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NON ALIGNMENT
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NON-ALIGNMENT,
YUGOSLAV DIPLOMACY AND
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
CROSS-CULTURAL LINKS
WITH AFRICA*
WITH AFRICA
WITH AFRICA

Introduction

Within the framework of non-alignment as a fundamental foreign policy orientation and a cultural imaginary from which socialist Yugoslavia drew the meaning of its position on the global stage during the Cold War, Africa occupied a prominent place. This was not just due to the fact that by the 1980s, virtually all countries on this continent, with the exception of the Apartheid South African regime, joined the Non-Aligned Movement (hereinafter: NAM); it was also a consequence of the symbolic significance of Africa as a metaphor of people's power, unity and future and as that geopolitical arena in which Yugoslavia was having to constantly validate its new global role and significance.¹ In the 1970s and 1980s especially, Yugoslavia's role was put to the test when the concepts of the "North-South Dialogue" and "Collective Self-Reliance", or "South-South Cooperation", were introduced into the language of global reform efforts, in both cases by the NAM and its sister organisation, the Group of 77

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1 Radonjić, A Non-Aligned Continent.

(G77).² Yugoslavia, as an important co-creator of these ideas and political advocate of this agenda, as well as the “more developed developing country” of Europe, as it defined itself, was to adopt an especially agile approach based on solidarity. This was an explicit expectation especially of the African countries, which were by and large on the other end of the development ladder, i.e. among the most economically underdeveloped.³

In addition to transforming political and economic relations, which was what Yugoslav foreign policy and the diplomatic service devoted by far the most attention to, the claim of decoloniality also included a change in the global cultural patterns, which in the newly established decolonised countries took place in parallel with the formation of independent cultural production. To this end, the necessary technical skills had to be transferred to local creators. For example, there were numerous requests addressed to Yugoslavia from African countries for help with education and training, especially in filmmaking.⁴ In this paper, the focus of our interest will be the mediating role of Yugoslav diplomacy, that is, those rare diplomats—members of an otherwise robust network of diplomatic and consular missions in African countries—who covered the field of cultural cooperation. In parallel, we will cover the contributions of specialised institutions and individuals with similar responsibilities within Yugoslavia. In our analysis of the publications and archival documents of federal and republican foreign policy bodies, we will pay particular attention to the political dimensions of the cultural spectrum of Yugoslav non-aligned internationalism, dwelling on the following questions: how was Yugoslavia able to establish itself as a partner to decolonised countries with varying socio-economic systems in the competition with other purveyors of alternative globalisation (the Eastern Bloc and China)? How were the activities related to cultural cooperation integrated into the platforms of the NAM and the—at the time strongly associated—United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)? What were the criteria for and priorities of bilateral cultural cooperation and which artistic practices were most often involved? What theoretical reflection accompanied this unique phenomenon in the history of encounters between Europeans and Non-Europeans, and what was Yugoslavia’s role in this context?

In the body of literature dealing with the public and cultural diplomacy of capitalist and socialist countries during the Cold War,

2 Dinkel, Fiebrig and Reichherzer, ed., *Nord/Süd*.

3 SI AS 1271, box 6, Društveno-politička kretanja u Africi sa osvrtom na mesto i ulogu SFRJ i odnose sa afričkim zemljama, April 1985, p. 46.

4 Vučetić, Uspostavljanje jugoslovenske filmske saradnje. Vučetić, *We Shall Win*.

the East-West axis of analysis is still predominant.⁵ Interactions between the Global North and Global South, and within the South itself, have received less attention.⁶ Similarly, the cultural dimensions of Yugoslav non-aligned internationalism have so far been the subject of only a few studies.⁷ Their number may soon increase, however.⁸ This paper does not delve into analysis based on cultural studies; the intent is instead to provide the emerging field of research with a political framework from the perspective of diplomatic and intellectual history that will more clearly indicate the significance and place of Yugoslav cooperation with the non-aligned countries, both in the context of Yugoslavia's cultural cooperation with foreign countries in general, and in terms of the relative importance given to culture in relation to the other components of Yugoslav non-aligned internationalism. Taking into account the specific institutional circumstances within Yugoslavia and the international context, the present analyses also help us understand why the crisis of the 1980s so severely weakened the cross-cultural links with Africa when they had only recently been established—links that would never again be restored to the same extent.

