

Miskovic, Natasja; Harald Fischer-Tiné, Nada Boskovska (Hrsg.): *The Non-Aligned Movement and the Cold War. Delhi - Bandung - Belgrade*. London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group 2014. ISBN: 978-0-415-74263-4; 232 S.

Rezensiert von: Arno Trültzsch, GWZO, Universität Leipzig

More than a quarter century after the collapse of real socialism and the end of the Cold War, historians rediscover this decisive era, which consumed almost the complete second half of the last century. In this vein of reassessment, scholarly focus has continuously shifted to the historical role of the so-called non-aligned and neutral states in the Cold War arena. Various conferences¹ and monographs² have contributed to a revival of this particular field of global historiography. Both inspired by postcolonial and classic Cold War studies, new approaches reach beyond these frames, concentrating on certain networks, agents and regional dimensions of political activity „beyond the blocs“. Both the European context of „perforating the iron curtain“³ and the reactions from the Global South to the bloc division, i.e. Afro-Asian solidarity and non-alignment resonate in the articles of this collective volume, edited by Natasja Mišković, Harald Fischer-Tiné and Nada Boškovska. It has come out as a volume of Routledge's modern Asian history series, despite its European and African side dimensions. The book is both the result of a conference held at Zurich University⁴, Mišković's and Boškovska's home institution, and their personal research on Yugoslav entanglements and the beginnings of the Non-aligned movement (pp. xv-xvii/p. 9). Thus the reader encounters a wide array of themes covered by a dozen scholars with different regional focus and background, bound together by a chronological order in three parts: „Afro-Asian solidarity“ as the starting point before 1945, „Cold War entanglements“ as the backbone of the book and „A voice in the international system“ as a concluding chapter on tangible impact and effects on non-alignment.

Natasja Mišković introduces the main objectives of the volume: tracing the diverse origins of non-alignment, both topical

and regional, and how the concepts around it evolved (notably anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, peaceful coexistence, the call for self-determination and the fight against racism and global economic inequalities). She notices very correctly that until this day „research on non-alignment is indeed scarce“ (p. 1), especially in terms of historicizing accounts.⁵ Like other contributors to the volume, Mišković emphasizes the two strands that helped form non-alignment in the end: the transnational anticolonial struggle starting long before 1945, marked by Afro-Asian solidarity (Bandung 1955) and turning steadily into the economic North-South dimension, and the emerging Cold War and its problems arising for small and newly independent countries. These strands overlapped of course, notably in the struggle against imperialism, which was often directed at the West but increasingly also at the Soviet-Socialist sense of mission in the so-called Third World. Non-alignment's most practical achievement is its impact on the United Nations: securing a vast majority in the General Assembly

¹ Cf. this recent event at the History department of Lausanne University: „The Role of the Neutrals and Non-Aligned in the Global Cold War, 1949-1989“ (13 to 15 March 2014), see the report: <<http://www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/tagungsberichte-5499>>.

² E.g. Jürgen Dinkel, *Die Bewegung Bündnisfreier Staaten. Genese, Organisation, Politik (1927-1992)*, Munich 2015; Thomas Fischer, *Neutral Power in the CSCE. The N+N States and the Making of the Helsinki Accords 1975, Baden-Baden 2009*; Rinna Kullaa, *Non-Alignment and Its Origins in Cold War Europe. Yugoslavia, Finland and the Soviet Challenge*, London 2012.

³ Cf. e.g. Thomas Fischer, *Bridging the Gap between East and West. The N+N as Catalysts of the CSCE Process, 1972-1983*, in: Poul Villume / Odd Arne Westad (eds.), *Perforating the Iron Curtain European Détente, Transatlantic Relations, and the Cold War, 1965-1985*, Copenhagen 2010.

⁴ The conference was organised together with Harald Fischer-Tiné (also co-editor of the volume) and held at both institutions in June 2011 under the title „The Cold War and the Postcolonial Moment: Prehistory, Aims and Achievements of the Non-Aligned Movement, 50 Years after Belgrade“ (p. xvi/9), see the report: <<http://www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/tagungsberichte-3719>>.

