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# Solidarity, Development, and Socialist Globalisation: The Centre for the Study and Cooperation of Yugoslavia with Developing Countries (1966–1973)

## IZVLEČEK

### CENTER ZA PROUČEVANJE IN SODELOVANJE JUGOSLAVIJE Z DRŽAVAMI V RAZVOJU (1966–1973): NASTANEK, DELOVANJE IN TRANSFORMACIJA

*Center za proučevanje in sodelovanje Jugoslavije z državami v razvoju je bil ustanovljen v Ljubljani, glavnem mestu Socialistične republike Slovenije, v času, ko je bilo Gibanje neuvrščenih – in jugoslovanska vloga v njem – že dobro uveljavljeno, a hkrati na pragu stagnacije. Ustanovitev je bila del odziva na obstoječe stanje: njegov namen je bil okrepiti jugoslovansko neuvrščeno delovanje z institucionalizacijo produkcije znanja o državah v razvoju in njihovem sodelovanju z Jugoslavijo. Njegovo poslanstvo je bilo zasnovano interdisciplinarno, združevalo je raziskovanje, izobraževanje in podporo pri oblikovanju politik. Članek obravnava formativno obdobje centra med letoma 1966 in 1973, ga umešča v socialistično politično okolje in akademski sistem ter sledi njegovi preobrazbi v ustanovo zveznega pomena. Kljub pomanjkanju arhivskih virov članek pokaže, da je center deloval kot stičišče med znanstveno produkcijo, zunanjo politiko in mednarodnim sodelovanjem, ter s tem ponuja nov vpogled v institucionalne*

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*dimenzije »neuvrščenosti od spodaj«. S tem, ko v ospredje postavlja institucijo in ne zgolj državne diplomacije, članek prispeva k sodobni historiografiji, ki znova preučuje infrastrukture socialistične globalizacije in aktivnosti, povezane z neuvrščenostjo.*

*Ključne besede: Center za proučevanje in sodelovanje Jugoslavije z državami v razvoju, socializem, znanje, solidarnost, razvoj*

## ABSTRACT

*The Centre for the Study and Cooperation of Yugoslavia with Developing Countries was founded in Ljubljana, the capital of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia, during a time when the Non-Aligned Movement and Yugoslavia's role within it were well established but faced a period of stagnation. A part of the response to this impasse was the creation of this Centre, which aimed to strengthen Yugoslavia's engagement with the Non-Aligned Movement by institutionalising the generation of knowledge about developing countries and their cooperation with Yugoslavia. Its mission was interdisciplinary, combining research, education, and policy support. This article explores the Centre's formative years from 1966 to 1973, situating it within the socialist political environment and academic system, and tracing its evolution into an institution of federal significance. Despite the scarcity of archival sources, the article demonstrates how the Centre operated as a link between academic output, foreign policy, and international cooperation, providing new insights into the institutional aspects of "non-alignment from below." By emphasising an institution rather than state-level diplomacy, the article adds to recent historiography that reexamines the infrastructures of socialist globalisation and activities related to non-alignment.*

*Keywords: Centre for the Study and Cooperation of Yugoslavia with Developing Countries, socialism, knowledge, solidarity, development*

An overview of current literature demonstrates that academic interest in alternative globalisations, socialist modernity, and the Non-Aligned Movement is growing. Many studies are decentralising the dominant Cold War narrative and instead proposing a multipolar perspective on global development.<sup>1</sup> This paper aims to enhance understanding of socialist modernity and globalising processes by examining a lesser-known research centre established in Ljubljana in 1966. The Centre for the Study and Cooperation of Yugoslavia with Developing Countries served as a hub, linking many

<sup>1</sup> James Mark, Artemy M. Kalinovsky, and Steffi Marung, "Introduction," in James Mark, Artemy M. Kalinovsky, and Steffi Marung, eds., *Alternative Globalizations: Eastern Europe and the Postcolonial World* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2020), 1–32, accessed on 3 June 2025, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvx8b7ph.4>. Bojana Videkanič, "Nonaligned Modernism: Yugoslav Culture, Nonaligned Cultural Diplomacy, and Transnational Solidarity," *Nationalities Papers* 49, No. 3 (2021): 506, <https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2020.105>.

of these issues within a single institution. While scholars familiar with the Centre's existence agree on its intriguing position and activities, systematic research remains limited, largely due to the lack of primary sources.<sup>2</sup> By acknowledging both the scarcity of sources and the importance placed on the Centre by current scholarship, this paper offers at least a partial overview of its existence, activities, and outputs. It thus supports the argument that the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and Yugoslavia's related initiatives, rooted in a specific vision of globalisation, were acts of significant political agency, resulting from both the complex reality of the Cold War era and the intellectual and political traditions of the Yugoslav state.<sup>3</sup>

While the early period of the Centre's existence examined here may not correspond to its most productive or influential years, this contribution nonetheless explores its initial achievements and the new knowledge it generated. In subsequent years, this expertise helped forge stronger links between Yugoslavia and developing countries. In the mid-1960s, the founding of an institution dedicated solely to Yugoslavia's cooperation with NAM countries reflected the academic, political, and economic interests and needs of that era, including the export of technology, knowledge, and ideology. This paper demonstrates that the Centre was an institution rooted in its local environment, contributing in its specific way to the broader development of global socialism.

