

Thursday, 7 September 2023, 09:30–13:00

Venue: The Institute of Economics, Zagreb Trg J. F. Kennedyja 7, Zagreb

GLOBAL EXCHANGE WORKSHOP II

NON-ALIGNMENT AND NEW INTERNATIONAL ORDER(S)

In many ways, the Non-Aligned Movement was most effective in terms of global governance discourses in the 1970s, not least in terms of the articulation of, firstly, the New International Economic Order (and associated Programme of Action) accepted at the UN General Assembly Special Session on 1 May 1974. Later, the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) was agreed at the UNESCO General Assembly held in Belgrade in September 1980. The NIEO represented a set of challenges by the countries of the Global South to the processes of colonialism and neo-colonialism. It involved close collaboration and exchange between NAM, the G-77 and UN bodies, primarily UNCTAD. In many ways, it was a well thought-through and holistic proposal based on the currents of intellectual thought, including dependency and world system theory, and responding to the ability of Arab oil producers to work together to raise oil prices. It was never implemented fully and was resisted by US-led global neoliberalism but continued to have impacts in a variety of spheres. Arguably, it had an afterlife in terms of reframing developmentalist agendas and linking with a new paradigm around women and development, even as the global governance architecture shifted towards the International Financial Institutions. Later, the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) applied some of the key tenets of the NIEO to the sphere of media and communications. In this workshop, we address the nature of the exchanges that created the NIEO, the NWICO, and other manifestations of decolonial principles as well as the work tracing the translation of these discourses into practice.

9:30 – 11:00

Keynote I (live)

Sašo Slaček Brlek, Social Communication Research Centre, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

The Paradox of Self-Sufficiency and the Demise of the NWICO: Exploring Internal Contradictions

ABSTRACT

The demise of the New International Economic Order (NIEO) and the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) has often been attributed to Western opposition. However, my presentation aims to shed light on the lesser-explored internal contradictions within NWICO that hindered its potential for success. Specifically, I will examine the concept

of self-sufficiency, which formed the link between NIEO and NWICO, and how it embodied an unresolved contradictory position concerning US hegemony.

The acceptance and rejection of US hegemony were simultaneously present within NWICO and NIEO reforms, as they opposed some fundamental aspects of post-war US foreign policy, like the free flow of information in the case of NWICO. However, these initiatives were also dependent on support from the US and other wealthy capitalist nations. To realize their objectives, NWICO and NIEO relied paradoxically on assistance from the very countries they sought to become independent from, a fact strikingly revealed by the swift demise of NWICO as the US, UK and Singapore withdrew from UNESCO in 1984 and 1985, leaving UNESCO without a third of its budget.

Another limitation of NWICO stemmed from its association with a pedagogical and paternalistic approach pursued by the national elites from the developing countries. Their primary goal was to catch up with the West, which influenced communication policies in several ways. Firstly, by perceiving citizens as not yet fully empowered, communication policies exhibited a paradoxical mix of emancipatory and repressive measures, often oscillating between the two. Secondly, the focus on national cultures as the subjects of emancipation disregarded their hierarchical and conflictual nature. Lastly, the emphasis on national development and the establishment of communication infrastructure overshadowed the potential for genuine emancipation. The pursuit of national development interests undermined NWICO's potential for promoting participatory and two-way communication systems. Rather than being a symptom of not enough Western values – as critics of NWICO claimed at the time – the limitations of NWICO stem from the opposite, a specific policy of catching up with the West by the national elites of dependent countries of the world system.

Sašo Slaček Brlek is a research associate at the Social Communication Research Centre of the University of Ljubljana. His research primarily centers on the transformative influence of digital technologies and the rise of digital platforms within the field of journalism. He investigates how these developments are affecting the working conditions of newswriters, the division of labor within news publishers, and the power dynamics between management and labor. Recently, his focus has been on delving into the history of the New World Information and Communication Order, with a particular emphasis on the role played by the Non-Aligned Movement and Socialist Yugoslavia.

11:00–11:30 COFFEE BREAK

11:30–13:00

Keynote II (via video link)

Ljubica Spaskovska, University of Exeter, UK

Decolonising Global Governance – The Search for a New Order and the (Un)Making of Sustainable Development

ABSTRACT

A plurality of internationalisms and a variety of political imaginaries shaped global governance in the twentieth century. The presentation will historicize contemporary debates on sustainable development and globalization and question standard accounts of multilateralism and international economic relations. I will explore the ways in which the perceptions and views on development and a 'new international order' evolved and changed, foregrounding the evolution of some of the core developmental clusters (e.g., women and development; the environment and development; disarmament and/or development), pioneered in the 1970s and 1980s by the neutral and non-aligned states and closely entwined with the discourse and visions about a 'New International Economic Order'. Remaining mindful of the fact that 'there are Souths in the geographic North and Norths in the geographic South', the talk will also trace the overlooked North-South alliances and shared visions about the major global challenges facing humanity that crystallized in the 1970s under the umbrella of the NIEO.

Ljubica Spaskovska is the author of *The Last Yugoslav Generation: The Rethinking of Youth Politics and Cultures in Late Socialism* (Manchester University Press, 2017) and *1989. A Global History of Eastern Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), co-written with James Mark, Tobias Rupprecht, and Bogdan Iacob. She is a Book Review Editor at Contemporary European History and her recent research on the history of internationalism, non-alignment and development has been published in the *Journal of World History*, *Contemporary European History*, *Labor History* and *Nationalities Papers*.

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