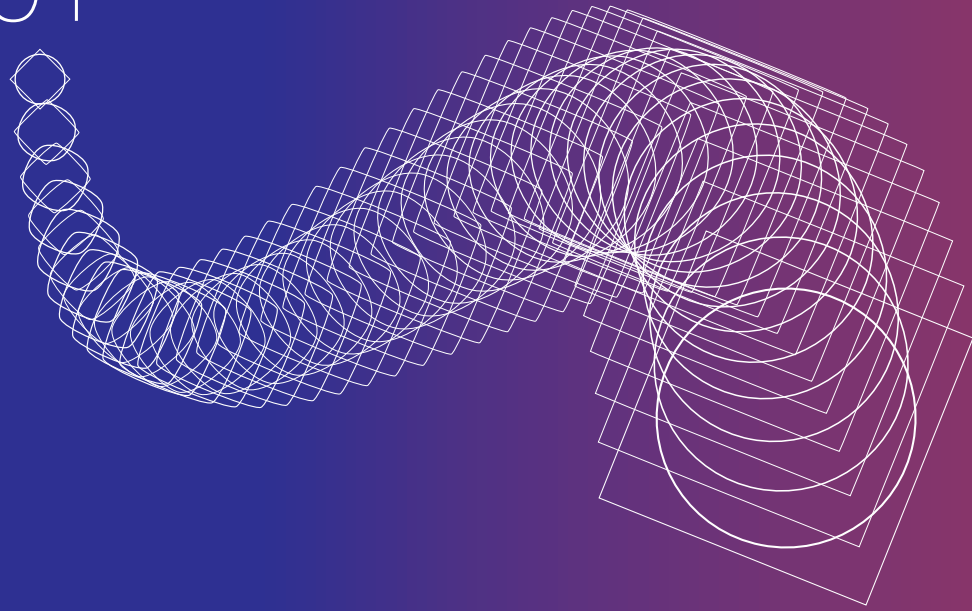


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Paul Stubbs

**THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT AND  
THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT AND  
THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT AND  
THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AND  
INFORMATION ORDERS: YUGOSLAVIA,  
THE GLOBAL SOUTH AND THE UN\*  
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**A**lthough, in factual terms, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) formally began with a summit in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in September 1961, a “spirit of non-alignment” can be traced much further back. In what stands to become a definitive history of NAM up to 1992, Jurgen Dinkel devotes the first two chapters of his book to the Brussels Congress Against Colonialism and Oppression of 1927—that led to the formation of the League Against Imperialism and For National Independence—and to the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung in 1955.<sup>1</sup> Fragments of a philosophy of non-alignment can also be found in Nehru’s writings and, indeed, in terms of *realpolitik*, in the agreement between India and China in 1954 known as the Panchsheel Principles, based on mutual respect for sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference, co-operation, and peaceful co-existence.<sup>2</sup>

India and China were, of course, important states in the Bandung Conference, which led to a communique articulating ten principles which, in broad terms, elaborate upon, and universalise, the

\* This text is the result of the collaborative research project *Models and Practices of Global Cultural Exchange and the Non-Aligned Movement. Research in the Spatio-Temporal Cultural Dynamics* (IPS-2020-01-3992), supported by the Croatian Science Foundation and the Slovenian Research Agency.

1 Dinkel, *The Non-Aligned Movement*, pp. 1–2.

2 Verma, Jawaharlal Nehru.

Panchsheel Principles, making more direct reference to the Charter of the United Nations. As Willetts notes, “peaceful coexistence” was viewed by pro-Western governments as too radical and replaced, at Bandung, by the eighth principle of “settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means”.<sup>3</sup> Made possible by, and focused on, processes of decolonisation, the countries gathered in Bandung made only vague reference to economic questions, resulting in a rather bland commitment to a “general desire for economic co-operation [...] on the basis of mutual interest and respect for economic sovereignty”.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Bandung hinted at cultural co-operation without ever really pinning down what was meant by “culture”. In the context of a frozen border dispute between India and China, a second Bandung never happened.