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New economic trends have emerged, particularly those leading to an increasing degree of unity and interdependence within the global economic market. Although this process is uneven and heterogeneous, it nevertheless encompasses the entire world, breaking down old structures and creating new forms and methods. The world has become a whole; the global market has established strong connections between all its parts, while simultaneously revealing the differences and antagonisms that exist within it. The main manifestations of these fundamental social contradictions are the conflict between the great powers and the issue of underdeveloped countries.<sup>4</sup>

2 While the Centre was active in different forms since 1966, there are no publicly available archival records. Its early production is scarcely catalogued and often unavailable. For further possible research options and state of the sources, see: Jure Ramšak, "An Attempt at an Alternative Globalization: The Slovenian Economy and the Developing Countries, 1970–1990 [Poskus drugačne globalizacije: slovensko gospodarstvo in dežele v razvoju 1970–1990]," *Acta Histriae* 23, No. 4 (2015): 767.

3 Mark, Kalinovsky, and Marung, "Introduction," 14. Videkanić, "Nonaligned Modernism," 507.

4 Vlado Benko, "The place and role of developing countries in the modern international community [Mesto in vloga dežel v razvoju v sodobni mednarodni skupnosti]," in *Yugoslavia and the Economic Development of Developing Countries: Symposium Papers*, Ljubljana, 23–24 June 1966 (Ljubljana: School of Political Science; Chamber of Commerce of Slovenia, 1966), 1–33.

With these words, Professor Vlado Benko<sup>5</sup> opened the introductory study resulting from a conference titled “Yugoslavia and Economic Development of the Developing Countries” that took place in Ljubljana in 1966. Organised by the College of Political Sciences (*Visoka šola za politične vede*) and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (*Gospodarska zbornica Slovenije*), the conference brought together a diverse group of participants from Yugoslavia, representing various scientific traditions such as sociology, political science, and economics, to review, present, and plan Yugoslavia’s involvement in cooperation with the so-called developing countries (*države v razvoju*). Benko’s words encapsulated a key dilemma at the heart of Yugoslavia’s engagement with the developing world at the time: how to navigate a global system marked by both integration and inequality. By framing the international order as both interdependent and antagonistic, he set the intellectual stage for establishing the Centre for the Study and Cooperation of Yugoslavia with Developing Countries later that same year. His opening was not only illustrative of contemporary socialist diagnoses of global contradictions but also pointed to the rationale for institutionalising research and cooperation with the developing countries. It anticipated the Centre’s dual mission: to generate knowledge about developing countries and to translate the principles of solidarity and development into concrete policies and practices of non-alignment.

As Benko further noted, aiming to establish firmer and more equal economic relations within the developing global market, the conference covered a range of topics: trade in goods, investment cooperation,<sup>6</sup> organisational issues, acceleration of economic development, institutional elements of cooperation, and technical assistance between Yugoslavia and developing countries.<sup>7</sup> The conference thus provided immediate impetus for establishing the Centre for the Study and Cooperation of Yugoslavia with Developing Countries. By 1966, when the conference took place, the NAM was already a significant force in global politics, with Yugoslavia playing a crucial role in its formation and development. Besides Yugoslavia’s political and economic position within the Movement, many indicators – such as the number of students from Non-Aligned countries studying at Yugoslav universities – also illustrate the dynamic

5 In 1961, Vladimir (Vlado) Benko (1917–2011) began working as a senior lecturer in the subject of International Relations and Foreign Policy of the SFRY at the then College of Political Sciences in Ljubljana. He pursued further academic training in the United States, France, and Sweden. In 1967, he was appointed Associate Professor of International Relations at the College of Political Sciences. From 1967 to 1970, he served as the Director of the College of Political Sciences (in 1968 renamed as the College of Sociology, Political Sciences, and Journalism). In 1966, he initiated the establishment of a research unit called the Centre for the Study of the SFRY’s Cooperation with Developing Countries (now known as the Centre for International Cooperation and Development), which is the focus of this paper. – Boštjan Udovič, Bojko Bučar, and Milan Brglez, “Benko, Vladimir (1917–2011),” *Slovenska biografija* (Ljubljana: ZRC SAZU, 2013), accessed on 3 June 2025, <http://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi1017730/#novi-slovenski-biografski-leksikon>.

6 This mainly excluded loans, since Yugoslavia faced “a chronic shortage of financial capital”. – Jure Ramšak, “Yugoslavia and the unlikely success of the New International Financial Order,” *Godišnjak za društvenu istoriju* 31, No. 1 (2024): 39–53, accessed on 3 June 2025, <https://udi.rs/godisnjak/godisnjak-za-drustvenu-istoriju-god-xxi-sveska-1-2024/>.

