



SFB 1199

Processes of Spatialization
under the Global Condition

Constantin Katsakioris

**The Soviet Union,
Eastern Europe, and Africa
in the Cold War:
The Educational Ties**

Working paper series
des SFB 1199
an der Universität Leipzig
Nr. 16

Collaborative Research Center (SFB) 1199
Processes of Spatialization under the Global Condition
at the University of Leipzig

Funded by Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft



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(= Working paper series des SFB 1199 an der Universität Leipzig, Nr. 16)

© SFB 1199
04 / 2019

Vertrieb:

Leipziger Universitätsverlag GmbH, Oststrasse 41, 04317 Leipzig,
info@univerlag-leipzig.de

ISBN: 978-3-96023-224-7
ISSN: 2510-4845

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The Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and Africa in the Cold War: The Educational Ties*

This working paper is intended as an overview of the Soviet Union's and Eastern Europe's aid to and co-operation with Africa in the field of higher and professional-technical education during the Cold War.¹ For a long time, both this and other important chapters of the Eastern bloc's relations with Africa and more broadly with the Third World had been either neglected or completely dismissed. In post-Cold War scholarship, the prevalent notion was that the Soviet-style political and economic model "was responsible for many grievous economic ills in the Third World in the second half of the twentieth century" and that it "shattered all possibilities of democratic rule, prosperity, and social stability".² The overall contribution of the Eastern bloc in the development of the Third World was considered as either negative or insignificant. Even a radical political economist like Andre Gunder Frank could affirm in 1989 that "much Third Worldist socialist rhetoric is just that, and no more", and add that "the East has supported superstructural change in the South with words and sometimes arms".³

For all the disillusionment that the failure of socialist and Eastern bloc-inspired policies left behind, the East-South cooperation and the assistance the socialist countries provided to the Third World can hardly be reduced to "words and sometimes arms". Recent scholarship, which has productively revisited the East-South relationships, has demonstrated how crucial and substantial in amount the support to national liberation movements and to the anti-apartheid struggle was.⁴ It has shown that the technical assistance and civil aid provided by the Eastern bloc, for instance by the Soviet Union and the GDR to Algeria or by Czechoslovakia to West Africa, was of major importance for newly-independent countries struggling to stand on their own feet.⁵ From Egypt to Algeria to Ethiopia, dams, harbours, steel industries and power plants were created with Eastern bloc assistance.⁶ Architects from socialist countries designed and constructed buildings and infrastructure, or planned urban development.⁷ In the realm of culture, award-winning African film and theatre directors learned their art in such institutions as the Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography (VGIK) in Moscow, the Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague or at Berthold Brecht's Berliner Ensemble.⁸ A burgeoning historical literature is

* I am grateful to Eric Burton for having shared with me so generously both his material from and his deep knowledge of the GDR archives.

1 Occasionally, the paper will also refer to Eastern-bloc assistance in primary and secondary education. Unfortunately, Cuba does not figure in the paper as much as she deserves.

2 S.G. Marks, *How Russia Shaped the Modern World: From Art to Anti-Semitism, Ballet to Bolshevism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003, pp. 330–31.

3 A.G. Frank, "The Socialist Countries in the World Economy: The East-South Dimension", in B.H. Schulz and W.W. Hansen (eds.), *The Political Economy of East-South Relations*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1989, p. 20.

4 V. Shubin, *The Hot 'Cold War': The USSR in Southern Africa*, London: Pluto Press, 2008; H.-G. Schleicher and I. Schleicher, *Special Flights: the GDR and the Liberation Movements in Southern Africa*, Harare: SAPES Books, 1998; p. Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–1976*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002; C. Saunders and S. Onslow, "The Cold War and Southern Africa, 1976–1990", in M. Leffler and O.A. Westad (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, vol. 3, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 221–41; J. Alexander and J. McGregor, "African Soldiers in the USSR: Oral Histories of ZAPU Intelligence Cadres' Soviet Training 1964–1979", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 43 (2017) 1, pp. 49–66.

5 See J.J. Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution: Algeria, Decolonization, and Third World Order*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 134–35 and p. Muehlenbeck, *Czechoslovakia in Africa, 1945–1968*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

6 Some examples include the Soviet-built Aswan Dam in Egypt, the steel plants of Helwan in Egypt and of Annaba in Algeria also constructed by the USSR, the power plant of Skikda in Algeria and the electricity network along the Nile constructed by Czechoslovakia and the GDR respectively, as well as the Assab Harbor built also by the GDR. China's major development project was the TAZARA Railway in Tanzania and Zambia. See S. Dullin and S. Jeannesson, *Atlas de la guerre froide*, Paris: Autrement, 2017, pp. 46–47; B. Unfried, "Friendship and Education, Coffee and Weapons: Exchanges between Socialist Ethiopia and the German Democratic Republic", *Northeast African Studies* 16 (2016) 1, pp. 15–38; J. Monson, *Africa's freedom railway: How a Chinese Development Project Changed Lives and Livelihoods in Tanzania*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009.

7 L. Stanek, "Architects from Socialist Countries in Ghana (1957–67): Modern Architecture and Mondialisation", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 74 (2015) 4, pp. 416–42.

8 T. Stejskalova (ed.), *Filmmakers of the World, Unite! Forgotten Internationalism, Czechoslovak Film and the Third World*, Prague: Tranzit Edice, 2017; G. Chomentowski, "Going Abroad to Study the Craft of Filmmaking: African Students in the USSR during the period 1960–1970", in R. Salti and K. Kouoh (eds.), *Saving Bruce Lee: African and Arab Cinema in the Era of Soviet Cultural Diplomacy*, Berlin: Haus der Kulturen der Welt, 2018, pp. 27–31.

set to revisit the relationships between the Eastern bloc and Africa, document their breadth and demonstrate their significance.

Within these relationships, educational aid and cooperation played an extremely important part, perhaps the sole most important part after that played by military support to national liberation movements and Marxist regimes. From 1951, when the first Nigerian students were enrolled at East German universities, to 1991, when many Africans left the USSR, the socialist countries offered thousands of scholarships to students from colonial and postcolonial Africa. At the same time they created several educational institutions in Africa, and sent thousands of professors, teachers, and experts there. Most of these educational commitments and particularly the training of students in the Eastern bloc clearly qualify as “aid”, in that in most cases it was provided free of charge. It was meant as a gesture of internationalist solidarity and was intended to foster the social and economic development of postcolonial countries. But still, Eastern-bloc commitments in Africa are not satisfactorily described by stating that they consisted solely of bilateral aid provided from East to South. Although some schools created in Africa were a gift to the recipient countries – and many experts or professors took up their mission partly or fully at the expense of Eastern-Bloc countries – more often than not, the salaries of Eastern-bloc faculty members were paid by the host country, and schools were constructed and equipped on a commercial basis within the framework of bilateral cooperation agreements. However, the loans Eastern-bloc countries granted their African counterparts for financing these projects were often not paid back. As a consequence, these cooperation schemes can de facto be considered as aid. Overall, grants or aid free of any charge represented the lion’s share in the Eastern Bloc’s educational engagement with Africa. “Aid” therefore is the most accurate term for describing these relationships. As for the projects and missions which were financed by African countries, the terms “cooperation” or “civil cooperation” are more appropriate.⁹

In recent years, these educational connections have attracted the attention of many historians and anthropologists. In particular, the two well-known schools that were created for Third-World students, namely the Patrice Lumumba Peoples’ Friendship University in Moscow and the University of the 17th of November in Prague, have been the object of a number of important studies.¹⁰ The GDR’s multilateral educational engagement, which ranged from the creation of the Stassfurt School of Friendship for Mozambican students to the dispatch of experts as well as the establishment of the Gondar Medical School in Ethiopia, has also been recounted in memoirs and, more importantly, studied both through archival work and through interviews with German and African actors.¹¹ Similarly, Cuba’s aid to and cooperation with Angola have been thoroughly analyzed in a major monograph by Christine Hatzky.¹² Another strand within this burgeoning literature has addressed questions of students’ mobility in many directions and of Alltagsgeschichte (everyday history) inside the Eastern bloc, focusing in particular on race relations, mixed couples, intermarriage, xenophobia and racism.¹³ Likewise, the history of the students’ political activity in Eastern Europe has also been

