

non-aligned  
(round) table

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and its  
discontents



# Dubravka Sekulić: non-aligned (round) table and its discontents

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

“Zambians all over the republic feel tremendous honour for their country to play host to such a gathering of so distinguished leaders. Lusaka citizens are particularly proud to be among the first in the world to have in their midst such a large number of world leaders under the same roof.”<sup>2</sup>

With these words, the first president of independent Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda, opened the Third Summit of Non-Aligned countries in Lusaka in September 1970. However, in order to greet sixty-two presidents and heads of state who gathered in Lusaka under one roof, the roof had to be constructed, and a great deal of other infrastructure was needed in order to host a meeting on such scale. Kaunda’s speech points to the connection between political independence and the

infrastructure necessary for its realisation. Symbolically, the most important project was the Mulungushi Hall, or the “Miracle in Lusaka,” as it was known and advertised by *Energoprojekt*, the Belgrade-based construction company who designed and built the complex.<sup>3</sup> A *New York Times* feature in 1983, entitled “How a Yugoslav Company Built an International Market,”<sup>4</sup> places Mulungushi Hall at the centre of the story:

“In 1972, Kenneth D. Kaunda, the President of Zambia, faced a crisis. He had called a conference of non-aligned nations for Lusaka, Zambia’s capital, and with just four months to go, there was no place for the delegates to meet. It could have been most embarrassing. But Mr. Kaunda telephoned officials of *Energoprojekt*, Yugoslavia’s biggest construction concern, and told them he needed a 4,000-seat convention hall – fast – with price no obstacle. And they came to the rescue.”<sup>5</sup>

1 I am indebted to Rina Priyani and Kanishka Prasad for conversations we had while I was writing this text, and to Paul Stubbs without whose patience and editorial support this chapter would have stayed a draft. This is a bootleg fanzine version of the text produced for the exhibition *It is not enough to write a revolutionary poem*, after which the more academic version of the text will be published in a volume edited by Paul. Additional gratitude goes to Dejana Sekulić for encouraging me to continue to develop drawings as integral part of this research.

2 Transcript from archival recording *SYND 10-9-70 NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT OPENED BY KENNETH KAUNDA*, 1970, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kOwHnCdN4ws>. (accessed 20 April 2021.)

3 Designed and built on a super short deadline for which *Energoprojekt*’s documentation offers different account that varies between 106 and 110 days in total from contracting to officially handing the keys and opening the building.

4 The 1983 article, which focuses on the potential economic troubles of *Energoprojekt*, not without a sense of oddity stresses how even the Western companies *Energoprojekt* employed as subcontractors rearranged their schedules to meet the tight Mulungushi deadline.

5 Tagliabue, “How a Yugoslav Company Built an International Market,” *New York Times*, March 28, 1983, 49. <https://www.nytimes.com/1983/03/28/business/how-a-yugoslav-company-built-an-international-market.html>

Apart from getting the year wrong, it communicated well how the construction of the hall had become an integral part of the myth the enterprise was building about itself and its “Golden African” phase. An earlier New York Times story on the eve of the conference in 1970 reported that “Zambia, which has a gross national product of about \$1 billion and is hard-pressed for funds, is spending more than \$14 million to build a hall and other facilities for a five-day conference of the members of the so-called Third world bloc.”<sup>6</sup> The text states that “contractors were given 17 weeks to build the hall, the houses for the heads of the delegations and a lot else – from scratch,” work that was “shouldered by” ZECCO and 20 subcontractors, including the Dutch electric company Philips,<sup>7</sup> and “in return for substantial payments, some of them have accepted heavy penalty clauses on the completion date.”<sup>8</sup> The framing questions the necessity of the Non-aligned movement and the capacity of Zambia, or any developing country for that matter, to organize something on this scale. The construction of the Hall was contracted in April 1970<sup>9</sup> when the Third Summit of the Non-Aligned countries had already

been scheduled to take place in Lusaka in early September of the same year. Zambia, who became a member in 1964 at the Second Summit in Cairo, the year it gained independence, was the perfect choice for the meeting that aimed to resolve “a crisis of continuity” for the movement.<sup>10</sup> Kaunda demonstrated that a new generation of African leaders still believed in the capacity and power of non-alignment.

In the moment when Mulungushi conference centre was contracted, Energoprojekt was no stranger to neither Non-aligned Movement nor Kenneth Kaunda and Zambia. Founded in 1951 the Yugoslav construction enterprise considered itself synonymous with the engagement of Yugoslav economy abroad – as majority of its projects from mid-1960s until late 1980s were outside of Yugoslav borders, in over 40 countries. Utilising the knowledge and skills developed in the (re)construction of Yugoslavia after the WW2, the tools offered by the special type of socialism developed in Yugoslavia – worker’s self-management, Energoprojekt offers a lens for understanding how the exposure to the markets abroad enhanced already existing affinities within the enterprise towards corporate culture and allowed them to develop and be highlighted. Working mostly in the non-aligned countries, Energoprojekt utilised well both the position of Yugoslavia and its ability to work across different systems and networks, as well as its autonomy to be able to independently from its own country negotiate economic support from even commercial western banks. The affinities towards corporate “organizational complex”<sup>11</sup> were materialized in the modernist tower, which

6 “Zambia Is Spending \$14 Million for a 5-Day Conference,” *New York Times*, August 21, 1970, 2. <https://www.nytimes.com/1970/08/21/archives/zambia-is-spending-14million-for-a-5day-conference.html>

7 The NYT article stresses how “Philips is said to have given priority to the Zambian contract over all others” and that it even recalled workers from holidays in order to meet the deadlines. Philips continued to be ZECCO’s subcontractor also on the project for the FINDECO tower.

8 ‘Zambia Is Spending \$14-Million for a 5-Day Conference’.

9 Dragan Petković, ‘Naša najdraža i najznačajnija poseta – Predsednici Tito i Kaunda posetili su našu organizaciju [The Favourite and Most Significant Visit – Presidents Tito and Kaunda Visited Our Organization]’, *Energoprojekt*, May 1970, 2.

10 On the role of Zambia and the Lusaka conference see: Jakovina, Treća Strana Hladnog Rata [*The Third Side of the Cold War*]; Dinkel, *The Non-Aligned Movement*.

11 On organizational complex and corporate architecture see: Martin, *The Organizational Complex – Architecture, Media, and Corporate Space*.

Energoprojekt built in 1960 and which was designed by Milica Šterić, a chief architect and a director of an in-house architecture department, famous for her moto that architecture is “Avant-garde! Design is the activity of the utmost importance, and us, the architects, are those whose obligations is to open roads and enable success to all of us by acquiring new commissions. We are the ones opening the doors to the commercial and other departments.”<sup>12</sup> The representatives of 28 countries<sup>13</sup> which gathered in Belgrade in September 1961 at the inaugural first summit of the movement had an opportunity to see the tower, which at the time was among the tallest structures in the city, while commuting between the two venues of the summit – neoclassicist Federal Parliament building and the newly completed modernist Federal Government building, one of the first projects completed as part of New Belgrade modernist new town project which at the time was a largest urban construction site of the country, and its own right a perfect advertisement for the Yugoslav construction industry.

Kenneth Kaunda was not in Belgrade in 1961, so he did not have an opportunity to see Energoprojekt’s tower then. However, in May 1970, after the Mulungushi Conference Centre had already been contracted, during an official visit to Belgrade, Kaunda visited Energoprojekt’s modernist, international-style aspiring tower, built in 1960, together with Tito. This was followed by a visit to the hydropower plant *Đerdap* on the Danube, under construction by Energoprojekt. In 1968, the two presidents had visited the Kafue Gorge dam, one of the most important energy infrastructure projects undertaken in the early days of

Zambia’s independence, being built with Yugoslav support after the World Bank had declined to invest in it.<sup>14</sup> Energoprojekt was shaping the relationship between the two countries, over and above the personal relationship between Kaunda and Tito. Indeed, Yugoslavia created legislative frameworks for collaboration, such as joint ventures, only after the company had already implemented them in practice. Energoprojekt founded ZECCO (Zambia Engineering and Construction Company) in 1965, with the Zambian Government holding a 51% stake.<sup>15</sup> Energoprojekt founded several other joint-ventures, notably UNICO specialising in architectural design, as well as several subsidiaries, creating flexibility to wear different hats in front of different bodies, while still maintaining high levels of control of the whole process of design and construction.<sup>16</sup>

Reading the spatiality of conference centres in a sequence that starts in 1970 and ends in 1986 affords an insight into the transformation of the capacity of the politics of non-alignment to influence and change international economic relations. Energoprojekt, describing itself as “a factor of the implementation of the Yugoslav non-aligned foreign policy”, built conference centres in Kampala (1972) and Libreville (1977) to host meetings of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and the conference centre for the NAM summit in Harare (1986). Foreign policies of newly independent post-colonial states could be performed in such settings. Conference centres were a practical materialization of

12 Šterić, ‘Projektovanje je avangarda među delatnostima [Design Is an Avant-garde among Other Disciplines]’.

