

Students from Portuguese Africa in the Soviet Union, 1960–74: Anti-colonialism, Education, and the Socialist Alliance

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Abstract

A major ally of the Marxist-inspired liberation movements, which fought against Portuguese colonialism in Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, and Mozambique, the Soviet Union provided them with not only military, but also civil aid in the form of scholarships. This paper focuses on the training of students from Portuguese Africa in the USSR. While it provides data and analyzes the importance and the complexities of educational assistance in the context of anti-colonial revolutions, it also sheds light on the tensions and serious conflicts that cast a shadow over the relationships between students and leaders. Students who created opposition groups and were accused of plotting against the leaders, criticizing the USSR, or trying to postpone their return to the motherland were repatriated and punished. Others managed to migrate and pursued their opposition from the West. Confronted with these phenomena, the party leaders grew disillusioned and reduced the number of students studying in the Soviet Union.

Keywords

Cold War, decolonization, education, Portuguese Africa, Soviet Union, students

Recent years have witnessed an increasing interest in the history of the training of Third World students in the Eastern Bloc. There are very good reasons for delving into this topic. Tens of thousands of African, Asian, and Latin American students studied in the socialist countries during the

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Cold War.¹ Although the studies, experiences, and trajectories of international students in the West have long been analyzed by sociologists, educationalists, and historians, those of international students in the East remained until recently almost a black box.²

Spearheaded by the Paris-based interdisciplinary group ELITAF, this new scholarship has been looking at both sides of the East–South connection.³ Among the host countries, East Germany has received the lion's share of the scholars' attention, followed by the Soviet Union.⁴ When it comes to the South, either to the policies of sending countries, the students' experiences, or the fate of returnees, sub-Saharan Africa is by far the most researched region.⁵ The bulk of the scholarship has addressed issues of race relations and xenophobia in the Eastern Bloc.⁶ Fewer studies have examined the links between education and development, and even fewer the ideologies and political activity of students.⁷

1 According to P. Gleijeses, 18,075 African students were enrolled at all education levels in Cuba in 1988. See *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–1976* (Chapel Hill, NC 2002), 392. The same year, there were 20,904 students from sub-Saharan Africa and 20,712 from North Africa and the Middle East in tertiary education programs in the USSR. See C. Katsakioris, 'Creating a Socialist Intelligentsia: Soviet Educational Aid and Its Impact on Africa', *Cahiers d'Études africaines*, 226, 2 (2017), 259–87. According to data gathered by historian Eric Burton, to whom I am deeply grateful, 4,365 students from African and Arab countries studied in East Germany in 1988–89.

2 See two older but still useful lists of studies in: P. Altbach, D. Kelly and Y.-M. Lulat, *Research on Foreign Students and International Study: An Overview and Bibliography* (New York 1985); A. Coulon and S. Paivandi, 'Les étudiants étrangers en France. L'état des savoirs', working paper, Université de Paris-VIII (2003).

3 ELITAF is the acronym for *Élites africaines formées dans les pays de l'ancien bloc soviétique*. The group's output includes: M. de Saint Martin, G. Scarfò Ghellab and K. Mellakh (eds), *Étudier à l'Est. Trajectoires d'étudiants africains et arabes en URSS et dans les pays d'Europe de l'Est* (Paris 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', special issue in, *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales*, 2, 32 (2016); M. de Saint Martin and P. Yengo (eds), 'Élites de retour de l'Est', special issue in, *Cahiers d'Études africaines*, 2, 226 (2017).

4 D. Mac Con Uladh, 'Guests of the Socialist Nation? Foreign Students and Workers in the GDR', unpublished PhD thesis, University College London (2005); E. Burton, 'Tansania "Afrikanischer Sozialismus" und die Entwicklungspolitik der beiden deutschen Staaten: Akteure, Beziehungen und Handlungsspielräume, 1961–1990', PhD thesis, University of Vienna (2018); S. Pugach, 'Eleven Nigerian Students in Cold War East Germany: Visions of Science, Modernity, and Decolonization', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 54, 3 (2019), 551–72; M. Schenck, 'Negotiating the German Democratic Republic: Angolan Student Migration during the Cold War', *Africa*, 89, S1 (2019), S144–66. See also the footnotes 3, 5, 6, and 7.