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- 9 For a discussion of this conceptual issue through the case-study of GDR’s relationships with Ethiopia, see B. Unfried, “Friendship and Education, Coffee and Weapons: Exchanges between Socialist Ethiopia and the German Democratic Republic”, *Northeast African Studies* 16 (2016) 1, pp. 15–38.
- 10 R. Djagalov and C. Evans, “Moskau, 1960: Wie man sich eine sowjetische Freundschaft mit der Dritten Welt vorstellte”, in A. Hilger (ed.), *Die Sowjetunion und die Dritte Welt: UdSSR, Staatssozialismus und Antikolonialismus im Kalten Krieg*, Munich: Oldenbourg, 2009, pp. 83–105; L. Ponomarenko and E. Zueva, *PFUR and Africa*, Moscow: Peoples’ Friendship University, 2009; T. Rupprecht, “Gesträndetes Flaggschiff: Die Moskauer Universität der Völkerfreundschaft”, *Osteuropa* 60 (2010) 1, pp. 95–114; A. Judge Kret, “We Unite Knowledge: The Peoples’ Friendship University and Soviet Education for the Third World”, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 33 (2013) 2, pp. 239–56; M.E. Holečková, “Konfliktní lekce z internacionalismu: Studenti z ‘třetího světa’ a jejich konfrontace s českým prostředím (1961–1974)”, *Soudobé Dějiny* 20 (2013) 1–2, pp. 158–76.
- 11 D. Mac Con Uladh, “Guests of the Socialist Nation? Foreign Students and Workers in the GDR”, PhD diss., University College London, 2005; U. van der Heyden, *GDR Development Policy in Africa: Doctrine and Strategies between Illusions and Reality*, Münster: LIT Verlag, 2013. T.R. Müller, *Legacies of Socialist Solidarity: East Germany in Mozambique*, Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014; E. Burton, “African Manpower Development during the Cold War”, in A. Exenberger and U. Pallua (eds.), *Africa Research in Austria: Approaches and Perspectives*, Innsbruck: Innsbruck University, 2016), pp. 101–34; and E. Burton, “Tansania’s ‘Afrikanischer Sozialismus’ und die Entwicklungspolitik der beiden deutschen Staaten: Akteure, Beziehungen und Handlungsspielräume, 1961–1990”, PhD thesis, University of Vienna, 2018.
- 12 C. Hatzky, *Kubaner in Angola: Süd-Süd-Kooperation und Bildungstransfer, 1976–1991*, München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2012.
- 13 J. Hessler, “Death of an African student in Moscow: Race, politics, and the Cold War”, *Cahiers du Monde russe* 47 (2006) 1–2, pp. 33–64; M. Matusевич, “Journeys of Hope: African Diaspora and the Soviet Society”, *African Diaspora* 1 (2008), pp. 53–85 and *ibid.*, “Expanding the Boundaries of the Black Atlantic: African Students as Soviet Moderns”, *Ab Imperio* 2 (2012), pp. 325–350; Q. Slobodian (ed.), *Comrades of Color: East Germany in the Cold War World*, New York: Berghahn, 2015; C. Katsakioris, “Burden or Allies? Third World Students and Internationalist Duty through Soviet Eyes”, *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 18 (2017) 3, pp. 539–567.

addressed in a couple of studies.¹⁴ Last but not least, a special mention should be made to the Paris-based research project ELITAF (Élites africaines formées dans les pays de l'ancien bloc soviétique), which, among other publications, produced one collective volume and two special issues covering most African countries and wrestling with a whole range of topics from the students' experiences to their return, careers, social and political activity, as well as reflecting on the memories of Eastern-bloc graduates.¹⁵

Within the limited scope of this working paper, issues of Alltagsgeschichte, students' politics, experiences, and memories will not be addressed. The training of political cadres, military officers, and trade unionists in special schools will not be addressed either or will be only mentioned in passing. Rather the focus will be on aid and cooperation in "ordinary" tertiary and secondary education, on the political and economic dimensions of aid and cooperation, their evolution over time and across space, as well as on their effects in terms of graduates and their careers. I will begin with surveying the first steps, the premises and aims behind the policies of international education looking simultaneously at the two sides of the connection. I will then move on to study the cooperation that took place on the soil of Africa, before turning the spotlight on the training of African students in the Eastern bloc. In the conclusion I will focus on returning students and attempt to assess the significance of this major chapter in the history of the global Cold War and Africa.

Readers should however bear in my mind several caveats. First, that for all the remarkable advances, literature has so far only partly, if at all, addressed a number of key issues related to Eastern bloc-Africa educational ties. For instance, detailed data on the training of students in the Eastern Bloc and on the missions of Eastern-Bloc professors and experts in Africa, not to mention on the economic dimensions of the cooperation and the fate of returning students, are still missing. Second, historians have so far primarily concentrated on East Germany and, secondarily, on the Soviet Union, whereas such important actors as Bulgaria and Hungary, or Yugoslavia, a non-aligned socialist country that definitely deserves more attention, are largely absent from the literature. More research is also necessary on Cuba's aid and cooperation apart from the major contributions by Gleijeses and Hatzky.¹⁶ All these gaps are unavoidably reflected on this working paper which, additionally, in many parts concentrates on the author's own field of research, that is the international education policy of the Soviet Union.

14 K. van Walraven, *The Yearning for Relief: A History of the Sawaba Movement in Niger*, Leiden: Brill, 2013. S. Pugach, "Agents of dissent: African student organizations in the German Democratic Republic", *Africa*, forthcoming.

15 See M. de Saint Martin et al. (eds.), *Étudier à l'Est : Trajectoires d'étudiants africains et arabes en URSS et dans les pays d'Europe de l'Est*, Paris: Karthala, 2015; M. Leclerc-Olive and M.-A. Hily (eds.), "Former des élites: Mobilités des étudiants d'Afrique au nord du Sahara dans les pays de l'ex-bloc socialiste", *Revue européenne des migrations internationales* 32 (2016) 2; M. de Saint Martin and p. Yengo (eds.), "Élites de retour de l'Est: Quelles contributions des élites 'rouges' au façonnement des États post-coloniaux?", *Cahiers d'Études africaines* 226 (2017) 2.

16 See also the very interesting paper by C. Gómez Martin, "La génération sahraoui de la guerre : des études à Cuba à la migration économique en Espagne", *Revue européenne des migrations internationales* 32 (2016) 2, pp. 77–94.

1 Beginnings: Aims, Policies, and Institutional Setting

Until the second half of the 1950s, when most African countries started transiting to independence, the educational connections with the Eastern Bloc were rare and predominantly of political character. On 1 June 1951, the Secretary General of the Nigerian Trade Union of Agricultural and Forestry Workers, Ilio Bosi, expressed his gratitude to the Eastern Bloc-led World Federation of Trade Unions for the scholarships eleven Nigerians had been granted to study at Leipzig University.¹⁷ However, his request that one of the most influential labour leaders, Nduka Eze, receive a scholarship to pursue his studies “in the School of Political Sciences and Economics of Moscow University” was not met.¹⁸ In 1953, for the first time three students from French West Africa were admitted to the Faculty of Medicine of Bucharest University. Among them was the future leader of the Marxist-Leninist African Independence Party (Parti Africain de l'Indépendance), the Senegalese Mahjemout Diop, who also attended classes of Marxism-Leninism under the auspices of the Romanian Union of Communist Youth (Uniunea Tineretului Comunist).¹⁹ Czechoslovakia, which around that time was the Eastern-Bloc country with the best connections to Africa, also hosted a handful of students, among them the future Minister of Finance of Nigeria, Festus Okotie-Eboh.²⁰ In Hungary, before the 1956 revolution, some Africans attended the Budapest-based school of the World Federation of Trade Unions. Among the first trainees there were two important Ghanaian labor leaders, Charles Richard Addison, the general secretary of the Trade Union of Dockers and Sailors, and his counterpart at the Trade Union of Agricultural Workers, John Essandoh Encher. They were both members of Kwame Nkrumah's Convention People's Party.²¹

Notoriously, the East-South relations changed dramatically during the second half of the decade. De-Stalinization in the East, decolonization in the South, the Suez Crisis and the Algerian War set the background against which the socialist countries embarked on a proactive Third-World policy. Africans, at the same time, increasingly looked at the socialist world for inspiration and assistance. In broad lines, the change took two directions. On the one hand, the socialist countries extended considerable support to countries or movements fighting against colonialism or against Western-oriented and Western-supported postcolonial regimes. On the other hand, they established an official state-to-state cooperation with postcolonial countries, offering the African governments substantial educational assistance in various forms.

