only explanations. After years of the liberation struggle, why were anti-colonial leaders and their people instigating wars with neighbouring countries who shared similar historical experiences of colonial violence and repression, over disputes that had been created by their colonial masters?

### **Ben Bella in Yugoslavia, 5–13 March 1964**

When the Algerian President, Ahmed Ben Bella, descended from his plane at Belgrade Airport on 5 March 1964, wearing a Mao-type tunic, ‘Yugoslav misgivings were allegedly increased... [They] were not entirely sure of what the visit would produce, particularly in view of Zhou Enlai’s [recent] visit to Algeria.’<sup>13</sup> The Chinese anti-Yugoslav campaign since 1957 had recently been injected with additional fervour and viciousness. On the one hand, Yugoslavia was particularly targeted as a prominent member of the international communist movement that had supported Moscow in the Sino-Soviet ideological break-up. On the other hand, as one of the leaders of the nonaligned movement, Yugoslavia was leading efforts to contain Chinese attempts to bring the

movement under its patronage. However, Belgrade's anxiety was somewhat eased when, in his statement upon arrival, Ben Bella first voiced a theme that thereafter recurred frequently during his visit: the Yugoslavs are following "the only right road to socialism".<sup>14</sup> Ben Bella pointed out that 'We wanted Yugoslavia to be the first country we will visit on this [European] continent.'<sup>15</sup>

There were five sessions of official Yugoslav–Algerian talks during Ben Bella's visit. Tito set the tone on the first day by imposing two topics that revealed the Yugoslavs' principal aims in the encounter with Ben Bella—to secure Algerian support for the Second Conference of nonaligned countries, and to solicit Ben Bella's support against the destructive role of China in the Third World. Tito was unequivocal that, 'the Soviet Union and the socialist countries stand on the position of peace... the Chinese ... promote a theory of permanent confrontation, a theory of unavoidable war between capitalism and socialism; this increases a possibility of an overall war.'<sup>16</sup> Tito then directly challenged a number of Chinese concepts that he perceived as dangerous for the nascent movement. He singled out as absurd the assertion that 'the policy of nonengaged countries towards a struggle for peace means freezing the current state of affairs and undermining the struggle of the oppressed people against colonial domination.' According to Tito, 'the struggle for peace is essential for the whole of humanity and even more so for the countries that have recently been liberated or have yet to become free because in a new war – not to speak of the one that would mean a general destruction – oppressed peoples would not have good prospects of liberation; the colonial powers are armed to the teeth.'<sup>17</sup>

Another unacceptable concept to Tito was 'promoting a policy of racial division in the world. The main advocate of this racial division is China. [The Second Conference of Nonengaged Countries] should take a common position against efforts at promoting division between the so-called coloured and whites, under the pretext that the coloured people are good while the whites are bad.' At this, Ben Bella interjected: 'After all, white is a colour'.<sup>18</sup> Tito returned to this topic during the second round of talks, accusing the Chinese of promoting the position that, 'the Whites have ruled the world long enough; it is now the turn for us, the coloured, to dominate'. According to the Yugoslav leader, no domination could be justified, least of all one based on skin colour.<sup>19</sup> At the conclusion of the first round of talks, Ben Bella sought to alleviate any lingering doubts Tito might have held regarding the Algerian position on these issues. He told Tito that 'a concept that believes war to be unavoidable [in the era of nuclear arsenals] would be dangerous even for a country with 700 million people' and that the struggle for peace must take priority over the struggle against imperialism.<sup>20</sup>

Tito's tirades against the Chinese served the second of his aims – to secure Algerian support for the Second Conference of nonaligned countries, as a follow-up to the Belgrade conference. Tito considered it very important that the Conference of Nonengaged Countries was held that year.<sup>21</sup> Making it clear that he had nothing against the Afro–Asian Conference, the Yugoslav President argued it should not precede the nonaligned meeting. He feared the Chinese would hijack the agenda of the Afro–Asian Conference and, as a result, kill off the chances for the second nonaligned conference. According to Tito, if the Afro–Asian Conference were to be held soon, as China and Indonesia were pressing, it would certainly end in disaster. He underlined that, 'bilateral relations between countries that would attend [the Afro-Asian Conference] are burdened with unsolvable bilateral problems, in particular with regard to borders between certain countries'. He pointed to Ethiopia and Somalia, India and Pakistan, India and China, Indonesia and Malaysia, and the conflicts around Cambodia. 'If all these problems were placed on the Conference table', Tito argued, 'there would be fracas and the conference would quickly disintegrate.'<sup>22</sup> Conversely, 'at the [Conference of the nonaligned countries] issues related to relations between participating countries would not be on the agenda... and any debate on bilateral issues would be prohibited.' This would remove the possibility of fractious debates and divisions between those attending. Instead, he argued, a nonaligned conference would discuss the liquidation of colonialism, underdevelopment, and other issues of general interest to all

nonengaged countries. Tito insisted that the countries attending the conference should pledge adherence to the principles adopted at the 1961 Belgrade Conference.<sup>23</sup>

Ben Bella's response was music to the Yugoslav leader's ears. He fully agreed with Tito that holding an Afro-Asian Conference at that moment was fraught with danger, referring to the formative Conference of the Organization of the African Unity, held in Addis Ababa in May 1963. According to Ben Bella, the Conference in Addis Ababa was endangered on two occasions: 'Once when the Moroccans did not wish to attend because of the problems with Mauritania and on the second occasion when the Somalis posed the question of their borders'. He agreed that the Nonengaged Conference 'should not weaken the OAU'. Ben Bella further underlined that 'Algeria wishes to lead purely an African policy, not because of our skin colour – we are as white as you are, perhaps slightly more tanned – but because we share the same problems with other people on our continent.'<sup>24</sup>

After agreeing on the Second Conference of the Nonengaged countries, Tito and Ben Bella addressed other contentious issues, namely the membership criteria and how many countries should be invited to the Conference. Tito insisted that more countries should be invited than to the 1961 Belgrade meeting. He argued against discriminating against countries that wished to pursue nonengagement but were currently, against their will, connected economically and politically to old colonial metropolises. In Tito's view, 'What we should focus on is what kind of policies they pursue and whether they accept principles adopted at the Belgrade Conference. This should be the main criterion.' At the same time, he was adamant that no member of NATO or the Warsaw Pact could attend and, once again, singled out China:

It is particularly out of question for China to participate. It has only declaratively adopted Bandung principles but is, in truth, against them. After all, the Chinese admitted it themselves. Zhou Enlai declared publicly that China is not non-engaged.