5 Apart from the three ELITAF volumes, see also D. Branch, 'Political Traffic: Kenyan Students in Eastern and Central Europe, 1958–69', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 53, 4 (2018), 811–31; K. van Walraven, *The Yearning for Relief: A History of the Sawaba Movement in Niger* (Leiden 2013).

6 J. Hessler, 'Death of an African Student in Moscow: Race, Politics, and the Cold War', *Cahiers du Monde russe*, 47, 1–2 (2006), 33–64; M. Matusevich, 'Journeys of Hope: African Diaspora and the Soviet Society', *African Diaspora*, 1 (2008), 53–85; Q. Slobodian (ed), *Comrades of Color: East Germany in the Cold War World* (New York 2015).

7 On development, see A. J. Kret, 'We Unite with Knowledge: The Peoples' Friendship University and Soviet Education for the Third World', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 33, 2 (2013), 239–56; C. Katsakioris, 'Soviet Lessons for Arab Modernization: Soviet Educational Aid Towards Arab Countries after 1956', *Journal of Modern European History*, 8, 1 (2010), 85–105. On politics, see 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 2007), 263–91; B. Zewde, *The Quest for Socialist Utopia: The Ethiopian Student Movement*

This article will focus on a small ‘group’ of students who studied in the USSR between 1960 and 1974 under specific circumstances: the students from Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, and Cape Verde. Contrary to the overwhelming majority of their African peers, whose countries acceded to independence in the late 1950s or early 1960s, Angolans, Mozambicans, Guineans and Cape Verdeans came from countries which until 1974 were possessions of the Portuguese empire and fought a liberation war against it. Almost all of them were members of the three like-minded and allied Leninist-inspired nationalist parties that pursued a liberation struggle, namely, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) and the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), or of youth organizations like the National Union of Mozambican Students (UNEMO).⁸ Altogether, students from the Portuguese colonies made up 4.2 per cent of students from sub-Saharan Africa in the USSR in 1964–5 and 2.3 per cent in 1973–4.⁹ Their countries officially acceded to independence in 1975, following the 1974 Carnation Revolution in Portugal, only to plunge into devastating civil wars. It is against this specific historical background that this article puts the spotlight on what was in several respects the distinctive group of students from Portuguese Africa in the USSR.

This case study engages with two other bodies of literature as well. The first and narrower one focuses on the relations between the Eastern Bloc and Portuguese-speaking Africa. Beyond the ground-breaking contributions on East German, Cuban, and Soviet military and civil aid by Hans-Joachim Döring, Piero Gleijeses, and Vladimir Shubin, two more monographs explored educational cooperation after 1975.¹⁰ Catherine Hatzky examined the case of Cuban teachers, professors, and education experts who worked in Angola between 1976 and 1991. This aid, she concluded, despite its importance and internationalist character, resulted in Angola’s dependence on Cuba.¹¹ Tanja Müller studied the history and legacies of the School of Friendship, this special boarding school the German Democratic Republic (GDR) set up in Stassfurt in 1982 to train 900 Mozambicans in various specializations. Along with good specialists, Müller reminds, both Mozambicans and East Germans sought to create a *homem novo*,

c. 1960–1974 (Oxford 2014); P. Yengo, ‘Former des cadres “rouges et experts”: Mouvement étudiants congolais en URSS et parti unique’, *Cahiers d’Études africaines*, 2, 226 (2017), 313–29.

