

„Divided Together?“ International Organizations and the Cold War

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Introduced as a preliminary online workshop, this conference provided a vibrant, collegial space for scholars to develop their papers in preparation for the physical meeting in Vienna, summer 2022. The organisers SANDRINE KOTT (University of Geneva), ELISABETH RÖHRLICH and EVA-MARIA MUSCHIK (both University of Vienna) outlined their intellectual motivations for the theme of international organisations and the Cold War. The timeliness of the conference was also touched on by Kott, outlining how international organisations have been cast as „powerless“ in an increasingly isolationist geopolitical context. However, the popularity of this workshop, in addition to the nature of many of the papers exploring the subtle or „soft power“ of these organisations, has suggested that there are swathes of historians considering questions about international organisations, expertise, and forums of knowledge exchange.

The format of the workshop was uniquely energising in an era of zoom-fatigue, with two half-day sections and four panels in total. Each panel consisted of two papers followed by a fifteen-minute breakout room and a Q-and-A session. This innovation allowed for the attendees to introduce themselves to two or three others, discuss the papers, and prepare questions to submit to the chair for the Q-and-A session. In a workshop dedicated to international organisations and expertise, this format fostered an atmosphere of collegiality and intellectual exchange.

Panel I introduced the workshop to themes of global scientific innovation, international development, and Soviet Union (USSR) politics. MAREK EBY (New York University) spoke of the USSR's engagement with malariaology and the subsequent global eradication programmes in the 1950s and 1960s. He

traced the fate of the Stalinist vision for revolutionary eradication in the post-Stalin era as the international sphere of malariology transformed with the establishment of the WHO campaign. Seeking to go beyond the „limits of the WHO“, the USSR scientists and medical experts made connections across other political forums to exchange resources and solutions to the pandemic. Eby's greatest contribution to the conference was to insist that his research spoke to a need for a broader conception – or definition – of „international organisations“. The epistemic communities established during the Cold War in the field of malariology went along different faultlines than simply Cold War allegiance and rivalry; eradication was an international problem that shaped different definitions of political allegiance within the WHO and beyond.

ARTEMY KALINOVSKY (Temple University/University of Amsterdam) developed his project on USSR development expertise from conversations with USSR economists about their careers post-1991. His interviewees had spent the rest of their professional lives writing reports and undertaking research for international organisations like the UN or the World Bank. Kalinovsky highlighted how tracing these careers could illuminate the philosophical and intellectual continuities from USSR scientific circles into mainstream international knowledge in the post-Cold War era. His work helps to unearth longer roots of technocratic diplomacy as the USSR worked alongside UNDP from the 1960s onwards. Thus, the USSR economists' shift from domestic employment to consulting with an international organisation was less surprising than at first glance. Kalinovsky's paper demonstrated that the involvement of USSR scientists was not just a performative act of multilateralism, these organisations also benefitted from USSR knowledge and Central Asia as a space to exchange development expertise.

This first panel helped to illustrate the benefits of expanding definitions of „global“ or „international“ networks and to go beyond typical or dominant spaces of Cold War interactions and ideas of development.

Panel II focused on global governance and international treaties, pushing us to reconsider assumptions about geopolitical divi-

sions and allegiances during the Cold War. BÉRÉNICE GUYOT-RÉCHARD (King's College London) presented a paper on oceanic diplomacy and governance negotiations during the mid-twentieth century, focusing on the drafting process of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Positioning UNCLOS as a new international order at sea, Guyot-Réchard emphasised the complexities of not only the legal undertaking but also the geopolitical complexities of this negotiatory process. Interacting with issues of territorial sovereignty, military and territorial expansion, unequal resource distribution, and capitalist aspirations (manifesting through extractive relationships with the sea), UNCLOS represented an ambitious global governance agenda.

Twentieth century statehood complexities are at the heart of these questions about oceanic governance during course of negotiations. Much like the first two papers of the day, Guyot-Réchard's work encourages us to decentre the Cold War and rethink our assumptions about geopolitical divisions. With regards to UNCLOS, the dominant Cold War rivals were partners in protecting their access to the oceans. Conflict arose between industrialised nations and a collection of non-industrialised, land-locked, and other marginalised territories, rather than across polar or global north/global south lines. UNCLOS negotiations, therefore, provided unindustrialised or smaller nations an important „seat at the table“ of international diplomatic discussions.