Ben Bella: He said the same to me ...<sup>25</sup>

The Algerian President then agreed that the number of participating countries should be increased and insisted that all the signatories of the OAU Charter should be invited, together with as many countries as possible from Asia, Latin America and even Europe, such as Finland.<sup>26</sup>

Africa and de-colonization were the topics to which the two leaders returned repeatedly during their exchanges. Ben Bella underlined that Algerian foreign policy was focused primarily on Africa and provided a *tour d'horizon*. He confirmed that, to date, his country had provided military training for about 1,500 Angolans, Mozambicans, and South Africans. Tito then remarked that during his recent trip to Western Africa, he had been struck by the extent to which the 'black population is suspicious of white Africa'. To this, Ben Bella responded that they were combatting both white and black racism. Tito also observed that some of the leaders of African states, 'Who hold certain concepts believe they should apply [them] to the whole of Africa. ... It is for this reason that President Nkrumah sometimes made proposals that were unrealistic.'<sup>27</sup> Tito then asked for clarification of the situation in Angola and the armed struggle against Portuguese colonial rule. Ben Bella explained why so much of their focus was centred on Angola: 'Angola is the key question of colonialism and when we ask [that question], we are simultaneously asking a question of fascism.' He was referring to the Salazar's authoritarian regime in Portugal, which was resisting international pressure to decolonize its imperial holdings in Southern Africa and Southeast Asia. Ben Bella confessed that it was difficult to say which of the liberation organizations in Angola was more progressive – the UPA/FNLA led by Holden Roberto or the MPLA. Although based on their declaration, the MPLA looked more progressive, Ben Bella pointed out that Algeria had 'decided to assist both of these movements in Angola'.<sup>28</sup> Tito then observed that many national-liberation organizations and movements in Africa seemed to contradict each other and then concluded: 'For this reason, ... it would be useful if from our Algerian comrades we can receive suggestions and information about the character of certain

African organizations because we cannot see and assess the conditions and developments in Africa as well as our Algerian friends.<sup>29</sup>

When the two leaders turned to the Arab world, Ben Bella began by blaming the CIA for encouraging Morocco to go to war against Algeria.<sup>30</sup> An animated exchange then ensued on the issue of Israel and on Arab unity. Ben Bella asserted that the '[Algerian] position with regard to Israel is not identical to the position and concepts of other Arab countries ... At the Conference in Cairo [First Arab League Summit, 13–16 January 1964], we rejected grandiose words and pledges of war against Israel ... We are convinced that Israel represents and will always represent an obstacle to Arab unity ... Of course, one cannot at the same time be for peaceful co-existence and for the liquidation of Israel. I admit there is a contradiction here.'<sup>31</sup> Somewhat unexpectedly, Tito then posed a rhetorical question:

It would be interesting for us to hear how useful it is to constantly negate the existence of the state of Israel ... It is true that Israel was created artificially but it has been recognised by the UN ... I would like to hear whether this state [of affairs] needs to remain or, whether there is some possibility to approach solving this problem in some other fashion, in which not only Arab but other countries and the UN would be engaged in order to create conditions for the return of Arabs who are in exile.<sup>32</sup>

However, Ben Bella was adamant and the response is revealing:

Things have been set up in such a way that the solution is practically impossible. To have a future ... Israel cannot stay in its existing borders ... Israel cannot resolve this question by integrating more than a million and a half Arabs who are now outside its borders ... Time that has passed since the foundation of Israeli state to date has shown that Israel and the Arab world cannot reconcile.<sup>33</sup>

The choice of the development model was critical for the Algerian leadership and figured prominently during the talks. They saw themselves as revolutionaries and independence from their colonial masters was only the first phase of the revolution. Those to whom they owed victory in the War of Independence, the truly oppressed, the peasants, now expected nothing less than a social revolution. Thus, in the aftermath of independence, Algerian revolutionaries found themselves facing more questions than they could answer.<sup>34</sup> Socialism was their ideology of choice, as was the case for many anti-colonial revolutionaries. However, by 1964, the question was: what kind of Socialism was right? If Socialism had one face before the Second World War, by the early Sixties, there were several different strands – the Soviet, the Chinese, the Yugoslav model- and all were competing against each other. Ben Bella insisted that, 'Algeria must orient itself towards a socialist model of development, but it needs assistance.'<sup>35</sup> Two months before his arrival to Belgrade, Ben Bella was publicly quoted as saying that 'the experience gained by socialist Yugoslavia is also the closest and most valuable to us.'<sup>36</sup> After only two days in Yugoslavia, Ben Bella publicly declared that '[we] have already realized what Algeria will be in ten or fifteen years'.<sup>37</sup>

Although some of the above statements were crude flattery, Ben Bella seems to have been genuinely interested in the Yugoslav political and economic system. Almost five hours of talks during Ben Bella's visit were dedicated to the Yugoslav 'road to socialism', the role of the League of Communists and, in particular to the Yugoslav economic model based on self-management. Tito and his associates dedicated a considerable amount of time explaining the implementation of self-management in Yugoslavia. After Ben Bella underlined that his interest was, above all, in 'self-management in agriculture', there was a great deal of discussion on the less than impressive achievements of Yugoslavia's agriculture.<sup>38</sup> The Yugoslavs were surprisingly candid about their mistakes and the future amendments they wished to implement. In the end, Ben Bella concluded that 'Socialism is too complicated; it is not only made of people but of numbers, as well.' It is not difficult to guess that what he meant was that most important aspect of the choice of the system to be implemented was whether it worked or not. Ben Bella also noted that 'no experience of socialism can be implemented unless the majority of people participate in it ... Time is also needed for experience to be accumulated'.<sup>39</sup>

Officially, Ben Bella led a 'State and Party delegation'. The 'Party study group' of the FLN was given special treatment and was hosted by the Yugoslav League of Communists. It had a programme of its own and held talks with top Yugoslav Party officials. In the closing session, Tito and Ben Bella discussed ideological cooperation and the role of the Party. Ben Bella stressed that, although the intention was to create a more revolutionary Party, '[The Algerian leadership] did not exercise strong and rough pressure on the people as they bled a lot during seven-and-a-half years of fighting. Algerian people are not in the mood for radical measures if it is not absolutely necessary and we understood this.'<sup>40</sup> Tito commended the Algerians 'for suppressing tendencies in the very beginning for the creation of a new state on a religious basis' and for not 'exporting their revolution to neighbouring countries. Cuba made a huge mistake in this respect and this rebounded on her with a vengeance.'<sup>41</sup> Ben Bella seemed eager for the two Parties to cooperate more closely, particularly in the field of ideological education of the Party cadres. Party cooperation was included in the final Declaration. Ben Bella publicly declared during the Press conference at the end of the visit: 'Of all forms of cooperation we have envisaged, I consider political cooperation is most important. We have planned occasional working meetings between our two parties ... We want to make these contacts more frequent at all levels.'<sup>42</sup>

At the end of the visit, a Joint Declaration was signed instead of a communiqué. The Declaration confirmed that Tito had achieved his main goal – to secure Algerian support for the second nonaligned conference. Moreover, it distinctly stipulated that the two leaders had agreed that this conference should be 'expanded'. There was a formulation that the two leaders should 'consider opportune the holding of the conference of the Afro-Asian countries'. The document also underlined Yugoslavia's and Algeria's commitment to support the anti-colonial struggle in Africa.<sup>43</sup> Surprisingly and to the relief of the British diplomats in Belgrade, the Declaration named Portuguese territories in the context of the 'people's fight for national liberation' and condemned South African apartheid but did not mention the remaining British colonial territories in Southern Africa, or Rhodesia.<sup>44</sup>

### Tito in Algeria, 15–26 April 1965

Tito's trip to Algeria between 15–26 April 1965 was a return visit, agreed during his meeting with Ben Bella in Yugoslavia the previous year. It was meant to signify the continuation of the special relationship between the two countries which shared similar revolutionary goals. Tito and Ben Bella held five rounds of talks. A striking feature of the exchanges in Algeria was the absence of serious deliberation on bilateral economic relations and, particularly on the Yugoslav model of self-management, which had been one of the important topics in the earlier talks. During their first meeting, Ben Bella summarized the extent of their economic cooperation. It was apparent that very little had been achieved since their previous meeting despite optimistic declarations. Presented statistics on the bilateral exchange were almost identical to those presented during Ben Bella's visit to Yugoslavia in 1964.<sup>45</sup> Importantly, the cooperation between the FLN and LCY, announced in the Belgrade Joint Declaration was not even mentioned.

