

Socialist Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned Movement: Social, Cultural, Political, and Economic Imaginaries. Edited by Paul Stubbs. Montreal & Kingston: McGill–Queen’s University Press, 2022. 393 pp.

The emerging literature on the “Cold War from the Margins,” to borrow Theodora Dragostinova’s title, expanded our understanding of the post-1945 world by transcending the focus on the power dynamics of the superpowers and focusing on the role of small states and non-Western international organizations in their attempts to transform the Cold War order. In addition to Dragostinova’s book (2021) on Bulgaria’s global cultural entanglements, Csaba Békés’ *Hungary’s Cold War* (2022) investigates the role that Hungary played in shaping relations among the superpowers. Similarly, in his superb book *Cold Wars* (2020), Lorenz Lüthi shows how local and regional histories affected the Cold War. Lüthi also devoted appropriate attention to “alternative world visions,” which included efforts by the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to transform the global political and economic order. Jürgen Dinkel provided a comprehensive account of NAM history, including Yugoslavia’s critical role in shaping and sustaining the movement from its inception in 1961 to the late 1980s.

As early as the 1970s, Yugoslavia’s role in the Cold War and NAM attracted scholarly attention, beginning with Alvin Rubinstein’s seminal work *Yugoslavia and the Nonaligned World*. This work was continued by a new generation of historians like Tvrтко Jakovina, whose *Treća strana bladnog rata* (The Third Side of the Cold War, 2011) significantly broadened our understanding of Yugoslavia’s unique role in the Cold War and NAM. A welcome addition to this literature is a “radically interdisciplinary volume” (p.27) edited by Paul Stubbs, senior research fellow at the Institute of Economics in Zagreb. Stubbs’ aim is to challenge “a kind of amnesia about the role of socialist Yugoslavia in the Non-Aligned Movement without ever lapsing into uncritical nostalgia” by providing different and sometimes, as he admits, conflicting “fragments” (p.26). A truly diverse group of scholars provide distinctive perspectives on these issues in 14 chapters divided into five different parts addressing various issues including the economy, multilateralism, cultural exchanges, migrations, and the problems of agency.

Part I, titled “Agency and Structure,” establishes different frameworks of Yugoslavia’s policy of non-alignment. In the field of research dominated by the focus on the impact of great men (Tito, Nehru, Nasser, Castro, etc.), the chapter by Chiara Bonfiglioli offers a refreshing analysis of gender and NAM by focusing on Yugoslav “encounters with non-aligned female subjects.” Bonfiglioli argues

that Yugoslav women's revolutionary experience and participation in postwar recovery allowed them to identify with their non-aligned counterparts (p.53).

With Bonfiglioli turning her gaze from great men, Peter Willetts further questions the role of foundational figures of NAM. In his chapter, Willetts shatters some of the widely accepted myths concerning NAM. Notably, he scrutinizes what he calls the "orthodox history of NAM," which claims that NAM had its roots in the 1955 Bandung Conference. Moreover, Tito, Nasser, Nehru, Nkrumah, and Sukarno—figures often depicted as the "founding fathers" of the movement—merely provided "an alternative history to the myth that the origins of the Non-Aligned Movement lie in the Bandung Conference" (p.71). Instead, according to Willetts, there were only two founders, Tito and Nasser, who "each provided leadership that was recognized and respected in both Africa and Asia" (p.71).

Gal Kirn establishes new frameworks for an understanding of nonalignment through ten theses which illuminate similarities between anti-fascist and anti-colonial histories. Kirn suggests that these histories should be understood through "ruptures" defined as historical events with "strong consequences" that "resonate across societies" (p.85). Kirn points out that partisan struggles and NAM shared many similar worldviews, notably belief in the creation of a new world (p.98). In his chapter, Tvrtko Jakovina shows that NAM was not just an ideological project but also suited Yugoslavia's national interests. Jakovina argues that the "role of Yugoslavia was understood pragmatically, although always within an idealistic framework" (p.121). Jakovina praises Yugoslavia's diplomacy in the last decade of the country's existence as "modern, rational, pragmatic, and idealistic." Yet, "things were falling apart at home," and this made NAM irrelevant (p.122). Jakovina's nuanced approach is thought-provoking and a good starting point for any discussion on ideology and pragmatism in Yugoslavia's NAM policies.

