

The Other Globalisers: How the Socialist and the Non-Aligned World Shaped the Rise of Post-War Economic Globalisation

Veranstalter: Exeter University's Research Project „1989 after 1989: Rethinking the Fall of State Socialism in Global Perspective“; Georg-August University of Göttingen; Robert Brier, London School of Economics; Hella Dietz, University of Göttingen; James Mark / Ned Richardson-Little / Ljubica Spaskovska, University of Exeter

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The story of post-World War II global economic integration is often told as a one of capitalist success and socialist failure, in which non-Western actors appear as the objects rather than the subjects of globalisation. Yet this narrative ignores countless forms of transnational connection and entanglement that emerged out of socialist and non-aligned contexts in the second half of the twentieth century, including circulations of people, goods, expertise, and ideas, as well as the creation of new markets and institutions, many of which survived long past the collapse of the Cold War order. „The Other Globalisers,“ invited scholars from three continents and a wide array of disciplinary backgrounds to address this imbalance and discuss the following questions: to what extent can we speak of socialist and non-aligned actors as „globalisers“? What sort of alternatives to neoliberal forms of globalization did they offer, and were these „true“ alternatives or did they ultimately feed into Western capitalist expansion? Finally, if thinking about „other globalisers“ can help us reformulate the history of postwar transnational integration, where and when should that revised history begin?

The first day of the conference began with a panel on „Chronologies of Socialist Globalizations,“ laying out several of the assumptions that, the panelists argued, have deprived non-capitalist globalisms of scholarly attention. Two contributions – a paper by MARC-WILLIAM PALEN (Exeter) on notions of „free trade“ in nineteenth-century Marxist thought and another by JAMES MARK

(Exeter) on Soviet Bloc involvement in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in the 1960s-80s – highlighted socialist efforts to counter economic nationalism(s) by supporting international trade; both papers sought to counter simplistic histories of globalisation that begin only in the 1970s and take only Western-led developments into account. A third paper by CHRISTINA SCHENKEL (Riverside) analyzed East German coffee export projects in Vietnam in order to counter another cliché: the idea that economies removed from capitalist trade networks became isolated, stagnant, or „frozen in time.“

The second panel, „Global Integration,“ called for a renewed focus on the 1970s – albeit with a programmatically broad understanding of that decade's importance in the history of economic integration. ANGELA ROMANO (Glasgow) looked at competing Soviet and Western European proposals for fostering pan-European cooperation in the 1970s, analyzing their contrasting aims and strategies in order to explain why the Western European approach ultimately won out. BESNIK PULA (Blacksburg) then called attention to 1970s-era reforms in Central and Eastern Europe, arguing that these reforms laid institutional groundwork that made it easier for those countries to attract foreign investment in the post-socialist era. This account stands in contrast with a common narrative in which the integration of Central and Eastern European economies into global markets had to begin from scratch in 1989.

Panel 3, „Global Institutions Without Imperialism,“ began an exploration of what exactly was „other“ about „other globalisers,“ in this case looking in particular at institutions with explicitly anti-imperialist aims. JOHANNA BOCKMAN (Fairfax) discussed the contributions of Yugoslav banks to financial globalization, focusing on what she identifies as a unique – as compared with its liberal counterparts – vision of a world economy that seemed to underwrite those contributions. MAX TRECKER (Berlin) spoke about the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), highlighting its role in facilitating relationships between the Soviet Bloc and the Global South. VLAD PAȘCA (Bucharest) ex-

plored Romania's interventions in developing countries, arguing „in order to fulfill its counter-hegemonic, anti-colonial mission, Romania had to behave as a neoliberal actor.“ Finally, LJUBICA SPASKOVSKA (Exeter) considered the Non-Aligned Movement and its conception not as a withdrawal from global economic competition, but rather as a way to compete with the West as equal partners.