Instead, Tito and Ben Bella focused on the international situation which they agreed had drastically deteriorated and had become more threatening since their meetings in Belgrade.<sup>46</sup> They concurred that the most dangerous developments and flash points were Vietnam; the disunity in the nonaligned movement; and the 'imperialist counteroffensive throughout Africa'. Tito and Ben Bella singled out the situation in Congo as the principal threat to the continent. In their view, the paralysis of the UN was particularly worrying. Ben Bella also pointed to increasing Arab disunity promoted 'by the Tunisian leader Habib Bourguiba, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan on behalf of the "imperialists"'. Both presidents also agreed that the deepening and increasingly vicious Sino-Soviet confrontation was hampering national-liberation movements around the world.<sup>47</sup>

Tito was keen to emphasize some positive trends in the nonaligned movement. He underlined the crucial role that the noncommitted countries had played in the conveying of the first UNCTAD Conference in Geneva a year earlier. The Yugoslav also pointed to the growing appeal of the movement, citing as proof almost twofold increase in the number of NAM members, from 25 Belgrade (First Conference in September 1961) to 48 Cairo (Second Conference, October 1964). Ben Bella, however, contested Tito's faith in the increasing numbers. The Algerian's response that 'it may be better to have together a smaller number of countries that will be more active and act in unison' dismayed the Yugoslavs, who thought this sounded too close to Sukarno's position.<sup>48</sup> They had hoped that the issue had been resolved during Ben Bella's visit to Belgrade. This disagreement over the conceptual aspects of the Movement was certainly provoked by the Cairo Conference experience. It also confirmed Algerian sympathies towards Sukarno's efforts to promote 'new forces' in the Third World consisting of more radical and China inspired countries.

Unsurprisingly, Tito was highly critical of Sukarno. According to the Yugoslav leader, one could clearly detect in Cairo 'a lack of unity among the nonengaged countries.'<sup>49</sup> He underlined that '[the nonaligned movement] is faced with the China and Indonesia's intent to create some sort of a new international organization. There is talk of "new forces". What are these "new forces"?'<sup>50</sup> Yugoslavs insisted that Sukarno's "new forces" theory, promoted in Cairo, was aimed at introducing divisions within the movement. Tito could barely hide his scorn when it came to Sukarno's 'revolution'. Recalling his conversation with the Indonesian President in Cairo but without explicitly naming him, the Yugoslav leader fumed: "'One speaker [in Cairo] had declared that one should not ask for the aid from the developed countries but should simply take it. Take it? How and with what? ... Such reasoning, to put it mildly, is utterly unrealistic ... It would be mindless to refuse aid from the capitalist countries and ex-colonial metropolises.'<sup>51</sup>

Africa, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa, dominated the discussions regarding the problems in the Third World. Congo was at the top of the agenda. In Tito's view the situation in that country was deeply concerning. The two leaders focused on how they could positively influence the developments in Congo and, in particular, provide assistance to the rebels. During the Cairo Conference Nasser, Tito and Ben Bella had been instrumental in preventing Katanga secessionist leader Moise Tchombe from attending the Conference.<sup>52</sup> Tito stressed that 'the issue of arming insurgents in Congo does not represent a big problem. There are a number of countries that are ready to help, including Yugoslavia.' Furthermore, as he observed, the recent removal of Ibrahim Abboud in Sudan was facilitating the delivery of aid to the Congolese rebels. For the Yugoslav President, however, the biggest problem remained 'to whom the weapons should be delivered and how will they be used.'<sup>53</sup> Ben Bella informed Tito of Algerian provision of weaponry, specifying: 'Six big transport planes are constantly in the air. To date, Algeria had sent to the Congolese rebels 26 planeloads or arms containing 12,000 modern rifles, machine guns and RPG launchers with ammunitions.'<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, according to Ben Bella, 'Mali and Guinea are training cadres for Congo and the Soviet Union had promised to substitute the arms Algeria sends to Congolese insurgents.' He revealed that the Chinese had also promised to send arms. Ben Bella further confirmed that, given the available material on the ground, the level of insurgency in Congo could easily be raised. Echoing Tito's earlier remark, he emphasized, 'that in order for this to be done, it is necessary to intensify the fighting, establish unity among the rebels, establish single command and the political leadership and expand the [provisional] government.'<sup>55</sup>

Addressing Chinese claims that the Soviets were not doing enough to help liberation movements, Ben Bella confirmed that there was 'wide cooperation between Algeria and the Soviet Union, whether it is in Congo, Angola, the so-called Portuguese Guinea or in Mozambique'. As a result, 'the liberation movements have at their disposal more material than Algeria had at the start of its own liberation struggle'. Ben Bella confirmed 'that the vast majority of arms that is being sent to the patriots in Africa is of Soviet origin. Transport planes carry Algerian symbols but are piloted by the Soviet pilots.' He then specified that these flights were carried out in

extremely difficult and dangerous conditions, often without the permission of the countries they flew over or in which they landed. Ben Bella admitted that, before the recent change of government in Sudan, the planes had had to fly *via* Yemen. He then recounted an incident whereby a plane had been sent to Entebbe in Uganda but, as it was about to land, the pilots discovered that the airport's flight control was in Israeli hands and had to fly back to Dar es Salaam. As for the Chinese, Ben Bella stated that they offered to transport war materials. However he was sceptical whether this had actually happened: 'Truth be told, [the Chinese] promised planes but have not delivered them as yet, because they would have to purchase them from the Russians.'<sup>56</sup> Ben Bella then made a scathing observation: 'The Russians and the Chinese are fighting for influence [among the Congolese factions]. The Russians gave a leader of one faction US\$200,000 and the Chinese gave the leader of another faction US\$300,000. This leads to nowhere.'<sup>57</sup>

Beside Congo, Angola loomed large among African issues. In early 1961, the Yugoslavs had been among the first to provide assistance to the Angolan insurgency.<sup>58</sup> Although they continued to deal mainly with Roberto Holden, Tito admitted that they were still in the dark as to which Angolan movement deserves assistance. Prior to the Cairo conference, a Yugoslav vessel had managed to deliver a load of weapons of Algerian origin to the port of Matadi in Congo-Leopoldville, for Roberto's organization. During the Cairo Conference, on 9 October, Tito met with Roberto and promised to continue assisting him.<sup>59</sup> However, a day later, Tito received a joint delegation of the representatives of the Liberation Movements from the Portuguese colonies. Each acquainted Tito with the struggle in Guinea Bissau, Angola, and Mozambique, where the uprising had started only two weeks earlier, on 27 September. They confirmed to Tito that 'the uprising in Angola is being reignited and is led by the People's Front for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) which does not cooperate with Holden.'<sup>60</sup>