8 Other students coming from countries fighting against colonialism and white minority regimes were the South Africans, members of the African National Congress (ANC) or of the Communist Party (SACP), Namibians, members of the South-West Africa People’s Organization (SWAPO), and Zimbabweans, members of the Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU).

9 Katsakioris, ‘Creating a Socialist Intelligentsia’, 277–81.

10 H.-J. Döring, *‘Es geht um unsere Existenz’: Die Politik des DDR gegenüber der Dritten Welt am Beispiel von Mosambik und Äthiopien* (Berlin 1999); Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*; V. Shubin, *The Hot ‘Cold War’: The USSR in Southern Africa* (London 2008). See also N. Telepneva, ‘Our Sacred Duty: The Soviet Union, the Liberation Movements in the Portuguese Colonies, and the Cold War, 1961–1974’, PhD thesis, London School of Economics (2014).

11 C. Hatzky, *Cubans in Angola: South-South Cooperation and Transfer of Knowledge, 1976–1991* (Madison, WI 2015).

a new man, progressive and patriotic, who would contribute to the building of socialism in independent Mozambique.¹² The training of students in the USSR in the midst of anticolonial wars, that the present article explores, prefigured the state-to-state cooperation that unfolded after decolonization and was an integral part of the aid to the liberation movements, despite having since been sorely neglected by scholars.

The second and vaster body of literature with which this article engages includes scholarship on African anticolonial movements, post-colonial regimes, and the educated youth from the 1950s to the 1970s. As numerous scholars have pointed out, a conflict loomed large between the 'glorious' first generation of Western-educated leaders and the second one of radical students inspired by Communism and Pan-Africanism.¹³ Narrowing down the inquiry to anticolonial struggles in southern Africa, Aquino de Bragança and Immanuel Wallerstein observed that, 'Students always pose a problem for national liberation movements,' and added: 'Practically the issue is that students are often an avant-garde group of protest and revolutionary aspirations, particularly in the early days of a movement. But in the midst of an ongoing struggle, students frequently come into conflict with leaders and cadres whose educational background may be less than theirs but who may in fact be closer in analysis and interest to the mass of the population than students.'¹⁴

More recently, however, Andrew Ivaska, who focused on youth and culture in post-colonial Tanzania, as well as Christian Williams and Michael Panzer, who looked at Namibian and Mozambican students in exile, showed that opposition politics and the subsequent conflicts with the leaders were not only due to revolutionary aspirations or competing ideological takes. They primarily reflected the students' frustrated ambitions in contexts of mobilization and scarce resources, their desire to pursue education and to be considered as elites, and their rejection of the authority of Western-educated leaders. Opposition, in this regard, translated less an ideological conflict than a fundamentally intergenerational one.¹⁵ In other cases, like those of Kenyan Luos or Biafran Nigerians, student mobilizations expressed ethnic grievances or national aspirations.¹⁶

These crucial insights notwithstanding, those who are familiar with these bodies of literature, and especially with the scholarship that investigates the relationships between the Eastern Bloc and African liberation movements, are left with the impression that such conflicts never occurred between FRELIMO, the MPLA,

12 T. Müller, *Legacies of Socialist Solidarity: East Germany in Mozambique* (Lanham, MD 2014).

13 F. Blum, P. Guidi and O. Rillon (eds) (eds), *Étudiants africains en mouvements. Contribution à une histoire des années 1968* (Paris 2016), in particular, the paper by P. Bianchini, 'Les trois âges du mouvement étudiant dans les pays d'Afrique subsaharienne francophone', 315–35.

14 A. de Bragança and I. Wallerstein (eds), *The African Liberation Reader: The Anatomy of Crisis*, volume 1, (London 1982), 102.

15 A. Ivaska, *Cultured States: Youth, Gender and Modern Style in 1960s Dar es Salaam* (Durham 2011); M. Panzer, 'The Pedagogy of Revolution: Youth, Generational Conflict, and Education in the Development of Mozambican Nationalism, 1962–70', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 35, 4 (2009), 803–20.