Algeria, where between 1954 and 1962 the Front de Libération National (FLN) was fighting a war against France, exemplifies the first type of Eastern-Bloc assistance. The FLN was supported not only with Czechoslovak arms, but also through various forms of civil aid, including medical assistance and scholarships. Of the more than two hundred Algerian refugees the GDR hosted after 1956, some enrolled at German and Czechoslovak universities.²² Mohand Ali-Yahia, for example, studied film direction at the East Berlin Film School (today the Konrad Wolf School), from which he graduated in 1961. His fellow, Boubaker Adjali, who had been taken to the GDR for medical treatment in 1957, was transferred to Czechoslovakia to the enrol at the Prague Film and TV School (hereafter FASU). Two years later he was joined at FAMU by another Algerian militant, Mohammed Lakhdar-Hamina. Boubaker Adjali later became an activist documentarian who made films about the national liberation movement in the Portuguese colonies. Mohammed Lakhdar-Hamina, who in 1966 received the Best First Work Award at Cannes Festival for his film *The Winds of the Aures*, is widely recognized today as one of the founding fathers of Algerian cinema.²³

17 On this early case-study, see S. Pugach, “Eleven Nigerian Students in Cold War East Germany: Visions of Science, Modernity, and Decolonization,” *Journal of Contemporary History* (December 2018), available at <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009418803436>.

18 Collection (f., fond) R-5451, inventory (op., opis) 45, file (d., delo) 503, page (l., list) 40–43, State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF, *Gossudarstvennyy Arkhiv Rossiskei Federatsii*), Moscow. On Nduka Eze, see A. Mayer, *Naija Marxisms: Revolutionary Thought in Nigeria*, London: Pluto Press, 2016, pp. 40–57.

19 M. Diop, *Mémoires de luttes: Textes pour servir à l'histoire du Parti Africain de l'Indépendance*, Paris: Présence Africaine, 2007, pp. 28–29.

20 Muehlenbeck, *Czechoslovakia in Africa*, p. 31.

21 f. R-5451, op. 52, d. 249, ll. 42–46, GARF, Moscow.

22 See p. Poutrus, “An den Grenzen des proletarischen Internationalismus: Algerische Flüchtlinge in der DDR,” *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 55 (2007) 2, pp. 162–178.

23 O. Hadouchi, “Mohammed Lakhdar-Hamina and Boubaker Adjali: The Careers of two Algerian Film-makers who attended FAMU,” in: T. Stejskalová, *Filmmakers of the World*, pp. 123–136.

The Soviet Union too started offering scholarships to FLN youth members. In 1956, Mohammed Lakhdar Benhassine became the first Algerian student to be enrolled in an institution of higher education in the USSR. Benhassine studied at the Faculty of Economics of the prestigious Moscow State University, from which he graduated in 1962. He then pursued postgraduate studies at the Higher School of Economics in East Berlin, where he was awarded his PhD in December 1967.²⁴ After returning to Algeria, Benhassine became a well-known Marxist economist, writer, trade unionist, and highly regarded university professor. These student trajectories from Algeria to France, the GDR, Prague, Moscow, and often to Beijing are recounted in the memoirs of another FLN youth activist, Mustapha Negadi. In 1957 Negadi was granted a scholarship through the Prague-based International Union of Students, enrolled at the Setchenov Medical Institute in Moscow, met Frantz Fanon, advocated the cause of the FLN in Tokyo and Beijing, and treated wounded Algerian fighters in the battlefield. Following independence, Negadi became director at several hospitals and one of the most important Algerian psychiatrists.²⁵

Throughout the Cold War this kind of assistance was extended to the liberation movements fighting against Portuguese colonialism and white rule in Southern Africa. The seven parties that led the liberation movements and benefitted from Eastern-bloc support in the form of scholarships for studies at schools of higher and secondary technical education were the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) in Namibia, as well as the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP).

However, the largest amount of assistance was offered to African countries already independent. Many agreements guaranteeing technical, scientific, and cultural cooperation between Eastern-bloc countries and African governments were made. Egypt became the first African country to engage in such cooperation, first with Czechoslovakia in 1956, then with the USSR in 1957, and finally with the GDR in 1965. These agreements paved the way for the export of educational and scientific material from Czechoslovakia, the construction of schools by the GDR, and the dispatch of Soviet professors to the Suez Oil Institute, to Cairo, Alexandria and other universities. They also provided training for Egyptian students and researchers in Eastern-bloc countries under various schemes. Other socialist countries, namely Guinea-Conakry, Ghana, Mali, and Algeria followed suit. At the same time, countries which did not claim to follow a socialist path of development and remained close to the West, such as the Emperor's Haile Selassie Ethiopia, the Kingdom of Morocco, Tunisia and others were also very willing to receive educational assistance from the Eastern bloc and thus signed cooperation agreements. In the case of some Soviet-African agreements however, there was one clause which in the early 1960s turned out to be quite problematic. This clause, which enabled cultural exchange between "nongovernmental organizations", gave the USSR the possibility to offer scholarships to members of opposition parties and leftist youth unions, and quickly provoked sharp reactions of most of the African countries.²⁶

Indeed, not only the USSR, but also other Eastern-Bloc countries, in order to reach out to communists and sympathizers in African countries ruled by pro-Western governments, offered scholarships to a wide range of leftist and nationalist organizations which opposed the government. Therefore, along with (1) the governments and (2) the national liberation movements in countries with which the socialist camp had no official relations, (3) these leftist and nationalist organizations de facto constituted the third "group" of beneficiaries of Eastern-bloc aid. Such organizations included among many others the Nigerian trade unions, and Marxist-Leninist or Marxist-inspired parties such as the PAI in Senegal and Umma in Zanzibar. Also left-leaning nationalist and anti-imperialist parties such as Sawaba in Niger and UPC (Union des peuples camerounains) in Cameroon profited from Eastern-bloc help – with the aid afforded to the latter creating particularly serious tensions in the relations between the Eastern bloc and African governments.²⁷

24 M. Lakdar Benhassine, *Die Industrialisierung Algeriens und der Akkumulationsprozess als Mittel ihrer Verwirklichung*, PhD thesis, Hochschule für Ökonomie Berlin, 1967.

25 M. Negadi, *Un roman algéro-soviétique : Aux origines de l'UGEMA*, Algiers: Dar El Adib, 2014.

26 On this issue, see C. Katsakioris, "Transferts Est-Sud : Échanges éducatifs et formation de cadres africains en Union soviétique pendant les années soixante," *Revue d'histoire d'Outre-Mers* 95 (2007) 354–355, pp. 92–93.

27 K. van Walraven, *The Yearning for Relief: A History of the Sawaba Movement in Niger*, Leiden: Brill, 2013; T. Burgess, "A Socialist Diaspora: Ali Sultan Issa, the Soviet Union, and the Zanzibari Revolution", in: M. Matusevich (ed.), *Africa in Russia, Russia in Africa: Three Centuries of Encounters*, Trenton: Africa World Press, 2007, pp. 263–91; *ibid.*, "Mao in Zanzibar: Nationalism, discipline, and the (de)construction of Afro-Asian solidarities", in: C.J. Lee (ed.), *Making a World after Empire: The Bandung Moment and its Political Afterlives*, Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2010, pp. 196–234.

Lumumba University in Moscow, the University of the 17th of November in Prague, the International Union of Students also in the Czechoslovak capital, as well as the African and Afro-Asian solidarity committees and the Communist youth leagues across the Eastern Bloc were the main providers of scholarships with political criteria to the third group of recipients. Practically, this required bypassing the beneficiaries' governments. Fearing subversion, the governments denounced this practice and took measures to stop the unsanctioned exchange. The African students who attended Lumumba University were often depicted as bad students who had undergone political indoctrination or been trained for revolution. Two Lumumba students who acquired a reputation for subversion in the seventies were Rohana Wijeweera, leader of the Popular Liberation Front who led a revolution in Sri Lanka, and Ilich Ramírez Sanchez, the Venezuelan terrorist later known as Carlos the Jackal.²⁸ Bulgaria, too, was singled out for her dubious recruitment policies and alleged political intentions. The country entered into the picture especially after a Bulgarian-educated Kenyan graduate, who had been recruited in Bulgaria thanks to his membership in the socialist-leaning opposition movement, was convicted for the assassination of Tom Mboya in 1969. Mboya was a rather liberal-minded politician and at that time the potential successor of President Jomo Kenyatta.²⁹

In all cases, Eastern-bloc countries stepped up their efforts to increase their educational engagement with Africa, the Middle East, and the biggest part of the Third World. Education was considered as a field in which the Eastern bloc had many comparative advantages and could compete very successfully with the West. It was also a peaceful means to unlock the door of and build ties with postcolonial countries. At the level of discourse, the socialist countries always contrasted the internationalist and disinterested character of their own assistance to the imperialist and neocolonialist intentions and practices of the West. On the symbolic level, the Moscow Peoples' Friendship University named after Patrice Lumumba in 1961 and the Institute of Bulgarian language at Sofia University which, in 1971 was named after Gamal Abdel Nasser, were also conceived as tributes to radical leaders and as symbols of solidarity to postcolonial countries, much as the School of Friendship in Stassfurt.

