



Book Review

Globalizing Independence Struggles of Lusophone Africa: Anticolonial and Postcolonial Politics

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The volume *Globalizing Independence Struggles of Lusophone Africa: Anticolonial and Postcolonial Politics* aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the historical global connections of the processes of decolonization and state-building in Lusophone Africa during the 1960s and 1970s. The volume makes two important contributions to the current historiographical literature on the decolonization of Lusophone Africa. First, it goes beyond the traditional concept of decolonization as a moment of formal transfer of sovereignty, making anticolonial ruptures and colonial continuities and legacies more visible. Second, several chapters explore under-researched dimensions such as the postcolonial challenges of São Tomé and Príncipe, the formation of networks of anticolonial solidarity with Western leftist associations in North America, and the transnational dynamics involving South American anti-communist actors who opposed African decolonization. The volume is composed of thirteen chapters divided into three thematic parts: “Ideas and Rhetoric of Liberation”, “Networks and Strategies of

Solidarity”, and “The Economy and Policies of Independence”.

In the first section, “Ideas and Rhetoric of Liberation”, Alexander J. Marino’s chapter examines the politics of Angolan nationalist leader Holden Roberto, who mobilized support for the Angolan Revolutionary Government in Exile (GRAE). Marino’s chapter is a welcome contribution to one of the least researched Angolan liberation movements. However, the author reproduces the American administration’s view of Holden as an inflexible hardline anti-communist, a portrayal that was reinforced by later propaganda from the People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). This view overlooks the National Liberation Front of Angola’s (FNLA) various attempts to mobilize resources in the communist bloc (e.g., in Hungary, Romania, and China) during the armed struggle, some of which were successful. Problematizing this apparent contradiction would allow for a more nuanced view of the political profile of one of the most complex leaders of early Angolan revolutionary nationalism. In the second

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chapter, Lazlo Passemiers reconstructs the political ideology of the Mozambican liberation movement, the Revolutionary Committee of Mozambique (COREMO), drawing on an interesting set of archival sources. Similar to other smaller liberation movements in Southern Africa that had to contend with internal competition from larger, more established nationalist groups, COREMO created a unique identity in the Mozambican anticolonial struggle by advocating national unity, self-reliance, and non-alignment while rejecting an armed struggle waged from exile. The theme of ideology continues in Chapter 3, where Rita Lucas Narra presents a meticulous and complex analysis of the development of Amílcar Cabral's Marxist concept of class and traces how it developed and matured over time. She highlights how the leader of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) demonstrated remarkable adaptability and originality in applying the class concept to the specific social realities of Guinea-Bissau.

The second section of the book, "Networks and Strategies of Solidarity", shifts its focus to the international responses to decolonization and the building of solidarity networks. R. Joseph Parrott's chapter examines the reaction of the United Nations to the onset of the anticolonial war in Angola and the annexation of Goa by India. Parrott argues that while the UN was unable to directly enforce decolonization, it played a crucial role in legitimizing the process on the international stage and served as an important platform for colonized actors from the Global South to voice their struggles. In Chapter 5, Ana Moledo skilfully examines how Southern Africa was imagined as an 'unliberated region' by various foreign actors. She also examines how these external imaginaries were in turn reshaped and integrated into the discourse of the African liberation movements. In Chapter 6, Julião Soares Sousa explores how the Sino-Soviet rivalry played out in Afro-Asian forums

and how the liberation movements of the Conference of Nationalist Organizations of the Portuguese Colonies (CONCP) navigated this Cold War tension, which pressured anti-colonial actors into an exclusive commitment with one of the two sides. In Chapter 7, Marçal de Menezes Paredes examines the Toronto Committee for the Liberation of Portugal's African Colonies (TCLPAC), a left-wing organization in Canada, and its role in the creation of an anticolonial solidarity network with the liberation struggles of Lusophone Africa. A particularly interesting aspect of this chapter is how the organization's interactions with African anticolonial actors influenced the perspectives of Canadian leftist activists and led them to re-examine domestic political issues through a global, anticolonial lens. In Chapter 8, Gisele Lobato examines the involvement of South American dictatorships during the aftermath of formal decolonization in Lusophone Africa. The chapter traces the mobility of anti-communist actors by following their trajectory from South America across the South Atlantic to conflict zones in decolonized African states.

In the third section of the book, "The Economy and Policies of Independence", most chapters deal with the challenges postcolonial states faced in the aftermath of independence. In Chapter 9, Aurora Almada Santos explores the debates in the United Nations Decolonization Committee about Portugal's development plans for its colonial territories. Santos argues that these debates revealed deep divisions between the member states of the Committee. The central point of contention was whether the development initiatives were considered as instruments to strengthen and legitimize colonial rule or as genuine efforts to promote economic and social progress in the colonies. In Chapter 10, Przemysław Gasztold stands out as the only contributor to systematically utilize archival material from Eastern Europe. The author offers a comprehensive examination of Polish economic cooperation, knowledge transfer, and military support for

Angola from its independence until the end of the Cold War. Gasztold argues that the high expectations that both Warsaw and Luanda placed in their bilateral relations were ultimately not fulfilled economically. Gerhard Seibert and Inês Nascimento Rodrigues make a welcome contribution in Chapter 11, by focusing on the under-researched case of São Tomé and Príncipe. The authors explore the country's post-independence challenges in the face of the enduring social and economic colonial legacy of the monoculture plantation system. In Chapter 12, Victor Barros, Francisco Osvaldino Nascimento Monteiro, and Suzano Costa examine how the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) navigated the postcolonial challenges of achieving economic sustainability in Cape Verde by establishing pragmatic external relations with both Cold War blocs. Finally, in Chapter 13, Paulo Cunha, Catarina Laranjeiro, and Rui Lopes analyse the development of

cinema consumption in Guinea-Bissau after independence and examine how the PAIGC decided to create a national film institute for local production, taking inspiration from the Cuban model and relying on international cooperation.

The volume would benefit from a concluding chapter or a brief afterword to provide a cohesive summary and reinforce its overarching themes. Nevertheless, each chapter is meticulously researched and provides valuable insights based on an eclectic array of sources. The use of a diverse body of sources is arguably the book's greatest strength, as it not only enriches the analysis of each chapter, but also reflects the overall complexity and interconnections of the historical themes examined. The lengthy volume makes an important contribution to the academic understanding of decolonization and state-building in Lusophone Africa and its entangled interactions with global processes.