Instead, socialist Yugoslavia, emerging from international isolation after the break with Stalin in 1948, sought new allies in opposition to the two hegemonic global power blocs led, respectively, by the Soviet Union and the United States. A meeting on the island of Brijuni between Yugoslav President Tito, Indian Prime Minister Nehru and Egyptian President Nasser in July 1956 became “one of the constitutive myths of socialist Yugoslavia”<sup>5</sup> and, indeed, of non-alignment itself. The final document called for “the intensification of efforts to speed-up the development of underdeveloped regions” as central to the establishment of “a permanent and stable peace among nations”. It reiterated the importance of “international economic and financial cooperation” and called for a UN special fund for economic development”.<sup>6</sup>

The idea of a non-aligned summit crystallised in September 1960 at a meeting in the Yugoslav mission to the UN in New York, on the occasion of the 15th UN General Assembly, attended by Tito, Nasser, and Nehru as well as Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Sukarno of Indonesia. Nehru, in particular, was reluctant to commit to regular conferences, much less a permanent organisation, only agreeing to attend the Belgrade summit in September 1961 having received assurances that it would be a one-off event. Both the Bandung and Belgrade conferences can be seen as performative, presenting the developing nations on a global media stage.<sup>7</sup> In the case of the Belgrade event, fears of limited media coverage dissipated once work had begun on the building of the Berlin Wall on

13 August 1961.<sup>8</sup> Although there were only 25 participating states, with many in Latin America persuaded not to attend by the United States in the context of Cuba’s involvement, there were also more than 40 representatives of liberation movements, left-wing parties, trades unions, and the like. Although the conference was dominated by questions of security and, indeed, nuclear disarmament, it did not shy away from economic questions. The conference communique linked economic inequalities to imperialism and colonialism in a more radical form than in Bandung, stating that

efforts should be made to remove economic imbalances inherited from colonialism and imperialism. [...] It (is) necessary to close, through accelerated economic, industrial and agricultural development, the ever-widening gap in the standards of living between the few economically advanced countries and the many economically less developed countries.<sup>9</sup>

Indeed, in what can be seen as an early formulation of ideas that led to the New International Economic Order,<sup>10</sup> the states meeting in Belgrade agreed to hold a Conference on Economic Development in Cairo in 1962. The Conference communique focused on low rates of growth in the developing countries, observing that “the terms of trade continue to operate to the disadvantage of the developing countries, thus accentuating their unfavourable balance of payment position”.<sup>11</sup>

In terms of the NIEO, the holding of the first United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva from 23 March to 16 June 1964, one of the key demands from the Cairo economic conference, supported by many of the Soviet bloc countries,<sup>12</sup> was crucial. In addition, at the first UNCTAD conference the Group of 77 (G77) developing countries was established, with Yugoslavia as a founding member. Hence, almost overnight, there was a multiplication of arenas in which global economic inequalities could be discussed and in which the newly decolonised nations could find their voice. UNCTAD, under the initial leadership of Argentinian economist Raul Prebisch, much of whose work on declining terms of trade for peripheral economies informed the thinking behind the NIEO, became “the multilateral site where the global

3 Willetts, *The Foundations of the Non-Aligned Movement*, p. 61.

4 Records of the UNESCO General Conference 21st session.

5 Petrović, *Jugoslavija stupa na Bliski Istok*, p. 139.

6 Tadić and Drobnjak, *Documents of the Gatherings of the Non-Aligned Countries*, p. 9.

7 Dinkel, *The Non-Aligned Movement*. See also Turajlić, *Film as the Memory Site of the 1961 Belgrade Conference*, pp. 203–231.

8 Dinkel, *The Non-Aligned Movement*, p. 98.

9 Tadić and Drobnjak, *Documents of the Gatherings of the Non-Aligned Countries*, p. 18.

10 Astonishingly, Whelan, who argues this, completely ignores the role of the Non-Aligned Movement in organising the Cairo event, p. 201.