At a practical level, the Commission for the Coordination of Technical Assistance (CCTA), which functioned inside the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), decided in 1961 to coordinate the members' policies also in international education. Beginning in 1962, the deputy Ministers of Education of CMEA countries, who were in charge of international cooperation, held annual meetings to exchange views and information both on the educational projects they pursued abroad and on the training of students from developing countries in Eastern Europe. The CCTA circulated memorandums on the state of education in Third World countries and repeatedly stressed how important it was for all CMEA members to engage in international educational assistance. With an eye on the West, CMEA deputy Ministers of Education exchanged views on the preparatory faculties, recruitment policies, and study programs for international students. At the second meeting that took place in Sofia in April 1963, it was decided that each CMEA country reports on the schools it was building and equipping abroad and, if needed, asks other CMEA members to dispatch professors. This decision was taken after it was realized that because of the lack of professors with sufficient knowledge of foreign languages, mostly English or French, Western professors were often filling the vacancies even in schools created by CMEA countries. Following a request of the Soviet Union, four Polish professors of geology and mathematics took service at the Technical Institute of Conakry in Guinea that the USSR set up in the mid-1960s.³⁰ In the midst of the Prague Spring in 1968, a decision was taken and simultaneously implemented in the USSR, Czechoslovakia and the GDR that the courses of Marxism-Leninism, which until then were optional, become compulsory for all Third-World students.³¹ In 1973, CCTA created a scholarship fund for the multilateral financing of students from developing countries, with the Soviet Union as the main donor, which remained operational until the late 1980s.³²

28 T. Rupprecht, "Gestrandetes Flaggschiff," pp. 95–114.

29 D. Branch, *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963–2011*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011, p. 81.

30 Many documents of the CCTA are found in: f. 9606, op. 2, d. 266, ll. 1–140, GARF, Moscow.

31 Most likely this decision was taken during the "meeting of experts from the CMEA member countries on issues of political and ideological education of students from developing countries" that took place in Prague in March 1968. See Report of the GDR Ministry of Higher and Specialized Education (Ministerium für Hoch- und Fachschulwesen), 31 July 1968, Berlin, DE 1/53799, p. 3, Bundesarchiv (hereafter BArch), Berlin.

32 Mentioned in: "Guidelines" for the GDR delegation at the CCTA meeting held in Tbilisi in November 1975", 30 October 1975, Berlin, DY 30/17734, BArch, Berlin; also mentioned by H. Machowski and S. Schultz, "Soviet Economic Policy in the Third World", in: R. Kanet (ed.), *The Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and the Third World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 127.

Overall, however, in terms of coordination, circulation of models and ideas, emulation of policies, and common approaches in international education among CMEA members the picture was mixed.

On the one hand, CMEA countries did step up their educational efforts in the 1960s and target specific Third-World countries, such as Egypt, Ghana, India or South Yemen, with ideological as well as geopolitical and economic criteria as primary incentives when deliberating whom to give their civil aid to. Furthermore, the University of the 17th of November in Prague was clearly inspired by Lumumba University, much as the Stassfurt School emulated the Cuban *Isla de la Juventud*.³³ The concept of the workers' faculties for training students who otherwise could not qualify for tertiary education, which travelled from the Soviet Union to Mozambique and Vietnam through Cuba and the GDR, is another example of emulation and circulation of models.³⁴ Perhaps more out of practical reasons, the institution of the preparatory faculty that offered language training and remedial courses was common across the bloc. Similarly, the insistence on the practical training of students during their studies, a characteristic feature that distinguished Eastern-bloc educational assistance from that of Western countries, was integral part of study programs that aimed at educating "new men." Most importantly, according to leading Western experts, this specific feature made the training in the socialist countries particularly relevant to Third World countries.³⁵

At the economic level, too, most CMEA countries had a similar approach throughout the biggest part of the Cold War. Schools created in Africa were either a gift or financed through low-interest loans which, as stated earlier, were usually never paid back. Most expatriate teachers, professors and experts received salaries and other benefits from the host country under various schemes. On the contrary, during the 1960s and the biggest part of the 1970s African students in the Eastern bloc, unless they were part of a specific training program after request of the sending country, were fully subsidized by the host countries. A notable exception was that of Egyptian students. For the majority of them who studied in the USSR, the Egyptian government covered a part of their monthly stipend.³⁶ In the late 1980s, the GDR too trained a growing number of Egyptians at the expense of Egypt.³⁷ The same was true for students from Cameroon and in particular for Libyans which, during the 1980s became the biggest group of African students who studied in the GDR at the expense of the home country.³⁸ Otherwise, the overwhelming majority of Third-World students in the GDR studied in scholarships provided by the East German state and public organizations.

On the other hand, beyond the coordination, the emulation and the similarities, over time several CMEA countries decided to change course primarily for economic reasons. After 1968, Czechoslovakia retreated from its earlier African policy and in 1974 closed down the University of the 17th of November.³⁹ Hungary, which had eventually been the most reluctant CMEA country to adopt CCTA guidelines with regards to educational assistance to developing countries, opted for the commercialization of international education. In the mid-1970s the Technical University of Budapest proposed study programs both in Hungarian language for recipients of Hungarian state scholarships who also attended a preparatory faculty and in English language for students whose families or states were eager to finance their studies and pay in hard currency. These English-language programs attracted mainly students from Nigeria and Libya, two countries which had greatly benefitted from the post-1973 oil boom. Bulgaria too seized the momentum and agreed with Nigeria to train 200 Nigerians annually on a commercial basis.⁴⁰ Romania, which until the mid-1970s fully subsidized small numbers of students from developing countries, also jumped on the bandwagon and used international education as a means for earning hard currency.⁴¹ In this respect, the international education policy of these countries differed from that of the USSR, the GDR and Cuba. Despite these differences and changes, the overall educational effort of the Eastern bloc was still very generous. It should be noted by way

33 Holečková, "Konfliktní lekce"; and Müller, *Legacies of Socialist Solidarity*.

34 I. Miethe et al., "Educational Transfers in Postcolonial Contexts: Preliminary Results From Comparative Research on Workers' Faculties in Vietnam, Cuba, and Mozambique", *European Education* 47 (2015) 3, pp. 242–259.

35 P. Altbach et al. (eds.), *Governmental and Institutional Policies on Foreign Students: An Overview and Bibliography*, New York: Praeger, 1986, pp. 52–56.

36 C. Katsakioris, "Creating a Socialist Intelligentsia: Soviet Educational Aid and its Impact on Africa, 1960–1991", *Cahiers d'Études africaines* 226 (2017) 2, p. 265.

37 A. Regnaud, *La RDA en Égypte, 1969–1989 : la construction d'une politique étrangère. De la solidarité anti-impérialiste aux avantages réciproques*, PhD thesis, University of Sorbonne – Paris I, 2016, pp. 357–58.

38 On the commercialization of international education in the GDR, see DY 30/8828, BArch, Berlin; and DY 30/7953, BArch, Berlin.

39 Holečková, "Konfliktní lekce".

40 F. Koudawa, *La Formation des Cadres Africains en Europe de l'Est depuis 1918 : Des Nègres Rouges aux Russotiques*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 1992, pp. 131–32.