16 Branch, 'Political Traffic'; M. Matusevich, *No Easy Row for a Russian Hoe: Ideology and Pragmatism in Nigerian-Soviet Relations, 1960–1991* (Trenton 2003); S. Pugach, 'Agents of Dissent: African Student Organizations in the German Democratic Republic', *Africa*, 89, S1 (2019), S90–108.

the PAIGC, or other liberation movements, and their students studying in Moscow, Kiev, or Prague. Shubin neglects the issue of students. He only refers in passing to some strict requirements the parties imposed on their members in the USSR, without examining the reasons, and evokes problems related to training and intermarriage. John Marcum, by contrast, devotes one chapter to the conflict of 'Students vs. Soldiers' in his posthumously published authoritative account of the Mozambican revolution. But the entire chapter revolves around the dissidence of students in Africa and in the West.¹⁷ In his insightful 'Pedagogy of Revolution', Panzer analyzes the Mozambique Institute in Dar es Salaam as a site of intergenerational conflict and connects the conflict with the opposition politics of Mozambican students in the United States, not in the Eastern Bloc. Oral histories and recollections of Soviet-trained African soldiers and cadres illuminate forgotten chapters of history but might miss confrontations and conflicts one finds abundantly in the archives, thereby unintentionally reinforcing the impression that everything went to plan in the Eastern Bloc-African alliance.¹⁸ Frequently mentioned in the media, the 'success story' of José Eduardo dos Santos, President of Angola between 1979 and 2017, who attended a Soviet university in the 1960s, corroborates this one-dimensional narrative.

This article subscribes to the conclusion unanimously drawn by scholars that the Eastern Bloc's material and political support was of utmost importance for FRELIMO, the PAIGC, and the MPLA to reach their objectives, and approaches the training of students, members of liberation movements, as a history of patriotism and socialist internationalism. At the same time, it uses documents from the Russian, Ukrainian and liberation movements' archives, the movements' correspondence with Soviet organizations (almost always written in French), memoirs, interviews, and other sources, to retrace histories of students who opposed the party, challenged the leadership, criticized the Soviet Union, expressed individualism through various decisions, and successfully sought a way out of the movement. Most seditious students were men studying at universities and considered as the most promising *quadros nacionais*, the nation's elite. Seriously concerned with the phenomena of individualism, disloyalty, and migration to the West, party leaders severed scholarships, repatriated students, punished them, and asked the Soviets to implement measures. Ultimately, as the paper will show, the parties revised their training policy and reduced the number of students studying in the USSR.

Before retracing these developments, the following section will provide data and survey the first steps, as well as the objectives, problems, and particularities of training youths from the Portuguese colonies in the USSR.

Student training constituted an integral part of the new Third World policy Moscow adopted in the second half of the 1950s. As historians Apollon

17 J. Marcum, *Conceiving Mozambique*, edited by E. Burke III and M. Clough, (New York 2018), 107–28.

18 J. Alexander and J-A. McGregor, 'African Soldiers in the USSR: Oral Histories of ZAPU Intelligence Cadres' Soviet Training 1964–1979', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 43, 1 (2017), 4966.

Davidson and Sergei Mazov have detailed, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) placed much emphasis on relations with Africa.¹⁹ Several institutions were created to cater for the training of students and the development of political and cultural ties. Officially a non-governmental organization, the Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee (henceforth Solidarity Committee) was set up in 1956 to reach out to anticolonial and left-leaning opposition movements. The Africa Institute within the Academy of Sciences of the USSR and the Soviet Friendship Association with the Peoples of Africa (henceforth Friendship Association) were both established in 1959 and headed by the Africanist, Ivan Potekhin. Founded in 1960, the Peoples' Friendship University 'Patrice Lumumba' was mandated to train students from Third World countries.²⁰ Older institutions like the Communist Youth League (Komsomol), which in 1956 created the Committee of Youth Organizations (KMO) to pursue its international activity, and the Union of Writers of the Soviet Union, were equally instrumental in this new policy.²¹