7 *Yugoslavia and the Economic Development of Developing Countries: Symposium Papers*, Ljubljana, 23–24 June 1966 (Ljubljana: School of Political Science; Chamber of Commerce of Slovenia, 1966).

exchange between countries.<sup>8</sup> This indicates that cooperation among individual states remained strong, while the top-down view of NAM activities suggested a relative stagnation of the Movement. In the second half of the 1960s, leadership changes occurred in several Non-Aligned states, including Algeria, Indonesia, Ghana, India, and others. No summits or other multilateral meetings were held. Confronted with this complex situation, the Yugoslav leaders, fully aware that Yugoslavia faced isolation and political constraints in Europe without the global Non-Aligned framework, sought ways to reinvigorate the NAM and draw attention to it once more.<sup>9</sup>

The establishment of the Centre for the Study and Cooperation of Yugoslavia with Developing Countries aimed to provide knowledge and information that would bridge the gap between existing ties and the apparent stagnation. By examining the Centre's emergence, early work, and transformation into a federal institution – although it was located in Ljubljana rather than in the federal capital, Belgrade – this paper builds on the concept of “*non-alignment from below*”,<sup>10</sup> exploring how the NAM was constructed beyond, yet always in relation to, global political and economic developments. The paper will focus on two key concepts: solidarity as a cornerstone of socialist internationalism;<sup>11</sup> and development understood as a vital condition that enabled the full potential of a socialist society.<sup>12</sup> In doing so, the contribution will shed light on the Centre's existence and role, while also deepening understanding of specific visions of modernity that the Centre, its collaborators, and, by extension, the Yugoslav federation as a socialist state, projected upon the developing countries during the period of socialist globalisation.<sup>13</sup>

8 Aleš Gabrič, “Cultural and scientific cooperation of non-aligned countries in the shadow of political dilemmas [Kulturno in znanstveno sodelovanje neuvrščenih držav v senci političnih dilem],” in Barbara Predan, ed., *Robovi, stičišča in utopije prijateljstva: spregledane kulturne izmenjave v senci politike* (Ljubljana: Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino: Akademija za likovno umetnost in oblikovanje, 2022), 22. Dugonjic-Rodwin and Mladenović, “Transnational Educational Strategies,” 336–42.

9 Jovan Čavoški, “Searching for a new meaning: Yugoslavia and global non-alignment in crisis 1965–1970 [U potrazi za novim smislom: Jugoslavija i kriza globalne nesvrstanosti 1965–1970],” *Istorija* 20. veka 39, No. 2 (2021): 353–74, accessed on 2 June 2025, <https://doi.org/10.29362/ist20veka.2021.2.cav.353-374>. Dragan Bogetić, “Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned Movement,” in Duško Dimitrijević and Jovan Čavoški, eds., *The 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Non-Aligned Movement* (Belgrade: Institute of International Politics and Economics, 2021), 239–53.

10 Paul Stubbs, “Introduction. Socialist Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned Movement: Contradictions and Contestations,” in Paul Stubbs, ed., *Socialist Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned Movement: Social, Cultural, Political and Economic Imaginaries* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2023), 4.

11 Mark, Kalinovsky, and Marung, “Introduction,” 14.

12 Alessandro Iandolo, “Socialist approaches to development,” in Corinna R. Unger, Iris Borowy, and Corinne A. Pernet, eds., *The Routledge Handbook on the History of Development* (London: Routledge, 2022), 34–51, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429356940-5>.

13 Mark, Kalinovsky, and Marung, “Introduction,” 13. James Mark and Paul Betts, “Introduction,” in James Mark and Paul Betts, eds., *Socialism Goes Global: The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the Age of Decolonization* (Oxford: New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), 5.

## The Centre's Establishment and Fields of Activity

The initiative to establish an institution dedicated to Yugoslavia's cooperation with developing countries in the early 1960s arose within a broader discussion of anti-imperialism, decoloniality, socialist solidarity, and peaceful coexistence supported by global economic cooperation. At the 1966 conference on economic cooperation, participants emphasised the need for systematic, institutionalised, and long-term monitoring of developing countries as a prerequisite for establishing closer and more stable relations. They acknowledged that the varied conditions of these countries posed specific challenges for economic engagement and that a lack of knowledge about them represented one of the main barriers to cooperation.<sup>14</sup> In response to these concerns, the Centre for the Study and Cooperation of Yugoslavia with Developing Countries was established in Ljubljana in December 1966. Building directly on the conference's conclusions, it aimed to address these knowledge gaps and encourage more effective cooperation.<sup>15</sup> It started operating in 1967 as a research unit of the College of Political Sciences at the University of Ljubljana. In 1973, it restructured itself as an autonomous research institution.