13 Out of 28 delegations, 3 countries (Bolivia, Brazil and Ecuador) had the status of observers and 25 were full participants.

14 For more on the politics of investment in large infrastructure in Zambia after independence see: Giulia Scotto, ‘Colonial and Postcolonial Logistics’, *FOOTPRINT*, 8 November 2018, 69–86.

15 ZECCO was advertised under the slogan “Zambian Company for Zambian People.”

16 For further analysis of Energoprojekt’s organizational models see: Sekulić, Dubravka. “Energoprojekt in Nigeria.” *Southeastern Europe* 41, no. 2 (2017): 200–229.

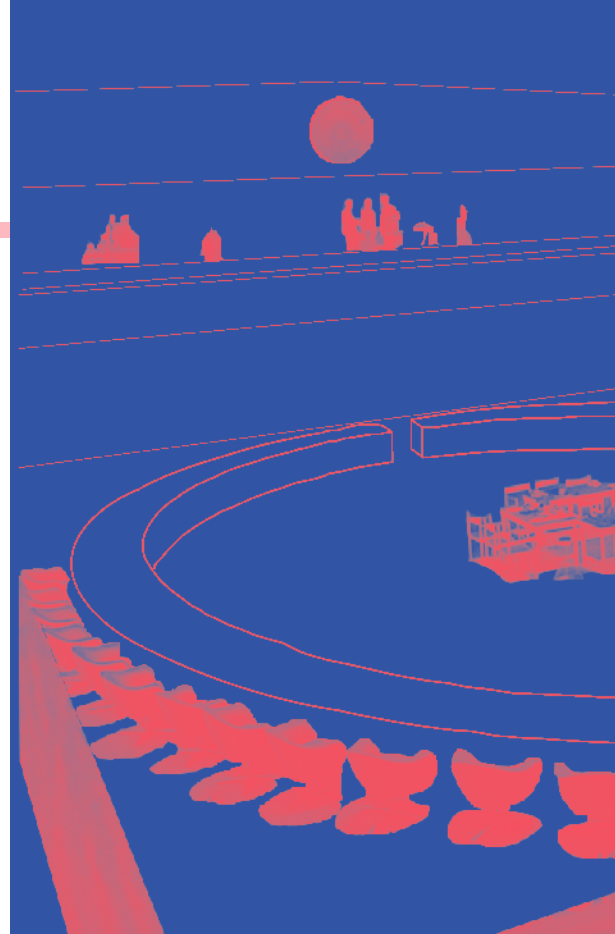
the necessity of South–South cooperation. Optically, the organization of these centres show how the anti–colonial, anti–imperial, anti–racist vision of non–alignment could not resist the pressures of economic dependency and global imaginaries, with Energoprojekt a friendly proxy for processes of neo–colonial capture envisioning progress and democracy only in the image of the West.

## Infrastructure for the Global Public Sphere

Choosing Lusaka for the crucial third summit of the Non–Aligned Movement was based on Kaunda’s political leadership, but Lusaka lacked the necessary infrastructure for an event of such scale, slated to be almost three times larger than the Belgrade summit of 1961. In addition to the conference hall, Energoprojekt’s task was also to design and construct the Mulungushi Village, a residential complex of villas to accommodate 62 heads of delegations that had confirmed their participation. The Village was situated in an enclosed space of 35 acres, one kilometre from the conference hall to which it was connected by one of many newly constructed roads. Each villa, occupying a total surface area of 350 sqm, was designed in what the architect Milenković described as “a combination of the laws of functionality with the laws of aesthetics, combining elements of the local African exoticism with those of the standard European culture.”<sup>17</sup> A decade after the poet Oskar Davičo had searched for commonalities in West Africa, such references to ‘exoticism’ were becoming increasingly

common amongst engineers, architects and other “experts”. Energoprojekt was embroiled in a contradictory position, seeking to maintain socialist solidarity in an increasingly capitalist context, creating a techno–managerial class. Those working abroad were moving in professional circles in the host countries in many of which, after initial attempts at building a more equitable post–independence society, a new class of “African accomplices inside the imperialist system”<sup>18</sup> was appearing.

Oskar Davičo addressed the problem of Yugoslav “whiteness” in his book *Crno na belo* [Black on White] published in 1962 following his visit to West Africa in 1961.<sup>19</sup> The opening chapter of the book, “Former



17 Dušan Milenković, ‘Uspešno obavljen posao [Job Well Done]’, *Energoprojekt*, October 1970, 2. Underlined by the author.

18 Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, 34.

19 Davičo, *Crno Na Belo*.

White,” starts with this contradiction, with the impossibility of reconciling his own Yugoslav whiteness with the imperial colonial whiteness:

“It’s pointless, but what can I do, I’m ashamed. The people I belong to and the class whose son I am, have never murdered, enslaved, killed. For centuries, we have been slaves ourselves. Yes, but I’m white, that’s all passers-by see. If only I could carry a concise history of my country on my lapel! But 94 percent here are illiterate. The consequence of the cultural policy of the colonists! For most it would remain a secret where I am from. To them, I look like a Frenchman,

the thought that in the eyes of just one African I can be equated with these, as such. If I could change my skin colour, I would do it without hesitation. Under that sun, the colour of my face is the colour of all the injustices and cruelties that the people of this continent have experienced, the colour of grimace and selfishness, the colour of misfortune and death, the colour of missionary lies.”<sup>20</sup>

Through the book, Davičo insists and focuses on similarities in the belief that recognition based on similarity and not difference will bring solidarity. He ends the book with the optimistic insight of the existence of similarities that bond and “are not binding. They are the unmistakable facts and the people who are fighting for the world to be the freedom of a single, sole, and increasingly unified human world. Here. There. Everywhere.”<sup>21</sup> Today, this seems too naïve and too optimistic.

The whiteness of Yugoslavs, while not the same whiteness of the colonizers, never ceased to be whiteness as long as they were operating according to capitalist relations and modes of production, increasingly dominating both their business operations and construction sites across the Non-Aligned world. Even after decolonization, the problem of the twentieth century continued to be the problem of the global colour-line,<sup>22</sup> especially after the sabotage of the New Economic International Order and the hegemony of the IMF and the World Bank.<sup>23</sup> Milenković saw the conference centre as a “seed of future urbanity,” and a capacity, even with the tight deadline, to provide a permanent and not a temporary solution, was what ultimately enabled them to win the contract and beat “the English.” Alongside the conference



The 3rd NAM Summit,  
Lusaka, Zambia, 1970.

an Englishman, a Belgian, a Portuguese, a Boer, a segregationist and a lyncher from Little Rock. And I am ashamed of

<sup>20</sup> Davičo, *Crno Na Belo*, 13.

<sup>21</sup> Davičo, 402.

<sup>22</sup> Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 3.

<sup>23</sup> Prashad, *The Darker Nations*, 207–75.

hall there was also a post office and four restaurants, along with the comprehensive technical support needed for the conference to become a media event. The complex also contained four smaller meeting rooms, as well as three salons for heads of states and delegations. Evoking images of the Belgrade conference nine years earlier, the main hall is dominated by a huge roundtable, projecting equality and a horizontal dialogue.