41 M.D. Gheorghiu et al., "Les étudiants africains en Roumanie (1970–1990) : De l'internationalisme militant à la commercialisation des études", *Revista Psihologia Socială* 34 (2014) 2, pp. 117–128.

of comparison that in the early 1980s only 11.5 per cent of international students who studied in the United States were subsidized either by the US government or by private foundations.⁴² In West Germany, where tuition was almost free of charge, the percentage of international students who also held a scholarship from the host country reached approximately 21 per cent in 1984.⁴³

African students and governments were grateful for the scholarships. It is safe to argue that the Eastern-bloc grants or the favourable economic terms offered to Africa constituted a major motivation behind the spectacular development of relationships in the field of education. At the same time, when it comes to the African actors, other perceptions, views, and interests should also be factored in. For instance, support for the international policies and fascination with the ideology and the technological achievements of the USSR was widespread among African youth. In his broad survey of the opinions, worldview and aspirations of African students in France, the Senegalese sociologist Jean-Pierre N'Diaye found that 25 per cent of the students admired the USSR, 20 per cent admired China, 12.4 per cent Israel, 12 per cent Cuba and 8 per cent France, while the United States was lagging far behind with only 3.3 per cent of positive responses. The reasons underpinning their admiration for the USSR were the rapid Soviet progress in all areas (35 per cent), communist ideology (22.3 per cent) and scientific achievements (18.5 per cent) such as the Sputnik and Lunik satellites. Accordingly, 37.8 per cent of the students believed that “full-fledged socialism” constituted the best economic system for the development of Africa.⁴⁴ N'Diaye's colleague, the French sociologist Pierre Fougeyrollas, conducted similar research among his African students at the University of Dakar to find that the USSR was not in first, but in third place, among the countries which were considered as “models,” behind France and Switzerland.⁴⁵

African intellectuals and politicians often held similar views. In his widely read, *L'Éducation en Afrique*, the prominent Nigérien scientist and militant suggested that the Soviet Union should be a model, among other things, also for the development of education and sciences in Africa.⁴⁶ High-ranking officials from Ghana and Mali who visited the Soviet Union in the mid-1960s found it very strange that their compatriots did not have compulsory classes of Marxism-Leninism in the study programs. Mozambican leader Samora Machel and his FRELIMO government embraced the notion of the “new man” and opted to emulate both the methods and the content of education in the socialist countries. President of Congo Brazzaville, Marien Ngouabi, considered that it was in the interest of his country and of his government that the national elites were both “red and experts” and subsequently relied on the cooperation with the Eastern bloc.⁴⁷ In any case, the partnership with the Eastern bloc allowed African governments to diversify their international cooperation and increase the volume of assistance they received from various donors. Foreign assistance in the creation of educational institutions in Africa was of primary importance for African countries, not only because universities and technical institutes were terribly missing, but also because these schools became an immediately integral part of the countries' educational system. The following part turns the spotlight on the major Eastern-bloc educational projects in Africa and on other forms of cooperation that took place in the continent.

42 P. Coombs, *The World Crisis in Education: The View from the Eighties*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 321.

43 In absolute numbers nearly 15,000 among 71,200 foreign students held a German scholarship according to K. Bönnemann, “Auswärtige Kulturpolitik und Ausländerstudium”, in H.F. Illy and W. Schmidt-Streckenbach (eds.), *Studenten aus der Dritten Welt in beiden deutschen Staaten*, Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1987, pp. 13, 18.

44 J.-P. N'Diaye, *Enquête sur les étudiants noirs en France*, Paris: Présence Africaine, 1962, pp. 228–229, 243–245.

45 P. Fougeyrollas, *Modernisation des hommes : L'exemple du Sénégal*, Paris: Flammarion, 1967, p. 156.

46 A. Moumouni, *L'Éducation en Afrique*, Paris: Présence Africaine, 1964.

47 P. Yengo, “Former des cadres ‘rouges et experts’ : Mouvement étudiants congolais en URSS et parti unique”, *Cahiers d'Études africaines* 226 (2017) 2, pp. 313–29.

2 Eastern-bloc Educational Aid and Cooperation in Africa

Czechoslovakia was again an early Eastern bloc actor in educational cooperation in Africa, even though it was quickly outpaced by the Soviet Union and the GDR, and later by Cuba. In 1959, Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie visited Prague and signed an agreement on cultural, scientific and technical cooperation. Czechoslovakia provided Ethiopia a loan and the following year a group of Czechoslovak lecturers took mission at Addis Ababa University.⁴⁸ Small numbers of Czechoslovak lecturers were also sent to the three West African socialist countries, Guinea, Mali and Ghana. In 1965, Czechoslovak companies were ordered to work together with Egyptian partners and then to equip the Technical Institute of Helwan in Egypt. This was a vocational school that trained mechanics for the steel and iron industry.⁴⁹

The Soviet Union too began its educational cooperation in Africa from Egypt and Haile Selassie's Ethiopia. In 1958, seven Soviet lecturers taught engineering at the Suez Oil Institute and others taught Russian language at Cairo University. In Ethiopia, between 1960 and 1963, the USSR created the Bahir Dar Technical Institute. This institute, which was "a gift of the Soviet government to the Ethiopian people", later developed into a Technical University.⁵⁰ In 1961, after the US refused to provide assistance for creating a technical university, Tunisia turned to the Soviet Union. Between 1963 and 1968, the USSR constructed and equipped the National Technical Institute of Tunis. Both Ethiopia and Tunisia however refrained from employing Soviet professors, something that provoked frustration on the Soviet side.⁵¹

West Africa, Guinea-Conakry and Mali became the major beneficiaries of Soviet aid. In Guinea, between 1960 and 1964, the USSR established the Polytechnic Institute of Conakry, with four faculties of engineering and an enrollment capacity of 300 students per year. In Mali, between 1963 and 1966, the Soviet Union also founded the Higher Administrative School of Bamako with an enrolment capacity of 250 students per year, future civil servants for the friendly regime of Modibo Keita, as well as a school of medical assistants and a center for agricultural training. All these schools were created with low-interest Soviet loans, which were quickly rescheduled and later written-off. Although they remained ill-equipped and understaffed, both the Conakry Institute and the Bamako School became the first higher education institutions in Guinea and Mali respectively and constituted landmarks in Soviet-African cooperation.⁵²

By far the most important Soviet educational projects in Africa were however those Moscow carried out in Algeria. In 1964 during a visit to Algeria Nikita Khrushchev announced to Ben Bella that Moscow was ready to finance the foundation of an oil institute so that the Algerian nation could be able to exploit its own resources and subsequently finance its other social and economic development projects. Towards the end of the same year the Algerian Oil and Gas Institute was founded in Boumerdès, a suburb of Algiers, as a part of the African Center for Oil and Textile (Centre africain des hydrocarbures et du textile, CAHT), an educational complex sponsored by the USSR and which also comprised a technical school for textile. The CAHT was equipped with Soviet material and employed about 200 professors, members of several Soviet universities and research institutes. Within five years the CAHT had raised its enrolment capacity in different specializations to more than 1,000 students. Many of its graduates pursued postgraduate training at the Gubkin Institute for Oil and Gas in Moscow and other research institutes in the USSR.⁵³

The CAHT became a symbol of the Soviet Union's disinterested aid towards a young socialist country, as well as an important centre for propagating the Soviet model to Algerian youths. Film screenings and exhibitions were regularly organized on such themes as the Soviet technological achievements or the modernization of the Central-Asian Republics thanks to the socialist regime. Soviet faculty members founded an Association for Soviet-Algerian friendship and organized lectures on the Soviet Union, as well as commem-

48 Muehlenbeck, *Czechoslovakia in Africa*, p. 21.

49 CCTA-CMEA records: f. R-9606, op. 2, d. 266, ll. 45–46, GARF, Moscow.

50 See d. 869, l. 3, GARF, Moscow; and f. R-9606, op. 1, d. 1842, l. 71, GARF, Moscow; on the Bahir Dar project in particular, see also G. Tsyppin, "Efiopia (po materialam arkhiva vneschnei politiki RF)", in: A. Davidson et al., *SSSR i Afrika: Dokumentirovannia istoriia vzaimootnoschenii*, Moscow: IVI RAN, 2002, pp. 102–103.

51 Katsakioris, "Creating a Socialist Intelligentsia", p. 263.

52 For a critical assessment of these projects, see V. Bartenev, "L'URSS et l'Afrique noire sous Khrouchtchev: la mise à jour des mythes de la coopération", *Outre-Mers. Revue d'histoire* 95 (2007) 354–355, pp. 63–82.