11 Cairo Declaration of Developing Countries.

12 Taylor and Smith, *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)*, pp. 9–10.

South might articulate its needs and problems".<sup>13</sup> However, from its very beginnings, it faced inevitable contradictions between acting as a technical assistance agency, being an analytical "think tank", an "honest broker" between the North and the South, and a "global South advocate", which severely limited its achievements.<sup>14</sup>

During the first UNCTAD, the statement from the G77 explicitly referred to "UNCTAD as a significant step towards creating a new and just world economic order [...] involv(ing) a new international division of labour oriented towards the accelerated industrialization of developing countries [...] (and) a new framework of international trade that is wholly consistent with the needs of accelerated development".<sup>15</sup> The Non-Aligned Summit in Cairo in 1964 further refined the critique of existing global economic and social inequality, stating

the structure of the world economy and the existing international institutions of international trade and development have failed either to reduce the disparity in the per capita income of the peoples in developing and developed countries or to promote international action to rectify serious and growing imbalances between developed and developing countries.<sup>16</sup>

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The first time NAM explicitly addressed cultural imaginaries was during the Preparatory Meeting for the second NAM summit, held in the Sri Lankan capital Colombo in March 1964. The last of 11 themes discussed was "Cultural, Scientific and Educational Cooperation" including the consolidation of international and regional organisations working on the topic. Hence, although not explicitly mentioned, a major focus here was, clearly, on influencing the main UN body whose mandate included these themes, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). "Culture", still undefined, was said to "widen the mind and enrich life", with cultural cooperation, alongside economic and scientific cooperation, necessary for deepening understanding, consolidating justice, freedom and peace, and contributing to development.<sup>17</sup> By the time of the NAM summit of October 1964, the "preservation and fostering of national culture" was one part of the Economic Declaration, combining a critique of the effects of "cultural imperialism" as a form of "alien ideological domination" with a not unprob-

13 Ibid., p. 1.

14 UNCTAD, UNCTAD: First twenty years.

15 Sauvart, *The Early Days of the Group of 77*.

16 Tadić and Drobnjak, *Documents of the Gatherings of the Non-Aligned Countries*, p. 31.

17 Ibid., p. 32.

lematic notion of the importance of the reaffirmation of "national cultural identity" and "the establishment of a national personality".<sup>18</sup> As Vijay Prashad has suggested, all newly independent decolonial nation states sought, albeit in different ways, to "assemble a history and an aesthetic".<sup>19</sup> This new "cultural canon" needed to be created and disseminated by a nationalist intelligentsia and was far from "natural" as the Cairo declaration seems to suggest. At the same time, as Prashad also suggests, such a notion was not at all incompatible with ideas of the importance of promoting cultural exchange and an anti-imperialist cultural internationalism.<sup>20</sup> The statement does, however, illustrate that, at least in terms of its work in formal conferences, NAM was a transnational body that reinforced, rather than challenged, the idea that sovereign nation states were privileged global actors or, in the case of national liberation movements, future sovereign nation states.

### NAM and the NIEO

There was a six-year hiatus in NAM summits between 1964 and 1970, for a variety of reasons that are too complicated to elaborate upon here. In the context of a lowering of political tensions between the two superpowers, a reinvigorated NAM was born at the Lusaka, Zambia, summit of September 1970. The hastily arranged summit was, in many ways, a result of close collaboration between President Tito of Yugoslavia and a new generation of leaders, notably Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Indira Gandhi of India, who all insisted on the movement being more pro-active, no longer just a "talking shop" and, crucially, focusing much more centrally on economic questions.<sup>21</sup> The Lusaka summit included a Declaration on Non-Alignment and Economic Progress which represented an early iteration of the ideas that were to be enshrined in the New International Economic Order (NIEO) less than four years later. The statement referred to "the poverty of developing nations" and their "economic dependency" as a "structural weakness of the world economic order", with the colonial past leading to a "neo-colonialism that poses insurmountable difficulties in breaking the shackles of economic dependency". This echoed both Prebisch's analyses of the economics of the periphery and Kwame Nkrumah's critique of "neo-colonialism".<sup>22</sup> The statement called on the UN to bring about "a rapid transformation of the

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18 Ibid., p. 91.

19 Prashad, *The Darker Nations*, p. 86.

20 Ibid., p. 88.

21 Willetts, *The Non-Aligned Movement*.

22 Prebisch, *The Economic Development of Latin America*, p. 22; Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*.

world economic system, particularly in the fields of trade, finance and technology, so that economic domination yields to economic co-operation".<sup>23</sup>