The universalism of Yugoslav non-aligned internationalism

As a political and social project, third-worldism (*tiers-mondisme*) was built on the assumption that the popular masses of the Global South harboured revolutionary aspirations whose realisation would be inevitable—brought about by history itself, through the convergence of pre-colonial forms of egalitarianism and a future utopia. The first generation of leaders there saw a strong, centralised state as the means to win and consolidate this fundamental post-colonial transformation, with alliances based on the spirit of organic collectivism as the international backstop.⁹ Serving as

- 5 Paulmann, *Auswärtige Repräsentationen*. Shaw and Youngblood, *Cinematic Cold War*. Barnhisel, *Cold War Modernists*. Wulf, *U.S. International Exhibitions*. Fosler-Lusnier, *Music in America's Cold War Diplomacy*. Phillips, *Martha Graham's Cold War*.
- 6 Djagalov, *From Internationalism to Postcolonialism*. Dragostinova, *The Cold War from the Margins*. Vu, Tuong and Wasana Wongsurawat (ed.), *Dynamics of the Cold War in Asia*. Day, Tony and Maya Liem, ed., *Cultures at War*. Xu, Lanjun, The Southern Film Corporation.
- 7 Vučetić, *Uspostavljanje jugoslovenske filmske saradnje*. Vučetić, *We Shall Win*. Videkanić, *Nonaligned Modernism*. Slaček Brlek, *Yugoslavia's commitment to third-worldism*.
- 8 I have in mind mainly the academic discussion that was started at two international scientific conferences in 2021: *The Non-Aligned Movement & Socialist Yugoslavia. Exploring Social, Cultural, Political and Economic Imaginaries* (23–26 February 2021, online) and *Towards a Conjectural Political Economy of Non-Alignment and Cultural Politics* (Rijeka, 27–29 September 2021).
- 9 Berger, "After the Third World", p. 34.

the most typical example of the latter is the founding of the NAM, which in 1961 brought to Belgrade the leaders of 25 Asian, African, Latin American and European countries with a common interest in consolidating a non-hierarchical form of comprehensive mutual cooperation and promoting an alternative to the bipolar division of the world at the time.¹⁰

62 But Tito's Yugoslavia, prior to establishing itself as one of the main architects of the collective policies of the period known as the *Bandung era*—after the site of the first Afro-Asian conference, not yet attended by Tito's official representatives—, would first have to face a campaign that sought to distance it, as a European country taking moderate positions in international negotiations, from the Global South. As the Canadian historian Jeffrey James Byrne notes, a crucial debate was taking place in these latitudes between 1962 and 1965 on whether the notion of the "Third World" was a matter of identity—"typically Southern, non-white, poor and post-colonial"—or a broader project, open to anyone sharing the same goals.¹¹ According to the first interpretation, championed by Mao Zedong's China, which aspired to a leading position in the decolonised world and had already become embroiled in a bitter ideological conflict with the "revisionist" Yugoslavia,¹² the Yugoslavs—a white, industrialised nation—were supposed to be fundamentally incapable of understanding the problems of the southern hemisphere.

The Chinese were conducting their racially tinged campaign mainly in the young African countries and tried to push out of this part of the world not only the Yugoslav foreign policy but also the first efforts at spreading Yugoslav culture. At the second Afro-Asian Writers' Conference in Cairo, for example, the Chinese threatened the Egyptian organisers with departure if a Yugoslav representative were to be present.¹³ Overall, however, the Chinese campaign had limited impact. Yugoslavia, while indeed atypical among countries where the experience of colonialism was still very fresh or even ongoing, had no shortage of other means—discursive, ideological, political and economic—of effectively building links with Africa.¹⁴ The strong common anti-imperialist orientation was manifested es-

10 Thomas, *The Theory and Practice*, p. 75. In recent literature, more detailed descriptions emerged of the genesis of the diplomatic steps that culminated in the Belgrade Summit and defined the further development of the NAM: Dinkel, *Die Bewegung Bündnisfreier Staaten*. Bogetić, *Nesvrstanost kroz istoriju*. Dimitrijević in Čavoški, ed., *The 60th Anniversary*.

11 Byrne, *Beyond Continents*.

12 Bogetić, *Sukob Titovog koncepta*.

13 Selinić, *Savez književnika Jugoslavije*, p. 177.

14 Sladojević, *Beyond the Photographic Frame*, p. 99.

pecially in aid in the form of arms and other equipment, with which Yugoslavia—initially more in the name of solidarity and its own tradition of national liberation struggle during the Second World War, but later also for pragmatic economic interests—helped many liberation movements.¹⁵

The Yugoslav “discovery” of the African continent was also accompanied by treatises in which Yugoslav intellectuals were developing the idea of kinship or even renouncing their race, like the surrealist writer and poet Oskar Davičo. In his travelogue *Črno na belem* (Black on White, 1962), in which he proclaimed himself a “former white man”, he emphasised that the Yugoslav peoples themselves had been “slaves” for centuries. The essential message they wanted to convey to their new African comrades was that they were a “different kind of white people”—the first Europeans free of both prejudice and any pretensions to future supremacy.¹⁶ They saw themselves as thus embodying an equal partner that could prove to Africans that there are forces outside the pan-African framework they can rely on.¹⁷