53 See a report of the Soviet Ministry of Higher and Secondary Technical Education: f. R-9606, op. 1, d. 9120, ll. 25–29, GARF, Moscow.

orations of the October Revolution. The Algerian administration of the CAHT did not oppose these activities, nor the teaching of Marxism-Leninism that was part of the few courses of economics. There were good reasons behind this tolerance. Soviet faculty members taught classes for which qualified Algerian lecturers were missing. Along with their Algerian counterparts and students, the Soviets pursued projects that were of major interest for the country, such as the detection and exploitation of oil, or the liquefaction of natural gas.⁵⁴ The outcome in terms of specialists was extremely important. Numerous graduates of the Oil Institute and especially those who continued training in the USSR made their career in Sonatrach, the national oil and gas enterprise. Sonatrach maintained a working relationship and had direct access to Soviet institutes for further training its cadres. During the second half of the 1960s, the company took over all the oil fields and assets, which so far had belonged to French and American oil companies. The Soviet direct and indirect support in this drive was instrumental. In 1971 the government of Houari Boumedienne nationalized all natural gas fields and Sonatrach became the state energy monopoly. In this process, the Soviet Union's educational assistance had played a crucial role. Boumedienne publicly stressed the connection between the Soviet educational assistance and the nationalization process in May 1971 when he affirmed that, "The recent cohort of graduates of the CAHT had a major contribution [in the process] by replacing the foreign technicians and managers when our country got back our national oil riches."⁵⁵

Beyond this direct effect, there were also major indirect effects and benefits for Algeria. As a response to the Soviet involvement, France sponsored the creation of the "rival" Algerian Oil Institute (Institut algérien du pétrole, IAP). IAP later also received the support of and developed cooperation with the American Stevens Technological Institute and the West German Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (Association for Technical Cooperation). By skillfully maneuvering between Western and Eastern sponsors, Algeria managed to develop education institutions of strategic importance for its national development.⁵⁶ Throughout this process, the Soviet Union's assistance had been instrumental. It was not a surprise, therefore, that in the mid-1970s Algeria agreed with the Soviet Union on the development of two other education institutions, namely the National Institute of Light Industry and the Institute of Mining and Smelting at the University of Annaba. In 1980, along with the Algerian Oil and Gas Institute of Boumerdès, all three schools were training a total of 8,500 Algerian students. The same year, there were 935 Soviet professors teaching in Algeria. Almost one third of them were still lecturing at the African Center of Hydrocarbons and Textile.⁵⁷

Beyond Algeria, Tunisia, Guinea Conakry, and Ethiopia, the Soviet Union created technical universities in several other countries too. The following table enlists the most important schools of higher education the USSR created in developing countries.

Table 1: Major institutions of higher education created by the USSR in Africa and Asia.⁵⁸

Country	School	Years	Financing
India	Bombay Institute of Technology	1957–65	Soviet credit
Burma	Rangoon Institute of Technology	1958–61	≈
Indonesia	Ambon Institute of Technology	1961–66	≈
Cambodia	Phnom Penh Institute of Technology	1962–65	≈
Afghanistan	Kabul Institute of Technology	1963–67	≈
Syria	Homs Institute of Technology	1975–85	≈
Syria	Lattakia Institute of Technology	1975–85	≈
Ethiopia	Bahir Dar Institute of Technology	1960–63	Grant

54 See two reports of 1975 and 1980 on the Soviet educational cooperation with Algeria: f. R-9606, d. 6829, ll. 35–38, GARF, Moscow; f. R-9606, d. 9120, ll. 25–29, GARF, Moscow.

55 H. Khelfaoui, *La formation des ingénieurs en Algérie : Le cas des Instituts Technologiques de Boumerdès*, PhD thesis, Université de Versailles, Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, 1997, p. 129.

56 H. Khelfaoui, "La coopération technique internationale : Le cas du pôle technologique de Boumerdès (Algérie)", in: Jacques Gaillard (ed.), *Coopérations scientifiques internationales*, Paris: ORSTOM Éditions, 1996, pp. 188–201.

57 f. R-9606, op. 1, d. 9120, ll. 25–29, GARF, Moscow.

58 C. Katsakioris, "Une superpuissance éducative : L'URSS et la formation des élites du Tiers Monde, 1956-1991", *Traverse: Zeitschrift für Geschichte / Revue d'histoire* 25 (2018) 1, p. 116.

Country	School	Years	Financing
Guinea	Conakry Institute of Technology	1960–64	Credit
Mali	School of Public Management of Bamako	1963–65	≈
Tunisia	Institute of Engineering Tunis	1963–68	≈
Algeria	African Oil Center in Boumerdès	1964–67	Grant
Algeria	National Institute of Light Industry	mid-1970s	Credit
Algeria	Institute of Mining and Smelting at the University of Annaba	mid-1970s	≈

Similarly, the GDR founded a number of schools in Africa. The first one was the Technical School of Economics that was created in Zanzibar in the mid-1960s following an agreement with the left-leaning government of the island. The study programs were designed by German experts and five lecturers began teaching at the school between 1965 and 1966.⁵⁹

Egypt too invited the GDR to assist her in the creation of schools. In June 1970 the two countries signed an agreement providing for the joint construction and development of the Technical School of Galal Fahmy in Shubra on the outskirts of Cairo.⁶⁰ By the end of the year, Margot Honecker, then Minister of Popular Education, posed the foundational stone. The school's mission was to "train technicians and a qualified manpower that would be able to supervise the work of skilled workers and to guide them through the production process so as to meet the necessary conditions for the industrialization" of Egypt. Meant to reproduce in Egypt the German model of polytechnic education, the school offered courses of mathematics, physics, chemistry, technical design, as well as German language. The five-year study programs were established by a joint team of experts, whereas Egyptian lecturers who had been trained in the GDR taught alongside their German colleagues. Already in 1971 the school enrolled the first 300 students. By 1974, the number of students had reached 1,200.⁶¹

In March 1972, after the Galal Fahmy Technical School had become fully operational and was considered by both sides as a particularly successful undertaking, Egypt and the GDR signed another agreement for the construction of the experimental school of Medinet Nasr. This school was an institution of both primary and secondary level education. It catered for students from 6 to 14 years of age and offered general-education study programs following the model of an *Allgemeinbildende Schule* (general-education school). At the beginning, classes of mathematics, natural sciences, and German language were taught by German teachers. In the meantime, their Egyptian colleagues attended training programs in pedagogy in the GDR. Medinet Nasr too was seen by both sides as a success story. As a result, in 1976 the Egyptian Ministry of Education asked the GDR to extend the study programs so as to train students until the age of seventeen. The idea was that Medinet Nasr could further develop as a technical secondary school following the example of Galal Fahmy. The same year, the Egyptian Minister of Education, Ahmed Talaat Osman, submitted to the GDR a request for aid in order to create three more technical institutes modeled on Galal Fahmy. These projects however never came into being. As the sources indicate, the German side was not eager to provide further material support to Egypt and refused to cover a big part of the cost of the teaching staff. Economic considerations therefore, and neither educational nor political reasons, lay behind the GDR's retreat from their educational cooperation with Egypt.⁶²

Another successful undertaking of the East-German educational aid in Africa was the Gondar Medical College in Ethiopia. This project, which was developed in the early eighties within the framework of the support the GDR provided to the friendly socialist regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam, became the most important educational institution the GDR created in the continent. Contrary to the Egyptian projects, in Gondar the GDR delivered the necessary material free of charge and dispatched tens of lecturers on a solidary basis.

59 See Burton, "Tansanias 'Afrikanischer Sozialismus'", and the CCTA-CMEA records in f. R-9606, op. 2, d. 266, l. 39, GARF, Moscow.

60 For the part that is related to the cooperation between Egypt and the GDR, I draw from A. Regnauld, *La RDA en Égypte*.

61 *Ibid.*, pp. 353–54.

62 *Ibid.*, pp. 354–56. Ulrich van der Heyden has also remarked that even in projects financed by the recipient country, the GDR contributed to the salaries of expatriate experts and teachers, and provided material free of charge. See his *GDR Development Policy in Africa: Doctrine and Strategies between Illusions and Reality, 1960–1990*, Berlin: LIT, 2013, pp. 201–203.

