

Betrayed by Britain *by Momcilo Selic*

"And hung my head and wept at Britain's name."

—Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Tito's Flawed Legacy by Nora Beloff, Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

If there be monsters, they yawn from within.

It is hard not to see justice in the story of an empire, brought low by its unwillingness to defend itself. "This book is in part a penance for unquestioningly accepting the Titoist bias shared by most of my countrymen," writes Nora Beloff, former British correspondent from Belgrade, in her new book, *Tito's Flawed Legacy*. But there was no bias. Instead, there was shortsighted self-interest, rationalized into doctrine, sentiment, or worse.

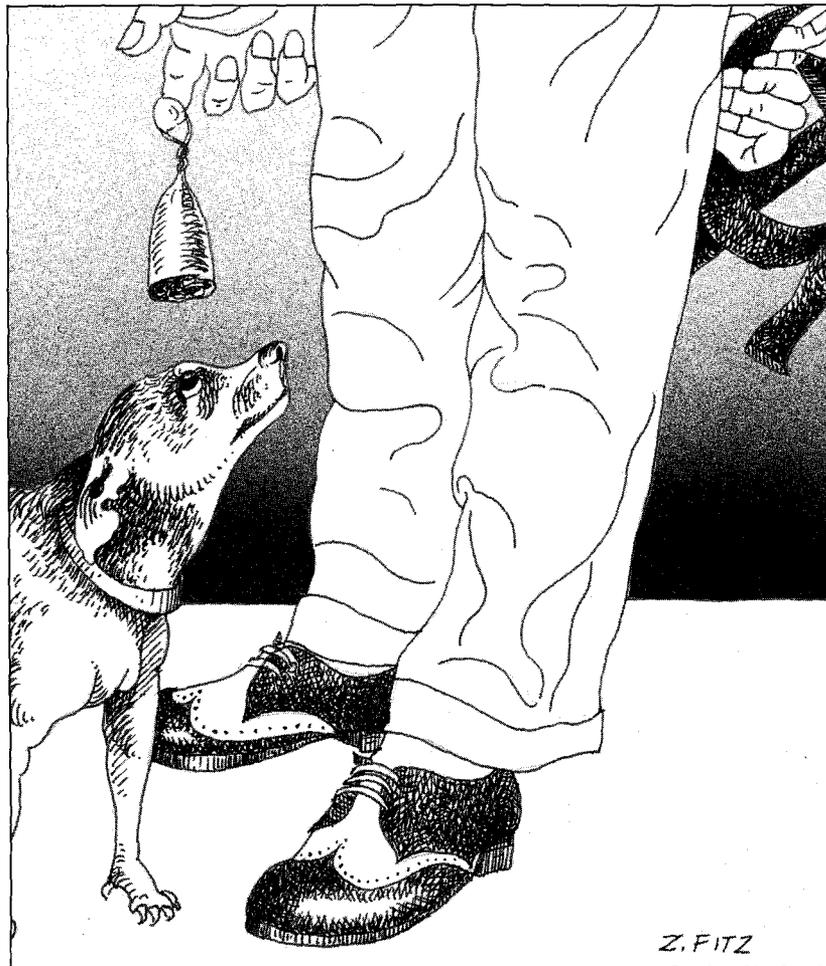
"Do you intend to make Yugoslavia

your home after the war?" Winston Churchill asked Brigadier Fitzroy Maclean, in 1943 in Alexandria.

"No Sir," replied his envoy to Tito.

"Neither do I," Churchill had said then. "And that being so, the less you and I worry about the form of government they set up the better."

John Donne long forgotten, Churchill was only continuing his government's policy towards Yugoslavia since 1941. If Czechoslovakia was sacrificed in 1936, why shouldn't another Eastern European impediment be used to buy a gasp of life? Though among individuals there is a name for such behavior, among states only survival counts. Maybe that's why so many of them have disappeared from the face of the earth.



Beloff, as Her Majesty's subject, did not initially question such policy. After all, wasn't it perfectly common that lesser people and races should sacrifice themselves for their betters? Mercifully, no one in the West has said that publicly, except Hitler. But facts have a way of speaking by themselves.

In 1941, Great Britain aided a coup in Belgrade that brought down a government intent on keeping Yugoslavia out of World War II. The new government, praised by Churchill, had as little to place in Hitler's way as the old. The Germans overran Yugoslavia in 10 days and then began a program of dismemberment and of genocide committed against its Serb, Jewish, and Gypsy population. The British, unable and unwilling to aid Yugoslavia even as little as Greece, lauded the resistance movement of Colonel Draza Mihajlovic, until the Communist Partisans appeared. Then, disregarding their own previous Special Operations Executive (SOE) directives, they asked the Yugoslavs to do what they counselled other Europeans to avoid, namely, to attack the Germans en masse. When Mihajlovic refused to permit 100 Serbs to be shot for each German slain, 50 for each wounded, the British transferred their support to the Partisans, who felt no such qualms. Thus the Communists, whose chief worry was the safety of the Soviet Union and whose aim was Communist revolution, became a gambit used by Churchill to offset Stalin's demands for a second front in Europe. In Teheran, Churchill curiously upheld Yugoslavia as just such a front, while the Soviet dictator justly pointed to the marginal effect of the Partisan war effort.