In the process of establishing cross-cultural ties, Yugoslavia, much like in its establishment of political and economic relations throughout the world, prioritised the values of non-alignment, primarily cooperation with countries with different socio-political systems, over the socialist internationalism evangelised by the Eastern European countries.¹⁸ As early as the late 1950s, the writer and diplomat Marko Ristić, who at that time headed the Federal Commission for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, which operated under the Federal Executive Council (the government), described cultural diplomacy as an extraordinary tool for cultivating a new culture of coexistence; he felt that without this “cultural blood transfusion”, this principle of international relations would have remained an empty phrase.¹⁹ With respect to cultural cooperation with countries of the Global South, with their wide range of socio-economic systems and political regimes, the bar had been set very low. As a group of experts from the Institute for Developing Countries in Zagreb recommended to those responsible for international cultural and educational cooperation in the mid-1970s, Yugoslavia should strive to develop relations with all developing countries, the only exception being those where racial, ethnic or religious discrimination was prevalent. Fascist regimes and countries

15 Lazić, *Arsenal of the Global South*.

16 Radonjić, “From Kragujevac to Kilimanjaro”, pp. 60–61.

17 Rajak, “Companions in misfortune”, p. 82.

18 Cf. Burton et al., ed., *Navigating Socialist Encounters*.

19 Videkanić, *Nonaligned Modernism*, p. 140.

fully engaged within neo-colonial relations were also avoided, while all others were to be offered equal opportunities without any regional preferences. According to the experts at the Zagreb Institute for Developing Countries, those countries of the Global South that were at that time experimenting with their own versions of Marxism had to be given special attention, but the greatest success was expected in cooperation with the partners that most consistently pursued a policy of non-alignment.²⁰

The cultural attachés (who weren't)

64 The programming documents of the NAM in the first decade of its existence did not yet single out mutual cultural and educational cooperation. This changed with the Algerian Summit in 1973, where mutual visits, exchanges of artists and scholars, scholarships, participation in festivals, exchanges of books and other media and similar activities were identified as desirable forms of solidarity-based joint action capable of overcoming Western cultural imperialism.²¹ The Yugoslav Federal Assembly and the Executive Council had already emphasised cooperation with developing countries a few years earlier as part of the Yugoslav policy of developing cultural links with foreign countries,²² but in the early days, this was not without organisational issues. In the case of Africa in particular, the Yugoslav diplomats who paved the way for artists and various professionals in the field of artistic production were not only faced with a lack of adequate infrastructure, but also with fierce competition. In the 1960s, contenders from other socialist countries, each with their own vision of creating a new world, began challenging the stream of cultural products that had been pouring in from the former colonial metropolises, with everyone locked in an intense competition for the affections of this part of the world. The Soviet Union, German Democratic Republic and China, were, for example, most active in developing their own networks on the ground, being willing to distribute their films under more favourable conditions than a more commercially oriented Yugoslav provider could.²³

On the one hand, the competitive and financially better supported Eastern European cultural advance into the decolonised countries, which in the early years of their existence hardly had a cultural budget of their own at all, did have some success. On the other hand, having just broken out from the grip of the former

20 Cvjetičanin, *Projekcija dugoročne prosvjetno-kulturne suradnje*, pp. 15–16.

21 Videkanić, *Nonaligned Modernism*, p. 142.

22 AJ 559, box 70, document 69.3-20, 11 September 1969.

23 Vučetić, *Uspostavljanje jugoslovenske filmske saradnje*, p. 61.

metropolises, the local intellectual elites remained sceptical of the new, socialist "masters".²⁴ This was also the impression that Ranka Kavčič Božović, Assistant to the President of the Federal Commission for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, got in Mali during her visit of several West African countries in 1969. The young intellectuals there were suspicious of the influence of the Soviet Union and China. By contrast, they viewed Yugoslavia with great sympathy because of its non-alignment and respect for the principle of sovereignty.²⁵ Even years later, Yugoslav diplomats in Angola observed that their country's "information and propaganda" activities, which were usually considered as including cultural cooperation, were clearly more adaptable and consequently more successful than the unrefined approaches of the Eastern European socialist countries.²⁶

The basic legal framework for cultural exchanges consisted of bilateral agreements on cultural and educational cooperation. Even though, by the early 1970s, Yugoslavia had entered into 17 such agreements with African countries,²⁷ the programmes outlining a specific set of activities were far fewer, and as a result, implementation always fell short of plans. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the first such agreement was with Sudan, dating to 1959, followed by Guinea, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Mali, Dahomey (Benin), Senegal, Nigeria and Congo-Brazzaville by the mid-1960s, mostly coinciding with Tito's tour of West and East Africa.²⁸ Cultural exchange accounted for one-fifth of the funds earmarked for scholarship schemes, which came mostly out of the Yugoslav federal budget and to a lesser extent out of the republican budgets, with some support also provided from time to time by the enterprises that were doing business with the countries in question.²⁹

Although by the mid-1970s, the network of Yugoslav diplomatic-consular missions in African countries had grown enormously, they were understaffed, and their work reports clearly indicate that cultural or public diplomacy came as a distant second to the political and economic tasks. It was often their own press attachés who were tasked with initiating and coordinating cultural exchanges. In the 1960s, it was discussed that cultural attachés should be posted

24 Ibid., p. 62. More on the perception of Soviet assistance in the construction of the new African states can be found in Osei-Opare's *Uneasy Comrades*.