The College, which became a university in the 1990s, constitutes until today one of the best medical schools in Ethiopia.⁶³

Another African Marxist regime that relied heavily on both military and civil aid from the Eastern bloc was the Popular Movement for the Liberation (MPLA) in Angola. After waging liberation war and seizing power with the Portuguese decolonization in 1974, the MPLA also fought a prolonged civil war against rival Angolan movements. Throughout the period from 1975 to 1991 Cuba was the major provider both of military and civil aid to the MPLA. According to Christine Hatzky between 8,000 and 10,000 Cubans worked in the Angolan education system during this period of time, serving in various positions. In 1983, for instance, there were “1,823 Cuban teachers, lecturers, advisors, education specialists, and university professors, followed by 99 Bulgarians, 85 Portuguese, 53 East Germans, 34 specialists from Cape Verde, 31 from Congo-Brazzaville, 23 from the Soviet Union, and 17 from Vietnam.”⁶⁴ Among the Cuban civil aid workers, there were hundreds of graduate students who served as teachers on a solidary basis. For the rest of the teaching staff and experts, however, whether Cubans, Soviets or East Europeans, Angola paid their salaries in hard currency, as she did also for Western expatriates. Overall, Hatzky assesses the work of Cuban teachers and professors positively. The negative consequence however was Angola’s growing reliance on Cuban civil aid. In that sense, as Hatzky concludes, instead of setting the foundations for Angola’s national education system, Cuban aid and cooperation had the opposite effect: They resulted in a new relationship of dependence, a fault that they were actually meant to combat.

63 Unfried, “Friendship and Education”, pp. 29–30.

64 Hatzky, *Kubaner in Angola*, p. 183.

3 African Students in the Eastern Bloc

If the creation of schools and the dispatch of professors, teachers, and experts constituted one part of the educational aid the socialist countries provided to Africa, the other part was the training of students at universities and professional-technical institutes in the Eastern bloc. To be sure, exchange and training took many other forms as well. Socialist-minded scholars were often invited as fellows by the academies of science of Eastern-bloc countries. Trainees were enrolled in short term vocational, language, or other exchange programs. And primary or secondary schools like the one in Stassfurt and those on the Isla de la Juventud provided education to younger students.⁶⁵

However, the training of students at universities and professional-technical institutes was the most common form of training in the East as well as in the West. On both sides of the Cold War divide policy-makers assumed that these students would become the new African elites and would hold key positions in the state or party mechanisms. From such positions, they were able to play a crucial role in the political and economic life of their countries. From the perspective of the donor countries, therefore, in order to yield influence over the postcolonial nations, it was necessary to be in good terms with their new elites. It was in such a context that the training of students at universities and professional-technical institutes came to epitomize what the British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan famously described in terms of a peaceful “battle” between the East and the West “for the hearts and minds” of postcolonial peoples. The members of the Commission for the Coordination of Technical Assistance would fully subscribe to Macmillan’s view. The late 1950s and early 1960s constituted a period when new parties, governments, administrations, and institutions were born and took shape in the postcolonial world. Training the people who would staff these institutions was an indispensable investment in the future of East-South relationships. The creation of universities especially for students from developing countries such as Patrice Lumumba and the University the 17th of November testified to the importance the socialist countries assigned to this form of assistance for setting the foundations of good long-term relations with the South.

Beyond these two well-known universities, however, the bulk of African and Third-World students studied alongside their Soviet and East-European peers in mainstream institutions. Charles University and the Technical University of Prague, for instance, were not less important centres for the training of international students than the University of the 17th of November. Similarly, in the USSR, Lumumba University admitted approximately only 150 African students per year.⁶⁶ At the same time the bulk of African students were enrolled not at Lumumba University, but in numerous mainstream schools all over the USSR. More than Russia, Ukraine was the most important destination of Third-World students in the USSR, with Kharkov University being the one that trained the biggest number of Africans during the entire period of the Cold War. Leipzig, Sofia and Warsaw were also home to hundreds of Third-World students. As Togolese political scientist Fafali Koudawo rightly observed, against the broader picture of Soviet and East-European educational aid to the Third World, the much-discussed Lumumba University was just “the tree hiding the forest.”⁶⁷ The table that follows testifies to the quantitative and geographic dimensions of the training of African students in the socialist countries. It also illustrates the increase in the number of scholarships the socialist countries offered to African students during the 1960s.

65 To this should be added the training of political and military cadres which is however out of the scope of this paper. Regarding military training, see the footnote 4. The three schools that provided political training in the Soviet Union were the Institute of Social Sciences of the Central Committee of the CPSU, the school of the Komsomol and that of the trade unions. In the GDR, trade unionists were trained at the Fritz Heckert School (Gewerkschaftshochschule) in Bernau and party cadres at the Institute for the training of foreign cadres of the Karl Marx Party School (Parteihochschule).

66 S. Rosen, *The Development of the Peoples' Friendship University in Moscow*, Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972, pp. 2–3.

67 Koudawo, *La formation des Cadres*, p. 128.

Table 2: African Students in the Eastern bloc and Yugoslavia in 1964 and 1967⁶⁸

Year	1964	1967
Country		
Bulgaria	381	565
Czechoslovakia	734	794
GDR	763	1,226
Hungary	198	398
Poland	174	874
Rumania	92	158
USSR	2,787	4,241
Yugoslavia	495	591
CMEA countries only TOTAL	5,129	8,256
CMEA and Yugoslavia	5,624	8,847
USSR as % of CMEA countries	54.3 %	51.4 %

To make sense of the extent and importance of the involvement of the socialist countries in the training of African elites it is necessary to compare the numbers of African students who studied in Eastern and Western Europe during the 1960s. The following table uses data from the CCTA-CMEA archives and from the UNESCO yearbooks to provide this comparative perspective. As the table illustrates, for every four African students who studied in Western Europe in 1964, there was one African student enrolled in a school on the Eastern side of the “iron curtain”. Three years later, in 1967, nearly one over three African students in Europe (30.3 per cent) studied in a socialist country. Just a few years after the majority of African countries had acceded to independence and given their actual and long-established dependence of Africa on the West, this percentage was extremely significant. By that time, moreover, still all African students received a scholarship and other allowances by the host socialist countries, something that was not always the case in the West even though it was the most common.

An even more significant difference should also be stressed. Studies in the West were very often part of a migration strategy or ended up as migration and hence as a brain drain for the sending countries, who in the process lost large parts of their national elites. France, for example, was by far the biggest host country for African students in Europe and particularly for students from the Maghreb. Algerians, Moroccans, and Tunisians alone made up nearly 50 per cent of all African students in France. Many of these students ended up as migrants in the former metropolis.⁶⁹ Most importantly, there were thousands of students from Africa who had already lived several years in France as children in the families of migrants before being enrolled at universities. In UNESCO’s statistical yearbooks however these students were simply counted along with all other international students.⁷⁰ Any comparison of the student flows to the West and to the East should therefore necessarily take into consideration the different projects and motivations behind the African student migration since the 1960s, as well as the different situations and outcomes.

68 f. R-9606, op. 2, d. 134, ll. 101–105, GARF, Moscow; f. R-9606, op. 2, d. 266, ll. 129–134, GARF, Moscow. Data for Yugoslavia come from the UNESCO Statistical Yearbooks. For Romania I have used both the CCTA-CMEA records and the UNESCO yearbooks. There are no data available for Cuba and Albania.

69 On the difficulties related to the analysis of student migration to France, see A. Coulon and S. Paivandi, *Les étudiants étrangers en France : L'état des savoirs*, working paper, Université de Paris-VIII, 2003.

70 It was the same for Turkish students, more often than not children of families of migrants, who studied in West Germany.

Table 3: African Students in the socialist countries and in Western Europe in 1964 and 1967⁷¹

Year	1964		1967	
	number	%	number	%
Regions / Countries				
CMEA and Yugoslavia	5,624	22.3 %	8,847	30.3 %
Western Europe	19,582	77.7 %	20,312	69.7 %
France alone	9,284	36.8 %	9,412	32.3 %
USSR alone	2,787	11 %	4,241	14.5 %
Total of African Students in Europe	25,206	100 %	29,159	100 %

A longer comparative perspective is provided by Table 4 which concentrates on the three most important host countries, France, the US, and the USSR (the United Kingdom being the fourth one after the second half of the 1970s), and which shows the evolution in the number of African students these countries hosted from 1962 to 1989. Throughout this period, France constituted by far the most important destination for African students. As stated earlier and illustrated clearly by Table 4, the French lead was mainly due to the migration of students from the Maghreb who made up the overwhelming majority of the students from North Africa. When it comes to students from sub-Saharan Africa, however, the picture is very different. In 1978, the U.S. was still the first destination for students coming from the regions south of the Sahara. Nevertheless, a decade later, the US had been outpaced both by France and by the USSR. In 1989, while the Eastern bloc was falling apart, the Soviet Union was still hosting 22,719 students from sub-Saharan Africa, compared to 17,887 in the US, and constituted their second destination behind France. And unlike the US the Soviet government and public organizations fully covered the expenses of almost all Third-World students who studied in the motherland of socialism.⁷² Such relevant figures illustrate that while the US in the context of its neoliberal revolution had drastically reduced its educational aid to Africa, the Soviet Union maintained its commitment to the training of African students despite the severe economic and political crises of the perestroika. This remarkable assistance was however very soon brought to an abrupt end with the collapse and disintegration of the USSR in 1991.