Day One of the conference concluded with a roundtable discussion taking stock of the conversation thus far and considering some of the challenges faced by scholars in pursuit of „other globalisers.“ Johanna Bockman highlighted the problematic nature of socialist globalisation's archives, given that many of the documents relating to state-socialist involvement in global commerce were absorbed into corporate archives – where they are routinely destroyed or heavily restricted – in the course of post-1989 privatization. FEDERICO ROMERO (Florence) then raised questions about the term „globalisation“ itself, noting its absence from the vocabulary of the actors under discussion. He also cautioned against the conflation of socialist and non-aligned projects or aspirations with „actual economic relations,“ which were conditioned by the histories of empire and other Western modes of globalism as well as the day-to-day exigencies of international trade.

WOLFGANG KNÖBL (Hamburg), the final panelist of the roundtable session, began his comments by expanding on concerns about the term „globalisation.“ Knöbl pointed out that this term – compared with its precursor, „modernization“ – is slippery and undertheorized, and that scholars who use it need to think carefully about its analytical purchase. Did the „other globalisers“ of the Cold War era really want to build something global, or were they more interested in bringing their own communities or nation-states further into the modern age? To what extent might this scholarly conversation profit by engaging with the concept of „multiple“ or „alternative“ modernities, or by paying more careful attention to the relationships between globalisation and nationalism? When the discussion was opened to the floor, conference participants took up several of the problems raised by the three panelists, in particular the prob-

lem of terminology. Disagreements emerged as to the extent to which contemporary actor categories („internationalism,“ „interdependence“) were preferable to the more recent concept of „globalisation.“ Participants also considered a range of similar and adjacent terms, including „transnationalism,“ „mondialisation,“ and „cosmopolitanism.“

The second day of the conference began with a panel called „Neoliberalism and the Socialist and Nonaligned Worlds.“ PATRICK NEVELING (London) used a study of special economic zones (SEZ) to introduce a reconceptualization of the 1970s as a „period of consolidation“ rather than a moment of radical rupture. TOBIAS RUPPRECHT (Exeter) then offered a critique of scholars who assume that Eastern European neoliberalism must be a result of the West having imposed its values on the former East Bloc after 1989. Evidence to the contrary from Poland and elsewhere indicates that local elites were developing „home-grown“ institutions for neoliberal economic thought before the 1990s-era Western advisors arrived, and continued to do so after they left.

The title of Panel 5 was „Africa and Alternative Globalisations.“ DARIUS A'ZAMI (Renmin) discussed Chinese infrastructure projects in Tanzania and the uniquely socialist character of Chinese development aid. THEODORA DRAGOSTINOVA (Columbus) then discussed Bulgaria's relationship with Nigeria in order to illustrate the multipolarity of the Cold War order and to highlight differences among state-socialist approaches to global outreach, arguing in this case that Bulgaria was unique in the resources it devoted to cultural diplomacy over other forms of engagement. Third, PAVEL SZOBI (Florence) discussed Czechoslovak involvement in Angola in the 1970s and 1980s, noting a trajectory from proletarian-internationalist concerns to a more economically driven pragmatism in the later years of the Cold War in which the former Portuguese Empire was envisioned more as potential markets than politically liberated spaces.

The final panel of the conference, Panel 6, was devoted to „Resources and Experts.“ JAN ZOFKA (Leipzig) opened the discussion with a paper about an East German method of deriving gasoline from brown coal. East Ger-

man interest in developing this method did not, Zofka argues, represent the pursuit of autarky. Rather, the GDR tried to use brown coal coking as the basis for global partnerships, for example with China. In a similar vein, NED RICHARDSON-LITTLE (Exeter) presented a discussion of the „Friendship Pipeline“ that delivered Soviet oil to the GDR, emphasizing the deep significance with which it was imbued as a symbol of transnational socialist solidarity that they hoped would spread to the global level – a significance that made it all the more painful when Soviet oil shipments began to dry up in the 1980s. Finally, shifting away from fossil fuels, ANDREW KLOIBER's (Hamilton) paper on East German coffee export projects in Vietnam (which also featured in Panel 1) show the GDR as constrained by, but also seeking actively to circumvent, the pressures of the global capitalist system.