NED RICHARDSON-LITTLE (Erfurt University) also spoke to issues of global governance and treaty processes as he examined the development of the International Narcotics Treaty. Richardson-Little argued that the treaty represented the beginning of a Cold War period of collaboration and competition moving towards a „global humanitarian cause“ of fighting international drug abuse. However, the treaty is part of a longer history of anti-drug global governance beginning with opium-based prohibitions in the interwar period. His paper traced the emergence of the UN treaty as a global alternative to other international organisations, like INTERPOL, working on drug enforcement dur-

ing the Cold War.

Although Cold War powers attempted to manipulate the negotiations, Richardson-Little highlighted how the treaty complicated dominant ideological faultlines and encouraged different world order allegiances. Within the UN negotiations, although drug abuse was projected as a non-political, non-ideological humanitarian crisis, the debates were filtered through ideological lenses, Cold War paranoia, and the emergence of decolonising nations. Inequality and decolonisation became part of this agenda as great powers worked together at the expense of the Global South.

Panel II emphasised the roles of international treaties in global governance transformations during the Cold War period and demonstrated how industrialised or powerful nations, like the US and USSR, often united in allegiance, despite ideological rivalries, in efforts to compete for control of global resources.

Day 2 began with panel III and concentrated on international responses to decolonisation. MARCIA C. SCHENCK (Potsdam University) presented a paper on the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the organisation's efforts to develop a new refugee convention for the African continent. Exploring the formation of the OAU, Schenck argued that it was only during this specific moment of decolonisation that the organisation could emerge, although the continent still struggled to extract itself from the influence of European powers. The violence of counterinsurgency and Cold War proxy wars, as in Congo, provoked waves of displacement across the continent, highlighting the need for a transnational response.

Schenck argued that the OAU convention paved the way for framing asylum as „a peaceful“ act and part of broader human rights and decolonisation innovations. The 1951 UN convention on refugee rights only applied to displacement on the European continent but the OAU had been inspired to develop a similar piece of legislation, relevant to African circumstances and Pan-African values around refugee protection. Instead, the OAU convention framed refugees as agents of development and referred to them as „set-

tlers“ as part of the progression of a nation – „assets“ rather than „threats“. Rather than supplemental to the 1951 convention, the OAU convention was developed to be part of a broader global conversation about refugee management, expanding the discussion beyond the borders of the European continent.

BOGDAN IACOB (University of Exeter) also spoke to issues of regionalism beyond Cold War alignment. His paper focused on how Balkan nations sought to overcome bipolarism and instead shape a postcolonial Europe on the periphery. Taking inspiration from other peripheral states and constructing networks across non-dominant networks, Iacob demonstrates how former imperial centres shifted within transnational debates throughout the Cold War period, inspired by notions of solidarity from decolonising contexts. Distancing themselves from the characterisation of the Balkan region as a „powder keg“, political initiatives within the Balkans promoted different developmental and intellectual imaginaries of the region by working alongside UNESCO on Eastern Europe and beyond. Thus, Iacob’s paper shows how Balkan efforts to construct a new postcolonial region, on the margins of the European continent, were influenced and supported by decolonial mentalities and political thought, fostered within international spaces like UNESCO.

Panel III illustrated the transference of global ideas across continents and centre/peripheral networks as decolonisation prompted a transformation of understandings of political units, statehood, and imaginaries of federalism.

Panel VI highlighted collaborations across the Iron Curtain and knowledge exchange between the two geopolitical rivals, the US and USSR. KATJA DOOSE (University of Fribourg, Switzerland) presented her paper on USSR scientific interventions in climate change studies. The USSR encompassed a vast number of different climate zones, territories, and physical geographies, thus hosting a desirable range of expertise and valuable experience for other nations. Doose’s paper focused on the USSR participation with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). As part of a „weather race“ between

the US and the USSR, the IPCC witnessed the scientists shifting from conflict to cooperation with one another through the *détente* period in the 1970s. Although geopolitics shaped much of the interactions between the Cold War rivals, Doose insisted that there was value in rethinking competition and collaboration within scientific or knowledge exchange contexts. Animositities would sometimes exacerbate competition, but Doose’s examples of collaboration provide important insight into how Cold War conflicts were interpreted and, in some cases, solved.