Table 4: Students from North and Sub-Saharan Africa in the Soviet Union, the United States, and France in selected years⁷³

Year	France			United States			USSR		
	North Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa	Africa TOTAL	North Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa	Africa TOTAL	North Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa	Africa TOTAL
1962	5,033	3,895	8,928	1,456	3,540	4,996	666	1,027	1,693
1966	5,189	4,117	9,306	1,509	5,680	7,189	693	2,829	3,522
1971	7,061	6,423	13,484	1,832	7,759	9,591	1,622	4,267	5,889
1974	19,832	14,083	33,915	2,710	15,670	18,380	2,051	5,027	7,078
1978	33,554	22,193	55,747	6,200	27,790	33,990	2,302	9,799	12,101
1984	45,748	31,513	77,261	5,543	28,235	33,778	3,886	16,571	20,457
1989	46,814	30,092	76,906	4,264	17,887	22,151	4,714	22,719	27,433

Other dimensions of this history, which corroborate the importance of Eastern-bloc educational assistance, should be also mentioned in passing. For example, as two sociological studies on Tunisia and Morocco have

71 Ibid.

72 P. Coombs, *The World Crisis in Education: The View from the Eighties*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 321.

73 See the footnote for the previous table, the UNESCO Statistical Yearbooks and Katsakioris, "Creating a Socialist Intelligentsia", Appendix, pp. 277–82.

shown, students who studied in the USSR and the rest of the Eastern Bloc were of lower class background compared to their compatriots who studied in the West and whose families could often afford financing their studies abroad.⁷⁴ There was therefore an element of positive discrimination in the scholarships provided by the Eastern bloc. And even if this affirmative action was motivated by ideological considerations, the essence was that it allowed thousands of youths, who otherwise would not have had the possibility, to pursue tertiary studies. Equally important was the fact that approximately fifty per cent of Third-World students in the USSR graduated from engineering schools, whereas a quarter of them studied medicine, dentistry, pharmacology and other health professions, including that of medical assistant, which were of primary importance for the developing countries.⁷⁵ Last but not least, with the exception of Lumumba University until the mid-1970s, studies in the USSR in such specializations as physics, mathematics, chemistry, economics, and several others lasted one year longer than studies in Western universities. Contrary to the stereotypes on the supposed lower quality of Soviet and other Eastern-bloc countries' degrees, the longer study programs testify to the serious commitment in the training of good specialists. This commitment existed in most universities and professional-technical schools of the Soviet Union until the end of the eighties.⁷⁶

74 See É. Gobe and B. Sedrine Saïd, *Les ingénieurs tunisiens : Dynamiques récentes d'un groupe professionnel*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004, p. 20. And G. Scarfò Ghellab, "Les meilleures années de notre vie" : Des ingénieurs marocains formés en URSS", in : de Saint Martin et al. (eds.), *Étudier à l'Est*, pp. 187–201.

75 A. Arefiev and F. Sheregui, *Ekspart rossiiskikh obrazovatel'nykh uslug, Statistitseski sbornik (Export of Russian Educational Services, Statistical Survey)*, Moscow: Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, 2014, p. 30.

76 On negative stereotypes regarding Eastern Bloc diplomas in Congo-Brazzaville and more generally in French-speaking African countries, see p. Yengo, "Jalons pour une historiographie des élites africaines formées dans le Bloc soviétique", in M. Leclerc-Olive et al. (eds.), *Les mondes universitaires face au marché : Circulation des savoirs et pratiques des acteurs*, Paris: Karthala, 2011, pp. 135–148.

Conclusion

The three decades that historians consider today, following Odd Arne Westad, as the main period of the global Cold War, did not witness only foreign interventions, civil wars, and authoritarian regimes in Africa and the rest of the Third World. They also witnessed increasing international cooperation and civil aid which, for all their interests and motivations, were of tremendous importance for countries lacking basic infrastructures, social goods, economic means, and an educated citizenry. In particular, the development of education in the Third World was raised to a global concern. As a result, along with the enormous sacrifices of African countries, international aid also played a crucial role in the expansion of all levels of education in Africa from the 1950s to the 1980s. Looking back at this period of dramatic worldwide growth of educational enrollments and of spectacular educational expansion in the Southern hemisphere, sociologists of education and modernization came to the conclusion that there had occurred a "World Educational Revolution".⁷⁷

The primary factor that lay behind this revolution, according to most Western authors, was the powerful and transnational "educational ideology." This educational ideology had drawn inspiration from the scholarship of Western economists, such as Theodore Schultz and Gary Becker, who had demonstrated that investment in human capital yielded substantial economic returns.⁷⁸ This scholarship thus nourished the educational ideology and, as Assié-Lumumba has also argued, convinced African leaders that investment in education would put their countries on a path of economic development and modernization.⁷⁹ The second driver behind the educational revolution was the assistance the developed countries had provided to the developing ones in the form of scholarships, grants, dispatch of professors, teachers and experts, and creation of schools. It should nevertheless be noted that no one among these Western authors ever stressed or pointed to the role the socialist countries had directly and indirectly played in these developments.

Africans, however, did not miss to stress the contribution of the Eastern Bloc in the training of their elites. In 1999, political scientist Ali Mazrui recalled the educational aid Africa received from the socialist countries with the following words: "The golden days of diverse scholarships for African students to study in Moscow, Prague, Warsaw, Budapest, and Belgrade seem to be almost over and rival scholarships to study in Western countries have been drastically reduced," he wrote and added: "The golden days of Czech, Hungarian, and Polish professors teaching at African universities are almost over and resources for Western visiting professors have been drastically reduced."⁸⁰

To be sure, Mazrui's statement might exaggerate the Eastern bloc's contribution in that it omits to mention that those Czech, Hungarian, and Polish professors who taught at African universities were usually paid by the African countries, which also subsidized a small number of their nationals studying in the Eastern bloc. Nevertheless, as this working paper sought to demonstrate, Mazrui's assessment is right to highlight the enormous contribution of the Eastern-bloc countries in the development of African education and, by extension, in the World Educational Revolution, a contribution that Western scholars have generally ignored. This paper therefore concludes, along with Ali Mazrui, that the Soviet Union's and Eastern Europe's aid to and cooperation with Africa in the field of higher and professional-technical education constitutes a major chapter in the history of international education, of the global Cold War and of the World Educational Revolution, and that with proper consideration it should become clear that the direct and indirect effects of the Eastern Bloc's commitment were major.

77 J. Meyer et al., "The World Educational Revolution, 1950–1970", *Sociology of Education* 50 (1977) 4, pp. 242–58; J. Boli et al., "The Origins and Expansion of Education", *Comparative Education Review* 29 (1985), pp. 145–170; R. Fiala and A. Gordon Lanford, "Educational Ideology and the World Educational Revolution, 1950–1970", *Comparative Education Review* 31 (1987), pp. 315–332.

78 T. Schultz, "Investment in Human Capital", *American Economic Review* 51 (1961), pp. 1–17; G. Becker, *Human Capital*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1964; F. Harbison and C. Meyers, *Education and Economic Growth*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964.

79 N. Assié-Lumumba, *Higher Education in Africa: Crises, Reforms and Transformation*, Dakar: CODESRIA, 2006, p. 44.

80 A. Mazrui, "From Slave Ship to Space Ship: Africa between Marginalization and Globalization", *African Studies Quarterly* 2 (1999) 4, p. 9.

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Working paper series des SFB 1199 an der Universität Leipzig No. 16

ISBN: 978-3-96023-224-7

ISSN: 2510-4845

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Funded by Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft

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