Energoprojekt signed the contract with the Zambian Government at the end of April 1970 and immediately dispatched a team to Lusaka. Led by Dušan Milenković, a senior architect and director of UNICO, Energoprojekt's design office in Zambia, the team consisted of two architects and six architectural technicians who surveyed the site and drew up a preliminary concept in "seven days and seven nights."<sup>24</sup> The pressure on all involved was immense since what was at stake was "not only the politics of Non-alignment at a particular historical moment, not only Energoprojekt, but Yugoslavia in general."<sup>25</sup> The importance of the project for the Zambian Government is visible in the name which was chosen for the hall – Mulungushi – after the Mulungushi Rock of Authority, a *kopje* situated next to the Mulungushi River north of the city of Kabwe in central Zambia, where in 1958 under the leadership of Kenneth Kaunda the first rally of the Zambian African National Congress, the first African political party in the country, took place. The importance of the site was bolstered in 1960 when Kaunda and other nationalists chose it, quite clandestinely and unbeknownst to the authorities of North Rhodesia, to hold the first party conference of the United Independence National Party (UNIP) which was instrumental in Zambia gaining independence in 1964. Giving the name Mulungushi

to the conference centre shows how important the project was for Kaunda and his government and how where the journalists of NYT could only see frivolity, they saw a crucial piece of infrastructure which Zambia needed to demonstrate its independence to the world, and even more importantly, to itself.

While the works on Mulungushi Hall were progressing in three shifts, seven days a week, in order to meet deadlines, Yugoslav diplomats used the close relations between Tito and Kaunda at the time to take charge of all the preparatory work including drafting, in advance, the preliminary version of the concluding summit declaration. Hence, many of the discussions taking place in Lusaka were more perfunctory than aimed at aligning ideas, approaches and decisions among the delegates. With such a limited input in the meeting itself, Tvrtko Jakovina stresses that "the host country could always organize the auditorium."<sup>26</sup> In Lusaka, the organization of the auditorium became the key element around which the whole conference hall was designed, namely the large circular table enabling each of the 62 heads of delegation to have a space for themselves, with the delegates sitting in circles behind them. The table, inspired by that used in Belgrade, was meant to symbolise the horizontality that the movement was trying to achieve and also ensure, in practical terms, that everyone could see everyone else throughout the conference. Tito sitting next to Kaunda, the chairperson, throughout the conference had been alphabetically, and not politically, determined.

In Lusaka at the Third Summit, Kenneth Kaunda proposed that the Non-aligned Movement form permanent institutional structures with committees and defined official positions, as well as a permanent physical infrastructure. Until then, the preparatory conferences had been organized

<sup>24</sup> Dušan Milenković, 'Uspešno obavljen posao [Job Well Done]', *Energoprojekt*, October 1970, 2.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem.*, 2.

<sup>26</sup> Jakovina, 'The Active Coexistence of Non-Aligned Yugoslavia', 498.



and hosted by the member countries, and the continuity of contact between the countries of the Movement had been dependent on the facilities of the United Nations in New York, i.e., the physical presence of most diplomats involved in the movement at least at the sessions of the General Assembly. However, the only permanent bodies formed in that period were the Permanent Committee of the Non-aligned Countries and the Chairman of the Movement, a position to which Kaunda was appointed in Lusaka. Historian Jürgen Dinkel stresses that some of the obstacles to the formation of the permanent seat came from the fears that this would lead to the domination by one country (and its allies) and that the permanent seat would make the movement appear to be more like a block and thus would not challenge the Cold War division of the world as such but be one more competitor for world domination.<sup>27</sup> According to Jürgen Dinkel

“the summit conferences had two functions within the movement. First, they were the highest-level decision-making and coordinating body. Second, they were consciously orchestrated media events, through which the non-aligned states sought to bring certain key issues and their political demands to the attention of a global public sphere.”<sup>28</sup>

Dinkel stresses that non-aligned conferences “served not just as a forum for the discussion of global problems but also as an arena for the negotiation and symbolic (re-)production of power relations within the non-aligned world.”<sup>29</sup> While Yugoslavia ultimately won the competition against

Cuba and Egypt to organize the First Summit, when the Second summit was organized in Cairo three years later, the main argument for choosing Cairo over Havana, beside the physical proximity of Cairo to the African countries, was its better developed hotel and meetings infrastructure.<sup>30</sup> Cairo was the “safe” choice that would not upset either of the superpowers, and symbolically, giving preference to it over Cuba meant supporting the existing infrastructure instead of taking a leap into the revolutionary unknown. Tito and Nehru won over Castro, and Cairo’s hotel infrastructure was a convenient excuse.

Therefore, there is no one spot in the world which one can point to and say – the seat of the Non-aligned Movement, or just the non-alignment as such. The singular site where the most meetings under the umbrella of the Non-aligned Movement took place was probably the building of the United Nations in New York. The Movement’s continuous belief in the power of the UN to build a more equal world for the developing countries is probably the most perplexing of all the continuities of the movement’s position, whose leaders failed to hear the biting judgement of Frantz Fanon who already in the early 1960s saw in the UN “the legal card used by the imperialist interests when the card of brute force has failed.”<sup>31</sup>

## Infrastructure for Non-Aligned Cooperation

Energoprojekt went on to build more conference centres in other non-aligned African countries including Uganda, Gabon, and Zimbabwe. The urban myth in Belgrade goes that some of the countries that attended the conference in Belgrade

<sup>27</sup> The issue of the permanent seat of NAM was a recurring topic in the 1970s and 1980s. Dinkel, ‘The Issues of a Permanent Secretariat and Financing Model’, 167–69.

<sup>28</sup> Dinkel, *The Non-Aligned Movement*, 169.

<sup>29</sup> Dinkel, *The Non-Aligned Movement*, 171.

<sup>30</sup> Jakovina, ‘The Active Coexistence of Non-Aligned Yugoslavia’, 481.

<sup>31</sup> Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution*, 195.

approached Yugoslavia wishing for a replica of the Federal Government building in New Belgrade where some of the meetings had been held.<sup>32</sup> This never happened but one can say that New Belgrade, which was the largest construction site in Yugoslavia in 1961, as well as Energoprojekt's own office tower, served as perfect advertisements for the capabilities of Yugoslav architects, engineers, and construction enterprises. Perhaps, the Non-Aligned Movement was at its most visible in the optimistic projects for conference centres built across the African continent, not only for NAM meetings but also for meetings of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and other large international meetings. From today's perspective it is easy to read these projects as a form of misplaced optimism, as "white elephants" or expensive, vanity, projects that wasted limited resources that could have been spent better on supporting processes of decolonization, but that would be an oversimplification. These projects are the most tangible materialization of the words and ideas that were often expressed and discussed during the summits, such as modernization, industrialization, infrastructure and the belief that, with their existence, progress will surely follow. However, it is important to understand these requests from a different perspective, as a response to the lack of spatial infrastructure for the type of self-governance and diplomacy that most of these countries had been denied whilst being ruled by colonial metropolises, and an awareness of the necessity for independent means of communication. This was best expressed by S. Rajaratnam, then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Singapore, during the Fourth Non-aligned Movement Summit in Algiers in 1973:

"Yesterday, Mr Chairman, for some reason, we had a technical breakdown.

<sup>32</sup> Kulić, *Building Babylon: Architecture, Hospitality, and the Non-Aligned Globalization*, 2:xxi.