The interdisciplinary work of the Centre focused on two main goals: promoting collaboration between Yugoslavia and developing countries, and acquiring knowledge about the key political situations and existing legislation of the developing countries.<sup>16</sup> At the December 1966 meeting, Vlado Benko, the leading advocate for the Centre's establishment and its first director, stressed that beyond the general social interest and the conference's conclusions, the executive council of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia also backed the initiative.<sup>17</sup> Along with the available infrastructure, academic interest, and the general trend towards decentralising the Yugoslav federation – from the Constitution of 1963 to the constitutional amendments of 1971 – these factors helped ensure that the Centre remained in Ljubljana, despite its federal significance. While it was supported by the republic and the College, its founders also consulted several key organisations at both republican and federal levels – including the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, the Bureau for Market Research,<sup>18</sup> *Jugobanka*

14 Jože Korošec, "Institutional elements of the system of our economic cooperation to date with developing countries [Institucionalni elementi sistema našega dosedanjega ekonomskega sodelovanja z deželami v razvoju]," in *Yugoslavia and the Economic Development of Developing Countries: Symposium Papers*, Ljubljana, 23–24 June 1966 (Ljubljana: School of Political Science; Chamber of Commerce of Slovenia, 1966), 1–47 [222–68].

15 *Establishment and record of the Centre for the Study and Cooperation of Yugoslavia with Developing Countries*. The document is kept at the Centre for International Cooperation and Development, Kardeljeva ploščad 1, 1000 Ljubljana. <https://www.cmsr.si/>.

16 *Research Centre for Cooperation with Developing Countries Ljubljana-Yugoslavia* (Ljubljana: Center za proučevanje sodelovanja z deželami v razvoju, 1981), 3.

17 *Invitation and record of the 7<sup>th</sup> sitting of the pedagogical-scientific council at the College of political science, December 10 1966*. The document is kept at the Centre for International Cooperation and Development, Kardeljeva ploščad 1, 1000 Ljubljana. <https://www.cmsr.si/>.

18 Active at the Chamber of commerce of Slovenia, established in 1963 by Franc Tretjak. – "Tretjak, Franc (1914–2009)," *Slovenska biografija* (Ljubljana: ZRC SAZU, 2013), accessed on 6 June 2025, <http://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi722091/#slovenski-biografski-leksikon>.

bank,<sup>19</sup> the Institute for International Technical Cooperation,<sup>20</sup> and Intertrade<sup>21</sup> – all of which expressed their willingness to collaborate with the Centre.<sup>22</sup>

To generate new knowledge and provide expertise, the Centre focused on two main activities. It delivered lectures on collaborating with developing countries as part of the College curriculum, connecting students with professionals in economics and international relations. Students also took part in the Centre's research projects, while new findings were incorporated into regular teaching. Additionally, the Centre provided specialised training for commercial officers, economic staff, technical assistance personnel, and other specialists. It organised conferences, meetings, and seminars, and prepared and published studies, manuals, and bibliographies. Furthermore, the Centre planned to introduce a new subject at the College: Socio-Economic Processes in Developing Countries (*družbeno-ekonomski procesi v državah v razvoju*). This course was designed to combine developmental and historical perspectives. Students would investigate colonialism and its impacts, analyse national liberation struggles, and explore the pursuit of state sovereignty and economic independence. Aimed at fostering an ideological foundation, the subject sought to enhance understanding of cooperation and relations between states.<sup>23</sup>

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## The Key Concepts in Early Scientific Production

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The research team employed at the Centre since its inception was interdisciplinary, which, among other factors, directly influenced its knowledge production. It is unclear how many collaborators worked there between 1966 and 1973. However, until 1980, the Centre employed around 20 researchers from fields such as economics, political science, law, sociology, and communications.<sup>24</sup> In its early efforts, research was often framed through the concepts of solidarity and development. Initial interpretations offered little critique of these concepts and were mainly used to criticise the politics and economic activities of Western countries. Nonetheless, the understanding

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19 Jugobanka – Yugoslav Bank for Foreign Trade (*Jugoslovska banka za zunanjo trgovino*) was a part of the National bank of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia. Dušan Mramor, "Overview of the institutional structure of the banking and credit system and certain other parts of Yugoslavia's economic system, 1945–1983 [Prikaz institucionalne ureditve bančno-kreditnega in nekaterih drugih delov ekonomskega sistema Jugoslavije 1945–1983]," *Bančni vestnik: revija za denarništvo in bančništvo* 34, No. 1 (1985): 17–20.

20 Established in 1963. – Gabrič, "Cultural and scientific cooperation," 11.

21 Intertrade was engaged in trade with developing countries, promoting the exchange of goods, the transfer of technology, and the development of industrial enterprises. – Janez Demšar et al., *25 let. Intertrade (Ljubljana)* (Ljubljana: Delo, 1977).

22 *Establishment of the Centre for the Study and Cooperation of Yugoslavia with Developing Countries*.

