

Spaces of Interaction between the Socialist Camp and the Global South. Knowledge Production, Trade, and Scientific-Technical Cooperation in the Cold War Era

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To tell the story of the post-war and post-colonial globalization without falling into the trap of a simplified vision of bipartite economic division of the world, the workshop's aim was to renew the spatial approach as an analytical category and methodological approach to alternative means of thinking of global (especially socialist) entanglements and socialist impact on new order. Although the „socialist globalization“ seems to be an already established term, with several international projects dedicated to it, the question still exists how the global was/is revealed and made through the interaction within the East-South cooperation. Aiming to explore socialistic spaces of interaction as a major actor in producing and (re-)shaping social, political, cultural and economic processes, as well as the rationale of actors who used and influenced spatial dynamics, the workshop invited international scholars to discuss the Socialistic Bloc in its role as a global player and its contribution to the (un-)making of globalization and the global economic system. To what extent can the spaces of interaction, produced by East-South entanglements, be seen as exceptional zones or rather as a systematic product of globalization? To what extent can we speak about one globalization and the socialistic engagement in it or were there rather few alternative globalization paths?

Those questions were partly addressed by the keynote JOHANNA BOCKMANN (Fairfax) held. By looking at the relations between socialist economies and financial globalization, particularly at the Yugoslavia Bank

for International Economic Cooperation and its financial approach to establish a new economic order, she argued that financial globalization can hardly ever be called global in so far as globalization — understood as the general creation of an interconnected world with a deeper consciousness of possible financial flows, mutuality and equality — can hardly ever develop under capitalism. It never happened on a global scale and it always needs to be considered which countries are (not) reached by the financial flow, which are used as a connection platform or to what extent the financial flows are followed by an intensification of social relations and consciousness across world-time and space. As for the Yugoslavia banks, they were very successful on the co-operating front and by providing finance for expanding production. By doing so, they contributed to global geographies (of solidarity) despite the obstacles generated by capitalist countries. They showed many activities even in the late 1980s when the socialist globalization attempt collapsed due to the 80s crisis.

The financial flows and co-dependencies remained relevant for almost every paper and/or as a core point of reference. The first panel on „Knowledge Production“ drew greater attention, though, to questions concerning history of knowledge and explored the chances, limits, and contradictions of knowledge transfer within the East-South relations. ERIC BURTON (Vienna) discussed the conflicted socialistic visions of modernity that were decided about in post-revolutionary Zanzibar. Zanzibar became, shortly after its independence in 1963, a crossing point of socialist rivalries and a laboratory of socialist-made modernity, especially for the GDR. The GDR's concept of shared commitment and class-based anti-imperialism clashed with both the China-orientated concept of self-reliance and the race-based anti-imperialism of the Zanzibar regime. As a result, the GDR's influence shifted from the „best friends“-status in the 1960s to the unwanted aid blamed for the economic ruin in the 1970s.

The GDR and its „making“ of the socialistic world was the pivot also of the second paper that was given by MONIKA MOTYLINSKA

(Erkner). Motylinska addressed the involvement of East German architecture in the export and conducting of architectural projects within the COMECON's activities and their cooperation with non-European actors in the building industry. Whereas the GDR executed its projects in Comecon countries, the real involvement of the Comecon was often limited to the label.

The third paper of the first panel — by CHRIS SOUNDERS and THORSTEN KERN (Cape Town) — examined the connections between the GDR and Namibia in the context of struggling for freedom of the SWAPO in South Africa with its goal of „scientific socialism“. Whereas the first direct involvement of the GDR in Namibia can be dated to 1989, since the mid-1970s many Namibians were granted scholarships, received among others technical training and military aid from the GDR. The ideological, material and technical interactions remained, though limited by space, changing political relations and alliances.

The close look on such limitations and obstacles that the cooperation was facing is, as JAMES MARK (Exeter) highlighted in his commentary, crucial for the understanding of the success and/or failure of alliances as well as its specification and patterns of internationalization and bilateral globalization. By looking at the socialist globalization as a process of control and distinction of flow of productions and knowledge, it is also important to bring into question the already (pre-)existing tradition of knowledge in the global South and to ask how the expertise did change over time and what did/does survive from those connections?

Following the first panel, the discussions moved on to the NIEO and the question of its extended internationalization that was debated in a roundtable round between MIHALY SIMAI and ERVIN LASZLO (Budapest) – two well-known economists / system theorists that were recalling the process of developing the new international economic order launched by the American plan of development and by the United Nations from the 1960s. The main question during the whole process remained the same: What is new, how utopian is it, how can we get rid

of the old system, how to develop the NIEO with countries of so many different interests and what makes a difference?