All the equipment that we are using – threatening the big powers, is provided by them. It broke down, and we could not communicate. We were all sitting here in this place, made and built by the great powers. Without that, we cannot hold this conference. We sent telegrams to our home countries. We had to send one to Singapore. It had to go to Paris, London, Singapore. They turn it off, we are lost."<sup>33</sup>

During the Lusaka Conference, Josip Broz Tito commented that the Non-alignment policy "opened the perspective of new international relations" emphasizing "the principles of independence, the self-determining development of countries and comprehensive international cooperation based on equality, as well as the need for the accelerated development of developing countries."<sup>34</sup> In the same speech, Tito went on to stress the importance of economic cooperation between the developing countries by saying that "it is certainly necessary to focus on our own strengths and maximize the development and utilization of all human and material potential. Further, it is necessary to further intensify the mutual cooperation between the developing countries and to take full advantage of the economic integration and cooperation they provide."<sup>35</sup> New diplomatic relations needed new physical spaces in which to unfold, and what was the best way to support the building of the

<sup>33</sup> Quoted in "Two Meetings and a Funeral," three-channel video installation, by Naeem Mohaiemen, 2017

<sup>34</sup> Tomislav Butorac and Ranko Petković, eds., 'Govori predsednika SFRJ Josipa Broza Tita na konferencijama šefova država Ili vlada nesvrstanih zemalja [Speeches by Josip Broz Tito, President of SFRY, at the Conferences of Presidents of Governments of Nonaligned Countries]', in *Nesvrstanost u Suvremenom Svijetu [Nonalignment in the Contemporary World]* (Zagreb: Vjesnik, 1979), 43.

<sup>35</sup> Butorac and Petković, 47.

economic connection than to materialize them in concrete, brick, and aluminium.

For Energoprojekt, and the Yugoslav banks, the rationale for these projects was simple – they saw them as seeds that would allow them to enter the new markets.<sup>36</sup> Socialist Yugoslavia, though existing for less than five decades, experienced a very dynamic internal development and established international relations such that one must be precise about the time-frame when drawing conclusions about Yugoslavia's global role. In particular, the economic motivations behind some of the decisions and alliances Yugoslavia made were very different in the late 1950s, the mid-1960s or the late 1970s. By 1986, when the Eight NAM Summit opened, Energoprojekt had just completed work in Harare and though the rhetoric stayed the same, the motivation had changed. However, in the first half of the 1970s it was still possible to see the projects of the conference centres and the initial involvement of Energoprojekt in the Non-Aligned Movement countries as the practical implementation of one of the principles of NAM, declared in point 12 of the Lusaka Declaration, as "the struggle for economic independence and mutual cooperation on a basis of equality and mutual benefit."<sup>37</sup>

36 Vladimir Unkovski-Korica argues that such pragmatic economic rationale of Yugoslav state and the enterprises as its proxies was shaped by the fact that by the time NAM formed in 1961 Yugoslav 'market socialism' was already 'more market, and less socialism'. Both Paul Stubbs and Gal Kirn criticise this interpretation as oversimplification. Kirn does not argue against the conclusion that market elements overtook the plan in Yugoslav economy but proposes a different time frame of analysis. Anecdotally, Unkovski-Korica's father worked as *Energoprojekt's* lawyer on the project for a Conference Centre and a Hotel in Harare. (see: Unkovski-Korica, *The Economic Struggle for Power in Tito's Yugoslavia*; Kirn, *Partisan Ruptures*; Stubbs, 'Socialist Yugoslavia and the Antinomies of the Non-Aligned Movement'.)

37 Jankowitsch and Karl P. Sauvant, *The*

Point 8 of the same declaration accused "the forces of racism, apartheid, colonialism and imperialism," of jeopardising "the independence and territorial integrity of many countries, especially those of the Non-aligned and developing countries, thereby hampering their advancement, intensifying tension and giving rise to conflicts."<sup>38</sup>

After the Lusaka Summit, Uganda's President Milton Obote approached Energoprojekt to build a Conference centre in Kampala. The centre was used as a successful "seed" project to enter the Ugandan market and, by 1975, Energoprojekt had also designed and built the Hotel Nile in conjunction with the centre, a terminal building at the airport in Entebbe, a few office buildings in Kampala and a water treatment and supply system in Lira, as well as having prepared projects for two more hotels and several office buildings.<sup>39</sup> The project was supported by Energoprojekt's entire operation and its joint-ventures ZECCO and UNICO in Zambia. In January 1971, Idi Amin overthrew the government of Milton Obote in a military coup. Nevertheless, the project was successfully completed, and an opening celebration took place in June 1971.<sup>40</sup> However, due to the situation in Uganda, the meeting of the OAU for which the conference centre had been designed took place in Addis Ababa, but the conference centre did host the OAU meeting in 1975. The project description in Energoprojekt's documentation reveals how the conference roundtable is still present as

*Third World without Superpowers. The Collected Documents of the Non-Aligned Countries*, 1:83.

38 Jankowitsch and Karl P. Sauvant, 1:82.

39 Information sourced from various Energoprojekt documents.

40 Jezdimir Radenović, 'Završen veliki posao u Istočnoj Africi – Konferencijski centar u Kampali, Uganda [A Major Job Completed in East Africa – Conference Centre in Kampala, Uganda]', *Energoprojekt*, May 1971. 4

the key element in the design: “the main hall is designed so that 50 heads of state with their delegations (each 5 members) can sit at the roundtable.”<sup>41</sup> The conference centre, whose investment value was \$15 million, was larger than that in Lusaka, and designed for 2,000 participants. Structurally, it adhered to the same organizational principle of a large main hall and three more smaller halls for 200 people, a series of offices and representative salons. The conference centre was fully equipped for broadcast and translation and air conditioned. Instead of villas, the complex in Kampala included a hotel which was connected to the conference centre by an enclosed walkway.

The next Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement held in Algiers in 1973 again provided Energoprojekt with an opening to enter a new market. According to the documentation of the Yugoslav Federal Executive Government, Omar Bongo, the Gabonese president approached Tito during the summit with a suggestion that the two countries should establish diplomatic relations. Part of their conversation included suggestions by Bongo that some Yugoslav enterprises build an international conference centre in Libreville.<sup>42</sup> Following this first contact, Energoprojekt entered into negotiations with the Ministry of Public Works whose proxy was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Gabon. Additionally, Energoprojekt agreed to provide credit for 50% of the project, the estimated cost of which was \$15–17 million, in advance. After the arrangement was made between Gabon and Energoprojekt, Bongo

<sup>41</sup> *Energoprojekt (Published as a Special Insert for the Architectural Journal Arhitektura Urbanizam)*. unpaginated.

<sup>42</sup> During the visit to the offices of *Energoprojekt* in 1975, Bongo stressed that it was Tito who recommended Energoprojekt to him in Algiers. See: Jezdimir Radenović, ‘U ponedjeljak, 7. aprila, predsjednik Gabona Bongo posećio *Energoprojekt* [On Monday, April 7, Gabon President Bongo Visited Energoprojekt]’, *Energoprojekt*, April 1975.

addressed Tito with a further request that Yugoslavia also fund part of the project as a form of public assistance. Jakša Petrić, a deputy of the Federal Secretary in the Secretary for International Affairs of SFRY recommended that the Yugoslav Federal Government should accept Bongo’s proposal even though “as far as they know, until now, our country has never supported the construction of such projects as a form of public assistance” because “these are the initial actions in a cooperation between the two countries and successful implementation of this project could open up further perspectives for our enterprises in this country.”<sup>43</sup> They were proved right, as the conference hall, completed in July 1976 six months ahead of schedule,<sup>44</sup> led to Energoprojekt being directly commissioned to design and build two further buildings, the Banquet and Performance Hall, in the complex that later became known as *le Cité de la Démocratie* [City of Democracy]. Furthermore, in June 1975, the *Energoprojekt* newspaper reported that an agreement had been reached between Energoprojekt and Gabon for the design and construction of a hydropower dam, thus confirming the mantra its architects would often repeat to highlight their relevance in the domain of bringing new commissions to the whole enterprise: “where designers come, contractors will come.”<sup>45</sup> The first

<sup>43</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, Fund: Fond za kreditiranje i osiguranje izvoznih poslova, F-455, Folio: Gabon

<sup>44</sup> ‘Završena zgrada za konferencije u Librevilu – šest meseci pre roka [Conference Centre in Libreville Completed – Six Months Ahead of Schedule]’, *Energoprojekt*, July 1976.