Anticolonial activists from the Portuguese empire established contacts with these organizations. The Angolan leaders Mário de Andrade and Viriato da Cruz and their Mozambican comrade Marcelino dos Santos first visited the USSR in September 1958 to attend the Afro-Asian Writers' Conference that the Union of Writers convened in Tashkent.²² The PAIGC leader and future theorist of revolution in the global South, Amílcar Cabral, briefly reached Moscow in December 1959 and thereafter returned regularly as a guest of the CPSU and the Solidarity Committee.²³ FRELIMO's president, Dr Eduardo Mondlane, American-educated and the first Mozambican PhD graduate, visited Moscow in September 1964, immediately after the launch of the armed struggle in Mozambique.²⁴ Cabral, Andrade, da Cruz, dos Santos, as well as Agostinho Neto, who quickly emerged as the MPLA's strong man, along with other leaders, had studied in Lisbon and been involved in underground leftist circles and anti-imperialist activity in the *Casa dos Estudantes do Império*.²⁵

19 S. Mazov, 'Nevedenieostov i poisk soiznikov, 1956–1960', in A. Davidson and S. Mazov (eds), *SSSR i Afrika, 1918–1960: Dokumentirovannaia istoriia vzaimootnoschenii* (Moscow 2002), 132–51; A. Davidson and L. Ivanova, *Moskovskaia Afrika* (Moscow 2003).

20 The University was rechristened 'Patrice Lumumba' after the slain Congolese hero, in February 1961.

21 Komsomol is the acronym for *Kommunisticheskiĭ Soĭuz Molodezhi* and KMO for *Komitet Molodezhnykh Organizatsii*.

22 N. Telepneva, 'Mediators of Liberation: Eastern-Bloc Officials, Mozambican Diplomacy and the Origins of Soviet Support for Frelimo, 1958–1965', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 43, 1 (2017), 67–81.

23 This trip is mentioned in the letter Cabral addressed to the Solidarity Committee from Conakry, on 8 January 1960. See State Archive of the Russian Federation (hereafter GARF), f. (*fond* means collection) R-9540, op. (*opis'* is inventory) 1, d. (*delo* is file) 100, l. (*list* means page) 90. Unless indicated otherwise, Cabral's correspondence with the Soviet officials was always in French.

24 Shubin, *The Hot 'Cold War'*, 123.

25 The oft-repeated account of Lisbon and the *Casa*, where overseas students lived, does not need repetition here. See directly A. Faria, *Linha Estreita da Liberdade: A Casa dos Estudantes do Império* (Lisbon 1997). And M. de Andrade, interview with C. Messiant (1982), 'Sur la première génération du MPLA: 1948–1960', *Lusotopie*, (1999), 185–221.

To the establishment of anticolonial parties, the Portuguese secret police responded with persecutions. Under such circumstances, many leaders initially sought refuge for themselves and their families in the Soviet Union. In January 1959, Andrade wrote a letter to Potekhin to request asylum in the USSR, but his inquiry remained unanswered.²⁶ Three years later, however, Andrade was offered a scholarship for his pregnant wife, Sara Ducados, to study at the prestigious All-Union Institute of Cinematography in Moscow. It was in Moscow that in November 1962 Ducados gave birth to their first daughter.²⁷ The same year, PAIGC leader Amílcar Cabral was offered a scholarship by the KMO for his younger brother, Fernando, to study medicine in Moscow. With the assistance of the Solidarity Committee, Cabral also entrusted his nine-year old daughter, Iva Maria, to the international boarding school of Ivanovo, where leaders of the international communist movement from Mao Zedong to Josip Tito used to send their children while they were fighting wars. Luís Cabral, Amílcar's half-brother and co-leader in the PAIGC, likewise sent his son to Ivanovo. After Eduardo Mondlane was murdered in 1969, his American partner, Janet Mondlane, sent their son to Ivanovo and their daughter to Moscow to study at the Bolshoi Ballet Academy.²⁸