Three years later, the NAM summit in Algiers from 5–9 September 1973 included an Economic Declaration that referred to imperialism as a form of "open aggression against the economies of peoples who do not submit to foreign domination"<sup>24</sup> and contained an outline plan of action. Stating that "the international strategy of development" had failed, with 70% of the world's population subsisting on only 30% of the world's income, the statement called on the UN General Assembly to draw up a charter of economic rights and duties of states. As Jankowitsch and Sauvart have demonstrated,<sup>25</sup> the Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, adopted without objection at a Special UN General Assembly (UNGA) held on 1 May 1974, uses the same logic and much of the same phrasing. The NIEO expressed the urgency of establishing a new order

based on equity, sovereign equality, interdependence, common interest and co-operation among all States, irrespective of their economic and political systems which shall correct inequalities and redress existing injustices, make it possible to eliminate the widening gap between the developed and developing countries and ensure steadily accelerating economic and social development and peace and justice for present and future generations.<sup>26</sup>

Shortly after the Algiers summit, of course, the oil shock of October 1973 occurred in the context of the Yom Kippur war when a coalition of Arab states, led by Egypt and Syria, launched a surprise attack against Israel, aiming to take back territory lost in the conflict in 1967. No more than a week after the conflict began, a group of oil-producing Gulf States, already organised through the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), raised the price of crude oil by over 70%, whilst also cutting exports and implementing an embargo on oil exports to the United States and Western allies. In December 1973, OPEC doubled the benchmark price of a barrel of crude oil.<sup>27</sup> Although its membership included both net oil exporters and importers, NAM welcomed OPEC's move at first, with the Algerians in particular seeing the possibility that other groups

23 Tadić and Drobnjak, *Documents of the Gatherings of the Non-Aligned Countries*, p. 47.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 86.

25 Jankowitsch and Sauvart, *The Initiating Role of the Non-Aligned Countries*, pp. 41–77.

26 United Nations General Assembly Sixth Special Session, Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order.

27 Jankowitsch and Sauvart, *The Initiating Role of the Non-Aligned Countries*, p. 67.

of commodity exporters could act together in a similar way. Algeria, effectively chair of NAM after the Algiers summit, and a vocal member of OPEC, acted to secure a special session of the UNGA to adopt the NIEO. This special session broadened the agenda and, effectively, "embedded OPEC's confrontation with the industrial states over oil into a confrontation of the entire Third World with the developed states over raw materials and development".<sup>28</sup>

The NIEO included a Programme of Action summarised by Nymoer in terms of five core clusters: Sovereignty; Trade; Modernisation; International Decision-Making; and Development Assistance.<sup>29</sup> It was followed by a Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States (CERDS) which was adopted at the regular 29th session of the UNGA on 12 December 1974 by 115 votes to 6 against, with 10 abstentions.<sup>30</sup> Those voting against or abstaining, exclusively states from the Global North, were concerned with Article 2 of Chapter II of CERDS, reinforcing the right of national sovereignty over a nation's "wealth, natural resources, and economic activities", a principle enshrined in the NIEO, stating that each State has the right "to nationalize, expropriate or transfer ownership of foreign property, in which case appropriate compensation should be paid by the State adopting such measures, taking into account its relevant laws and regulations and all circumstances that the State considers pertinent". A number of countries, led by the Cubans, had been advocating for some time that the power of multi-national corporations needed to be curbed and the lessons of Algeria's own partial nationalisation of oil companies in 1971 was now followed by other producers.

The NIEO still divides commentators today, much as it did at the time of its development. Some suggest that it was so radical in its structuralist critique of the global economic order that it was bound to fail in the context of opposition from those with most to lose from such a shift, whilst others suggest that it never, actually, amounted to very much in terms of real change but was, rather, piecemeal in its conceptualisation and designed to create the conditions for the continued dominance of a reformed "embedded liberalism".<sup>31</sup> The articulation of the NIEO was important, I would suggest, not least because of its holistic nature, bringing together a number of themes that had tended to be kept separate. In addition, it brought questions of the global economic architecture into an

28 *Ibid.*, p. 72.

