

***Une histoire en travelling de l'Albanie (1920–1939): Avec, au-delà et en deçà de l'État.*** By Nathalie Clayer. Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2022. 490 pp. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. Maps. €33.00, paper.  
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With this new book, *Une histoire en travelling de l'Albanie (1920–1939): Avec, au-delà et en deçà de l'État*, Nathalie Clayer, the author of several publications on Albania's modern history and the Ottoman and post-Ottoman Balkans, embarks on a different scholarly journey that reconceptualizes and challenges the traditional and “nationalized” narratives of nation- and state-building processes. She has broadened the scale of investigation by intertwining the local, regional (Balkan/Adriatic/Mediterranean), European, and transnational levels. By placing them together, each casts a new light on the others and thus co-produce one another through multiple temporal dynamics. What emerges from this exploration of the nation state in-the-making, seen through a constantly “moving camera” (17), is a complex and fluid socio-temporal space full of action, actors, and potentiality.

The book consists of thirteen chapters organized in three sections. The first part examines the political processes as spaces of contestations and negotiations within (post)-imperial, neo-imperial, and (trans)-national frameworks. The interweaving of various socio-political developments began within the European space with the recognition of the Albanian Principality in 1913, a sovereignty guaranteed by the Great Powers. Clayer focuses on specific forms of political mobilization at the intersection of the clandestine and the public, center and periphery, and violence and non-violence. Her “camera” captures the role of the secret societies, a phenomenon that derived from the shared late Ottoman space, which had analogs in the other post-Ottoman successor states. The author also investigates the post-imperial Habsburg impact in the Albanian nation-building process through the history of the national museum in Tirana. In addition, the debates on the Civil Code disclose various forms of transmission, adaptation, and circulation of European ideas about constitutionalism that marked nation building as modernizing process. The political space as a multi-confessional one, especially in education and religion, was also shaped by and coproduced with Catholic and Eastern Orthodox actors and their state sponsors, such as the Vatican, Italy, and Greece.

The second section elaborates on the social construction of the national space and the tensions of its “territorialization and nationalization” (41) from above, the middle, and below. For example, Clayer analyzes schools' laicization through “neutralization” of state institutions (194). The albanization of the toponyms as well as the demarcation of the southern borders provided other ways for nationalizing the social space, which was also an uneven process. The construction of new mosques in the 1920s distinguished Albania from its neighboring countries. This physical appropriation of the space marked both an “affirmation of a reformed Islam and a sovereignty in the face of Europe” (233).

The last part applies a biographical approach to both individuals and families. Clayer signals a polyphony of voices and bodies on the move. She perceptively traces the Ottoman background of an imam and religious scholar; the experiences of a young educated woman from the incipient middle classes; the neo-colonial extraction practices by an Italian entrepreneur in tandem with the private economic profits and political connections that brought to power Ahmet Zogu, the future King Zog of Albania (1928–39); the bureaucratic peregrinations of a vice-prefect; and the multigenerational family history of establishing interpersonal networks. Such re-spatialization also led to nationalization of social interactions. Moreover, Clayer is also attentive to gender, material culture, and generational commonality and difference.

Through such intimate “portraits” she examines how administrative reforms were negotiated and co-produced locally and transnationally.

Clayer’s book deepens our understanding of state building through the case study of modern Albania placed within the broader theoretical framework of nationalism. The book is successful in avoiding the usual historiographic practice of privileging a top-down approach. In Clayer’s story, the state appears as one amongst many other political and social protagonists. Another key feature is the amplification of the post-imperial space, with a focus on the Ottoman and Habsburg legacies. One wish, though: that Clayer would have considered the social not only in ethno-religious terms but also as class stratification. One was also wondering how public health, and more broadly welfare policies, impacted the legitimation and perception of the new nation state.

*Une histoire en travelling de l’Albanie* is a valuable contribution to the intersection of state and nation building within a broader transnational framework. The study expands the concept of the nation state by fleshing it out from within, above, beneath, and beyond its territorial, institutional, and ideological confines. The book would be of interest to students and researchers engaged in the history of southeastern Europe and European history.

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***Unmaking Détente: Yugoslavia, the United States, and the Global Cold War, 1968–1980.*** By Milorad Lazić. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2022. vii, 281 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$100.00, hard bound.  
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As the history of the Cold War continues to expand, especially with a look beyond the superpowers, new approaches at explaining the role of Yugoslavia are gaining ground. The traditional idea of Yugoslavia as in the middle of the superpowers or playing both sides merely for the sake of survival is becoming more nuanced and scholars are beginning to appreciate the influence of smaller powers. Part of this fresh gaze at Yugoslav foreign policy seeks to understand better the way that policy might have been driven with clarity and foresight; one of the core concepts where this manifested was in the role that Yugoslav leaders thought they could play in aiding international peace. Milorad Lazić’s monograph is a welcome addition to contemplating what that concept looked like from the late 1960s until 1980.

Lazić centers his exploration on Yugoslavia’s response to a superpower-led move towards détente. He argues that the foreign and domestic policy objectives of Josip Broz Tito’s government required that it disrupt détente because any superpower arrangement stood as a threat to it and other minor powers. As a result, Yugoslav commentary on global conflict sought to undermine the superpowers. Some examples that highlight Yugoslavia’s role include reactions to the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, whereby Tito reduced the conflict to simply the Soviets exerting influence through coercion. That event, as Tito told Emir Jaber al-Ahmad al-Sabah of Kuwait, was the “strongest blow to nonaligned states” (211). Similarly, the Yugoslav leaders recognized that they would be in “a permanent conflict” with Moscow because “it was obvious that the Soviet leadership sees everything through their interests as a big power” (220). On the one hand, it seems obvious that Tito would react to any violence in the world with hyperbolic negativity; this was, after all, how Yugoslav foreign policy gained stature and matured since the Korean War. The idea of a permanent