Pursuing studies under normal conditions was, however, not only a concern for the leaders and their families. Young members of the liberation movements often living in exile expected the parties to obtain scholarships for them to study abroad. Some youths directly addressed the Soviets to ask for assistance, mobilizing various arguments: 'I have run away from my country which is Mozambique but which is called Portuguese East Africa. I will be killed by Portuguese Whites,' wrote a Mozambican refugee in Dar es Salaam to the Friendship Association, and solicited 'a scholarship for further studies'.²⁹ 'Our present leaders [...] want us all to study in the U.S.A.,' argued three Mozambicans also exiled in Dar es Salaam in 1962, hinting at the allegedly pro-American Eduardo Mondlane, before affirming that, 'We want to pursue further studies in the U.S.S.R.'³⁰

Such arguments show that young people were aware of the actors' labels and perceptions across the world and eager to exploit them in the right context so as to earn a scholarship. But the Soviets rarely gave in without proper political recommendations. Once, when they did so in 1965 for five Angolans, who had received their scholarships through the UNESCO, it turned out that all of them were supporters of Holden Roberto's FNLA, the rival Bakongo-dominated anticolonial movement that was leaning toward China and campaigning against the 'Luso-African' and 'pseudo-Marxist' elites of the MPLA.³¹ A conflict broke out

26 Andrade's letter to Potekhin, Paris, 9 January 1959, and Potekhin's reply, 8 March 1960: GARF, f. 9576, op. 12, d. 76, ll. 62–64, 69.

27 Telegram of the Solidarity Committee to Andrade: GARF, f. 9606, op. 1, d. 121, l. 72.

28 E. Banks, 'Internationalism and Socialism between the Soviet Union and Mozambique', PhD thesis, New York University (2019).

29 Letter by Júlio Fotte, 25 March 1962: GARF, f. 9576, op. 14, d. 45, l. 33.

30 Letter addressed to the Friendship Association on 29 August 1962: *Ibid.*, l. 97.

31 The FNLA was the Front for the National Liberation of Angola. See J. Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution: Exile Politics and Guerilla Warfare*, volume 2 (Cambridge 1978).

in Kiev between FNLA and MPLA supporters, with the latter denouncing the 'reactionaries' to the Soviet authorities. After the issue was passed from the Ukrainian to the Soviet Ministry of Education then to that of Foreign Affairs, all five FNLA supporters were expelled, officially for failing to cope with the academic requirements.³²

Admissions to universities or political schools needed therefore to be carefully managed by the pro-Soviet leaders and the Soviet organizations, in particular the Solidarity Committee, the KMO, the Komsomol, and the Trade Unions' Council. Beginning in October 1961, the latter created an annual 10-month training program especially for trade unionists from the Third World. Activists from Angola and Mozambique were in the first cohort of trainees.³³ Soon afterwards others were enrolled in the yearly program run by the Central School of the Komsomol to study Marxism-Leninism, the history of the USSR, and Komsomol's experience. Between 1963 and 1967 the Komsomol School alone trained 59 PAIGC militants, 18 Angolans, and 13 Mozambicans. Not only Amílcar Cabral, but also Agostinho Neto held the Komsomol School in high esteem. In April 1964, when Neto visited the USSR together with Jonas Savimbi, the future leader of the rival UNITA movement in an aborted effort to join forces, each one asked for 12 placements per year.³⁴ Savimbi's request was rejected whilst Neto's was accepted. Although the MPLA could not fill its quota every year, in 1968 Neto asked the Soviet officials to raise it to 30.³⁵ Apart from political training, other short-term training programs were set up for soldiers, intelligence cadres, and radio broadcasters, as well as to train young people in other indispensable skills.³⁶

