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The edited volume *Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and Africa: New Perspectives on the Era of Decolonization, 1950s to 1990s* represents a comprehensive collection of papers dealing with connections between Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and various state and nonstate actors in Africa from the 1960s until the 1980s. A follow-up to *Southern African Liberation Movements and the Global Cold War “East,”* the volume aims, according to the editors’ introduction, to reexamine recent historiographical trends, focus on the “resources” of those involved in decolonization, and explore their legacies.[1] Rooted in excellent primary resource materials, most chapters succeed in demonstrating the outcomes of these connections.

During the last decade, a rich new historiography has emerged that attempts both to make sense of the role of struggles against colonial and white-minority rule in the global history of the twentieth century, and to gauge the importance of the socialist countries in these processes. Largely in response to the publication of Arne Westad’s *Global Cold War*, historians such as Frank Gerits, in *The Ideological Scramble for Africa*, have sought to untangle postwar political projects in Africa from discussions centered around the two global alternatives: capitalism and communism.[2]

This volume demonstrates that, concerning Lusophone anti-colonial movements, disengaging from these competing Cold War binaries was challenging.

The lengthy volume consists of fourteen chapters, thematically divided into three parts: “Lusophone Connections,” “Southern African Entanglements,” and “Euro-African Complexities.” Several chapters in part 1 highlight how connections facilitated the transfer of ideas, images, and practices from the socialist countries to the liberation movements. João Fusco Ribeiro’s chapter provides an excellent example of such an ideational transfer. He explores the early history of the Angolan nationalist movement, União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA), which, as the author argues, borrowed an emphasis on self-reliance, nonalignment, and anti-Soviet animosity from their Chinese donor. They also adopted practices such as democratic centralism, collective leadership, and self-criticism. The chapter presents a compelling argument overall, though the fundamental question regarding the depth of these convictions lingers, particularly considering that UNITA’s leadership later relinquished a significant portion of its Marxist-Leninist ideology and forged an alignment with South Africa and the United States.

While Ribeiro's chapter exemplifies a direct transfer, Ana Moledo's excellent chapter on the relationship between the Lusophone liberation movements in Conakry and the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) provides an excellent example of an indirect ideational transfer. Moledo centers on the role of the French communist and WFTU head, Maurice Gastaud, whose close relationship with the Partido Africano para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC) encouraged close collaboration between the two. Gastaud even pressured the United Nations to sponsor the production of educational books for the PAIGC with the help of the Marxist geographer and historian Jean Suret-Canale. Moledo's chapter reveals that the transfer of ideas was multidirectional, shaped not only by specific ideological affinities but often also by practical considerations and personal relations. An absence of a similarly straightforward relationship between the WFTU and the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA) meant the sponsorship of the Angolan trade union movement was much less extensive and effective.

While Ribeiro and Moledo effectively utilize Portuguese/African and Eastern European sources, respectively, to delve into the impact of these connections on their protagonists, Alba Martín Luque employs both African and Yugoslav sources to reevaluate the story of the shooting of *Venceremos* (1967)—the first film about the armed struggle of Frente para a Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO), which was filmed by Yugoslavian filmmakers in the so-called liberated areas of Mozambique. The deep engagement with both sets of sources yields fascinating results. As Luque convincingly demonstrates, FRELIMO actively shaped this process by influencing what filmmakers could observe and capture, while the Yugoslavs molded the eventual product, essentially creating what she terms the standard of “visual solidarity” with FRELIMO. In a thinly veiled critique of those who tend to make assumptions about liberation movements based predominantly on sources produced

by Africans' international donors, Luque illustrates how African sources can reveal a much more complex, multidimensional narrative.