25 AJ 559, box 70, Izveštaj o boravku Ranke Kavčič-Božović, pomočnika predsednika Savezne komisije za kulturne veze sa inostranstvom, u nekim zemljama Zapadne Afrike, December 1969, p. 20.

26 DAMSP, PA, 1985, box 7, document 49071, 20 February 1985.

27 Jemuović in Lah, *Naučna, tehnička i kulturna saradnja*, p. 128.

28 Merhar, *Mednarodno kulturno sodelovanje*, p. 48.

29 Cvjetičanin, *Projekcija dugoročne prosvjetno-kulturne suradnje*, p. 87.

at least in the regional centres in Africa and Asia.³⁰ Ten years later, however, Sub-Saharan Africa had only a single such post systematised, namely for the embassy in Nigeria.³¹ The idea was floated of opening new Yugoslav cultural information centres, like those in Western Europe and in the USA, but at the end of the 1970s, still during the “golden age” of cooperation with the non-aligned countries, it was decided that no such centres would be opening in Asia, Africa and Latin America.³² The plan was nevertheless to bolster Yugoslav presence at least in those regional centres that received the most media coverage. In Sub-Saharan Africa these were the ones in Congo, Senegal, Tanzania and Côte d’Ivoire. In addition to the translation of Yugoslav texts into French and English, translations into Swahili were also planned.³³

66 On multiple occasions, cultural attachés, or rather, whoever performed these tasks at the Yugoslav embassies, in liaison with the Federal Secretariat for Foreign Affairs, the federal and republican institutes for international scientific, technical, educational and cultural cooperation (ZAMTES) and the cultural institutions involved, provided information on potential institutional partners or artists in particular countries, facilitated contacts and took part in the organisation and realisation of individual cultural events. This included finding suitable venues, and logistical assistance with transport, as well as securing support from prominent figures in the political life of the host countries.³⁴ Familiar with the preferences of the local population, they also suggested which types of cultural manifestations would reach the largest audience given the limited financial resources.³⁵

From folklore to modernism: typical forms of cultural manifestations

Much like the criteria for political cooperation, the artistic-aesthetic criteria in the field of cultural cooperation with members of the NAM were vague. In addition to the fact that the artworks had to fit the developing countries’ equally ill-defined ideological and political conception of cooperation and not conflict with the cultural norms of the host countries, emphasis was placed on the requirement that

30 AJ 559, box 70, Informativno-propagandna delatnost Jugoslavije prema zemljama Afrike i Azije, 12 November 1969, p. 4.

31 DAMSP, PA, 1978, box 61, document 412462, 1 March 1978.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 DAMSP, PA, 1978, box 84, document 477729, 31 March 1978; 1986, box 150, document 433152, 31 July 1986.

35 AJ 142/II, box A-187, Ambasada SFRJ Dar es Salam, Izvještaj za 1980-u godinu, January 1981, p. 17.

they resonate with and appeal to local audiences, that is, be comprehensible without extensive additional explanations.³⁶

A fixture of cultural exchanges with Sub-Saharan countries was the hosting of (academic) folklore ensembles on both sides. The visit of the folklore group *Ivo Lola Ribar* from Belgrade in 1969 was the first Yugoslav cultural manifestation in Kenya.³⁷ Music and art events of this type were also popular in Yugoslavia. For example, there were three groups visiting from Ghana in the late 1970s and early 1980s as guests of the Ljubljana Festival, the Dubrovnik Summer Games and the International Children's Festival in Šibenik.³⁸ The tour of the Tanzanian college of arts *Bagamoyo* across Yugoslavia in 1987 attests to the fact that such logistical feats kept being undertaken even at the end of the 1980s, when funds were already in short supply.³⁹ Zagreb-based Africanist Biserka Cvjetičanin, noting the frequency of folklore-tinged cultural exchanges, pointed out that the hypertrophy of exotica can also result in the narrowing of potentials for cultural interaction, although, in her view, it was obvious that folklore, in all its forms, was simply the most recognised among the traditions of the countries of the Global South.⁴⁰

Ostoja Gordanić Balkanski, the "unofficial sculptor of the Non-Aligned Movement", also borrowed from the traditional sculptural techniques of Sudan and many other "exotic spaces of the Third World", as he put it in one of the interviews.⁴¹ As early as 1974, the only Yugoslav artist who, as he declared himself, consciously turned his back on Paris,⁴² focused all his creativity on the topos of the NAM and began to create sketches for its flag and coat of arms, as well as memorials for the places where the summits of the NAM were held.⁴³ While the Yugoslav Federal Secretariat did not accept Gordanić's proposals, his portrait of Robert Mugabe did end up on the wall of the Harare Convention Centre, where the eighth summit of the movement was held.⁴⁴ The Zimbabwean commission from the Yugoslav artist was not an isolated case, however. In 1956, for example, Ethiopia sent a request to the "good painter" to paint portraits of their statesmen.⁴⁵ Yugoslav master artists would later also be invited to post-revolutionary Angola, which was otherwise

36 Cvjetičanin, *Projekcija dugoročne prosvjetno-kulturne suradnje*, p. 44.

37 AJ 559, box 69, Lagos – 1987, 9 June 1969.

38 DAMSP, PA, 1985, box 28, document 429243, 21 June 1985.

39 DAMSP, PA, 1987, box 149, document 6304, 12 October 1987.

40 Cvjetičanin, *Projekcija dugoročne prosvjetno-kulturne suradnje*, p. 51.

41 *Vjesnik*, 31 August 1989, Dletom za Treći svet.