⁵ A notable exception is Tvrtko Jakovina's opus magnum, which is only available in its original Croatian edition and could therefore raise only little attention outside former Yugoslavia: Tvrtko Jakovina, *Tréća Strana Hladnog Rata (The Third Side of the Cold War)*. Zagreb 2011.

and organising a „third voice“ in the Security Council (although a thorough analysis on this aspect is missing in the book). Before introducing the volume’s articles, she lays out a concise state of the art, revealing that authors have often dealt with only one of the two strands that lead to the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) – instead of a combined, truly global narrative (pp. 8f.).

Dietmar Rothermund provides us with a general overview of the „era of non-alignment“ emphasizing again the two strands the movement was built on, i.e. bloc division and anti-colonial struggle. He very convincingly argues that Afro-Asian solidarity failed because it was based on the single commonality that all these diverse countries had suffered the yoke of colonialism (pp. 20f.). Only in combining the efforts, i.e. to overcome or counterweight the bloc division *and* to organise the newly independent countries along common interests, the three main protagonists Tito of Yugoslavia, Nasser of Egypt and notably Nehru of India (the father of the concept as such) could successfully promote a desirable foreign policy called „non-alignment“, resulting in the Brioni Agreement 1956 and the Belgrade Conference 1961 (pp. 23-26). He then briefly relates to the Non-Aligned countries’ role in the UN and the growing tensions within the different factions, the resulting crisis of the NAM especially after 1989 and the legacy and long-lasting impact on new initiatives such as BRICS and IBSA (pp. 28-32).

Introducing the first chapter on Afro-Asian solidarity, Maria Framke’s piece on the 1930’s events in and around India sheds new light on how Indian independence activists turned to establishing a common struggle against colonialism with African peoples. She has analysed newspaper articles and cartoons from India on the Abyssinian war, where she encountered a boasting critique of British colonial rule that is linked to the oppression of Ethiopia by Fascist Italy. Britain tolerated the brutal conquest of this independent African state as a „civilizing mission“, which triggered the harshest criticism by Indian commentators (pp. 40-41). These reactions can be interpreted as early notions of Afro-Asian solidarity that became so prominent after India’s in-

dependence during the 1950s and formed one basis for the NAM.

Carolien Stolte also addresses the impact of civil society in the making of Afro-Asian solidarity and its later ramifications for the Cold War by exploring the „Asiatic Hour – New Perspectives on the Asian Relations Conference 1947“ (title, p. 56). She gives new insights on political endeavours like Pan-Asian and women’s conferences, assessing their impact on (trans-)cultural identities. They all pointed to joint Asian action against imperialism and colonialism and influenced the issues addressed at the Asian Relations Conference at New Delhi in 1947 and its aftermath.

Itty Abraham explores the social phenomenon of race in the international system and how racial categorizations paved the way for constructing new identities in the postcolonial space. He also chooses the example of India and analyses the nation-building process in relation to the international sphere using the notion of „scales“ to determine contested political spaces and border zones in the making (cf. pp. 77ff.). However, the notion prevailed only in the formative years of anticolonial struggle and the formation of an Afro-Asian solidarity movement. When other actors like Yugoslavia and Egypt entered the stage, „race“ lost its unifying symbolism, being replaced by common interests for a just and peaceful coexistence of all nations (cf. pp. 89f.).

Part II of the book is opened by Lorenz Lüthi’s enlightening piece on the Cold War entanglements of various non-aligned countries. He provides various examples that show how several declared non-aligned countries openly took sides in Cold-War related conflicts or contravened the movement’s principles: he elaborates on India’s nuclear armament (cf. p. 98f.), Egypt’s armed interference in the Arab-Israeli conflict and the subsequent siding of most NAM members with the Palestinian cause (p. 100ff.), and lastly the Indochina conflict (resulting in the NAM’s clear alignment with pro-Soviet regimes like Ho Chi Minh’s Vietnam and Khmer Rouge Cambodia) (p. 104f.). All these issues point to the ambiguity of the NAM in regard to the bloc division, especially in its decisive period 1961-1973, making it „as much a participant in the Cold War as it was victim“ (p. 107).