Although they identified the escalation of American military involvement in Vietnam as one of the most threatening developments of the previous year, Tito and Ben Bella devoted surprisingly little time to this topic. Rather, it served as an introduction to the subject to which they allocated far more attention – the paralysis of the UN. Ben Bella proposed his own "domino effect" interpretation of the Vietnam conflict: 'The offensive [imperialist] policy could also endanger other countries, including the United Arab Republic and Algeria. If the aggression in Vietnam succeeds, the next in line will be Sihanouk [of Cambodia].'<sup>61</sup> For Tito, the important consequence of the aggression against Vietnam was the paralysis of the UN.<sup>62</sup> Ben Bella insisted that 'two big nations, the USSR and the United States have practically blocked the activity of the World Organization [UN], ' and that he 'disagree[d] with De Gaulle's opinion that the role of the powers in the UN has to be proportionate.'<sup>63</sup> Tito attributed the Organization's paralysis to an 'increasing lack of interest of the big powers for the UN'. In his view, 'The Americans are losing interest for the World organization and wish to paralyze the United Nations in order to pursue their goals in the Far East, in Africa and on other continents.'<sup>64</sup> Both then agreed that the paralysis called for the nonaligned countries to strengthen their activities in the UN and to do their best to secure that it remains a forum that would safeguard their sovereignty and independence.<sup>65</sup>

While critical of the West and its destructive attitude towards the nonaligned, Tito was surprisingly affirmative of the Soviet policies. In a way, this would serve as an introduction into deliberations on the Sino-Soviet split and his effort to distance the Algerians from the Chinese. Without saying as much, he attributed the positive change in the Soviet attitude to the removal of Khrushchev in October 1964: 'In the beginning [of the NAM existence] the socialist countries were sceptical towards the policy of nonengagement ... Today, there is much more understanding in the Soviet Union for the problems and hardships of the Afro-Asian countries than has been the case before [obviously during Khrushchev]. Today, the [new] Soviet leaders assess more correctly the positions of the nonengaged countries.'<sup>66</sup> Ben Bella remarked that 'The Yugoslavs have contributed significantly to this [changed Soviet attitude]. He [Ben Bella] had concluded this when in Moscow.'<sup>67</sup>

The issue of Sino-Soviet confrontation took up much of the second and third meetings between Tito and Ben Bella in Algiers and Constantine. Although he characterized the Sino-Soviet conflict as tragic for the 'international communist movement and all progressive forces, in particular national-liberation movements', Tito used every opportunity to blame the Chinese, and did not mince his words.<sup>68</sup> His sympathy for the Soviet position was certainly the result of his decision to side with Moscow in the deepening Sino-Soviet confrontation. His meetings with Khrushchev in December 1962 and June 1964, following the public revelation of the Sino-Soviet split, had enabled him to mend fences with Moscow following a very acrimonious rupture of Soviet-Yugoslav relations in 1957. This can also explain Tito's positive attitude towards the new Soviet leadership headed by Leonid Brezhnev and Alexei Kosygin. He blamed Khrushchev for the schism with the Chinese. In his view, 'Khrushchev had completely neglected the Far East, Vietnam as the Soviet sphere of interest. Premier Kosygin and the new Soviet leadership have very correctly turned their attention towards the development of events in the Far East.'<sup>69</sup> The Yugoslav President's support for the changes in the Kremlin went even further: 'It was clear that Khrushchev had to go. However, we do not approve of the manner in which it was carried out.' He, then, revealed what he thought was the true reason behind Khrushchev's removal or, at least something that might have helped to mobilize the majority in the Politburo against the General Secretary: 'In the USSR, it was calculated that, following the removal of Khrushchev, there would be a lessening of tension between China and the Soviet Union. The Chinese were attacking Khrushchev personally, as the protagonist of the revisionist policies, and continued to do so. When Khrushchev left, it looked as if it would be easier to resolve the dispute with China. However, when the Chinese realized that there was no change in Soviet foreign policy, they started to attack the new leadership, calling it "revisionist." This exacerbated the conflict between China and the Soviet Union.'<sup>70</sup>

Tito's frequent reference to the Sino-Soviet confrontation and his repeated accusations against Beijing were also aimed at dispelling any lingering sympathies he feared that the Algerian leader still harboured towards the Chinese. After all, Prime Minister Zhou En Lai had been warmly welcomed in Algeria on his second visit in fifteen months, only two weeks before Tito's visit. The Yugoslav President insisted that the Sino-Soviet conflict was not only ideological; of equal if not greater importance were different foreign policy strategies and concepts of war and peace, of co-existence and disarmament. Tito also revealed the background and origins of the Sino-Soviet conflict, as divulged to him by Khrushchev during their last meeting in Leningrad, in June 1964. According to Khrushchev, the conflict had started as early as 1955 and 1956, when the Chinese refused to allow the Soviets to use their airports and naval bases in the event of war. Moreover, the Chinese demanded a fully functioning atom bomb from the Russians, not simply technological information. Khrushchev had refused this, explaining to Tito, 'who knew what the Chinese would have done with this bomb?' Furthermore, according to Khrushchev's account, the Chinese were irritated by Soviets developing contacts within what they considered to be their 'sphere of influence': Korea, Vietnam, and other Asian countries. Khrushchev allegedly also revealed to Tito that the Chinese had real pretensions regarding the Soviet territories in Siberia and the Far East. Serious armed clashes on the border, according to Tito, had started already in the early 1960.<sup>71</sup> At this point in his conversation with Ben Bella, the Yugoslav President added a prescient reminder to the Algerians that, a few years earlier, Edvard Kardelj, Tito's second in command, had published a book *Socialism and War*. At the time, many attacked the book's main thesis, saying that it was impossible for a war to break out between socialist countries. 'However', Tito concluded, 'events have proven that it would be unrealistic to exclude such a possibility.'<sup>72</sup>

Tito was particularly keen to 'unmask' China's main point of attack on the Yugoslavs, namely, what he claimed to be their completely erroneous understanding of the Yugoslav concept of co-existence. On this occasion, Tito offered one of the most elaborate explanations of the Yugoslav concept of co-existence, one of the key precepts of nonalignment. Tito underlined:

According to our view co-existence does not mean freezing of the existing situation in the World; it [co-existence] is not the factor that should impede the activity of the liberation movements and the progressive forces that are fighting for new social relations in their own countries... Co-existence is an alternative to war. We offer the imperialists co-existence and not war. However, within their countries the people have the right to fight for their progress with all means available – from parliamentary methods to the revolutionary struggle... Co-existence applies only to relations between states. It should prevent a war that would today represent a catastrophe for the whole world.<sup>73</sup>

Ben Bella disagreed, underlining that, 'Algeria was nonengaged not only in the conflict between the USSR and the United States but also in the ideological conflict between the USSR and China. It is a false conflict... The ideological conflict between China and the USSR is harmful not only for the socialist countries but for the national-liberation movements. There are liberation movements that do not have the faintest notion as to what is going on but are still taking either the pro-Chinese or the pro-Soviet positions.' At the same time, however, Ben Bella admitted that he could not 'understand [Chinese] attacks against Yugoslavia. The Chinese leaders attack Yugoslavia and the USSR more viciously than the reactionary regimes.'<sup>74</sup> Following Ben Bella's relatively equidistant stance towards the Sino-Soviet conflict, Tito came up with a surprising proposal: 'It is necessary for something to be done towards calming down of this [Sino-Soviet] conflict. Who could do this? Countries like Algeria or the UAR [probably due to their cordial relations with the Chinese], could, from time to time, remind the Chinese of the consequences of the [Sino-Soviet] conflict and tell them that it brings harm to the progressive movements in the world, as a whole.' At the same time, he offered a word of caution: 'When a delegation of progressive Latin American parties visiting Mao Zedong began to speak of the need for the defusing of the confrontation, between the USSR and China, Mao kicked them out of the room saying, "You represent the Soviet line."<sup>75</sup>