42 *Ibid.*

43 DAMSP, PA, 1974, box 173, document 44741, 31 January 1974.

44 *Vjesnik*, 31 August 1989, Dletom za Treći svet.

45 AJ 559, box 58, 1956: Jugoslavija – Etiopija, undated.

typically a destination for non-established artists from the Eastern European “fraternal” socialist countries.⁴⁶ As far as group guest exhibitions are concerned, modern graphic art gained a representative place in Yugoslav fine art. In a repertoire selected to be put up in ten African countries, it was represented by 102 examples (by Mersad Berber, Janez Bernik, Janez Boljka, Bogdan Borčić, Jože Ciuha, Stojan Čelić, Emir Dragulj, Ivo Friščić, Jože Horvat - Jaki, Vladimir Makuc, Edo Murtić, Jože Spacal and others).⁴⁷

For the more critical observers among Yugoslav diplomatic circles, it was the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture in Lagos in 1977 in particular that was responsible for broadening the horizons about the reach of African creativity. As they themselves acknowledged, the assumption until very recently had always been that the continent had little to contribute to modern world culture apart from its wealth of folklore. At that time, however, modernist approaches to African theatre were beginning to be evident, especially in Nigeria, which is where the first African theatrical troupe to come to the Belgrade International Theatre Festival (BITEF) was from.⁴⁸ They later tried to have the National Theatre of Zaire come to Belgrade, but technical issues ended up preventing them from realising that goal.⁴⁹

68 One of the more frequent areas of cultural cooperation with Africa was in film; this was not limited to the screening of Yugoslav films, but also included joint productions. Yugoslav film exports remained largely commercial in nature and perpetually troubled by issues with distribution, since, with the exception of a few African countries, the entire network was in the hands of foreign private companies.⁵⁰ A new market for the great partisan epics opened up in the 1970s in countries like Ethiopia and Angola, both of which were undergoing revolutionary transformation and trying to “educate” their cinema audiences accordingly.⁵¹ After the Yugoslav embassy gave the office of the first Angolan president, Agostinho Neto, a copy of Janković’s *Krvava bajka* (Bloody Tale), the Angolans were immediately willing to buy the film, as it had left a profound impression on the president.⁵² While not all Yugoslav blockbusters were subtitled in Portuguese, there were other partisan-themed

46 DAMSP, PA, 1978, box 5, document 433353, 29 May 1978.

47 DAMSP, PA, 1980, box 145, document 46116, 31 January 1980.

48 DAMSP, PA, 1975, box 191-192, document 439693, appendix: Informacija o uslovima za rad u Zapadnoj i Centralnoj Africi na zadacima u oblasti informacija i kulturno-naučne saradnje i aktuelnim problemima, 17 July 1975, p. 24.

49 DAMSP, PA, 1980, box 145, document 456873, 11 November 1980.

50 Cvjetičanin, *Projekcija dugoročne prosvjetno-kulturne suradnje*, p. 57.

51 DAMSP, PA, 1978, box 33, document 442749, 18 July 1978.

52 DAMSP, PA, 1978, box 5, document 416743, 15 March 1978.

films that were well received by audiences in Luanda.⁵³ In Kenya, by contrast, the screening of Delić's *Sutjeska* did not go down well with the audiences accustomed to American films.⁵⁴

In the field of literature, the Struga Poetry Evenings occupied a special place in the creation of cross-cultural links. Through the mediation of Yugoslav diplomats, many well-known African writers came to Struga. Shortly after the signing of an agreement on cultural cooperation with Ghana, this increasingly renowned international meeting hosted the president of the Ghana Association of Writers, Atukwei Okai,⁵⁵ followed by several of his colleagues.⁵⁶ The town in the south of Macedonia was also visited by Angolan poets,⁵⁷ as well as those from Guinea, after the Yugoslav embassy in Conakry funded their air tickets.⁵⁸ The most famous African participant of the Struga Evenings was undoubtedly the first Senegalese President, poet and one of the founders of the theory of *négritude*, Léopold Sédar Senghor, who was awarded the festival's prize, the *Golden Wreath*, in 1975.⁵⁹ The high-ranking guests started giving the event on Lake Ohrid an air of political exclusivity, as illustrated by a written remark by the Federal Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Josip Vrhovec, in the early 1980, when the Macedonian organisers were about to invite back Senghor, as a past prize-winner: "We have no interest in Senghor continuing to come to Yugoslavia [...]."⁶⁰ At the same time, Vrhovec's secretariat was working hard to get the Guinean Minister of Justice and former ambassador to Yugoslavia, as well as Senghor's poetic rival, Sikhé Camara, to come to Struga.⁶¹

Together towards cultural decolonisation?