29 Nymoer, *The United States' Economic Hegemony*, p. 19.

30 United Nations General Assembly. Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, Resolution 3281 (XXIX).

31 See, for example, Ruggie, *International regimes, transactions, and change: embedded liberalism in the postwar economic order*, pp. 379–415.

arena of political debate, namely the UN, in which the countries of the Global South had a real voice. Although only fully articulated later, along with Prebisch and Nkrumah noted above, the work of Algerian legal scholar Mohammed Bedjaoui was also important in underpinning the NIEO. The basis of Bedjaoui's analysis was that international law needed radical reform, as it remained a tool of neo-colonial domination, constraining the actions of decolonial states through the burden of "a host of unwarranted obligations".<sup>32</sup> As Ozsu has suggested, a critique of existing legal structures went hand in hand with a firm belief in the possibility of creating a new legal order that would be both emancipatory and truly universal. For Bedjaoui and others, this legal order would form the bedrock upon which principles of self-determination, the right to development, and sovereignty over natural resources, could be institutionalised, prioritising universal, collective, economic and social rights over individualistic human rights.

Well before the second oil shock of 1979, as Spaskovska has argued, a sense of "triumphalism" associated with the passing of the Declaration on the NIEO, quickly gave way to a sense of "dread" amongst some NAM Member States, including Yugoslavia.<sup>33</sup> Although there was a sense that energy interdependence could be a part of "collective self-reliance" of states on the periphery, splits between oil exporting and oil importing states tended to grow, and these were exploited by the United States and its allies who began to be more vocal in their opposition to the NIEO. In addition, authors such as Samir Amin, from a radical left perspective, saw the NIEO as "a rebellion by the bourgeoisies of the periphery over the unequal division of the exploited proceeds from the periphery", an obfuscation of the real choice between capitalism and socialism as global systems and, thus, contributing little to "the struggle of the Third World against the dominant-imperialist hegemony".<sup>34</sup> NAM's call for a kind of voluntaristic reform of the international economic order was seen by some as futile, precisely because "the global capitalist system [...] continues to evolve under pressures more salient than those generated by this Movement".<sup>35</sup> Socialist Yugoslavia was, also, sceptical of the NIEO initially, not least because it was perceived as being driven by Algeria, a country which, since the overthrow of Ben Bella, was no longer a close ally, and was criticised for using NAM to pursue its own interests. At the same time, as Getachew has suggested, the NIEO formed the apex

of anticolonial worldmaking and represented an attempt to channel the UN as the means for the creation of "an egalitarian global economy",<sup>36</sup> combining a Marxist "diagnosis of economic dependence" with prescriptions "articulated within the terms of a liberal political economy".<sup>37</sup>

In the end, the United States and its allies ensured, ultimately, that a very different new international order, underpinned by the ideology of neoliberalism, prevailed. Indeed, it was the NIEO on the global scene, as much as the rise of the new left at home, that energised a radical neo-conservative backlash, perhaps most clearly articulated in a 1982 report from the right-wing Heritage Foundation, describing the NIEO as "a simplistic scheme to redistribute the world's wealth and resources to more than 100 underdeveloped nations, creating a global welfare state financed mainly by the US and the western industrial nations" and attacking the "Fabian socialism" of the NIEO as no more nor less than "a secret plan to create a world government".<sup>38</sup> The 1980s saw a shift in terms of the locus of global governance from the United Nations where, despite the veto powers of the permanent members of the Security Council, newly decolonised nations could muster a majority of votes, and towards global International Financial Institutions, notably the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, where voting rights were linked directly to economic power. In short, "the US argued that the UN was not an appropriate forum for NIEO discussions and consistently suggested to move negotiations on development to other international institutions"<sup>39</sup> which, even if they did not control them directly, tended to act in the interests of a hegemonic global capitalist order.

Serving, in many ways, more to fragment and dissipate the NIEO within the UN system than to clarify things, UNESCO and, more directly, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) were tasked with commissioning a number of studies to set out the intellectual foundations of the NIEO and to ensure that it went "beyond economics". UNITAR, in collaboration with the Mexico-based Centre for the Economic and Social Studies of the Third World (CEESTEM), produced some 16 volumes of overviews, regional analyses, and thematic issues, directed by the Hungarian philosopher Ervin László.<sup>40</sup> This, in many ways, kept the NIEO alive as an intellectual idea long after it had been rejected

32 Ozsu, *In the Interests of Mankind as a Whole*, p. 131.

33 Spaskovska, *Crude Alliance*, p. 529.

34 Amin, *Self-Reliance and the New International Economic Order*, p. 205.

35 Shaw, *The Non-Aligned Movement and the New International Economic Order*, p. 139.

36 Getachew, *Worldmaking After Empire*, p. 100.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 145.

38 MacBride, Preface, p. xvii.

39 Nymoen, *The United States' Economic Hegemony*, p. 68.

40 László, Preface to the UNITAR-CEESTEM NIEO Library, pp. vii-xiv.

by US-led hegemony on the global political scene. UNESCO, along with NAM and others, worked to create the idea of a New World Information and Communications Order (NWICO) as “a corollary to the NIEO”<sup>41</sup> which, in some ways, represented a continuation of arguments around the NIEO and to extend them into the spheres of culture, communications and mass media.