23 Ibid.

24 *Research Centre for Cooperation with Developing Countries*, 17–18. Cf. Maja Korolija, "Yugoslav science during the Cold War (1945–1960): socio-economic and ideological impacts of a geopolitical shift," *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 10, 913 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-02414-2>. Davor Boban and Ivan Stanojević, "The Institutionalisation of Political Science in Post-Yugoslav States: Continuities and New Beginnings," in Gabriella Ilonszki and Christophe Roux, eds., *Opportunities and Challenges for New and Peripheral Political Science Communities* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 87–118, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-79054-7\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-79054-7_4).

of development differed from the Soviet model by allowing more room for bottom-up initiatives. Instead of insisting on a strictly state-led approach, the Centre's research acknowledged the importance of the personal experiences of economic experts and promoted building on the limited but vital knowledge of individuals directly involved with developing countries.

Assessing the state of global affairs and Yugoslavia's role within them, the two concepts were also connected to time and speed, which, as the authors noted, was a key issue leading to increasing gaps between the global West and developing postcolonial countries. By training foreign experts and offering material support to developing countries, the Centre argued that Yugoslavia could help accelerate modernisation and thus reduce the disparity between states on the world stage. At the same time, however, the authors acknowledged "subjective factors" related to the ideas of solidarity and development. They identified areas where Yugoslavia and other socialist states could directly implement further changes. These included the political and economic conditions in the developing countries and the politics of NAM, which was viewed as the most effective safeguard for successful economic cooperation, territorial integrity, independence, and the spread of socialist ideas.<sup>25</sup> The need for another NAM conference was clearly expressed in the hope of achieving new, more decisive actions in economic cooperation and issues in the developing countries.<sup>26</sup>

Acknowledgement of "subjective factors", such as domestic economic reform in Yugoslavia, created space for Yugoslavia's agency in relation to developing countries by establishing clearer legislation and enhancing the competencies of state bodies.<sup>27</sup> Because Yugoslavia had limited capacity to finance the economic development of developing countries, technical and scientific cooperation gained greater significance. In the second half of the 1960s, the Centre issued guidelines for such support: indeed, the Yugoslav state was supposed to provide more financial backing for technical and scientific cooperation, but it was Yugoslav economic organisations that were expected to take the lead, mainly by offering expert support alongside the export of materials, machines, and equipment. This was similar to the documents discussed after the NAM ministers' conference in Georgetown, Guyana, in August 1972, and again at the 1974 UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) meeting, which circulated and were discussed in Yugoslavia at the time. The topics included student

25 Avguštin Lah, "Foreword [Predgovor]," in Rodoljub Jemuović and Avguštin Lah, *Scientific, Technical, and Cultural Cooperation of Yugoslavia with Developing Countries [Naučna, tehnička i kulturna saradnja Jugoslavije sa zemljama u razvoju]* (Ljubljana: Univerza v Ljubljani, Fakulteta za sociologijo, politične vede in novinarstvo: Center za proučevanje sodelovanja z deželami v razvoju, 1972), i.

26 Ivo Pelicon, "Summary Assessment and Certain Problems of Yugoslavia's Economic Cooperation with Developing Countries in the Period from 1966 to 1967 [Sumarna ocena in nekateri problemi gospodarskega sodelovanja Jugoslavije z deželami v razvoju v času od 1966 do 1967]," in *Yugoslavia's Economic Relations with Developing Countries: Conference Materials*, Ljubljana, June 1968 (Ljubljana: School of Political Science, 1968), 1, 2.

27 Ivo Fabinc, *Economic Relations of Yugoslavia with Developing Countries: Final Study [Ekonomske odnosi Jugoslavije sa zemljama u razvoju: finalna studija]* (Ljubljana: Univerza v Ljubljani, Fakulteta za sociologijo, politične vede in novinarstvo: Center za proučevanje sodelovanja z deželami v razvoju, 1972), 11.



exchange, training of planning experts, the exchange of information and ideas, and the establishment of joint schemes and institutions for technology transfer and training.<sup>28</sup>

The Centre found that some of the proposed measures for cooperation with developing countries were financially less profitable or even unprofitable for Yugoslavia. Hence, the researchers employed at the Centre suggested that the state should consider providing compensation to offset the negative effects of such cooperation. When discussing the Centre's findings, the researchers explained that, although cooperation might only yield benefits in the long term or prove unprofitable due to global uncertainties such as war, political upheaval, and shifting economic trends, it was nonetheless understood through the principle of solidarity. It offered incentives for the global integration of the Yugoslav economy.<sup>29</sup> Solidarity also facilitated the activation of capacities such as exchanging and disclosing technical documentation and information to developing countries; establishing expert training centres in those countries; organising workshops; providing scholarships; strengthening ties with Yugoslav experts experienced in working with developing countries; and establishing clear legislation to define relationships between the federation and its units as well as responsibilities of existing political and expert bodies.<sup>30</sup> While solidarity served as a powerful argument for cooperation, it also faced practical issues such as the limited existence of institutions, regulations, and legislation that could effectively channel desired actions – particularly during internal or international conflicts.<sup>31</sup>

In line with the Centre's earliest project, titled "Economic, Political, Scientific-Technical, and Cultural Cooperation of Yugoslavia with Developing Countries" [*Gospodarsko, politično, znanstveno-tehnično in kulturno sodelovanje Jugoslavije z deželami v razvoju*],<sup>32</sup> the Centre established a comprehensive information service: the INDOK. It included literature, data, and information collection, based on the Centre's own studies but greatly supplemented by collaborations with other research institutions, research centres in banks in Yugoslavia and abroad, and its own network

28 SI AS 1140, container 10, unit of description 297. Federal ZAMTES – Centre for the Transfer of Science and Technology among Non-Aligned Countries – UNCTAD [Zvezni ZAMTES – Center za transfer znanosti in tehnologije med nevrščenimi deželami – UNCTAD.]