The 1979 Summit of the NAM in Havana recognised culture as one of the cornerstones of social development in general, a vehicle of national emancipation and non-alignment, and of better mutual understanding. Cultural cooperation among the members and the dissemination of knowledge in this field were seen as strengthening the common intellectual and material potential needed for more rapid development, underlining the need to strengthen bilateral and multilateral cooperation, including through the creation of

53 DAMSP, PA, 1978, box 5, document 464834, 24 November 1978.

54 DAMSP, PA, 1975, box 82, document 413348, 26 March 1974, p. 16.

55 DAMSP, PA, 1975, box 37, document 416688, undated.

56 DAMSP, PA, 1985, box 28, document 429243, 21 July 1985.

57 DAMSP, PA, 1985, box 7, document 49071, 20 February 1985, p. 20.

58 DAMSP, PA, 1986, box 118, document 432444, 28 July 1986.

59 Spaskovska, *Comrades, Poets, Politicians*.

60 DAMSP, PA, 1980, box 145, document 4742, 18 January 1980.

61 DAMSP, PA, 1980, box 145, document 43199, 17 January 1980.

joint institutions in the field of culture.⁶² This did not, in Yugoslavia's view, imply that the NAM needed a common cultural policy—something Yugoslavia was rather reluctant to do, considering the historical, political and religious differences among the members.⁶³ However, Yugoslav intellectuals were able to identify to a large extent with the concept of “the humanism of development”, as formulated by UNESCO under the leadership of the Senegalese geographer and Honorary Doctor of the University of Belgrade, Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, in harmony with the aspirations of the Global South. The essence of the concept was that development could not be interpreted solely in economic terms, but also in the social and cultural sense. It was in this context that the conclusion of the 1970 UNESCO Intergovernmental Conference on Institutional, Administrative and Financial Aspects of Cultural Policies was formulated, namely that either the development is endogenous, or there isn't one, and that every nation, large or small, has something to contribute to the world and something to receive from it.⁶⁴ The Yugoslav Marxist understanding of culture went a step further in this respect, arguing that culture has no independent goals of its own above or beyond the goals of general social development.⁶⁵ Culture was thus contextualised as a part of broader efforts towards changing the global economic relations and fostering cooperation among the developing countries (“South-South” cooperation)—two of the flagship projects of the NAM and its sister organisation, the G77, in the 1970s and 1980s. In this urge to find their own expression in the new world constellation, humanist intellectuals from the south-east of Europe and those from the Global South were united by a common experience of their peripheral position and dependence on external forces, both in the past and in the present, which could only be dealt with through definitive emancipation.⁶⁶

The Yugoslav Commission for UNESCO also facilitated the first contacts with the African Cultural Institute of Dakar, founded in 1972, that took up a leading role in the cultural “decolonisation and emancipation” of the African continent through activities such as education, research, linguistics, film development and the development of traditional crafts and arts. By the end of the 1970s, a total of 19 founding countries had joined.⁶⁷ In cooperation with the Insti-

62 6th Summit Conference of Heads of State or Government of the NAM.

63 Kolečnik, *Practices of Yugoslav Cultural Exchange*.

64 Iacob, *Southeast by Global South*, p. 259.

65 Cvjetičanin, Švob-Đokić and Jelić, *Kultura i novi međunarodni ekonomski poredak*, p. 12.

66 Iacob, *Southeast by Global South*, 257.

67 DAMSP, PA, 1980, box 145, document 4298/3, 22 May 1980, appendix: Izveštaj o »Danima informacija o kulturi Afrike«, p. 1.

tute's director, Basil T. Kossou, who had previously been a guest of the Federal ZAMTES, what was probably the largest manifestation of African culture in socialist Yugoslavia, called the Days of Information on African Culture, was organised in Belgrade (and partly in Novi Sad and Zagreb) in March 1980. The multi-day event included not only film screenings and book exhibitions, but also a series of lectures and panel discussions featuring distinguished African experts in the fields of literature, linguistics and history, some of whom were former ministers and ambassadors, and was presented as one of the first tangible results of the efforts to implement the Havana Declaration.⁶⁸

The key issues discussed both at the interviews at the individual specialised institutes in Belgrade and Zagreb, as well as in front of the general public (the proceedings were later published), echoed the intentions to mobilise culture and cultural cooperation as a means of struggle against (Western) hegemony and as an instrument of economic and technological independence and national identity. According to Kossou, the order of the "Third World"—as a political and ideological concept, not a cultural entity, as he pointed out—also included individual small European countries that had won their autonomy from one of the great powers. These countries—not especially rich, but also not burdened by very low gross social product, as described by the Senegalese expert, clearly alluding to Yugoslavia—have recognised the parallels between their fate and that of African, Asian and Latin American countries with much worse conditions, and thus achieved great prestige in Kossou's eyes.⁶⁹ African participants from countries with various foreign policy profiles had varying experiences with regard to relations with the two major socialist purveyors of alternative globalisation projects, the Soviet Union and China, with the former occasionally referred to as an "ideological coloniser", offering its services only on the condition of acceptance of its orthodoxies.⁷⁰ By contrast, Yugoslavia was seen as a partner who respected the imperative of cooperating as equals, which is why, on this occasion as well, a number of proposals were addressed to Yugoslavia for cooperation or expert assistance in the fields of library science and book trade, radio and television production, and archaeology, as well as initiatives for cooperation in the research projects at the previously mentioned Dakar Institute.⁷¹