### NAM and the NWICO

Some of the antecedents of what became the NWICO can be found in the establishment of the Non-Aligned News Agency Pool (NANAP) in January 1975. NANAP was a product of a growing concern that information and news media needed to be central to “collective self-reliance”. At the same time, as Slaček Brlek has suggested, NANAP mirrored some of the contradictions of NAM itself with the more pragmatic leadership of the Yugoslavs in conflict, to a degree, with the more radical critiques of “cultural imperialism” emanating from some NAM members.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, what I have termed Yugoslavia’s “liminal hegemony”<sup>43</sup> meant that, as in many other aspects of NAM’s work, the dominant role of, in this case, the Yugoslav news agency Tanjug, needed to be played down in favour of the appearance of a more multilateral, more horizontally egalitarian, form of cooperation.<sup>44</sup> By 1980, NANAP had expanded to include over 50 news agencies and information services but, reaching a daily exchange of 40,000 words by 1983, remained extremely small in relation to the “Big Four” global news agencies whose combined daily output was some 33 million words in 1978.<sup>45</sup>

By the time of the NAM summit in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in August 1976, under the thematic heading “Press Agencies Pool”, it was stated that “a new international order in the fields of information and mass communications is as vital as a New International Economic Order”.<sup>46</sup> Colonialism was said to have created a “vast and ever-growing” communication gap between the non-aligned and “the advanced countries” resulting in domination and dependency with the majority of countries “reduced to being passive recipients of biased, inadequate and distorted information”.<sup>47</sup> Self-reliance in terms of information was seen as being enabled by technological breakthroughs and linkages between national, bilateral, regional

41 UNESCO, UNESCO’s Contribution to the Attainment of the Objectives of the New International Economic Order: Report by the Secretary-General, 22 C/13.

42 Slaček Brlek, *The Creation of the Non-Aligned News Agencies Pool*, pp. 37–63.

43 Stubbs, Introduction, pp. 3–33.

44 Slaček Brlek, *The Creation of the Non-Aligned News Agencies Pool*.

45 *Ibid.*, p. 56.

46 Tadić and Drobnjak, *Documents of the Gatherings of the Non-Aligned Countries*, p. 173.

47 *Ibid.*

and inter-regional forms of cooperation were now seen as much more possible. By the time of the NAM Summit in Havana, Cuba, in September 1979, the creation of a pan-African news agency was greeted “with satisfaction” even though the relationship of this to NANAP was not addressed. “The Promotion of Culture and Cultural Cooperation Among Non-Aligned Countries” was a specific agenda item in Havana, linking the NIEO to “the affirmation of cultural identity” and suggesting, again rather simplistically, that “the appreciation of the values of different civilisations could contribute towards defining original models of indigenous development.”<sup>48</sup>

Around the same time, UNESCO took up the concept of “endogenous development”, discussed in a meeting in Quito, Colombia, in August 1979. The term remained vague but appeared to be based, like many of the principles of NAM itself, on the idea that “development cannot be patterned on an outside model” but “must be freely chosen by each society”.<sup>49</sup> A Working Group was established in 1980 to report on “Relations between endogenous development and tendencies towards modernization as reflected in UNESCO’s programme”, with a strong link to its work on popular participation. This resulted in a kind of technicisation of many of the issues and a focus on country-by-country case studies and projects, an emphasis on “socio-cultural context”<sup>50</sup> and “a revised economic philosophy in which the market economy is humanized by man-centred development (sic)”.<sup>51</sup>

At the same time, a more radical strand of work focused on the impact of transnational corporations. As Schiller suggests, the focus on market domination and neo-colonialism in culture and communications, gaining pace throughout the 1970s, was underpinned by three developments: the independence of new decolonial states after successful national liberation struggles, the global expansion of US-led capitalism, and the development of new rapid global communications technology and infrastructure.<sup>52</sup> NANAP, albeit on a rather small scale, and a new international information order were, therefore, logical extensions of national liberation struggles and represented attempts to secure “cultural sovereignty” along with “economic sovereignty”. As these calls concretised into the idea of a New World Information and Communications Order, developing countries’ demands concentrated on what became known as the 4Ds: democratisation, decolonisation, demonopolisation, and

48 *Ibid.*, p. 381.

