

Unmaking Détente: Yugoslavia, the United States, and the Global Cold War, 1968–1980. By Milorad Lazić. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2022. 304 pp.

Recent years have seen a blossoming of works on Yugoslav foreign policy and non-alignment. The field has been augmented by an array of studies dealing with topics such as Yugoslav political networks in the countries of the Global South, economic and technical cooperation, cultural diplomacy, and transnational academic exchange, with high-quality research conducted not only by historians but also by sociologists, anthropologists, art historians, and political scientists. As a result, our current knowledge of Belgrade's international endeavors has become considerably richer than it was merely one or two decades ago, when Yugoslavia's bloody dissolution and its aftermath were still at the center of academic research.

In this context, it might be reasonable to say that there is less room for fresh and original works on Yugoslav foreign policy. Yet Milorad Lazić's recent book *Unmaking Détente*, which is based on a rich and expansive corpus of archival sources, not only constitutes an excellent work of diplomatic history but also makes very valuable contributions to the field by focusing on a relatively less charted historical period and by shedding light on fascinating dimensions of Yugoslav non-alignment.

Unmaking Détente offers a clear and extremely well documented account in three parts of Yugoslav foreign policy from 1968 to 1980. The first chapter deals with Yugoslavia's reaction to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and shows that the regime in Belgrade interpreted these events as a worrying sign that détente could pave the way for "a new Yalta," one in which the superpowers could effectively agree on spheres of influence and dispose of smaller nations at their will. The second chapter analyzes Yugoslav foreign and domestic policies in the first three years after the invasion, describing how Belgrade decided then to approach Washington, improve relations with Beijing, and reinvigorate the NAM. Chapters three and four examine Yugoslavia's efforts to destabilize détente in the 1970s from Cyprus to Ethiopia, efforts which were intended to redefine the global order through increased support for national liberation movements in the "Third World." In these chapters, Lazić also discusses the Yugoslav regime's reaction to the Croatian Spring, its short-lived rapprochement with the Soviet Union after 1973, and the reemergence of tensions sometime

later due to Havana's and Moscow's intention to domesticate Yugoslavia and steer the NAM in a more radicalized direction. Chapters five and six cover Yugoslav diplomacy during the last three years of Tito's life, following his very active personal diplomacy, Yugoslavia's rapprochement with the United States and renewed distance from the Soviet Union, Yugoslav tensions with Cuba, and Yugoslavia's reactions to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Lazić analyzes the many challenges that Belgrade had to face in its attempts to destabilize what it perceived as a threatening foreign and domestic environment. According to Lazić, these challenges arose due in part to the changing and unstable environment in the Eastern Mediterranean, the financial and political limitations of Yugoslavia's policies in the Third World (which were often eclipsed by Cuban radicalism and Soviet might), and last but not least, the country's internal insecurity as a result of conflicts around the Yugoslav national question and Tito's uncertain succession.

Unmaking Détente deals with Yugoslav policies in the countries of the Global South, but it deals first and foremost with how these policies were shaped by and also affected Belgrade's relations with the superpowers. The book gives interesting hints concerning the development of Yugoslavia's relations with the Soviet Union, China, and the United States. It thoroughly examines the evolution of Yugoslav-Soviet relations during the period and underlines the constant distrust that affected interactions between the Soviet and the Yugoslav communist parties even three decades after their break in 1948 and despite the short-lived rapprochement in the mid-1970s. Moreover, Lazić succeeds in introducing the importance of Sino-Yugoslav relations, showing in particular how Belgrade's decision to normalize relations with Beijing was both an asset for Yugoslav power abroad and a cause of strife with Moscow. Perhaps more importantly, and especially due to his systematic use of US archival sources, Lazić offers valuable insights into the development of Yugoslav-American relations in times of détente, and he sheds light on the importance and consistence of Washington's support for socialist Yugoslavia throughout the period. The book gives considerable proof that, aside from the detrimental action of a handful of individuals and notwithstanding recurrent fluctuations in bilateral relations due to Yugoslavia's need to assert its revolutionary credentials in the Global South, the United States highly valued Belgrade's neutral position in the Cold War and especially its tempering influence among the non-aligned, and thus it made significant efforts to secure Yugoslavia's independence even in the face of recurrent pressures from Moscow.

By following the development of Yugoslavia's relations with a wide pool of countries, including the global powers but also several nations of the global South, and also by revisiting Yugoslavia's role in many key international crises of the 1970s, Lazić has produced a study that is original and compelling and also very useful, as it gives a clear picture of the evolution of Yugoslav foreign policy throughout the period. This extensive character is one of the book's strengths, but it is also perhaps one of its few limitations, as Lazić touches on a very wide number of episodes, and he is therefore forced to give a rather short account of many of them. While the book covers the development of Yugoslav relations with Egypt after the death of Nasser and under Sadat in some detail, for instance, it also goes too hastily over episodes such as Yugoslavia's reaction to Pinochet's coup in Chile in 1973 or Yugoslav actions following the Cyprus crisis of 1974. Although Lazić underlines such episodes as important elements of Belgrade's independent foreign policy in the 1970s which were meant to secure a wider margin of action for Yugoslavia in the international scene, he gives them only limited space in his discussion.

The overall balance is nevertheless undeniably positive. *Unmaking Détente* is a valuable contribution to the existing secondary literature on the period, and it constitutes an enjoyable reading for any scholar of international history. Moreover, its chronological structure and clarity will make it a useful resource for courses and research seminars dealing with the history of non-alignment. Milorad Lazić has produced an excellent account of Yugoslav foreign policy in the 1970s, one which provides valuable insights and will be of great interest to scholars of the Cold War in Yugoslavia and beyond.

Agustín Cosovschi
École française d'Athènes
agustin.cosovschi@efa.gr