68 Ibid., p. 3.

69 Kosu, *Perspektive i svrha*, pp. 100–101.

70 Benin, Gabon, *Obala Slonovače*, p. 193.

71 DAMSP, PA, 1980, box 145, document 4298/3, 22 May 1980, appendix: *Izveštaj o »Danima informacija o kulturi Afrike«*, pp. 19–21.

On Yugoslavia's list of priorities for the development of cultural links with foreign countries, the neighbouring countries and the non-aligned countries came first and second. It was only in third place that Western countries followed; in reality however, they were the ones with whom most exchanges took place.⁷² Cultural cooperation with the non-aligned countries began to decline as early as 1981, likely due to the general economic crisis, which caused the earmarked funds to dry up and sparked controversy between the federal and republican authorities over what portion of the costs each of them should bear.⁷³ At a time when Yugoslavia and most of the members of the NAM were becoming less financially capable and losing influence in the world,⁷⁴ one last major project of cross-cultural cooperation in this context was taking place: the Josip Broz Tito Gallery of Art of the Non-Aligned Countries.

72 The gallery opened on 1 September 1984 in the premises of the former Petrović Palace in Titograd (Podgorica). Preparations had begun some three years earlier, when the NAM Coordinating Bureau in New York was informed of the plans, and at the VII. Summit in New Delhi in 1983, there was already mention of the gallery in the Final Declaration, where members were also encouraged to contribute actively to the creation of the Gallery's fund and activities.⁷⁵ As a pioneering joint institution with the aim of "cultural decolonisation", the Gallery was to do more than just collect, preserve and exhibit outstanding archaeological and ethnological artefacts and contemporary artworks from non-aligned countries—the intent was to provide a space for the education and training of visiting artists and at the same time serve as a kind of meeting point for the intellectual production related to the affirmation of the cultural values of this part of the world.⁷⁶ This integral approach to art as a catalyst for facing the social challenges of the Global South was also hinted at with title of the international conference "Art and Development", co-organised by UNESCO, which was held at the Gallery in October 1985. The conference was attended by 40 participants from 21 non-aligned and developing countries, which included African representatives from Gabon, Ghana, Mali, Seychelles, Ghana and Uganda.⁷⁷

One of the "most widely known galleries in the world", as the Yugoslav ambassador to Angola described it,⁷⁸ put itself on the map by striving to transcend the artificial distinctions between the "big"

72 DAMSP, PA, 1986, box 118, document 43942, 21 January 1986.

73 DAMSP, PA, 1983, box 114, document 445277, 22 November 1983.

74 Atwood Lawrence, *The Rise and Fall*. Byrne, *Africa's Cold War*.

75 DAMSP, PA, 1984, box 155, document 435390, 16 July 1984.

76 *Ibid.*

77 DAMSP, PA, 1985, box 153, document 7458, 1 November 1985.

78 DAMSP, PA, 1987, box 149, document 04508, 11 June 1987.

and the “small”, and between the “metropolitan” and the “peripheral” cultures, as well as to break down the hierarchy of differences imposed by certain cultural models, as expressed by the Federal Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Raif Dizdarević, in the introduction to the gallery catalogue.⁷⁹ The plan was to allow participation of representatives of other non-aligned countries on the Gallery’s management boards. However, when this later triggered a complicated procedure for the amendment of its statute, no further steps were taken in this direction.⁸⁰

The very naming of the Gallery, after the late President and one of the founders of the NAM, Josip Broz – Tito, showed that Yugoslavia was counting on this institution in the capital of Montenegro to cement its place in the future political topography of the movement. The importance it ascribed to it is also shown by the unsuccessful plans to have the inauguration conducted by the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi as the leader of the presiding member.⁸¹ Even more so than in the cases described above, the Yugoslav diplomatic network showed zeal in engaging with artists who were willing to donate their works, which was the only way to expand the gallery’s collection. In Angola, for example, artists such as Paulo Jazz, Filipe Salvador, Manecas de Carvalho, Fernando Valentino and Augusto Ferreira were approached, and the donated paintings were given suggestive titles: *The Moment of Aggression*, *The Freeing of the Slaves*, *The Secret of Rebellion*, *The Black Tear*.⁸² A total of 206 exhibits from 21 countries came from Africa, including traditional wooden sculptures, examples of Makonde art, ritual shields and masks, and contemporary paintings and prints.⁸³ Some of these exhibits would later end up back in the countries of the Global South as part of guest exhibitions of the Gallery in Titograd (for example in Harare, Lusaka and Dar es Salaam).⁸⁴ Yugoslav diplomats also invited artists, among them the well-known Zimbabwean sculptor Bernard Matemera, to come to visit the Gallery, and to then bequeath it the works created during the visit.⁸⁵ Other renowned guest artists included Bunama Kosa from Guinea and Vitorio Madonga from Tanzania, whose visits were covered by the journalists from those countries.⁸⁶ Since the visiting artists had to pay