<sup>45</sup> Quoted here from an interview with Dušan Milenković, but formulated first by Milica Šterić, the head of the Architecture and Urbanism Department of *Energoprojekt* since its founding in 1951 until 1976, and often repeated by the architects author interviewed during research. D. Jakovljević and Dušan Milenković, ‘Razgovor sa Dušanom Milenkovićem, direktorom OOURA za urbanizam i arhitekturu: Inostranstvo – generalna

major event in the finished complex was the 15th Conference of the OAU in July 1977. The total value of the three projects was almost \$50 million when completed.<sup>46</sup> The same year, Energoprojekt founded UFK, an enterprise for forest exploitation after winning a state concession for exploitation of some 350,000 hectares.<sup>47</sup>

In the 1980s Energoprojekt was involved with two projects that revolved around the hosting of the Non-aligned Movement Summit: a conference centre and a hotel in Harare, Zimbabwe where the Eighth Summit took place and a Hyatt hotel in Belgrade which housed some of the participants of the Ninth Summit three years later in 1989. Late to the Non-alignment party, the first president after the country had gained independence, Robert Mugabe, was probably the last believer in the capacity of the Non-aligned Movement to transform the power dynamics of the world and change the increasingly difficult economic position of most of its members. All the founders were dead, the last one of them who stayed on power, Tito passed away in 1980, and democracy as one of the key principles of the Non-aligned Movement had withered away as a possibility in many of the member countries which were not united anymore by a struggle for independence but by one with crippling debt and pressure from their international creditors. The crippling debt was also haunting Yugoslavia.<sup>48</sup>

orjentacija 1979. [Interview with Dušan Milenković, Director of OOUR for Urbanism and Architecture: The General Orientation for 1979 – Markets Abroad], *Energoprojekt*, January 1979, 4.

<sup>46</sup> Conference Hall was roughly 25 million, Banquet 10.5 and Performance Hall 10.7 million USD. See: D. Jakovljević, 'Brza gradnja – gotovi problemi [Fast Construction – Finished Problems]', *Energoprojekt*, July 1977.

<sup>47</sup> Energoprojekt 1951–1981 publication, unpaginated.

<sup>48</sup> On struggle of Yugoslavia with debt in the 1980s see: Woodward, 'Orthodoxy and Solidarity'; Woodward, *Socialist*

Mugabe's belief in the solidarity of the movement and view of Yugoslavia as the true supporter of the independence of the African countries was formed during the 1970s when Yugoslavia, together with Tanzania and Zambia, were the main allies of the Black liberation movement fighting against the white apartheid regime of Ian Smith which was destabilizing the whole region. During his visits to Belgrade in the late 1970s, Mugabe, while seen by the apartheid newspapers as a "terrorist" was celebrated as the leader of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) to which Yugoslavia had been offering diplomatic, political as well as material and military support. In 1978 and 1979 Yugoslavia, especially through the activities of Josip Vrhovec at the UN, was actively arguing for and advocating support for the independence movement in Zimbabwe.<sup>49</sup>

The long-running negotiations for the commission of the first project in Zimbabwe, a conference centre and a hotel, started in April 1981 after Energoprojekt first took the initiative and contacted the deputy minister of Information and Tourism of the Government of Zimbabwe to offer him an alternative project to that which had in 1980 been prepared by the British design office Palmer and Brussow. After overthrowing the apartheid regime of Ian Smith in 1980 and renaming the country Zimbabwe, and the main city Harare, the Zimbabwean government led by Robert Mugabe organized, in March 1981, the Zimbabwe Conference on Reconstruction and Development (ZIMCORD) where 31 national and 26 international agencies pledged \$1.45 billions of international aid, with the US pledging \$225 million to be distributed by USAID. The funding pledged

*Unemployment*; Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*.

<sup>49</sup> On the support of Yugoslavia to African independence movements in the late 1970s and active diplomatic role see: Jakovina, 'Afrika – utvrda nesvrstanih [Africa – the bastion of the non-alignment]', 477–517.



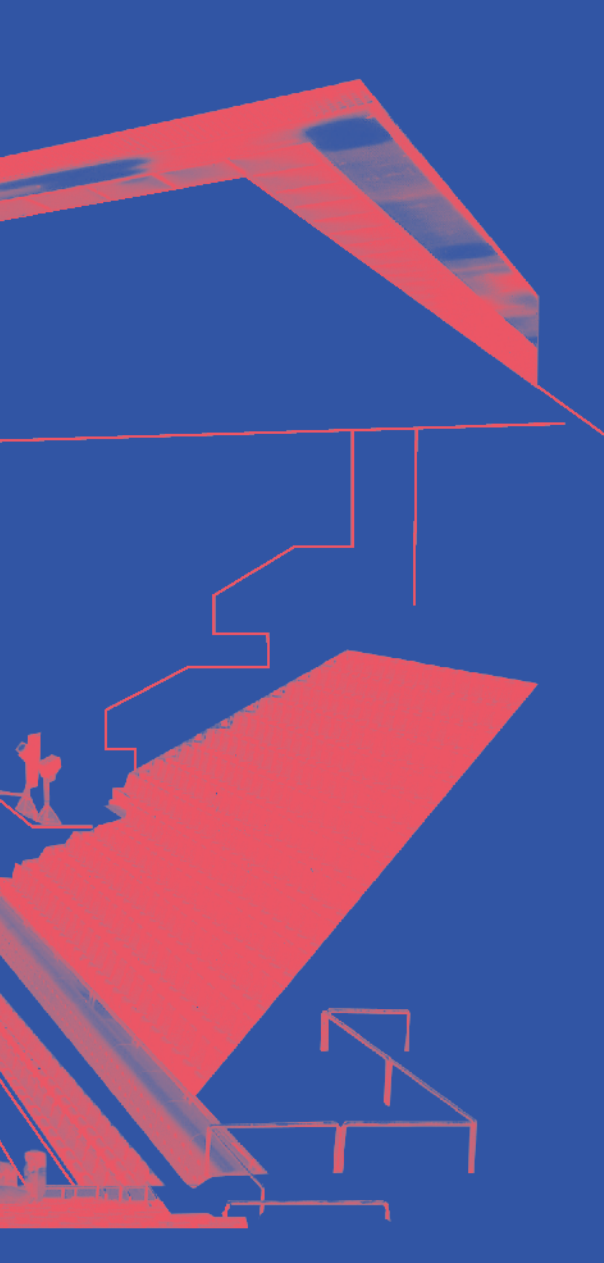
was for a period of three years to support the transition from a white- to a black-led government in Zimbabwe.<sup>50</sup>

Energoprojekt, which at that time had a long-established presence and joint companies in Zambia and Botswana, sent its delegation to follow the conference, including an architect Dragoljub Bakić. During the conference, Bakić found out about the plans of the Zimbabwean government for a conference centre and a hotel and managed to negotiate with Victoria Chitepo, the Minister of Information

and Education and later the Minister of National Resources and Tourism, a two-month window during which Energoprojekt would draw up a competing architectural proposal.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, Bakić used the commemoration of the death of the Chairman of the Presidency of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, Stevan Doronjski, at the Yugoslav embassy in Harare, as an opportunity to showcase the model of the project to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Zimbabwe who had come to

<sup>50</sup> Dougherty, 'Zimcord Conference Documentation'.

<sup>51</sup> Bakić, *Anatomija B & B Arhitekture [An Anatomy of B&B Architecture]*, 166–68.



the embassy to pay his respects.<sup>52</sup> The Conference centre and hotel were completed in July 1985 and officially opened in November 1985 by Robert Mugabe. When the complex opened, Tihomir Nenadić, director of Energoprojekt's Construction Department saw the project as the perfect example of how "the politics of aggressive acquisition" had to be adopted by the company especially in new markets such as Zimbabwe.<sup>53</sup>

52 Dragoljub and Ljiljana Bakić in an interview with the author, January 2015.

53 D J, 'Premijer Mugabe otvorio Šera-

In January 1982, Energoprojekt won the construction contract based on the Bakićs' design in a bidding competition with two other international construction companies, French *Sofitel* with a local design office Clinton and an Italian company *De La Vera*. The contract was signed on 22 November 1982, with an initial deadline of 24 months as Harare was hoping to host one of the annual summits of the OAU. Coordination between design and construction was achieved by forming a team of designers in Harare where both Bakićs relocated to, setting up a design office that remained active until the end of the 1980s.<sup>54</sup> What most determined the approach to design and construction was the tight deadline and fear of inflation (in the Yugoslav, Zimbabwean, and other markets) and

ton [Prime Minister Mugabe Opened Sheraton]', *Energoprojekt*, 6 December 1985.