Studying at a university, or to a lesser extent in a professional-technical school, was however the youths' most coveted goal. Their chances of achieving their aim increased significantly after the socialist countries committed to supporting the PAIGC, the MPLA and FRELIMO. This commitment was even reiterated within the Eastern Bloc's Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA). The CMEA Commission for the Coordination of Technical Assistance surveyed, among other things, the training of students from colonial and Third World countries across the Eastern Bloc. Drawing partly on documents of this Commission,

32 Letter addressed by the deputy Minister of Education of Ukraine to the Soviet Ministry of Education, 24 June 1966: Central State Archives of Supreme Bodies of Power and Government of Ukraine (hereafter TsDAVO), f. 4621, op. 13, d. 213, ll. 23–4. See also the letter an official of the Soviet Ministry of Education addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 30 January 1967: GARF, f. 9606, op. 2, d. 263, l. 8.

33 Secret 'Report on the state of relations between the trade unions of the USSR and African countries', 9 January 1963: GARF, f. 5451, op. 43, d. 1503, ll. 13–9.

34 Letter sent by the secretary general of the Komsomol, Sergei Pavlov, to the Central Committee of the CPSU, 26 April 1964. See Russian State Archive of Social and Political History (hereafter RGASPI), f. M-3, op. 5, d. 4, l. 117. Even though Pavlov was supportive, Savimbi's request was rejected. On this visit, see also Shubin, *The Hot 'Cold War'*, 14–5.

35 Komsomol's secret report, 12 June 1968: RGASPI, f. M-3, op. 5, d. 159, l. 194.

36 Shubin, *The Hot 'Cold War'*; On training in radio broadcasting in the USSR, see Â.S. Benoliel Coutinho, 'The Participation of Cape Verdean Women in the National Liberation Movement of Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau, 1956–1974: The Pioneers', *Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung West Africa*, 2, (2017), 1–30.

Table 1. Students from the Portuguese colonies studying at universities and professional-technical schools in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in 1964 and 1967.³⁷

	Angola		Mozambique		Guinea Bissau & Cape Verde		Portuguese colonies Total	
	1964	1967	1964	1967	1964	1967	1964	1967
Bulgaria	1	10	0	14	5	16	6	40
Czechoslovakia	17	23	1	9	11	22	29	54
East Germany	1	4	1	6	2	12	4	22
Hungary	3	11	0	10	0	11	3	32
Poland	2	6	0	0	0	0	2	6
Romania	0	3	0	1	0	5	0	9
Soviet Union	42	68	8	16	42	74	92	158
USSR & Eastern Europe	66	125	10	56	60	140	136	321

Tables 1 and 2 illustrate the extent of assistance in the form of scholarships for studies at universities and professional-technical schools the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries provided to the PAIGC, the MPLA, and FRELIMO during the first years of the liberation struggle.

Contrary to scholarships granted to independent countries, usually through the Soviet Ministry of Education and its African counterpart, where issues of certificates, travel documents, and transportation were more easily resolved, aid to liberation movements presented serious complications and invited special arrangements. If passports and facilities were provided by socialist Tanzania, Congo-Brazzaville, and Guinea-Conakry, where FRELIMO, the MPLA, and the PAIGC had respectively set up bases, the educational level of candidates, mostly exiled youths, was a thorny issue. Few of them could qualify for post-secondary studies or possessed school certificates. Party assurances were then substituted for certificates: 'Warrant of the educational level of the candidate: In the name of the Party I confirm that Romão Monteiro has a level of education equivalent to the 4th year of secondary school, Amílcar Cabral,' read a typical party certificate the PAIGC leader sent to the KMO.³⁸ Similarly, FRELIMO's secretary of education Eduardo Coloma – the man who had been severely beaten by students of the Mozambique Institute in Dar es Salaam in the March 1968 incident³⁹ – managed

37 The figures correspond to the school terms 1963–64 and 1966–67. I drew them from the documents of the Commission for the Coordination of Technical Assistance: GARF, f. 9606, op. 2, d. 134, ll. 102–3 and d. 266, ll. 129–34. For the USSR, data come from the records of the Soviet Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education: GARF, f. 9606, op. 1, d. 1638, ll. 9–12.