This cross-cultural collaboration was also visible in the paper offered by AGATA IGNACIUK (University of Granada/University of Warsaw) and SYLWIA KUŹMA-MARKOWSKA (University of Warsaw). The authors examined the evolution of two family-planning organisations in Poland and traced their influence on international networks of abortion rights and population control. Engaging with international organisations legitimised the family planning groups and helped to inform the language and policies promoted in domestic spheres (both pro- and anti-abortion). Ignaciuk and Kuźma-Markowska’s paper demonstrates the connections between the Americas, Western, and Eastern Europe during the 1970s and 1980s through religious and healthcare networks, enabling circulations ideas and solidarity to travel across the Iron Curtain.

The workshop concluded with a short discussion questioning some of the conceptual definitions used by the papers’ authors, such as „Cold War“, „international organisations“, „international staff“, and „expertise“. The presence and perhaps, more interestingly, the absence of the Cold War rivalries within the international organisations chosen by the workshop authors are important for thinking about how these transnational, technocratic personnel navigated the peaks and troughs of Cold War geopolitics alongside their personal and national aspirations for knowledge, expertise, and exploration. Can we usefully think of international organisations, broadly conceived, as spaces where international actors attempt to restrain the effects of Cold War politics on them and their careers; how far were international forums spaces for sci-

entists and bureaucrats to push back against the ideological constrictions? Ultimately, how nations and their experts reacted and evolved to invent or connect to international organisations despite the ideological rivalries and restrictions on trade and technological transfer are shadow influences of the Cold War.

Finally, we concluded that perhaps it was worth thinking about plural „Cold Wars“, with optics beyond the dominant players. Taking this workshop as an important jumping point, Cold War studies would be improved through further study of the different constellations of networks with multiple loyalties other than their nationality. By the same token, the workshop would benefit with greater consideration of how international staff and experts used and played with these liminal spaces of restrictions and dynamic interests in order to work towards their (or their nations' or organisations') interests. Going beyond the categories that have previously excluded these peripheral stories, narratives, and organisations from conversations about the Cold War has enabled a far more complex – or nuanced – understanding of how international organisations negotiated the shifting geopolitical dynamics of the twentieth century.

Conference overview:

Welcome/Introduction

Sandrine Kott (University of Geneva), Elisabeth Röhrlich, Eva-Maria Muschik (University of Vienna)

Panel I: Beyond the Cold War I? Global Development

Chair: David Webster (Bishop's University)

Marek Eby (New York University): Convening and Contesting Global Malariology: Soviet Expertise inside and outside the WHO Global Malaria Eradication Program, 1952-1969

Artemy Kalinovsky (Temple University/University of Amsterdam): Soviet-UN Development Cooperating and its Afterlives in Central Asia

Panel II: Governing Global Issues

Chair: Monika Baar (Leiden University)

Bérénice Guyot-Réchar (King's College London): Governing the Sea: UNCLOS Negotiations and the Making of Contemporary International Diplomacy

Ned Richardson-Little (Erfurt University): International Narcotics Institutions in the Cold War: From Competition to Cooperation

Panel III: Beyond the Cold War II? International Responses to Decolonization

Chair: Alanna O'Malley (Leiden University)

Marcia C. Schenck (Potsdam University): The Cold War, Refugees and the Organization of African Unity: Reflections on International Bureaucracies and New International Paradigms

Bogdan Iacob (Institute of History in Bucharest): Second Europe: Imagining a Postcolonial Mediterranean through the Balkans

Panel IV: Collaboration across the Iron Curtain

Chair: Federico Romero (EUI)

Katja Doose (University of Fribourg, Switzerland): A Global Problem in a Divided World – Collaboration on Climate Change during the late Cold War, 1972-1991

Agata Ignaciuk (University of Granada/University of Warsaw) and Sylwia Kuźma-Markowska (University of Warsaw): Cold War Family Planning: Polish Engagements with the International Federation for Family Life Promotion and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (1950s-1980s)

Concluding Discussion

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