54 Both Bakićs returned to Harare in 1993 to further develop the office of Energoprojekt there which had fewer and fewer commissions. By that time the world seemed completely different from the one of 10 years before. What was remained under the name of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) was under UN economic sanctions because of the wars they were waging against other parts of the former country, which had been expelled from the NAM. For Energoprojekt, the projects in Zimbabwe offered potential relief from the pressure on the business caused by the sanctions. In order to be able to bid for both design and construction projects and not to appear twice as the same company, Bakić, with the initial support from Energoprojekt, registered in 1993 Bakić Architects. They would stay and work in Zimbabwe until 1999 and design a series of large projects, including the complex for the UN's blue helmets division that they completed. (see: Ljiljana Bakić and Draginja Maskareli, "Nepriznatost" arhitekture je delo samih arhitekata, intervju sa Ljiljanom Bakić [“A Non-Recognition” of Architecture Is the Doing of Architects Themselves, Interview with Ljiljana Bakić], *Arhitektura*, February 2004. and Bakić, *Anatomija B & B Arhitekture [An Anatomy of B&B Architecture]*, 78–87.).

its potential impact on the narrow profit margin of Energoprojekt since the contract did not have a sliding scale clause. A reduced Yugoslav workforce was planned for the construction site in order to reduce costs. This was possible because the country had a relatively advanced local construction industry with a labour force skilled in more complex work which had been developed out of necessity during the international isolation of 17 years in which the country had been independent from the UK but ruled by the apartheid racist regime of white, former colonists, mostly of English descent.<sup>55</sup> However, it was crucial that the team of architects was there to coordinate the whole process. The Workers Council of the Construction Department had to accept all the proposals for how the construction work was to be organized – this included authorizing the opening of a new work unit, a decision on the way the salaries for those working abroad would be calculated, approving two nine-hour shift working as well as issuing a permit to invest in the acquisition of additional machinery on top of that which Energoprojekt already owned and which had been pulled in from construction sites in Belgrade, Peru, Kuwait, Botswana, and Iraq.<sup>56</sup> According to Lazo Žakula, the president of Energoprojekt's Advisory Board, there were two main reasons why this project received an extraordinary amount of attention from the board. The primary reason was the tight deadline given to finalize a complex project, something that had been characteristic of Energoprojekt in the 1970s but when this project was starting the enterprise was already plagued by a two-year delay in the construction of its own building in Belgrade and doubted

<sup>55</sup> In her text about the project, Ljiljana Bakić states that “the ruling white elite, responsible for the majority of architectural and construction projects, designed its life like in a film *Gone with the Wind*.” Bakić, 60.

<sup>56</sup> ‘Počelo je odbrojavanje’, *Energoprojekt*, 3 December 1982, 3.

if it still had the capacity to pull off “miracles” like those from the previous decade. However, the more important reason was the crisis, the contraction of profits and the increasingly difficult position of Energoprojekt and especially its design divisions in the international market, made more complex when the Yugoslav dinar was devalued in the early 1980s within the IMF Structural Adjustment Program to curb the Yugoslav debt. Energoprojekt, as well as other Yugoslav companies which were sub-contractors, were hoping that the hotel and Conference centre in Harare would open new markets and mark the beginning of the second “golden African decade,” despite the fact that the scheduling and profitability of the project were “borderline.”<sup>57</sup>

The Sheraton hotel and conference centre complex were designed by starting from the outside in – i.e., the architects, faced with a plot too small for the original program had to develop it vertically, and first they found a suitable formal composition of rectangular shapes in which they programmed the hotel as a combination of a tower and a slab and the conference centre as series of intersecting cubes, which enabled the hotel and centre to be connected. The whole complex was clad in golden aluminium sandwich panels and air conditioned. The architects stressed that for them it was important to achieve a strong separation between inside and outside, and that outside was in a colour that could be associated with the soil but that the interior had to be autonomous, “international” and artificial.<sup>58</sup> This comes close to how Energoprojekt started to

<sup>57</sup> Lazo Žakula, member of the Business Committee on Energoprojekt's Work Division for Construction, and a president of its Workers Council in: D J, ‘RS traži precizniju organizacionu šemu [Worker's Council Asks for the More Precise Scheme]’, *Energoprojekt*, 28 January 1983.

<sup>58</sup> Bakić, ‘Nezaboravni Porodaj [The Unforgettable Birth]’.



understand the idea of the corporate aesthetics, and the approach, that would dominate it from 1980s onwards. In 1982, the year the project was contracted, chief architect Dragoljub Bakić stressed the importance of Zimbabwe for the whole enterprise and especially for the Architecture and Urbanism Department which had been singled out, at the end of 1981, as the most potentially problematic segment of Energoprojekt. In an interview for the Energoprojekt newspaper, after the contract for the project was finally signed and the project started, in late 1982, Bakić was frank about the importance of the project, especially for the Architecture and Urbanism division:

“In a moment when we have already seriously started to feel the consequences of a drastic restriction of investments in the domestic market, this project in Zimbabwe opens the possibility for us to get through the approaching period and even procure new commissions. Our plans for Zimbabwe’s market don’t stop with this job. We are already in advanced discussions about several other projects, which are opening prospects for founding a permanent design subsidiary in Harare. That is both our wish and goal.”<sup>59</sup>

This goal was reached as Energoprojekt did open a subsidiary and worked actively in the country until the mid-1990s, designing and constructing a wide range of public buildings and infrastructural objects. In January 1989, Robert Mugabe visited the Belgrade offices of Energoprojekt during an official visit to Yugoslavia and described the position of the enterprise in his country in terms that resonated with those used by the President of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda when he had visited the

company almost 20 years earlier.<sup>60</sup> At the time, Energoprojekt was completing the headquarters for the main political party in the country, Mugabe’s Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU–PF), a 15–storey high postmodern tower designed by local architects Peter Martin and Tony Wales–Smith and influenced by Philip Johnson’s 1984 AT&T building on Madison Avenue in New York.

## Spectres of (Infrastructures and) Debt

The 2017 three–channel digital video installation *Two Meetings and a Funeral* by artist Naeem Mohaiemen, in which he links the politics of independent Bangladesh with its participation in Non–aligned Summits, brings Indian historian Vijay Prashad to the *Salle omnisports la Coupole d’Alger* designed by Oscar Niemeyer in which the 1973 Summit took place.<sup>61</sup> Prashad comments while walking around the empty space searching for anti–colonialism in the building’s architecture:

“You know, they produced these giant buildings. They are so hard to maintain. They look shabby perhaps days after they finished constructing it. How are you supposed to maintain something so enormous? [...] it is ok to build it, it gives you a sense of pride, but it is not maintainable. You have populations in poverty, and then there is this huge thing. It is impossible to clean the glass, it is impossible to maintain it from leaks. I am optimistic about the proj–

<sup>60</sup> D. Jakovljević, ‘Energoprojekt poželjan poslovni partner – poseta predsednika Zimbabvea Roberta Mugabea [Energoprojekt Desirable Business Partner – Visit of the President of Zimbabwe Robert Mugabe]’, *Energoprojekt*, 3 February 1989.

<sup>61</sup> On the Niemeyer’s building in Algiers see especially Samia Henni’s text in Oddy, *Revolution Will Be Stopped Halfway*.