Turning to the Arab-Israeli conflict, Tito seemed to agree with Ben Bella's assertion that Israel was 'an artificial creation' and stressed that Yugoslavia did not condone Israel's policy. It is questionable whether he truly shared Ben Bella's view, given that he continued that 'Israel is now a full member of the UN and we have already recognized it ... can the situation be changed by force? Nothing can be achieved through war.' Tito revealed that, a few years earlier, he had declined Ben Gurion's request to mediate between himself and Nasser.<sup>76</sup> Ben Bella, however, insisted that Israel, which he regarded as an artificial creation like the Republic of South Africa, 'will never heed to UN Resolutions' and that 'it had become an instrument of Imperialism and has no other option'. In a much less tolerant tone than he had used a year earlier in Yugoslavia, Ben Bella was adamant that 'Israel cannot agree to the return of a million Arabs to its territory because it would unsettle the internal balance in the country... The Arabs will never accept the existence of Israel.' According to the Yugoslav record, after posing a question, 'Does war represent an alternative? [Ben Bella did] not exclude the possibility of war... This, of course need not lead to a world war.'<sup>77</sup>

Ben Bella also informed Tito about the preparations for the Second Conference of the Afro-Asian Countries, which was due to take place in Algiers in two months' time. Ben Bella was optimistic that it would take place as planned. The worrying sign was that some African countries would not participate or have raised the issue of the nonparticipation of the countries Algerians did not invite, namely Moïse Tshombe's break-away territory Congo – Leopoldville, South Vietnam, and South Korea. Ben Bella admitted that any ideological confrontation at the conference could cause it to collapse. For this reason, he had sought and received assurances from Zhou Enlai during his visit to Algeria, that China would not instigate divisions. Tito warned that bilateral conflicts, such as the one between Pakistan and India, could derail the conference.<sup>78</sup> His scepticism was very much driven by his conversation with Nasser in Cairo several months earlier. The Egyptian President believed that the initiative for the 'Second Bandung' came from Indonesia, with strong Chinese support.<sup>79</sup> Tito also warned that, as the Afro-Asian Conference would be burdened with unsurmountable difficulties because countries with little or no

nonaligned credentials, such as China, India, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Thailand, the Philippines and even Japan were invited.<sup>80</sup>

Unlike a year earlier, instead of a pompous Declaration, a communiqué was issued at the end of Tito's visit. The two sides did their best to accentuate the main points of the accord, namely that the American intervention in South Vietnam and the military action against North Vietnam posed a threat to world peace; strongest support to the people of Congo, Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, and the Palestinians; and their unequivocal affiliation to the policy of nonalignment. The communiqué also stated that the Afro-Asian Conference would have a positive impact on the struggle against colonialism, as the Second Nonengaged Conference in Cairo had done.<sup>81</sup> According to British diplomats in Algiers, however, the primary aspect of Tito's visit was 'to set it against that of Zhou Enlai 'and to see it in terms of 'where Algeria stands between Peking and Belgrade ... Tito had the better of the Chinese here ... The official word for the Chinese visit was agreement over essentials; while for Tito the professions of unanimity were unqualified.'<sup>82</sup> Moreover, Ben Bella had publicly denounced the ideological conflict in the international communist movement. The joint communiqué, issued after Tito's visit, contained points distinctly opposed to the professed Chinese views, such as the support for 'immediate negotiations' over Vietnam and endorsement of the UN as an 'irreplaceable instrument of peace', even if it needed to reform.<sup>83</sup>

## Conclusion

The discussions between Tito and Ben Bella during their two encounters in 1964 and 1965 highlight the gravity of the crisis confronting the newly created nonaligned movement. They reveal the lack of strategy and consequent paralysis of political engagement of the underdeveloped world. Moreover, these talks underline the devastating effect of the Sino-Soviet split on African decolonization, the unity of purpose of the Third World and the cohesion of the nonaligned movement. As such, the meetings are significant for the scholarship of the "global Cold War".<sup>84</sup> Moreover, the account of these meetings contributes to the literature on nationalism, racism and ideology in international relations in the mid-twentieth century, in particular how these issues resonated in the Third World.

Tito's main preoccupation was to ensure the continuation of the momentum created by the Belgrade Conference in 1961, at the time when the international system suffered from multiple uncertainties. A particularly ominous development was the metastasis of Superpower confrontation into the Third World and into Africa, in particular. Not long before Ben Bella's arrival in Belgrade in March 1964, Tito had secured the backing of several important leaders of the non-committed movement, namely Nasser, Nehru, Bandaranaike, and Selassie for the convening of a Second nonaligned Conference, at some point in 1964. However, there was still no overwhelming support among the nonaligned for the convening of the Conference. Given Algeria's recently acquired prestige in the Third World, in particular in Africa, it was important for the Yugoslav President to secure Ben Bella's support for the Conference.

At the same time, the identity and political imagination of the nascent association of the non-aligned countries was laden with dilemmas. It was not until the Conference in Lusaka in 1970 that this gathering became truly institutionalized into a Nonaligned Movement, with a structure, organizational bodies, membership criteria and a codified mode of decision making. At the time of Tito - Ben Bella's meetings in 1964 and 1965, there existed a genuine dilemma among many in the Third World about whether the best format for the grouping of the noncommitted countries was a follow-up to the Belgrade Conference, or the follow-up to the Bandung Conference within the Afro-Asian framework. This dilemma reflected different approaches to the role of the Third World countries in the international system. The Belgrade Conference concept, as advocated by Tito, favoured a more expansive gathering of countries outside NATO and the Warsaw

Pact, with the main criterion being the acceptance of the Belgrade Conference Declaration on the principles of nonalignment. This would ensure both the true noncommitment to either of the ideological Blocs, as well as active engagement in the pursuit of peaceful co-existence. The 'second Bandung' proposal, according to Tito, threatened acrimony between participants and a break down, thus, destroying the nonalignment initiative. This would then open the door for the creation of an elitist gathering of "progressive" anti-imperialist oriented countries – Sukarno's "new force". This, however, was much too close to the dogmatic and, to a point, racialized vision of the world promoted, at the time by Mao's China.