29 Jure Ramšak, "Yugoslavia and the ambivalence of the south-south economic cooperation in the 1970s and 1980s [Jugoslavija i ambivalentnost ekonomske saradnje Jug-Jug u sedamdesetim i osamdesetim godinama]," *Tokovi istorije* 1 (2024), 204–24.

30 Ibid., 22, 23. Miloš Vuksanović, "Technical cooperation as an important element of our relations with developing countries [Tehnično sodelovanje kot pomemben element naših odnosov z deželami v razvoju]," in *Yugoslavia's Economic Relations with Developing Countries: Conference Materials*, Ljubljana, June 1968 (Ljubljana: School of Political Science, 1968), 112.

31 Mirko Žarić, "Basic Assumptions and Dilemmas of Action-Oriented Measures and a More Organized Role of Non-Alignment on the International Level [Osnovne prepostavke i dileme akcionog dejstva i organizirivanje uloge nesvrstanošti na medjunarodnom planu]," in Mirko Žarić and Dragoslav Pejić, eds., *Non-alignment and Yugoslavia [Nesvrstano i Jugoslavija]* (Ljubljana: Univerza v Ljubljani, Fakulteta za sociologijo, politične vede in novinarstvo: Center za proučevanje sodelovanja z deželami v razvoju, 1972), 56.

32 The project was supported by major Yugoslav institutions working with developing countries: Jugobanka, Federal Secretariat for Foreign Trade, Investment Bank, Fund for the Financing and Insurance of Export Transactions, Federal Chamber of Commerce, Federal Secretariat for Information, and Federal Fund for the Financing of Scientific Activities. – Janez Terček, "Editorial," in *Bulletin [Bilten]*. Ljubljana: Center za proučevanje sodelovanja z deželami v razvoju 1, No. 1 (1970): 3–7.

of correspondents from developing countries and international organisations. Besides managing the Centre's production, the INDOK also provided information to support economic cooperation with developing countries, such as legislative overviews, and organised symposiums, seminars, workshops, and consultations for both Yugoslav and foreign personnel and students.<sup>33</sup>

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## Transformation: An Independent Research Institution

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By the late 1970s, the recognition of the power of the scientific-technical revolution became the central argument when pursuing further collaborations and strengthening trade with developing countries to support their economic development by enabling them to rely on their own potential, as well as regarding the efforts to establish the New International Economic Order and further cooperation within the NAM.<sup>34</sup> Science became a factor that helped establish the level of both economic and social development. By acknowledging international developments in technical cooperation,<sup>35</sup> the Centre extended criticism towards the concentration of wealth, knowledge, and power in developing countries.<sup>36</sup>

Throughout the socialist period, the Centre remained a vital institution, providing expertise, information, and support to the state and Yugoslav companies, which relied on existing studies when planning long-term strategies for cooperation with developing countries.<sup>37</sup> It has, however, faced many transformations. The first one occurred in the early 1970s. By that time, the Centre's primary focus had shifted more notably from its initial plan to research the economic and social development of developing countries equally. It focused predominantly on the economic aspect, while still including the interdisciplinary focus established in its early years. In March 1973, the Centre therefore separated itself from the former College of Political Sciences (since 1970, the Faculty of Sociology, Political Science and Journalism) and renamed itself the Centre

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33 Ibid.

34 Justyna Pierzyńska, "Collective self-reliance: A portrait of a Yugoslav development strategy," *Miscellanea Geographica Sciend*, 16, No. 2 (2012): 30–35, <https://doi.org/10.2478/v10288-012-0024-3>.

35 Mainly the 1978 Conference in Buenos Aires and the subsequent Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC). – *Buenos Aires Plan of Action* (1978), accessed on 25 July 2025, <https://unsouthsouth.org/bapa40/documents/buenos-aires-plan-of-action/>. About the economic and diplomatic cooperation of Slovenia (Yugoslavia) with developing countries, see: Jure Ramšak, "Socialist' economic diplomacy: activities of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia in the field of international economic relations 1974–1980 ['Socialistična' gospodarska diplomacija: dejavnost Socialistične republike Slovenije na področju mednarodnih ekonomskih odnosov 1974–1980]," *Annales* 24, No. 4 (2014): 733–48, <http://www.zdjp.si/sl/docs/annales/sociologia/n24-4/ramsak.pdf>.