At the end of the day, participants reflected on the conference as a whole in a wide-ranging final discussion. Many agreed that if the „otherness“ of socialist and non-aligned globalisation remained difficult to pin down, it was likely in part because the neoliberal model against which „other globalisers“ were defined was itself an elusive concept. The question that had framed the conference – whether socialist and non-aligned agents of globalization constituted a true „alternative“ or merely a tributary to an emerging neoliberal consensus – had been considered in a wide array of case studies, with several compelling answers that varied from context to context. Many speakers made suggestions for further thought and research in this vein: these included more thoroughly incorporating histories of science and technology, paying special attention to non-state actors, and thinking about competition *within* rather than merely *between* nation-states, to name only a few. If the range and quantity of new ideas put forward in this final discussion are any indication, „The Other Globalisers“ has laid the groundwork for a rich and productive ongoing conversation.

Conference Overview:

Panel 1: Chronologies of Socialist Globalisations

Marc-William Palen (University of Exeter) –

Marx and Manchester: The Socialist Foundations of Post-1945 Globalisation

James Mark (University of Exeter) – Alternative? Socialist? Writing Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union into Postwar Globalisation
Christina Schwenkel (University of California – Riverside) – The Afterlife of Global Socialism: Technology and Mobility in the Post-colony

Discussant: Wolfgang Knöbl (Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung)

Panel 2: Global Integration

Angela Romano (University of Glasgow) – Competing Plans of Pan-European Cooperation: European Community's Policy and Soviet Proposals During the 1970s Globalization
Besnik Pula (Virginia Tech) – From Reform Socialism to Transnational Capitalism: The Political Economy of Foreign Direct Investment in Central and Eastern Europe

Discussant: Federico Romero (European University Institute)

Panel 3: Global Institutions Without Imperialism

Johanna Bockman (George Mason University) – Financial Globalisation Through Socialist and Non-Aligned Banks

Max Trecker (Institute for Contemporary History, Berlin) – Globalisation by Import Substitution? The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) and the Global South

Vlad Pasca (New Europe College) – Global Advocacy or Self-Interested Relativism? Socialist Romania, International Organizations, and the Quest for Economic Development (1960s-1980s)

Ljubica Spaskovska (University of Exeter) – The Non-Aligned, the UN and the Defeat of the 'New International Economic Order'

Discussant: Richard Toye (University of Exeter)

Round Table Discussion

Johanna Bockman (George Mason University)
Wolfgang Knöbl (Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung)

Federico Romero (European University Institute)

Panel 4: Neoliberalism and the Socialist and

Nonaligned Worlds

Patrick Neveling (School of Oriental and African Studies) – The New International Division of Labour before the New International Economic Order: Special Economic Zones and Neoliberal Globalisation since 1947

Tobias Rupperecht (University of Exeter) – „Neoliberal“ Ideas in the Communist Periphery

Discussant: James Mark (Exeter)

Panel 5: Africa and Alternative Globalisations

Darius A'Zami (Renmin University of China) – Extra-Liberal Interdependence: The Land Commission, Heterodox Globalisation and its Roots in Sino-Tanzanian Relations in the Cold War

Theodora Dragostinova (The Ohio State University) – The Second World in the Third: Bulgarian Notions of Economic and Cultural Development in Nigeria, 1976-1982

Pavel Szobi (European University Institute) – Was Angola the „Czechoslovak Africa?“ The Obstacles of the ČSSR Support for the MPLA Government Between 1975 and 1992

Discussant: Patrick Neveling (School of Oriental and African Studies)

Panel 6: Resources and Experts

Ned Richardson-Little (University of Exeter) – East Germany and the Failed Dream of Global Socialist Oil Solidarity

Jan Zofka (University of Leipzig) – Coal as the Other Oil: East German Technical Experts and Industrial Expansion in the Socialist World of the 1950s

Andrew Kloiber (McMaster University) – Brewing Global Socialism: Coffee, East Germans and the World, 1949-1989

Discussant: Piers Ludlow (LSE)

Concluding Discussion

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