Part Two goes beyond traditional political and diplomatic histories of Yugoslavia's nonalignment and focuses on cultural politics. Bojana Videkanić points out that art and culture are often subordinated to political work, arguing that cultural struggles were essential to state-building projects (p.135). Bojana Piškur and Đorđe Balzamović concur that culture was important in NAM. Yet, they argue that nonaligned art largely followed Western cultural canons (p.156). Using a graphic novel format, they demonstrate that nonaligned art, despite its failure to "produce... a new international narrative in art," created opportunities to discuss art outside the Western canon (p.136). Similarly, Ljiljana Kolečnik

claims that Yugoslavia's cultural exchanges with the nonaligned world were impeded by Eurocentrism of the Yugoslav culture and educational system as well as cultural prejudices (p.179). Mila Turajlić expanded on her pioneering work on the visual history of nonalignment by creating “an inventory of the image(ry) debris floating around the city [Belgrade],” notably using unseen reels from *Filmske novosti* but also from the movie depositories abroad. As Turajlić concludes, “The film archives are not merely a means for recalling the past but become a medium in which the past continues to exist and reconfigure itself in new constellations.” (p.229).

In Part Three, Jure Ramšak and Dubravka Sekulić discuss economic relations between Yugoslavia and NAM. Ramšak looks at similar efforts by nonaligned Yugoslavia and neutral Austria to expand their economic and political influence in the “Third World.” Even if Bruno Kreisky of Austria and Edvard Kardelj of Yugoslavia shared some ideas about the importance of North-South rapprochement, joint action was largely absent because of different priorities (Yugoslavia) and domestic pressures (Austria). Sekulić focuses on Energoprojekt, a company which served as the vehicle for Yugoslavia's economic influence in the Global South. She analyzes large infrastructural projects in which Energoprojekt (with its joint ventures) was involved, concluding that these projects, paradoxically, created debt and thus “neocolonial enclosure” (p.274). Although Energoprojekt's endeavors did not create nonaligned architecture, Sekulić argues that they formed the most tangible materialization of ideas expressed during summits (p.263).

In Part Four, Agustín Cosovschi discusses the limits of Yugoslavia's nonalignment by focusing on Yugoslavia's political and diplomatic initiatives in Latin America. Yugoslavia's failure to establish influence in Latin America enables Cosovschi to provide a critical assessment of nonalignment. According to Cosovschi, after the Cuban Revolution, Yugoslavia's “‘herbivore’ conception of nonalignment” had little appeal in Latin America (p.297). If realities of Latin America stymied Yugoslavia's foreign policy objectives there, Africa provided the space for affirmation of Yugoslavia's global role. Nemanja Radonjić in his chapter argues that Africa was an “ideological creation” which served as a metaphor for nonalignment as well as the “ideal continent” for Yugoslavia's global activism (p.303).

The final part of the book deals with the concepts of mobility and migrations during socialist Yugoslavia and in its aftermath. Leonora Dugonjic-Rodwin and Ivica Mladenović trace the trajectories of students from Africa and Asia

in Yugoslavia and in the post-Yugoslav space. Relying on archival sources and interviews, they emphasize personal experiences instead of top-down policies. They invite us to look at the presence of international students not as a “by-product” of the policy of nonalignment but as complex phenomena of identity building and accumulation of cultural capital. David Henig and Maple Razsa examine the links between nonaligned Yugoslavia and the Muslim world from 1961 to the Balkan route, providing the “affective history of Yugoslav non-alignment” as a possible alternative to dominant Eurocentric and Yugocentric understandings of NAM (p.363).

Looking at these empirically, thematically, and methodically diverse chapters, one wonders how this volume would look if the voices from scholars (and archives) from the nonaligned world were included in it. Stubbs promises to dismantle the “Yugocentric” approach, namely studying NAM “primarily through the lens of the study of socialist Yugoslavia” (p.23). Yet the book in many respects remains “Yugocentric” in its outlook (beginning, ironically, with its title). This is not necessarily a bad thing, because with Yugoslavia at the center of its scholarly inquiry, the book achieves a coherence that is often missing in edited volumes. The book’s main strength rests in its diversity. Even when in disagreement, the contributors are in conversation with one another, and the assembly of different “fragments” finely captures multifaceted and often contradictory and contested roles that Yugoslavia played in NAM. This book will be indispensable to those who are studying the history of Yugoslavia’s nonalignment and NAM more broadly. Theoretically and methodologically innovative, it will be a valuable source but also an inspiration to scholars interested in international and transnational connections between the so-called Second and Third Worlds.

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