Possibly, Churchill may have planned an Allied Front in the Balkans, but his idea was vetoed by President Roosevelt, because too many Americans would die in such an attempt. Yugoslavs were allowed to die instead.

Even after the war ended, as Beloff records, and as Nikolai Tolstoy documents in his new book (*The Minister and the Massacres*), the British forcibly repatriated from Austria some 40,000

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Yugoslav refugees to Tito. They, and a further 200,000 Croat refugees whose surrender was refused by the British, were massacred by the Partisans almost to a man, woman, and child.

Empires, even if reluctant, oblige. But the British, who preferred to acquire and maintain theirs largely by proxy, could not accept such a rationale. Behind the unspoken belief that a single British life was worth any number of others, lay the possible knowledge of the fickleness of this world, ungrateful to victor and vanquished alike. So in 1945 Czechoslovakia was sold once again to a successful tyrant, as was Poland, over whose fate the war was ostensibly begun.

Beloff, understandably, does not discuss broad geopolitical issues within her book, but she can only be commended for her fidelity to the truth. It is only to be regretted that she has been vehemently attacked by those of her countrymen who, like Basil Davidson, Fitzroy Maclean, William Deakin and his student, Mark Wheeler, have turned pro-Titoism into a profession. (By the way, Sir Fitzroy Maclean *did* go to live in Yugoslavia, in a villa given to him by Tito.)

These paragons of dispassionate justice seem to find nothing wrong in wanting for Yugoslavia what they wouldn't accept in their own home country. As before, during, and after the war, Yugoslavs are expected to suffer interminable hardships in order to fit into a "larger picture," painted by Churchill, MacMillan, and others. In what way was Winston Churchill, who forged an alliance with the most heinous tyranny on record in order to combat a geographically closer tyrant, any different from those anti-Communist Yugoslavs who collaborated with the Italians to contain murderous revolutionaries in their own midst? Yet, it was only the Yugoslavs who were sent back to Yugoslavia, to be interred alive by "patriots" inspired by Moscow.

Beloff's account of Tito is also highly revealing. Josip Broz is shown as a shiftless youth, a volunteer in the Austrian Imperial Army, a willing NCO in the 1914 "punitive expedition" against the Serbs, a POW turned revolutionary to improve his status, a seducer of a 15-year-old Siberian girl, a renegade father and husband, a Comintern

toady, a hatchetman against his own Yugoslavian "comrades," a defiant terrorist, as well as the leader of a party that, even during the Axis occupation, made war against its own countrymen the principal agenda. Few, including Winston Churchill, believed Tito's pledge not to turn Yugoslavia Communist; yet in 1948 Tito was once again given *carte blanche* by the West, to do what Mihajlovic had been prevented from doing. Needless to say, post-Soviet Yugoslavia only intensified its Pol Potian measures to prove its Communist orthodoxy. The reign of terror continued well into the 1950's, when the last Royalist guerrillas were shot and their corpses exhibited to the populace.

Slaughtering a cow for a pound of meat has never been considered wise; yet, time and again Yugoslavia had been traded for temporary, illusive, and even personal gain. In 1941, the price was 10 days of war; in 1943 it was Stalin's goodwill; in 1945 it was "peace in our time"; in 1948 it was Stalin's displeasure, all the way until 1980 when Josip Broz died, to be mourned by everyone from Qaddafi and Idi Amin-Dada to Sir Fitzroy Maclean and Margaret Thatcher.

As Beloff ably shows, Yugoslavia's edifice of myth, upheld by draconian "verbal crimes" laws within its borders, and by human corruptibility abroad, has pointed a way to many similar ventures. For their part, the Yugoslav Communists have aided, by arms, sanctuary, and diplomatic support, the following "liberation movements" around the globe: Greek Communists from 1945-48; Algeria's FLN in the 1950's, Nasser in 1956; Angolan, Mozambiquean, and Cap Verdean rebels in the 1970's; PLO since its inception, as well as Nicaragua and SWAPO at the time of this writing. The list is far from complete, and Yugoslav arms are still killing people from Shat-El-Arab to El Salvador. In that part of her book named "Non-Aligned Against the West," Beloff tells Western readers what the Yugoslav media never hid from theirs. It was in the late 1970's, after all, that Tito publicly placed Yugoslavia, as he had all along, on the "side of socialism," in case of a final showdown.

Today, the "Yugoslav syndrome" is hard at work in Southern Africa and

Central America, as it was previously in Cuba, Vietnam, and Cambodia. In all those upheavals, Soviet-sponsored Marxists denied any involvement, or any desire to institute the "dictatorship of the proletariat." Despite Jane Fonda's reversion to keeping trim, her actions in support of a crime against the human race, its Vietnamese subdivisions, were very much in accord with those of many British and American politicians and bureaucrats in their dealings with Yugoslavia.