In a source-fed tour de force through the Hungarian Crisis of 1956, Nataša Mišković gives new insights into Tito's and Nehru's crisis management, making the events a first acid test for non-aligned policies. She elaborates on the contested meaning of „peaceful coexistence“, particularly pointing to its flawed interpretation by the Soviet Union (p. 115ff.). Yugoslav involvement in the Hungarian Crisis, which hampered their recently restored relations with the still mistrustful Soviets, and Nehru's misconception of Tito's true influence on the Soviet bloc proved to be the weak points of a future non-aligned movement, despite the hopes triggered by de-stalinization and the Brioni agreement earlier in 1956 (cf. p. 132f.).

In a similar critique of the NAM, Amit das Gupta has studied various German sources that reveal how the German Question turned the non-aligned conferences into arenas for propaganda of the two German states (cf. p. 155), thus opening a „third side of the Cold War“.⁶ Yugoslavia's stance of establishing relations with both German states proved to be toxic for many African countries relying on West German development aid during the 1960s (e.g. Ghana, cf. p. 149f.).

The third part on the NAM as a voice in the international system begins with Matthieu Rey's analysis of Arab points of view of the Bandung conference, where he compares Iraqi and Syrian perspectives and reactions with the Egyptian voices regarding colonialism, imperialism (always equated with Zionism and Israel) and the chances for inter-Arab politics in a non-aligned forum like Bandung.

Jovan Čavoški then returns to Yugoslavia, giving new insights into the prehistory and aftermath of the Belgrade Conference, largely drawing on the only recently published work by two eminent Serbian historians on the issue⁷, besides his own archival research. He convincingly retraces Tito's and thus Yugoslavia's path from being a renegade in the Soviet bloc to choosing non-alignment. New alliances formed on this path strengthening Yugoslavia's potential to make her voice heard, particularly inside the United Nations (pp. 187-192). Čavoški, a specialist on Chinese-Yugoslav relations also underlines the harsh

differences with China who wanted to keep Europeans and especially the Yugoslav „revisionists“ out of the Bandung process (cf. pp. 190, 197).

Jürgen Dinkel, one of the eminent recent scholars on non-alignment, finalises the book from a different angle, seeing to the influence of mass media on the summits of the NAM. He outlines how single countries used the summits for first international appearances, often staging their newly acquired independence and mediating own messages. Media presence was always huge, particularly in Belgrade 1961 (p. 210) and thus the non-aligned countries always tried to secure common messages to the world, providing a third voice to the international public. When the NAM became an institutionalised movement, its own news agency (established in 1976) helped to spread these alternative perspectives on world problems (cf. pp. 210f.).

Altogether, the volume covers both a rather long period (1927-1990) and provides an utter global view on non-alignment and its implications for the Cold War era. Besides the regional aspects that some articles present, most authors (above all Mišković, Lüthi, Čavoški and Rothermund) succeed in linking single countries' endeavours with global developments to react to the bloc division and colonialism. The book is a valid contribution to a truly transnational Cold War history, which successfully transcends Eurocentric perspectives on the bloc division and the evolution of the international system. One point of criticism may be that not a single paper on American and/or Soviet reactions to the NAM summits/initiatives has made it into the volume. Likewise, a study on the tangible outcomes of non-aligned initiatives in international affairs, particularly in the UN system is lacking. However, the book is most certainly not the

⁶ A notable exception is Tvrtko Jakovina's opus magnum, which is only available in its original Croatian edition and could therefore raise only little attention outside former Yugoslavia: Tvrtko Jakovina, *Treća Strana Hladnog Rata (The Third Side of the Cold War)*. Zagreb 2011.

⁷ Cf. Dragan Bogetić/ Ljubodrag Dimić, *Beogradska konferencija nesvrstanih zemalja 1-6. septembra 1961. Prilog istoriji Trećeg sveta (The Belgrade Conference of Non-Aligned States, 1-6 September 1961. A Supplement to the History of the Third World)*, Belgrad 2013.

final word on Cold War history and the so-called „Third World“ and its impact on international relations.

HistLit 2015-4-055 / Arno Trültzsch über Miskovic, Natasa; Harald Fischer-Tiné, Nada Boskowska (Hrsg.): *The Non-Aligned Movement and the Cold War. Delhi - Bandung - Belgrade*. London 2014, in: H-Soz-Kult 23.10.2015.