49 Final Communiqué of the Asian-African Conference in Bandung, 24 April 1955, p. 5.

50 UNESCO’s Contribution to the Attainment of the Objectives of the New International Economic Order.

51 *Ibid.*

52 Schiller, *Decolonization of Information*, p. 36.

development.<sup>53</sup> In a sense, then, in this period, whilst UNESCO, NAM and others either avoided defining culture or limited it to rather simplified understandings of indigeneity and national identity, a “concrete policy agenda” was formulated and agreed addressing “global media practices” and underpinned by “far-reaching claims about the impact of media on (national) cultures, their role in national development and in the (un)making of international order.”<sup>54</sup>

In a way reminiscent of the contradictory roles of UNCTAD in relation to the NIEO, UNESCO, under the leadership of Mahtar M’Bow from Senegal, saw the NWICO as a way of placing itself centre-stage in the institutionalisation of global reform in the sphere of communications, whilst inevitably becoming embroiled, sometimes despite itself, in controversy and conflict. Radical voices such as the Algerian legal scholar Mohammed Bedjaoui went as far as to blame the blocking of the NIEO on the power of the largest news agencies, suggesting that this vicious circle needed to be broken.<sup>55</sup> Seeking compromise, UNESCO proposed an International Commission known as the MacBride Commission after its chairperson Sean MacBride. The Commission’s final report “Many Voices, One World”, published in 1980,<sup>56</sup> sought to reconcile the irreconcilable, in the process presenting little more than a functional list of “crucial problems facing mankind (sic) today” stripped of theoretical and political substance<sup>57</sup> and, yet, garnering a deal of support from the Global South seeing it as containing a set of winnable demands and, indeed, criticism from the United States and its allies as being too radical.

Resolution 4/19 adopted by the 21st session of the UNESCO General Conference held in Belgrade stated that the basis of the NWICO should consist of a number of elements including: the elimination of imbalances and inequalities; the elimination of the negative effects of monopolies; removal of barriers to the free flow of balanced information and ideas; plurality of sources of information; press and journalistic freedom; capacity building for developing countries; and “respect for each people’s cultural identity and for the right of each nation to inform the world public about its interests, its aspirations and its social and cultural values”. Interestingly, the resolution rejected universalistic solutions, stating: “diverse solutions to information problems are required because social, po-

litical, cultural, and economic problems differ from one country to another and, within a given country, from one group to another.”<sup>58</sup>

Not unlike their stance towards the NIEO, the United States and its allies utilised shifting tactics to ensure that the NWICO was never implemented. Critics of the NWICO pointed to the way in which one of the leading figures in NAM, Indira Gandhi, had suppressed the mass media and limited the freedom of journalists after declaring a state of emergency in India in 1975, inferring from this the tendency of developing countries to censor information. Even before this, in 1972, the United States was the only dissenting voice against the UNESCO Principles on the Use of Satellite Broadcasting which required satellite broadcasters to, at least, negotiate with receiving countries before broadcasting.<sup>59</sup> In the second half of the 1970s, the US offered a degree of support, if largely tokenistic, to those developing country news agencies that adopted “Western modes of organization and work” and which acquiesced in “market-determined” systems.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, the idea of a “balanced free market” in information,<sup>61</sup> not unlike the idealised free market in some iterations of the NIEO, was one that could garner support from many countries.