The Ben Bella-Tito talks were replete with the latter's uncharacteristic hostility and caustic language addressed at China. On the one hand, Tito's bias in the Sino-Soviet split and unequivocal siding with the Soviets had its roots in his aspiration to reach long-term stability in relations with Moscow. Following the Sino-Soviet split, the two meetings he held with Khrushchev, in December 1962 and June 1964, laid the ground for the normalization of relations with Moscow that had been ruptured in 1957. On the other hand, following the 1957 renewed break-down of Soviet – Yugoslav relations, China established itself and was continuing to be at the forefront of a vicious anti-Yugoslav, "anti-revisionist" campaign. Ideologically, Tito was clearly uncomfortable with Mao's theories of permanent revolution; the egalitarian dogmatism that was leading to tragic and delusional excesses, such as the "Great Leap Forward" and the "Cultural Revolution"; or the advocacy of the inevitability of a war with capitalism, including a nuclear one. By 1964, Beijing's concerted efforts to sabotage the nascent nonaligned movement and impose itself as the "natural" leader of the Third World became the biggest source of Tito's ire against China's foreign policy.

Yugoslavia's strategic *sine qua non* was the sustainability of a nonaligned movement. After all, Tito had spent the better part of the previous ten years engaged in strengthening Yugoslavia's position outside the Cold War Blocs. The Sino-Soviet split and their profoundly acrimonious rivalry had spilled into the Third World. The leading communist powers became bitterly engaged in fighting for the "soul" of the nonaligned, revolutionary-minded regimes and movements. Records of his discussions with Ben Bella, as with numerous other Third World leaders, confirm that Tito believed that China represented a mortal danger for the future of the nonaligned movement. As he did during his discussions with Ben Bella, he tirelessly contested four Maoist concepts that he identified as particularly corrosive. First, according to Tito, the unavoidability of war and permanent confrontation with the "Imperialists", as promoted by the Chinese, would make it easier for the "imperialist" countries to subjugate or re-colonize the Third World countries. They were simply better armed and more powerful. Moreover, a war in the nuclear era could lead to total destruction and the end of humanity. Second, Tito regarded the pitting of coloured nations against "whites for global supremacy as contravening the very same principles that brought the nonaligned countries together in the first place – the struggle against racial inequality and colonial subjugation. Third, Tito believed that pushing for an Afro-Asian Conference before the Second Nonaligned Conference was a Chinese attempt to undermine the nonaligned movement. In the circumstances, when many Afro-Asian countries were bitterly at odds with each other over border issues and many were affiliated with military alliances, a meeting of the "second Bandung type would simply collapse into mutual acrimony and discord. This, in turn would, in all probability eliminate the chance of convening a follow-up to the Belgrade Conference of the nonaligned. Fourth, Sukarno's theory of the "new forces was, to Tito, nothing but new radicalism intended to divide the nonaligned countries, and was a malign project hatched in Beijing.

The Tito-Ben Bella exchanges demonstrate that the two leaders were determined to influence developments in Africa and reinvigorate stalled de-colonization. By 1964, both were determined to play a more prominent role in the continent. They were confident that the Superpower confrontation was shifting into Africa, threatening to undermine the process of de-colonization. The discussions clearly reveal Ben Bella's and Algerian unambiguous identification with Africa, as a

whole, and Sub-Saharan Africa in particular. Unlike perhaps some other countries of the Maghreb, the Algerians believed that they share a common destiny and problems with the rest of the continent. Tito saw in Africa the reservoir of new members of the nonaligned movement. Furthermore, he understood that Africa's anti-colonial struggle provided essential energy and a goal that was needed to mobilize the nonengaged countries into common action. The records of the discussions further confirm that the two leaders' commitment to supporting anti-colonial movements and "progressive" regimes or "forces" throughout Africa included substantial military assistance. Moreover, Tito and Ben Bella were ready to create a partnership in order to improve the effectiveness of their actions in Africa.

Interest in the Yugoslav economic system, in particular its innovative concept, self-management, figured prominently during Ben Bella's visit in 1964. Tito increasingly saw the successful projection of Yugoslav socialism as the desirable development model for the Third World. Detached from Moscow or Beijing's patronage, the Yugoslav "road to socialism" was promoted by the Yugoslavs as best suited for the underdeveloped countries opting for socialist model of development while intent on maintaining noncommitment to either ideological or military blocs. The Yugoslav leadership believed in their ideological correctness and that their system was the future of Socialism. In their view, what distinguished Yugoslavia from other "exporters" of Socialism, the Chinese, the Soviets or even the Cubans was, on the one hand, its true adherence to the principle of co-existence of different political systems, and tolerance of political choice among the underdeveloped countries. On the other hand, despite building successful economic cooperation with the underdeveloped world, evidenced in impressive construction projects and export of goods, technology, and know-how, Yugoslav economic and financial capacities were modest. In the long run, they simply could not compete with the two Superpowers or the Chinese. Perhaps this last point explains why the interest in the Yugoslav political and economic model or further trade and economic cooperation was conspicuously absent from the talks during Tito's visit to Algeria.

The differences which emerged in the positions between the Algerians and the Yugoslavs on a number of issues over the twelve-month period between the two summits are of particular interest. Careful study of the exchanges during two Tito – Ben Bella meetings enhances our understanding of the changing impact of the dynamics of the international environment on the Third World and the nonaligned movement. The absence of some topics from the second meeting, which had preoccupied much of the attention of the two leaders during their first summit, is striking. One such issue that was almost completely sidelined in Algeria was bilateral trade and ideological cooperation. There is no reliable evidence to support a definite answer as to why there was clear lack of interest in the Yugoslav "road to socialism" by the time of the second meeting. We can only speculate. One possible explanation could be increasing Algerian ideological closeness to more radical Leftist concepts promoted by Beijing but, also by some more "revolutionary" members of the Cuban leadership, namely Che Guevara. The latter's increasing involvement with African independence movements by 1965 and closeness to Algerians may explain this. This change of position was, however, not limited to the issue of the Yugoslav domestic economic and political model. A change of emphasis was detectable in Algeria's more pronounced "equidistance" in the Sino-Soviet conflict. Furthermore, after the Cairo Conference, the Algerians have become more sympathetic towards the creation of a more "revolutionary" and selective grouping, the "vanguard" of Third World countries. The change in Algerian positions, however, may have been a result of yet another factor. Given that the coup that deposed Ben Bella happened only two months after Tito's departure, it is plausible that by the time the two met, Ben Bella was already politically isolated within the Algerian leadership. As later became clear, his successors had different ideological priorities and preferences for international allies. Consequently, at the time, Ben Bella may not have been free to engage in sensitive talks related to domestic political and economic system or Party cooperation with the Yugoslavs. Equally, he may have been required to profess a more pro-Chinese nonaligned position.

The strategic importance that Tito attributed to the cooperation with Algeria in the non-aligned movement and in Africa, compensated for any real development of their bilateral economic relations. This could explain the Yugoslav reaction to the coup against Ben Bella. The removal of Ben Bella from power created an outpouring of protests in the Third World. For a time, it even froze relations between Havana and Algiers. The Yugoslav reaction, conversely, was notably subdued and composed. At a press conference on 25 June 1965, barely a week after the coup, the Yugoslav Foreign Ministry spokesman limited himself to stressing Belgrade's 'desire for relations and cooperation between two countries to continue to both sides' mutual interest' and that the Yugoslav viewpoint on recent affairs in Algeria was that 'they were internal affairs of that country.'<sup>85</sup> On 25 August 1965, Tito confirmed to the Algerian mission of goodwill, sent by Houari Boumédiène that, in the interest of Algerian–Yugoslav cooperation, he was ready to work with the new leadership. He did not forget, however, to mention that Ben Bella was a friend and asked that he be treated fairly.<sup>86</sup> Yugoslav reaction to the coup and readiness to continue working with Boumédiène seems to confirm that the Yugoslavs did not harbour illusions about the "special closeness" with the Algerians or any exceptional ideological proximity. It confirms, however, that the most important aim of the Yugoslav interest in having good relations with Algeria was to secure cooperation on issues related to nonalignment and Africa. Neither was, as they were soon assured, something Boumédiène wished to change.