But history does teach. To some it teaches that a phalanx was no match for a legion, while to others that weaknesses of mind, spirit, and body are preludes to disaster. If the Yugoslav case, so aptly cited by Beloff, succeeds in counteracting at least some of the West's miraculous virginity, the whole of Yugoslav experience, including over a million horribly slain, would not have been in vain. Unfortunately, as the case of the 1389 Battle of Kosovo shows, it took three centuries of unmitigated disaster for the Austrians to realize that their enemy was capable of capturing Vienna itself.

Are we to wait for our Sobieski to deliver us from barbarity, perchance from a spaceship?

Unless we turn to gambling, the West's flawed legacy on Yugoslavia can best be overcome by making Nicaragua the last of such takeovers. Schools and hospitals, after all, do not outweigh murder, deception, misery, and barbarism. At least that much has been repeatedly made evident to us, every decade since the end of the last century.

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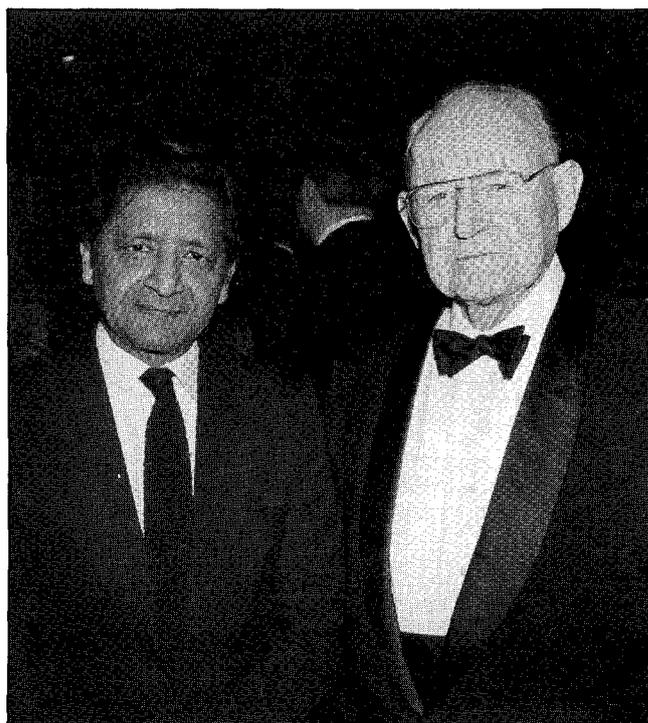
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THE INGERSOLL PRIZES 1985

The fourth annual Ingersoll Prizes, presented during an awards banquet on November 21, 1986, at Chicago's Ritz-Carlton Hotel, recognized the achievements of V.S. Naipaul and Andrew Lytle. The T.S. Eliot Award for Creative Writing went to V.S. Naipaul, while Andrew Lytle was honored as the recipient of the Richard M. Weaver Award for Scholarly Letters. Inaugurated in 1983, The Ingersoll Prizes (each carrying an award of \$15,000) are supported by The Ingersoll Foundation, the philanthropic division of The Ingersoll Milling Machine Company, and are administered by The Rockford Institute.

Attending the banquet were nearly 100 scholars, writers, and community leaders, including former Weaver laureate Russell Kirk; the directors of The Ingersoll Foundation, Clayton Gaylord, Edson Gaylord, and Robert Gaylord Jr.; Rockford Institute directors Norman McClelland, George O'Neill Jr., and Clyde Sluhan; as well as several *Chronicles* regulars, contributing editor John S. Reed and the redoubtable M.E. Bradford. Also in attendance were British Consulate General R.J. Carrick, Newberry Library President Charles Cullen, Henry Regnery, and the president of Northwestern University, Arnold Weber.

Both of this year's Ingersoll laureates spoke to the assembled guests, and their remarks will appear later this year as feature essays in *Chronicles*. Also speaking as part of the program were John Howard, president of The Ingersoll Foundation and counselor to The Rockford Institute, and Thomas Fleming, executive secretary of The Ingersoll Prizes and editor of *Chronicles*.



V.S. Naipaul and Andrew Lytle pose for a collegial photograph.

V.S. Naipaul

As an unflinching explorer of a troubled world, V.S. Naipaul has no peer among contemporary writers. Both in his novels and his reportage, he has been a relentless enemy of political and ethical illusion. His books have clarified the principles of humane civilization while at the same time reminding us of their fragility. He has traveled the world with an independent mind, resisting every reduction of thorny realities to ideology or formula. In works of satiric comedy and of profound tragedy, he has illuminated the dilemmas of modern life with patience and vision. Our confidence in the future is bolstered by the honesty and strength of his imagination.



Mr. Naipaul listens patiently to an off-the-cuff editorial from Thomas Fleming.

Andrew Lytle

A leader of the Southern Renaissance in American thought and letters, Andrew Lytle has left a lasting mark on the cultural history of 20th-century America. With his eloquent defense of agrarian principles, he has helped to secure the literary and intellectual traditions of the South as a precious heritage for the entire United States. As an acclaimed novelist, Lytle has given imaginative shape to his moral vision of family, place, and tradition. He has challenged and fostered the genius of promising younger writers in his work as a teacher, critic, and editor. In an increasingly mechanized age, he has given expression to the highest aspirations of human life.