<sup>59</sup> Dragoljub Bakić, ‘Izvođaču ćemo omogućiti kontinuirani rad [We Will Enable Continuous Work of a Contractor]’, *Energoprojekt*, 19 November 1982.

ect, but I am not optimistic about this kind of artistic expression in the middle of the project. Somehow it doesn't seem correct. Huge amounts of scarce resources are put into this and then, as I say, it's hard to maintain it. [...] Although to tell you the truth, I can't see many motifs of anti-colonialism here. Where is the anti-colonial motif, where are the people?"<sup>62</sup>

If we look at the conference centres Energoprojekt built in Africa, is it possible to see in them anti-colonialism or, at least, non-alignment? If we focus only on the one in Harare, its design and spatial disposition of the interior reveals more about the ideological shifts between the 1970s and 1980s and the changing approach to various projects abroad than its golden clad exterior. This conference hall represents a radical break with the approach developed by Energoprojekt in the previous decade. The roundtable as the key organizing design element for the main conference hall, and the principle of horizontality, were abandoned. The hall, rectangular in its base, was organized vertically, with two steep juxtaposed seating galleries on the longer sides, modelled as an arena. The architects used the UK Parliament as a reference, as it, for them, represented the spirit of democracy they wanted to capture. The irony of using such a reference in a former British colony escaped the authors who at that moment had already developed a critique of the Yugoslav system and most importantly self-management which they saw as a burdensome process which allowed non-experts to interfere and slow down their projects and, most significantly, hindered them from playing a role in a society they thought was theirs by right – that of the bourgeois architect which they saw in the capitalist West.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Quoted from the "Two Meetings and a Funeral," three-channel digital video installation by Naeem Mohaiemen, 2017

<sup>63</sup> In an interview with an author in

The two strongest factors in shaping the auditorium as a new arena for democracy in Zimbabwe were a fascination with Western capitalist democracy and competition. What was at play was a colonization of the imagination by a Western imaginary translated into architecture. In practice, the auditorium was too large, and most of the participants were reduced to being passive observers. While, in the moment of initial design, Zimbabwe wanted to host an OAU meeting and not a Non-aligned Summit, it seems that for Energoprojekt's architects, both non-alignment and anti-colonialism

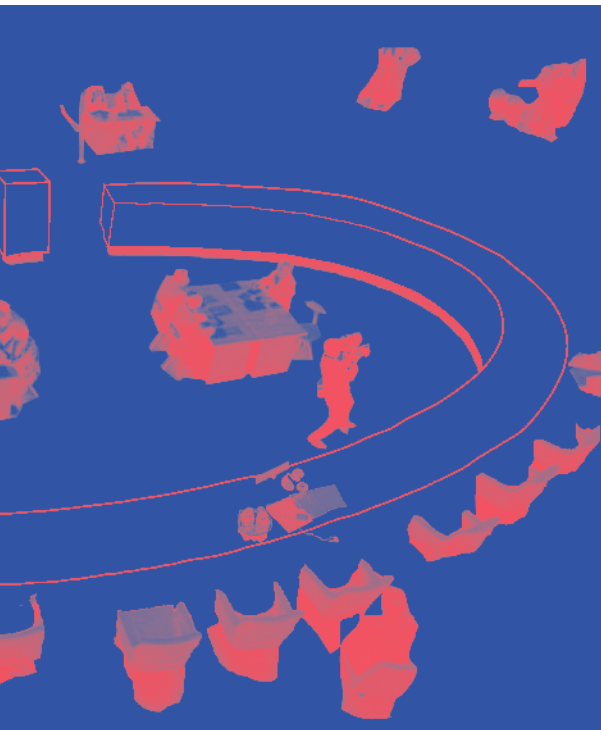


became pure rhetorical devices, forgotten as principles.

Both Summits in Lusaka and Harare were important in the history of the movement because they brought about documents or bodies concerned with the future

April 2016, see also: Ljiljana Bakić and Draginja Maskareli, "Nepriznatoš" arhitekture je delo samih arhitekata, intervju sa Ljiljanom Bakić ["A Non-Recognition" of Architecture Is the Doing of Architects Themselves, Interview with Ljiljana Bakić], *Arhitektura*, February 2004.

of the Third World and tried to articulate demands for a more equitable world. The Lusaka conference put forward a document that was to guide the development of the Third World into a more harmonious position in relation to other parts of the world, whilst the Harare conference formed a body, the Southern Commission, which analysed the failure to build such world and the causes of the sharp economic decline most of the member countries faced in the 1980s. Prashad states the statistics that “in 1970, when the Third World project was intact, the sixty states classified as



“low-income” by the World Bank owed commercial lenders and international agencies 25 billion USD. Three decades later, the debt of these countries ballooned to 523 billion USD.”<sup>64</sup> However, Prashad further notes that “over the course of these three decades, the sixty states paid 550 billion USD in principle [sic] interest on loans worth 540 billion USD. Yet they still owe 523 billion USD,” concluding that the “alchemy of international usury binds

the darker nations.”<sup>65</sup> This was not the outcome hoped for by the Non-aligned leaders when they passed at the 1970 conference the Lusaka Declaration on Peace, the Independence, Development, Co-operation and Democratisation of International Relations which proposed a series of demands and mechanisms articulated in the Programme for Action in the fields of planning and projection; trade, co-operation and development; industrial, mineral, agricultural and marine production; the development of infrastructure; and the application of science and technology advocating more equitable economic progress in the world.

Therefore, the Declaration, still seeing in the UN the most important body with the power to remedy inequality in the world, urged the United Nations to “fulfil the objectives enshrined in its Charter in order “to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom;” and to “employ international machinery to bring about a rapid transformation of the economic system” particularly in the fields of trade, finance and technology so that “economic domination yields to economic co-operation and economic strength is used for the benefit of the world community.”<sup>66</sup> The development process was seen as the key to bringing about a more equitable world, and for the Non-aligned leaders in 1970, the UN had to “view the development process in a global context and to adopt a programme of international action for utilization of world resources in men and materials, science and technology, benefiting developed and developing countries alike,” especially focusing on “international action to promote processing of primary products in areas of production.”<sup>67</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Prashad, 276.

<sup>66</sup> The Third Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-aligned Countries, 84.

<sup>67</sup> The Third Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-aligned Countries, 85.

The Non-aligned leaders decided to foster mutual cooperation and contribute to each other's social progress by utilising complementarities between their respective resources and requirements and all in order to accelerate the economic growth and social development and thus fortify independence.<sup>68</sup> The special imperative in this process was placed on the development of the infrastructure, in the expanded sense, and even conference centres and hotels were considered infrastructure necessary for conducting international politics and the economy. In order to reach a better future, the development of infrastructure, as in the vision the authors of the Lusaka Declaration, had to:

“(a) to facilitate mutual co-operation in preparing pre investment surveys and in executing projects for the development of one another's infrastructure in the field of road and rail communication, irrigation and power; and  
(b) to concert measures for transforming the prevailing systems of communication, transport and commercial services previously designed to link metropolitan countries to their dependent territories as to promote direct commerce, contact and cooperation amongst developing countries.”<sup>69</sup>

The World Bank and other development banks were quick to start supporting various infrastructural projects in the countries of Africa which were in the process of liberating themselves, and in many other different countries – in the East, the West and in those which were not aligned. Many loans came with conditions requiring the selection of projects or construction companies from specific countries but

for a while there was enough work for construction companies from all parts of the world, which would compete against each other but also work side by side on the same construction sites.<sup>70</sup> And even with both political and economic power of Yugoslavia slowly diminishing during the 1970s, Energoprojekt was amongst the most successful enterprises, especially when compared with the size of economy in the country it came from, and in the 1980 annual survey of the Engineering News Record it was ranked as 6th in the field of consulting and 20th in that of turnkey contracts.<sup>71</sup>

As Paul Stubbs notes, there was “no singular, stable, socio-economic imaginary within Non-aligned Movement,”<sup>72</sup> but there was a broad consensus that Non-aligned Movement countries individually and through mutual collaboration and support can achieve “rapid economic and social development.”<sup>73</sup> The Non-Aligned Movement followed the UN and the zeitgeist, development approach in which industrialization was the cornerstone of development and growth, “a kind of monological project of modernity.”<sup>74</sup> This

<sup>70</sup> On the conditions of investments from the East Block see: Lukasz Stanek, *Architecture in Global Socialism: Eastern Europe, West Africa, and the Middle East in the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020); Lukasz Stanek, 'Gift, Credit, Barter: Architectural Mobilities in Global Socialism', *E-Flux Architecture Housing* (July 2020), <https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/housing/337850/gift-credit-barter-architectural-mobilities-in-global-socialism/>.

<sup>71</sup> See: *Engineering News Record* (July 17, 1980), 45–48.