The second panel „Scientific-Technical Cooperation / Development Policy“ was opened up by JUN FUJISAWA (Yohokama) who explored the Soviet and GDR's policy vis à vis Iraq and the Iraq Petroleum Company between 1967-1979, by illustrating the indecisiveness of Soviet policy, changes of its pattern in oil support as well as of Iraq's attitudes towards the Soviet-East policy. He demonstrated that the Oil Crisis made Iraq stronger and less interested in the idea of the red consortium.

MAX TRECKER (Munich / Berlin) surveyed the GDR-Bulgarian cooperation in Syria of building the Syrian cemetery industry. Thereby he pointed out how differentiated the supply model of both GDR and Bulgaria was: to developing countries, for instance, the GDR sent Rumanian technology, to Syria Czechoslovakian technology and to customers paying with good currency Belgian technology. The Bulgarian-GDR cooperation shows the complexity of economic and political relations and supply chains between the CMEA and the Global South that led to a failure of the cooperation but simultaneously enhanced Syrian industrialization by import substitution.

Both papers demonstrated, as FRANK HADLER (Leipzig) stressed in his commentary, the importance of questioning to what extent some actions can be read as a socialistic approach, where is the line between a socialistic vision and thinking in terms of economic profit, how strong is the relevance of geopolitical positions towards the new economic order and which conditions were driven by the process of globalization and which can be perceived as an active actor of it?

The second part of the panel was led by MARCIA C. SCHENK (Princeton / Berlin) and her analysis of experiential spaces of Angolan and Mozambican Worker-Trainees in the GDR. Picturing labour migrant's experiences and memories, she discussed the dormitory, factory, and disco as (gendered) spaces of inclusion and exclusion where the formal encounters between African migrants and East Germans could become intimate and de-

exoticized. Whereas racial and national prejudices disconnected, at the same time gender codes — at least the patriarchal masculine language — connected by contributing to changing patterns of gender dynamics.

Shifting away from individual memories, NANA OSEI-OPARE (Los Angeles) examined the Ghana-Soviet Technical Cooperation and its ideological and practical outcomes. As he demonstrated, not the Soviet Union but mainly Ghana dictated and controlled the space of interaction and economic assistance and did not hesitate to criticize the incompetence of Soviet experts and equipment.

BOGDAN JACOB and IOLANDA VASILE (Bucharest) then used a study of Romania involvement in Mozambique in the field of healthcare (development aid) and oil (development assistance) to demonstrate the translation of macro discourses of solidarity into micro-histories of experiencing Mozambique by Romanian experts, of shaping a new logic of horizontal bilateralism and of Romanian attempts to introduce the socialist modernity to Mozambique. Both, but especially the doctors believed in the superiority of the Eastern European system and felt that the Mozambican vision of medical healthcare stayed in the way to „catch up“ with more advanced visions of socialism.

As GEERT CASTRYCK (Leipzig) summarized in his commentary, the African perspective appears to have been more pragmatic and less ideological as the Eastern European. While the papers showed the logic of colonial and postcolonial attempts and visions, a closer look at the practices of horizontality would be needed as well.

The next panel on „Trade and Trade Infrastructure“ was initiated by ANNE DIETRICH (Leipzig). She explored the economic cooperation between the GDR and Ethiopia over coffee and between the GDR and Cuba over fruits, picturing the shift from the idealized vision of socialistic solidarity to much more pragmatic dispositions in the 1970s. The bilateral trade was, as Dietrich argued, beneficial only for those partners who did not lose foreign currency due to the relating transactions — in this case for the GDR and Cuba. Ethiopia, however, started to benefit from the global coffee price development since the late

1970s and consequently dropped down the barter arrangement with the GDR.

SIMON YIN (Hefei) then called attention to the China-Soviet rubber cooperation in the 1950s, arguing that it was one of the most important cooperation projects of economic partnership that did not follow the classic trade relations based on mutual benefits. China's limited productive capacity was challenged by Soviet high demands and pressure on modification and ended up with cutting down the cooperation.

To what extent the cooperation patterns and cooperation cases, presented by both papers, could be indeed labelled as solidarity, and to what degree as commercial interests, asked UWE MÜLLER (Leipzig) in his commentary. What role did the infrastructure play, who were the experts and what influence did the COMECON have on the trade agreements and/or its split?