36 Janez Rogelj, *Scientific and Technical Cooperation of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia with Developing Countries in the Period 1976–1979/1980* [Znanstveno-tehnično sodelovanje SR Slovenije z deželami v razvoju v obdobju 1976 – 1979/1980] (Ljubljana: Center za sodelovanje proučevanja z deželami v razvoju Ljubljana, 1981), 1–4.

37 SI AS 1140, container 71, unit of description 1058. Elements of the Strategy for Economic Cooperation of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia with Developing Countries (Concept), Republican Committee for International Cooperation. [Elementi strategije ekonomskega sodelovanja Socialistične Republike Slovenije z Državami v razvoju (koncept), Republiški komite za mednarodno sodelovanje.]

for the Study of Cooperation with Developing Countries [*Center za proučevanje delovanja z deželami v razvoju*].<sup>38</sup>

This reorganisation affected both the internal operations of the Centre and its links with other institutions. Firstly, the group of founding members expanded, and their membership became more stable while their roles became more defined. The new members included the Executive Council of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia, the Yugoslav bank for foreign economic relations and *Ljubljanska banka*, the Chamber of Commerce of Yugoslavia, the Research Community of Slovenia, the Self-Managed Interest Community for Foreign Economic Relations Vojvodina – Novi Sad, the Self-Managed Interest Community for Foreign Economic Relations Slovenia – Ljubljana, and the Federal Secretariat for Foreign Affairs.<sup>39</sup> While before the transformation, research projects were financed by federal institutions (for example, the Federal Fund for the Financing of Scientific Activities [*Savezni fond za finansiranje naučnih aktivnosti*]) and “other interested parties”,<sup>40</sup> the clearly defined and registered financial responsibilities of the founding members became one of the primary financial sources for the Centre.<sup>41</sup> The funding members, along with other permanent members, contributed about one-third of the Centre’s budget.<sup>42</sup>

While the transformation allowed the Centre to select research topics and broaden its activities more independently, the framework of its efforts remained aligned with its original purpose. It continued to be a research institution that advised, educated, and informed its members, clients, and state institutions about the economic, social, and political situations of developing countries, as well as their roles within the international community. It also contributed to fostering more democratic and solidarity-based international relations. By combining practical experience gained from previous collaborations with developing countries and insights from other Western nations, the Centre also provided a platform for discussion, knowledge creation, and information exchange concerning activities within the NAM and among developing countries.<sup>43</sup>

The Centre primarily concentrated on economic cooperation between Yugoslavia and developing countries within the framework of the New International Economic Order. This resulted in a series of studies on individual countries and research into

38 Statute of the Centre for the Study of Cooperation with Developing Countries. The document is kept at the Centre for International Cooperation and Development, Kardeljeva ploščad 1, 1000 Ljubljana, <https://www.cmsr.si/>.

39 The rest was contributed by research communities or gained in the framework of the projects, funded by the federation, republic, or international institutions or organisations. – *Research Centre for Cooperation with Developing Countries*, 33.

40 Centre for the Study of Cooperation with Developing Countries, “Foreword,” in Ivo Fabinc, *Economic Relations of Yugoslavia with Developing Countries: Final Study* [*Ekonomski odnosi Jugoslavije sa zemljama u razvoju: finalna studija*] (Ljubljana: Univerza v Ljubljani, Fakulteta za sociologijo, politične vede in novinarstvo: Center za proučevanje sodelovanja z deželami v razvoju, 1972). Žarko Lazarević, “Yugoslavia: economic historiography between national and international context,” in Antonie Dolezalova and Catherine Albrecht, eds., *Behind the Iron Curtain: Economic Historians during the Cold War, 1945–1989* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), 200.

41 Centre for International Cooperation and Development, 6 April 1973, at the Court in Ljubljana RGZ UV 380/1. The document is kept at the Centre for International Cooperation and Development, Kardeljeva ploščad 1, 1000 Ljubljana, <https://www.cmsr.si/>.

42 *Research Centre for Cooperation with Developing Countries*, 4.

43 Statute of the Centre for the Study of Cooperation with Developing Countries.

specific issues related to cooperation (transport, legislation, investments, etc.). The Centre also enhanced its cooperation with the United Nations and organisations within the federation dedicated to similar activities. Such collaborations included work with the International Centre for Public Enterprises in developing countries, where the legal and economic aspects of technology transfer from Yugoslavia to these countries, along with the role of communication and information systems, gained further significance.<sup>44</sup>

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## In Summary: Prospects

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While both the topics and the Centre as an institution warrant further research, initial findings, combined with existing literature on the matter, indicate that the Centre played a significant role within the federal political system and scientific production. Through its publications, expertise, and educational activities, it provided vital support for collaboration between Yugoslavia and developing countries. Moreover, by analysing the Centre's output – particularly its key arguments, framework, and rationale for the studies it conducted and published – it is possible to identify two core concepts that were both established and adaptable: development and solidarity. Each carried its own political implications, which were often reflected in the Centre's research focus. However, they gained additional and distinct meanings when utilised in the context of the Centre's scientific work: offering ideological justification while also masking any potential adverse effects of their findings and proposals. These concepts thus not only linked the Centre to existing political and economic power structures but also granted considerable agency to its activities. While many questions regarding the Centre's research practices, daily operations, and closer ties with economic organisations and political structures remain unanswered, this early research demonstrates potential for connecting global developments to hands-on political, scientific, and economic practices. Further investigation into the Institute for Developing Countries – another research centre established in 1963 in Zagreb – would also shed more light on the questions raised (and partially addressed) in this contribution.