## Notes

1. Terms 'noncommitted', 'nonengaged' or 'nonaligned' were common at the time and were used intermittently by Ben Bella and Tito. 'Nonalignment' and 'Nonaligned Movement' were widely accepted and became official following the 1970 Lusaka Conference, once the organizational structures and permanent bodies were put in place. To avoid confusion, the term 'nonalignment' is used in this article. Whenever the text refers to the institutionalized nonaligned movement, it is capitalized as Nonaligned Movement (NAM). In academic literature, the term nonaligned / nonalignment is also transcribed as non-aligned / non-alignment. Hereafter, the term nonalignment / nonaligned is used in the text.
2. Among notable works in the English language that look into this period of NAM and Third World history: Jürgen Dinkel, *The Non-Aligned Movement: Genesis, Organization and Politics, 1927-1992* (Leiden, Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2019) (a good overview of the history of the NAM); Robert B. Rakove, *Kennedy, Johnson, and the Nonaligned World* (Cambridge University Press, 2013) (from the US perspective); relevant chapters in Robert J. McMahon (ed), *The Cold War in the Third World* (Oxford University Press, 2013); Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge University Press, 2005); David Kimche, *The Afro-Asian Movement: Ideology and Foreign Policy of the Third World* (Israel University Press, 1973). Jeffrey James Byrne, 'Beyond Continents, Colours and Cold War: Yugoslavia, Algeria and the Struggle for Non-Alignment', *International History Review*, 37(1) (2015), provides further insight into Algerian considerations regarding some of the issues addressed in this article. For more on Algerian foreign policy from the same author, *Mecca of Revolution: Algeria, Decolonization and the Third World Order* (Oxford University Press, 2016). On China's policies in the Third World: Gregg A. Brazinsky, *Winning the Third World: Sino-American Rivalry during the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017). On Sino-Soviet rivalry in the Third World: Friedman, Jeremy S., *Shadow Cold War: The Sino-Soviet Split and the Third World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015); . On Angola in 1960s: Natalia Telepneva, *Cold War Liberation: The Soviet Union and the Collapse of the Portuguese Empire in Africa, 1961-1975* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2022). For more on the USSR and Soviet Bloc countries' engagement in Africa and the Third World, in general: Philip Muehlenbeck and Natalia Telepneva (eds), *Warsaw Pact Intervention in the Third World: Aid and Influence in the Cold War* (London: J .B. Tauris, 2018). On Cuba's involvement in the Third World: J. Brown, *Cuba's Revolutionary World* (Harvard University Press, 2017); and a seminal book on Cuban engagement in Africa based on unique access to Cuban archives: Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001). On early nonalignment and Yugoslavia's role, from this author, 'From Regional Role to Global Undertakings: Yugoslavia in the Early Cold War' in S. Rajak, K. Botsiou, E. Karamouzi, and E. Hatzivassiliou (eds), *Balkans in the Cold War* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); S. Rajak, 'No Bargaining Chips, No Spheres of Interest: The Yugoslav Origins of Cold War Non-Alignment', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 16(1) (Winter 2014), 146–179 (Cambridge, USA: MIT Press, Harvard). For general background on the succession of Cold War crises

in the late 1950s and early 1960s, see Antony Best, Jussi Hanhimäki, Joseph A. Maiolo, Kirsten E. Schulze, *International History of the Twentieth Century and Beyond* (London: Routledge, 2015).