The second part of the panel on „Trade and Trade Infrastructure“ began with YURY SKUBKO's (Moscow) analysis of the Soviet impact on the diamond industry in South Africa. The Soviet-South African agreement illustrates a very pragmatic approach of two countries being under sanctions, representing opposite ideologies, but which needed one another to foster their respective national well-being by overcoming isolation and the shortage of financial profits and investments credits.

VICTOR PETROV (Florence) then looked at a different development, namely how the „Second World“ used the „Third World“ to get in touch with the „First World“ and thus how Bulgaria started to be capitalistic thanks to the cooperation with the „Third World“, in his case study on the export of electronics with India. By experiencing that the „free world“ was more restricted in technological exchange than the socialist one, Bulgaria made efforts to become part of the transnational business world and underwent a shift in understanding self-promotions.

The two papers demonstrated, as STEFFI MARUNG (Leipzig) highlighted in her commentary that there is a plurality of globalization projects and globalization has to be read as the multiplication of increasing flows and efforts of controlling them. A systemati-

zation can be hardly reached, but a broader look (beyond the Cold War) of the individual projects discloses the ways of how power relations and entangled modernization projects became part of socialistic and/or capitalists processes.

The final discussion resumed many of the commentary remarks. It reflected on the theoretical consideration of „master“ terms, such as „globalization“, „decolonization“ and „socialism“, among others, by expressing the need for overcoming the Eastern European-centric perception of the socialist globalization and the consequence thereof which is the strict dichotomy between the Socialistic Camp and the Global South, which in many cases was socialistic itself. For a start, we could focus more on the geography of solidarity as ways of knowledge transfer within the socialistic world, on interactions between socialistic countries and/or on interactions alongside developing policy within East-Global South connections. Furthermore, the micro perspective needs to be strengthened as the actors from the global South remained subaltern. However, beyond that, also the theoretical frame could use a deeper elaboration since the attempts to a broader systematization of the narratives are still partially missing and reduced to a collection of case studies.

Conference Overview:

Keynote:

Johanna Bockmann (Fairfax): Financial globalization as a socialist, decolonial project: UNCTAD, NIEO and non-aligned banking

Panel I: Knowledge Production

Bense Kosces (Leipzig): Introduction

Eric Burton (Vienna): Diverging visions in post-revolutionary spaces: East German advisers and revolution from above in Zanzibar (1964-1970)

Monika Motylinska (Erkner): The COMECON and knowledge production in the fields of architecture, town planning and design

Chris Sounders / Thorsten Kern (Cape Town): A Space of Interaction: the GDR and Namibia in the Cold War

James Mark (Exeter): Commentary

Roundtable: Mihaly Simai / Ervin Laszlo (Budapest)

Panel II: Scientific-Technical Cooperation/Development Policy

Section A:

Uwe Müller (Leipzig): Introduction

Jun Fujisawa (Yohokama): A united front against the Seven Sisters? The Soviet-East European support for the Iraqi oil industry and the nationalization of the Iraq Petroleum Company (1967-1979)

Max Trecker (Munich / Berlin): The grapes of cooperation: Bulgarian and East German plans to build a Syrian cement industry from scratch

Frank Hadler (Leipzig): Commentary

Section B:

Marcia C. Schenck (Princeton / Berlin): Working the factory and the dance floor: Angolan and Mozambican worker-trainees in East Germany (1979-90)

Nana Osei-Opore (Los Angeles): Socialist Help: Ghana and Soviet Technical & Scientific Exchanges (1957-1966)

Bogdan Jacob / Iolanda Vasile (Bucharest): Elective affinities under Duress: Limits of Romania-Mozambique Bilateralism (1976-1984)

Geert Castryck (Leipzig): Commentary

Panel III: Trade and Trade Infrastructures

Jan Zofka (Leipzig): Introduction

Section A:

Anne Dietrich (Leipzig): Bartering within and outside the COMECON: The GDR's import of Cuban fruits and Ethiopian coffee

Simon Yin (Hefei): China-Soviet rubber cooperation (1950-1953)

Uwe Müller (Leipzig): Commentary

Section B:

Yury Skubko (Moscow): National interests above ideology: Soviet diamond deals with

South African De Beers cartel during the Cold War

Victor Petrov (Florence): The Rose and the Lotus: Bulgarian electronic entanglements in India (1967-1990)

Steffi Marung (Leipzig): Commentary

Final Discussion

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