Nevertheless, responding to vocal neoconservative critics, and buoyed by a global “roll-out neoliberalism” in the form of deregulation, the United States, followed by the United Kingdom, sought to attack UNESCO as a symbol of a totalitarian, even communist, attack on freedom, in this case, the freedom of large US media corporations, dressed up as the “free flow of information”. Making a series of impossible demands such as the rapid introduction of weighted voting, which did not even gain the support of many erstwhile allies, the United States withheld its contributions to UNESCO and formally withdrew from the organisation in 1984, not returning until 2003.<sup>62</sup> The United Kingdom withdrew a year later, rejoining in 1997. These withdrawals occurred despite the fact that the MacBride report, the 1980 UNESCO General Conference and, in particular, the 1983 UNESCO General Conference, essentially “depoliticized” communications issues and replaced them with technocratic calls for development assistance.<sup>63</sup> The 1985 General Conference, without the US and the UK as members, saw a renewed, final, push by NAM states for elements of the NWICO but this, too, proved to be in vain.

53 Carlsson, *The Rise and Fall of the NWICO*, p. 40.

54 De Beukelaer, Pyykkonen and Singh, *Globalization, Culture and Development*, p. 108.

55 Ibid., p. 125.

56 *Many Voices, One World: Towards a New More Just and More Efficient New World Information and Communication Order*.

57 Mansell and Nordenstreng, *Great Media and Communication Debates*, p. 24.

58 Records of the 21st General Conference.

59 Schiller, *Decolonization of Information*, p. 40.

60 Ibid., p. 46.

61 Preston et al, *Hope & Folly*, p. 121.

62 Scher, *UNESCO Conventions and Culture as a Resource*, pp. 197–202.

63 Carlsson, *The Rise and Fall of the NWICO*, p. 52.

### The “Unfailure” of the NIEO and NWICO

It is far from an easy task to assess the “afterlives” of the NIEO and NWICO and whether there are any lessons that can be drawn from them for the contemporary period. What both initiatives show clearly, however, is that the 1970s was the decade in which the Non-Aligned Movement had its greatest influence in terms of the discourses, if not always the praxis, of global governance. This influence was a result of a rejuvenated NAM attaining a new balance between a degree of formalisation, through a three-year rotating chairperson, and continued flexibility to act as a kind of incubator for new ideas allowing for the cultivation of “a stronger political awareness than that of the G77”.<sup>64</sup> Socialist Yugoslavia continued to prefer “practical” solutions as opposed to what they perceived as more “radical” ideas and maintained a degree of ambivalence regarding their own continued “liminal hegemony” of the movement. This was reflected in the critique of Algeria as “privatizing” NAM during and after the 1973 summit at the time it took on leadership of the push for the NIEO, and in a very different way, attempts to persuade first Tunisia and, later, India, to take more of a lead, even if only symbolically, in NANAP.<sup>65</sup> Both the NIEO and NWICO were also a product of strong interlinkages, a mix of advocacy and critique, of the United Nations and its agencies, specifically UNCTAD and UNESCO.

Any attempt to remember, recover and re-assemble elements of the NIEO and the NWICO for a re-envisioning of contemporary global economic, cultural, political and social relations must address changed conjunctural conditions, including the longevity of neoliberal hegemony, even if sometimes “zombie-like”,<sup>66</sup> and the fact that the voice of Global South is by no means as strong in arenas of global governance as it was in the initial period after colonial rule ended. In his incisive analysis of the potential relevance of the NIEO, Gilman borrows Jennifer Wenzel’s notion of “unfailure”<sup>67</sup> suggesting that “although the historically specific institutional demands of the NIEO during the 1970s went unrealized, one can make a credible case that the undead spirit of the NIEO continues to haunt international relations”,<sup>68</sup> an argument that can be widened to include the NWICO and to go far beyond international relations. As Carrie Buchanan has suggested, elements of the NWICO have, indeed, been achieved “by other means” through the rise of social

media and so-called “citizen journalism”, the growth of significant new media production in the Global South, and the taking up by non-state actors of the struggle for “The Right to Communicate”.<sup>69</sup> Ultimately, whilst the NIEO and NWICO can continue to inspire, how to update the content of these demands to respond to contemporary crises may be easier than envisioning the who, when and how of real change in the global economic, cultural, ecological, social and political orders today.

64 Ibid., p. 54.

65 Slaček Berlek, The Creation of the Non-Aligned News Agencies Pool.

66 Peck, *Zombie Neoliberalism and the Ambidextrous State*, pp. 104–110.

67 Wenzel, *Bulletproof*.

68 Gilman, *The New International Economic Order*, p. 10.

69 Buchanan, *Revisiting the UNESCO Debate on a New World Information and Communication Order*, pp. 391–399.



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