3. Yugoslav transcripts, on which this article is based, do not mention Ben Bella ever referring to either Castro or Che in his conversations with Tito. This is even more surprising, given the particularly close relations between Algeria and Cuba, at the time. According to Piero Gleijeses, who has had unprecedented access to Cuban archives, following his visit to Havana on 16 October 1962, Ben Bella developed an extraordinary emotional closeness to Fidel Castro. The feeling seems to have been mutual. The roots can be found in the Cuban and Algerian independence struggle that coincided and during which both sides revered each other's revolutionary zeal. Moreover, during the Algerian–Moroccan war in October 1963, Cuba provided critical military aid to Algerians, including a tank battalion. Arguably, it was this assistance that forced Moroccan King Hassan II to agree to negotiate ceasefire with Ben Bella in Bamako, Mali, on 29 October. Che Guevara visited Algeria on several occasions between 1963 and 1965. For the first time on the occasion of the first anniversary of Algerian independence, in July 1963, and then, on three occasions during his notable tour of Africa between December 1964 and March 1965. According to Gleijeses, by 1964, Algeria became the springboard for extending Cuban influence in Africa and establishing contacts with guerilla movements. Gleijeses also suggests that Fidel Castro took Ben Bella's fall as a personal loss. After the coup, Algerian–Cuban relations deteriorated dramatically, only to start improving slowly towards the end of 1960s. Source: Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions ...*, 30–57.
4. For the sake of presenting Western impressions of the meetings, relevant records in the British National Archives and from the US National Archives in College Park, Maryland, have been used.
5. Although the author shares the view that the phrase 'Third World' may be imprecise, it is used in the article because of its wide acceptance in contemporary literature. At the same time, the term 'underdeveloped world', which the author holds to be more appropriate, is used as often as possible.
6. Information from the Yugoslav Foreign Minister, Koča Popović to Yugoslav Ambassadors on the Tripartite, Tito, Nehru, Nasser meetings in Brioni, 26 July 1956; SMIP (Yugoslav Foreign Ministry Archives), SPA, 1956, Fil/Jugoslavija I-176.
7. Material on current issues regarding the domestic development and foreign policy of Algeria and its relations with Yugoslavia, DSIP, February 1964; AJ (Yugoslav Archives), KPR, 837, I-3-a/2-8.
8. Transcript of the first round of official talks between President Tito and President Ben Bella, Belgrade, 6 March 1964; AJ, KPR, 837, I-3-a/2-8.
9. Jürgen Dinkel, *The Non-Aligned Movement: Genesis, Organization and Politics, 1927-1992* (Leiden, Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2019), 113.
10. Transcript of the first round of official Yugoslav–Algerian talks, Belgrade, 6 March 1964; AJ, KPR, 837, I-3-a/2-8.
11. Transcript of the closing, fifth round of official Yugoslav–Algerian talks, Brioni, 12 March 1964; AJ, KPR, 837, I-3-a/2-8.
12. Some of the authors listed in footnote 2 bring up or address tangentially the issue of race and colour, namely Friedman, Brazinsky, Byrne, and Piero Gleijeses in *Conflicting Missions ...*
13. A. C. Johnpole, Embassy in Belgrade to the Department of State, 25 March 1964: US National Archives (USNA), RG 59, CFPF, 1964-1966, Box 1879, POL7ALG
14. Ibid.
15. Transcript of the first round of official talks between President Tito and President Ben Bella, Belgrade, 6 March 1964; AJ, KPR, 837, I-3-a/2-8.
16. Transcript of the first round of official Yugoslav–Algerian talks, Belgrade, 6 March 1964; AJ, KPR, 837, I-3-a/2-8
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Transcript of the second round of official Yugoslav–Algerian talks, Brioni, 11 March 1964; AJ, KPR, 837, I-3-a/2-8
20. Transcript of the first round of official Yugoslav–Algerian talks, Belgrade, 6 March 1964; AJ, KPR, 837, I-3-a/2-8.
21. Transcript of the first round of official Yugoslav–Algerian talks, Belgrade, 6 March 1964; AJ, KPR, 837, I-3-a/2-8.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Transcript of the second round of official Yugoslav–Algerian talks, Brioni, 11 March 1964; AJ, KPR, 837, I-3-a/2-8.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.
34. Jeffrey Byrne, "The Pilot Nation: An international History of Revolutionary Algeria, 1958–1965" PhD, LSE, 2010; 132–134.
35. Transcript of the closing (fifth) round of official Yugoslav–Algerian talks, Brioni, 12 March 1964; AJ, KPR, 837, I-3-a/2-8.
36. Sir M Creswell, British Embassy in Belgrade to the Foreign Office, 23 January 1963; UK National Archives (NA), FO 371 / 169629.
37. Sir Michael Creswell, British Embassy in Belgrade to FCO, Despatch No. 37'S', 18 March 1964; UKNA, FO 371/177778.
38. Transcript of the fourth round of official Yugoslav–Algerian talks, Brioni, 12 March 1964; AJ, KPR, 837, I-3-a/2-8.
39. Ibid.
40. Transcript of the closing (fifth) round of official Yugoslav–Algerian talks, Brioni, 12 March 1964; AJ, KPR, 837, I-3-a/2-8.
41. Ibid.
42. Elbrick, American Embassy in Belgrade to the Department of State, 13 March 1964; USNA, RG59, CFPF, 1964-66, POL7ALG, Box 1879.
43. Joint Declaration, Brioni, 12 March 1964; AJ, KPR, 837, I-3-a/2-8.
44. Sir M. Creswell, UK Embassy in Belgrade to FCO, 14 March 1964; UKNA, FO 371/177778.  
Although the Central African Federation had formally ended in December 1963, with Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia moving to independence as Malawi and Zambia, the problem of white rule in Southern Rhodesia was an increasingly contentious international issue. Britain also retained colonial control of the High Commission territories of Bechuanaland (Botswana) and Basutoland (Lesotho) until 1966, and Swaziland (Eswatini) until 1968
45. Transcript of the first meeting of the Yugoslav and Algerian delegations in villa "Joly," Algiers, 15 April 1965; AJ, KPR, 837, I-2/24-1.
46. Ibid.
47. Transcript of the second meeting of the Yugoslav and Algerian delegations in the building of the FLN Political Bureau, Algiers, 16 April 1965; AJ, KPR, 837, I-2/24-1.
48. Transcript of the second meeting of the Yugoslav and Algerian delegations in the building of the FLN Political Bureau, Algiers, 16 April 1965; AJ, KPR, 837, I-2/24-1.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid. See also Record of conversation between President [Tito] and the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Sukarno, Cairo, 5 October 1964; AJ, KPR, 837, I-4-a/5.
52. Record of conversation between the President [Tito] and Ben Bella, 3 October 1964, Cairo; AJ, APR, 837, 1-4-a/5.
53. Transcript of the second meeting of the Yugoslav and Algerian delegations in the building of the FLN Political Bureau, Algiers, 16 April 1965; AJ, KPR, 837, I-2/24-1.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. Transcript of the concluding meeting between the Yugoslav and Algerian delegations in villa "Arthur", Algiers, 24 April 1965; AJ, KPR, 837, I-2/24-1.
58. Record of conversation between the President [Tito] and Holden Roberto, 9 October 1964, Cairo; AJ, KPR, 837, I-4-a/5.
59. Ibid.
60. Record of conversation between the President [Tito] and the representatives of the Liberation Movements from the Portuguese colonies, Yugoslav Embassy, Cairo, 10 October 1964; AJ, KPR, 837, I-4-a/5.
61. Transcript of the third meeting of the Yugoslav and Algerian delegations in Constantine, 18 April 1965; AJ, KPR, 837, I-2/24-1.
62. Ibid
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. Transcript of the second meeting of the Yugoslav and Algerian delegations in the building of the FLN Political Bureau, Algiers, 16 April 1965; AJ, KPR, 837, I-2/24-1.
67. Transcript of the concluding meeting between the Yugoslav and Algerian delegations in villa "Arthur," Algiers, 24 April 1965; AJ, KPR, 837, I-2/24-1.
68. Transcript of the second meeting of the Yugoslav and Algerian delegations in the building of the FLN Political Bureau, Algiers, 16 April 1965; AJ, KPR, 837, I-2/24-1.

69. Ibid.
70. Transcript of the concluding meeting between the Yugoslav and Algerian delegations in Villa "Arthur," Algiers, 24 April 1965; AJ, KPR, 837, I-2/24-1.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Transcript of the third meeting of the Yugoslav and Algerian delegations in Constantine, 18 April 1965; AJ, KPR, 837, I-2/24-1.
74. Transcript of the second meeting of the Yugoslav and Algerian delegations in the building of the FLN Political Bureau, Algiers, 16 April 1965; AJ, KPR, 837, I-2/24-1.
75. Transcript of the concluding meeting between the Yugoslav and Algerian delegations in villa "Arthur," Algiers, 24 April 1965; AJ, KPR, 837, I-2/24-1.
76. Transcript of the third meeting of the Yugoslav and Algerian delegations in Constantine, 18 April 1965; AJ, KPR, 837, I-2/24-1.
77. Ibid.
78. Transcript of the third meeting of the Yugoslav and Algerian delegations in Constantine, 18 April 1965; AJ, KPR, 837, I-2/24-1.
79. Transcript of conversation between the President [Tito] with President Nasser in the Kubbeh Palace, Cairo, 14 October 1964.
80. Transcript of the third meeting of the Yugoslav and Algerian delegations in Constantine, 18 April 1965; AJ, KPR, 837, I-2/24-1.
81. Sir T. Bromley, British Embassy in Algiers to the FCO, 22 April 1965; UKNA, FO 371/182850.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid. With regard to Chinese position on Vietnam, expressed during talks with Ben Bella, see also: Zhou Enlai and the Algerian President Ben Bella, Algiers, 30 March 1965, CWIHP Working Paper No. 22: "77 Conversations": [http://legacy.wilsoncenter.org/va2/index.cfm?topic\\_id=1409&fuseaction=home.document&identifier=5034C7F1-96B6-175C-9435FAF80B22697A&sort=rights&item=cwihp](http://legacy.wilsoncenter.org/va2/index.cfm?topic_id=1409&fuseaction=home.document&identifier=5034C7F1-96B6-175C-9435FAF80B22697A&sort=rights&item=cwihp)
84. As defined by Arne Westad in his *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
85. Telegram, US Embassy in Belgrade to Department of State, 25 June 1965; USNA, RG59, CFPF, 1964-66, Box 1884.
86. Memcon of conversation between President [Tito] and the members of Algerian mission of good will, Brioni, 25 August 1965; AJ, KPR, 837, I-3-a/2-13.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

## Notes on contributor

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