

In Dr. Stafford's excellent article there is an allegation, however, about me to which I must take exception. He asserts that the links of the SOE "with the air force conspirators, led by Bora Mirković, were only indirect—through Trifunović and Radoje Knežević on the Yugoslav side, and through the air attaché's contacts with Mirković on the British side" (p. 412). Let me say that, in this respect, I have had an exchange of letters with Dr. Stafford. In my letter to him, dated February 28, 1978, I said that his "assertion about me conveys the impression that, in some manner, I have been in connection with the SOE people then in Belgrade." I impressed upon him that "as a matter of fact, while in Yugoslavia, I have never heard the names of the SOE or SIS people. I didn't even know a single Englishman living then in my native country." I asked him to let me know what prompted him to state that I had been a link between SOE people and General Mirković. Dr. Stafford replied on March 13, 1978. He said that "a normally highly reliable informant, whose name I am not at liberty to divulge, told me that Masterson saw you prior to the *coup*."

On April 8, 1978, I sent the following response to Dr. Stafford: "Whoever that person may be, a He or a She, that person has told you a deliberate lie. It was certainly not someone of SOE people: those I had come to know later in the summer of 1941 were all honest men and they would not stoop to a lie. I suspect it could be someone from among the followers of Prince Paul. The aim of most of them has been throughout the years to denigrate the men who had prevented Yugoslavia in March 1941 from siding with Hitler. The story of my 'several meetings' with Colonel Masterson was invented twenty years ago by D. Cvetković, Prince Paul's Prime Minister and the signatory of the Tripartite Pact, in his booklet 'Dokumenti o Jugoslaviji' (Paris, February 1958). After I rebuked him in the London review 'Poruka' (March 1958), Cvetković and his acolytes kept mum about it. Now, your 'normally highly reliable informant' repeats the lie to you. Did you do something to ascertain the veracity of your informant? And why should you keep Him or Her hidden in anonymity? I would ask you to reveal the name of that 'normally highly reliable informant,' in order for me to deal with Him or Her in an appropriate manner. It would be in the interest of the historical truth, to which we are both attached."

I have waited for his response up to this day, to no avail.

May I add that in my letter of April 8, 1978 to Dr. Stafford I also stated the following: "There is nothing in your letter that would support your claim that in 1941 I have been an indirect link between SOE people in Yugoslavia and General Mirković. Your assertion about it is utterly inaccurate."

I would like to state this again most emphatically.

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PROFESSOR STAFFORD REPLIES:

If I was incorrect in assuming that Mr. Knéjévitch was among the leading members of the Democratic Party in 1941, and therefore, on the evidence of SOE's own account, one of their many contacts, then I regret the error and any personal offense this may have caused. My assumption appeared to be confirmed by the recollections of an informant, but I accept that after thirty-five years such recollections may be in error. I am grateful to Mr. Knéjévitch for placing his own views on record.

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