Ribeiro, Moledo, and Luque advance our understanding by scrutinizing sources for deeper meaning and bias. Some chapters, however, could potentially deepen their examination of the source base. For instance, Helder Adegar Fonseca's chapter constructs a fascinating story of the Angolan MPLA's early sponsorship network, arguing that external support was “modest” in the early phase of the armed struggle. However, one wonders whether the content, language, and potential biases of the Portuguese military and security intelligence and the Lúcio Lara (MPLA) archives could be interrogated further to reveal how these two sides perceived and constructed the narratives of armed struggle in its early phase. Barbora Menclová's chapter on Czechoslovak experts in Angola likewise employs rich source material (both archival and oral history) to argue that Prague was essentially driven by economic considerations. The narrative provides a useful overview but is too descriptive to make the argument fully convincing. In contrast, by centering on the experiences of those members of the Basutoland Congress Party who went to study in the Soviet Union, Mateo Grilli does an excellent job of exploring the diverse experiences of socialism from the perspective of the Global South.

Another significant theme in the volume is its emphasis on the Soviet role in Africa. In fact, at least five out of fourteen chapters delve into the role of the USSR in Africa. While Jeremy Friedman's *Shadow Cold War* has famously argued that the liberation movements embraced China's interpretation of anti-imperialism, which, in turn, influenced the Soviets, Alexandr Voevodsky's chapter argues that Sino-Soviet squabbling was often confusing or unimportant for leaders of the liberation movements, even though it was clearly damaging to their armed struggles.[3] These chapters contribute to recent narratives, specific-

ally in Natalia Telepneva's *Cold War Liberation*, which highlight the importance of Soviet military technology to guerrillas struggles.[4]

Soviet military technology was likewise important in regular warfare. As Sergey V. Mazov shows in his new reconstruction of the Soviet decision to back the Nigerian federal government during the Biafra War, the Soviet supply of combat aircraft and howitzers to was crucial to the success of the offensive operations launched against the secessionist forces by the central government. In Libya too, as argued by Radoslav Yordanov, the highly contentious "strategic alliance" with the Warsaw Pact endured because the bloc could "provide a steady supply of conventional military equipment" to Muammar Gaddafi's government (p. 334). However, perhaps the biggest impact was on the ways that colonial and white-minority rule in southern Africa ended. In a broad overview, Chris Saunders underscores the role of Soviet military technology and expertise in MPLA's war against South Africa during the 1980s.

Soviet diplomacy mattered, too. As Saunders argues, Soviet diplomatic efforts facilitated the agreements, leading to Namibian independence in 1990. The broader changes in the USSR and the collapse of communism created conditions that influenced the calculations of South Africa's apartheid regime and major Western partners, especially the United States, ultimately allowing for the transition to majority rule. Robin E. Möser further highlights how changes in the USSR enabled Soviet diplomats to engage with their Western counterparts at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), successfully lobbying the South African government and the Frontline States to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. These chapters underscore the value of recently declassified Soviet sources in the Russian archives, a rich collection currently inaccessible to most Western researchers due to the ongoing war in Ukraine.

The volume contributes significantly to our understanding of decolonization in Lusophone Africa. It offers excellent examples, highlighting the transfer and circulation of ideas, practices, and cultures between liberation movements and their sponsors, especially in Eastern Europe. The volume also goes beyond state-centric perspectives, emphasizing the importance of individual agency. In several narratives, actors from the "Second World" advocate on behalf of the liberation movements, almost acting as "intermediaries" in their relations with the West. Additionally, the volume serves as a reminder of the role of Soviet military technology in both guerrilla and conventional warfare in Africa. All chapters are thoroughly researched, providing new information and insights rooted in fresh source material. Ultimately, the volume aptly demonstrates how the sources we use shape the stories we tell.

Notes

[1]. Lena Dallywater, Chris Saunders, and Helder Adegar Fonseca (eds.) *Southern African Liberation Movements and the Global Cold War "East": Transnational Activism 1960–1990* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019).

[2]. Odd Arne Westad, *Global Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Frank Gerits, *How the Pursuit of Anticolonial Modernity Shaped a Postcolonial Order, 1945–1966* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press).

[3]. Jeremy Friedman, *Shadow Cold War: The Sino-Soviet Competition for the Third World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

[4]. Natalia Telepneva, *Cold War Liberation: The Soviet Union and the Collapse of the Portuguese Empire in Africa, 1961–1975* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2022).

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