79 Piškur, *Druga ozvezdja*, p. 19.

80 DAMSP, PA, 1987, box 149, document 5494, 9 September 1987.

81 DAMSP, PA, 1984, box 155, document 435390, 16 July 1984.

82 DAMSP, PA, 1987, box 149, document 428719, 15 June 1987.

83 DAMSP, PA, 1987, box 149, document 04508, 23 June 1987.

84 DAMSP, PA, 1986, box 150, document 432558, 28 July 1986. Piškur, *Druga ozvezdja*, p. 18.

85 Čelebić, *Galerija umetnosti neuvrščenih*.

86 *Shihata*, 14 September 1987, A Meeting of Non-Aligned Arts.

for their trips to Yugoslavia themselves, Yugoslav diplomats during the difficult circumstances also proposed Solomonic solutions, such as engaging a somewhat less established painter or sculptor instead of a renowned artist from Mozambique, who would go on to create works in Titograd and then sell them in a sales exhibition, the proceeds of which would have been enough to buy the airline tickets.⁸⁷

Conclusion

74 According to a definition in one of the Yugoslav documents that were written around 1980 and reflected the general principles of non-alignment, the goal of the educational and cultural cooperation was to foster awareness of common social issues and needs and with that the strengthening of the spirit of solidarity among the members of the movement and other developing countries.⁸⁸ To what extent the various promoters of Yugoslav non-aligned internationalism succeeded in doing so, and whether in doing so they managed to subvert the Eurocentric perspective, is a question that the sources we analysed do not permit us to fully answer. Yugoslav diplomacy largely internalised the general principles of non-alignment, and as far as its cultural arm was concerned—and to the extent that we can even speak of cultural diplomacy as an independent endeavour when talking about Africa and the Global South, in light of the extremely limited human and material resources available for its implementation—it went somewhat beyond the tasks of typical propaganda activity as pursued by both Western and Eastern countries at the time. It is telling that in Slovenia in particular, in the first half of the 1980s, 82% of all manifestations of cultural exchange with Sub-Saharan Africa took place on this continent, and only the remaining 18% in Africa,⁸⁹ which in itself reveals efforts to bring arts from that region closer to Yugoslav and Slovene audiences.

Being familiar with the local environment, Yugoslav diplomats also had a say in what kind of art made its way into the cooperation programmes. Their efforts were initially dominated by logistical and financial concerns, although they were also aware, at least in some cases, of the need to represent different, including also modern, artistic expressions in cultural exchanges. The Federal Secretariat for Foreign Affairs was also involved in international debates

87 DAMSP, PA, 1987, box 149, document 441436, 23 September 1987.

88 DAMSP, PA, 1980, box 145, document 4298/3, *Medjusobna saradnja nesvrstanih i zemalja u razvoju u oblasti obrazovanja i kulture*, undated, p. 1.

89 SI AS 1271, box 6, *Znanstveno-tehnično in prosvetno-kulturno sodelovanje SR Slovenije z afriškimi deželami v obdobju 1981–1984*, 4 June 1985.

among domestic and foreign experts in the fields of education and culture, which were somewhat in tune with the emerging postcolonial thought of the time. Through these events, organised either in Yugoslavia or in the partner non-aligned countries, a handful of Yugoslav experts emerged who were able to substantively discuss the characteristics and problems of cultural production in different parts of Africa.

At the same time, it became apparent that cultural policies in individual NAM member countries were not oriented towards encouraging broad interaction.⁹⁰ This was not only characteristic of Yugoslavia, but also of the great national cultures such as the Chinese and Iranian, or the various Indian cultures, which failed to constitute themselves as subjects capable of establishing links with other cultures of the Global South, but were subject to transfers only in relation to Western European cultures.⁹¹ The cultural cooperation in the (relatively short) period discussed, when the idea of comprehensive cooperation between non-aligned and developing countries flowered, can therefore be said to have faced similar issues as the mutual economic integration of this part of the world,⁹² namely that it has rarely moved beyond an administratively imposed framework to where it could have a life of its own, driven by initiatives by non-institutional actors. When many of the cross-cultural links with Africa, having just barely been established, weakened and broke down in the chaotic situation of the late 1980s, it became all the more difficult to re-establish them once Yugoslavia and its successor states lost their role as a key European link in the NAM.

90 Cvjetičanin, Švob-Đokić and Jelić, *Kultura i novi međunarodni ekonomski poredak*, p. 36.

91 Ibid., p. 68.

92 Ramšak, *Poskus drugačne globalizacije*, p. 779.

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 PA – Politička arhiva.
- SI AS – Archive of the Republic of Slovenia:
 SI AS 1271 – National Council for International Relations.

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