<sup>72</sup> Stubbs, 'Socialist Yugoslavia and the Antinomies of the Non-Aligned Movement'.

<sup>73</sup> Kardelj, *Istorijski koreni nesvrstavanja [The Historical Roots of Non-alignment]*, 12.

<sup>74</sup> Stubbs, 'Socialist Yugoslavia and the Antinomies of the Non-Aligned Movement'. On Escobar's critique of development and the policies detrimental

<sup>68</sup> The Third Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-aligned Countries, 83.

<sup>69</sup> The Third Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-aligned Countries, 84.

is the context in which all projects, not only conference centres, need to be read, including the role of Energoprojekt. In this quest for development, infrastructure, in an expanded sense, played an important role. By the late 1970s and especially in the 1980s, it became obvious that the post-independence infrastructure boom of the 1960s and 1970s did not bring to many Non-aligned countries the bright and prosperous future of more developed societies, but a future that was arrested by debt. According to Prashad,<sup>75</sup> the Third World as a project, and with it the emancipatory potential of the Non-aligned Movement, was assassinated in Kingston by IMF-led globalization. The Summit in Zimbabwe was not a funeral, but the night of the living debt, packaged in a hypertrophied UK Parliament. The main achievement of the 1986 Non-aligned Movement Summit was the creation of the South Commission following the initiative of Mahathir Mohamed, Prime Minister of Malaysia. The Commission, chaired by the former president of Tanzania Julius Nyerere, was to develop a “serious study of the political and economic problems of the NAM states and some pointers for action.”<sup>76</sup> The Report, released in 1990, “argued that the adjustment strategies of IMF-led globalization weakened the Third World as a political force.”<sup>77</sup>

The Non-aligned Movement, together with similar initiatives such as the G-77 and UNCTAD, ceased to be a political force and their demise left no one to “champion a debt abolition of relief strategy for the planet”<sup>78</sup> Yugoslavia shared the faith with its Non-aligned peers of the debt arrested future and 1980s in the country were also marked

effect on the Third World see: Escobar, *Encountering Development*.

<sup>75</sup> Prashad, *The Darker Nations*, 224–44.

<sup>76</sup> Prashad, 276.

<sup>77</sup> Prashad, 277.

<sup>78</sup> Prashad, 277.

by the Structural Adjustment Programs and the IMF imposed austerity measures, which Johanna Bockman has termed “capitalist counterrevolution.”<sup>79</sup> Timothy Mitchell stressed how “infrastructures work on time, but not only in the ways we commonly assume. While they may increase the speed at which goods are transported, people travel, or energy flows, this acceleration of time is not their most important attribute. Their physical scale, technical durability, and political strength give them another purpose. They introduce an interruption, a gap, out of which the present extracts wealth from the future.”<sup>80</sup> In other words, infrastructures produce debt. For decades, it was unthinkable that the focus on infrastructure investment was what was bringing all the countries into a neocolonial position of servitude because of debt. Perhaps it is possible to think about debt<sup>81</sup> not as foreclosure, but an opening for the future. Denise Ferreira da Silva reminds us that “global capital lives off the total value expropriated from slave labour and native lands.”<sup>82</sup> She articulates the concept of ‘unpayable debt’ as “an obligation that one owns but is not one’s to pay,”<sup>83</sup> and an operative figure which “recalls expropriation, the mode of extraction of profit characteristic of the modern colony, which is the moment of the juridical-economic matrix of capital that performs the appropriation of total value required for capital creation through

<sup>79</sup> Bockman, ‘The Struggle over Structural Adjustment: Socialist Revolution versus Capitalist Counterrevolution in Yugoslavia and the World’.

<sup>80</sup> Mitchell, ‘Infrastructures Work on Time’.

<sup>81</sup> I owe gratitude to Johanna Bockman for pushing me to think beyond debt as foreclosure and to think it as an opportunity.

<sup>82</sup> Ferreira da Silva, ‘Unpayable Debt: Reading Scenes of Value against the Arrow of Time’, 88.

<sup>83</sup> Ferreira da Silva, 87.

the deployment of total violence.”<sup>84</sup> Harney and Moten insist that, unlike credit, debt is social and mutual.<sup>85</sup> According to them, “debt can be abandoned for bad debt. It can be forgotten for bad debt, but it cannot be forgiven.”<sup>86</sup> Their concept of bad debt is close to Ferreira da Silva’s unpayable debt – it is a conceptualization of debt that refuses to be re-integrated into the circuits of global capital flows. The bad and unpayable debt acknowledges that its origin lies in colonial dispossession and refuses to be forgiven. For Harney and Moten “there will be a [debt] jubilee when the Global South does not get credit for discounted contributions to the world civilization and commerce but keeps its debts, changes them only for the debts of others, a swap among those who never intend to pay, who will never be allowed to pay, in a bar in Penang, in Port of Spain, in Bandung, where your credit is no good.”<sup>87</sup> Infrastructures produced in Non-alignment, can offer some guidance, on how the oppressed, the underdogs, the damned, can come together and articulate their position in the world, across difference, in resistance to both local and global ruling elites, in which debt forgetting and not forgiving, can be one of the triggers for anti-(neo)colonial solidarity.

The Non-Aligned Movement can be seen as the conservative side of the anti-colonial struggle, providing solidarity for decolonizing nations to gain sovereignty, but taming and integrating them into capitalist globalization. Ultimately, the vehicle of liberation also became the vehicle of integration into an indefensible system<sup>88</sup> precisely because of a belief in the possibility of an international public sphere to be constituted on principles of equality by

bracketing off differences,<sup>89</sup> rather than insisting on co-liberation based on thinking in terms of difference. The Non-Aligned Movement and its materialization through the work of Energoprojekt point to both the possibility and the necessity to think about internationalism and solidarity, and about parameters not set by capitalist or socialist developmental agendas of progress predicated upon continuous growth.

The tentative answer to the question if there were Non-aligned architectures is ‘no’, but a new non-alignment is needed more than ever. For Non-aligned architectures to emerge both the Movement and modern architecture as an extension of industrialist modernization were an obstacle and not a vehicle, as they led to integration into the hegemonic global system and not its transformation. However, an architecture of non-alignment as an architecture of co-liberation must be possible and is needed more than ever. Based not on the concepts of modernization and **bracketing of difference but derived from** working with and across difference, it is possible to rethink development but this time as “‘small d’ development”<sup>90</sup> which Ruth Wilson Gilmore builds through the concept of “blues epistemologies.”<sup>91</sup> If the Non-Aligned Movement teaches us anything, it is that while its existence together with other progressive ideas such as Pan Africanism, the Tricontinental or the Third World, did not prevent neocolonial enclosure, this does not mean that recolonization as such was inevitable. Ultimately, anti-colonialism serves as a constant reminder that “there is nothing undoable, as hard as undoing it would be.”<sup>92</sup> Studying

<sup>84</sup> Ferreira da Silva, 88.

<sup>85</sup> Harney and Moten, *The Undercommons*, 61.

<sup>86</sup> Harney and Moten, 63.

<sup>87</sup> Harney and Moten, 63.

<sup>88</sup> Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 32.

<sup>89</sup> Fraser, ‘Rethinking the Public Sphere’.

<sup>90</sup> Bhandar, Ziadah, and Wilson Gilmore, ‘Abolition Feminism - Ruth Wilson Gilmore’, 167.

<sup>91</sup> On the concept of ‘blues epistemologies’ see: Woods and Gilmore, *Development Arrested*.

<sup>92</sup> Bhandar, Ziadah, and Wilson Gilmore,

Energoprojekt enables us to understand that it matters how things are done. The experience of South–South collaboration was not enough to raise a different type of consciousness and with it a different type of imaginary. “What the world will become already exists in fragments and pieces, experiments and possibilities”<sup>93</sup> and while flawed, there are many lessons to be learnt from Energoprojekt and its being in the Non–Aligned world.

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‘Abolition Feminism – Ruth Wilson Gilmore’, 176.

<sup>93</sup> Lambert and Wilson Gilmore, ‘Making Abolition Geography in Southern California – Interview with Ruth Wilson Gilmore’, 14.

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