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<sup>44</sup> Research Centre for Cooperation with Developing Countries, 3, 4.

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## Tjaša Konovšek

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### CENTER ZA PROUČEVANJE IN SODELOVANJE JUGOSLAVIJE Z DRŽAVAMI V RAZVOJU (1966–1973): NASTANEK, DELOVANJE IN TRANSFORMACIJA

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#### POVZETEK

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Center za proučevanje in sodelovanje Jugoslavije z državami v razvoju je nastal leta 1966 v Ljubljani. Njegova ustanovitev spada v kontekst hladne vojne, dekolonizacije in vzpona Gibanja neuvrščenih (NAM), ki ga je Jugoslavija soustvarjala kot eden ključnih akterjev. Prispevek raziskuje vlogo centra kot veznega člana med znanstveno produkcijo, zunanjepolitičnim delovanjem in razvojnim sodelovanjem z državami globalnega juga, hkrati pa se umešča v pristop raziskovanja »neuvrščenosti od spodaj« – razumevanje gibanja, ki ne izhaja zgolj iz politične elite, temveč tudi iz institucionaliziranih praks, znanstvene produkcije in sodelovanja na terenu. Center je nastal neposredno po konferenci Jugoslavija in gospodarski razvoj dežel v razvoju, ki se je leta 1966 odvila v Ljubljani. Združila je strokovnjake s področij sociologije, ekonomije in politologije, poudarek pa je bil na pravičnejših in stabilnejših gospodarskih odnosih z državami v razvoju. Udeleženci so pozvali k ustanovitvi raziskovalne institucije za trajnostno in interdisciplinarno razumevanje razmer v teh državah. Center je tako sprva nastal kot raziskovalna enota Visoke šole za politične vede, nato pa je leta 1973 postal samostojen zavod.



Deloval je na dveh področjih: izobraževalnem in raziskovalnem. Na prvem je organiziral predavanja, seminarje in usposabljanja, na drugem pa spremljal gospodarsko sodelovanje med Jugoslavijo in državami v razvoju, analiziral procese modernizacije ter pripravljali študije, priročnike in bibliografije. V povezavi z znanstveno produkcijo centra sta se kot ključna izkazala koncepta solidarnosti in razvoja. Solidarnost je pogosto pomenila ideološko-politično načelo, ki je presegalo ekonomske interese in temeljilo na skupnih zgodovinskih izkušnjah kolonializma in boja za suverenost, medtem ko je razvoj razumljen kot večdimenzionalen proces tehnološkega napredka, gospodarske neodvisnosti in politične avtonomije. Center je pri tem poudarjal odgovornost Zahoda za globalne neenakosti ter pomen tehnološkega prenosa kot poti k odpravi tehnološkega kolonializma in vzpostavitvi miru. Pri tem so posebno vlogo imeli zbiranje, posredovanje in uporaba informacij. V ta namen je center v okviru svojega delovanja vzpostavil informacijski sistem INDOK, v sklopu katerega so sodelavci centra zbirali, obdelovali in posredovali podatke o političnih in ekonomskih razmerah v državah v razvoju. Po letu 1973 je center doživel preobrazbo. Postal je samostojna raziskovalna ustanova z zveznim pomenom. Slednje je omogočalo razširitev delovanja, hkrati pa tudi tesnejše povezave z zunanjepolitičnimi cilji Jugoslavije. Center ni bil zgolj raziskovalna ustanova, temveč tudi politični akter v mednarodnem prostoru. Z analitičnimi prispevki in poročili je vplival na oblikovanje jugoslovanske politike do držav v razvoju ter prispeval k uresničevanju koncepta socialistične modernosti kot alternative zahodnim modelom razvoja.

Solidarnost in razvoj sta v kontekstu centra delovala kot osrednja konceptualna okvira za povezovanje v okviru NAM ter artikulacijo globalne prihodnosti. Center je bil pomemben akter v produkciji znanja. Predstavljal je prostor, kjer so se prepletale raziskovalne, politične in diplomatske prakse socialistične Jugoslavije. Za globlje razumevanje njegovih institucionalnih povezav ter sodelovanja z drugimi akterji s področja znanosti, gospodarstva in politike je potrebno nadaljnje raziskovanje, ki bo pripomoglo k boljšemu razumevanju jugoslovanske globalne politike in vloge znanstvenih ustanov v njej.