38 Sent by Cabral on 4 June 1965: RGASPI, f. M-3, op. 3, d. 33, l. 67.

39 Panzer, 'The Pedagogy of Revolution'.

Table 2. Students from the Portuguese colonies in the Soviet Union from 1960 to 1974/5.

	Angola	Guinea-Bissau & Cape Verde	Mozambique	Portuguese colonies Total
1960–61	0	2	0	2
1961–62	6	6	0	12
1962–63	4	11	0	15
1963–64	42	42	8	92
1964–65	88 (15)	23 (12)	5 (5)	116 (32)
1965–66	53 (20)	38 (22)	11 (9)	102 (51)
1966–67	68 (21)	74 (26)	16 (11)	158 (58)
1967–68	76 (18)	33 (21)	18 (12)	127 (51)
1968–69	57 (17)	33 (18)	16 (10)	106 (45)
1969–70	42 (15)	71 (16)	14 (12)	127 (43)
1970–71	37 (15)	12 (9)	14 (8)	63 (32)
1971–72	44 (–)	26 (–)	10 (–)	80 (–)
1972–73	41 (19)	67 (9)	8 (4)	116 (32)
1973–74	36 (16)	72 (12)	8 (4)	116 (32)
1974–75	32 (14)	138 (28)	5 (2)	175 (44)

Note: Figures in parentheses are those enrolled in university programs.⁴⁰

to secure a Solidarity Committee scholarship for a trusted militant who had apparently only completed the second year in secondary education.⁴¹

To be sure, the problem was deeper, in that it reflected the state of education in Portuguese Africa. With the exception of the few administrative and economic centers, where settlers and *assimilados* could attend primary and secondary school, church missions and the Estado Novo had ignored the countryside. As early as July 1962, the issue was raised in a discussion between Andrade and Soviet officials in the offices of the Solidarity Committee, where the two sides reached an understanding that most Angolan students should be directed to professional-technical schools.⁴² Indeed, during the academic year 1967–8, more than 70 per cent of Angolans studied at professional-technical schools and only the remainder at universities. For all students from Portuguese Africa considered together, this percentage reached 54.5 in 1967–8 and 58.5 in 1973–4. By way of comparison, it should be noted that more than 90 per cent of Nigerians or Ghanaians studied at universities, medical, and engineering institutes at that time.⁴³ The major destination for students

40 The figures on university students in parentheses do not include those studying at preparatory faculties. I compiled them from the following files (d.) of the Soviet Ministry of Education: GARF, f. 9606, op. 1, d. 2369, 2381, 2699, 3090, 3533, 3957, 4387, 5938, 6485 and 6841. (–) means no data.

41 Coloma's letter, 1 October 1969, and the Committee's reply on 16 December 1969: GARF, f. 9540, op. 1, d. 265, ll. 153–5.

42 GARF, f. 9540, op. 2, d. 53, ll. 115–6.

43 Detailed statistics of the Soviet Ministry of Education: GARF, f. 9606, op. 1, d. 2699, d. 5938, d. 6485.



Figure 1. Students from Guinea-Bissau at the Slaviansk Institute of Civil Aviation visiting a factory in October 1975.⁴⁴

from the Portuguese colonies was Soviet Ukraine. Female students were trained as nurses at the Kiev or Donetsk schools for medical assistants, whereas men were trained as mechanics in institutions such as the Technical School of Machine-Building in Kharkov or the Institute of Civil Aviation in Slavyansk (see Figure 1).

In spite of such objective difficulties, FRELIMO, the PAIGC, and the MPLA still sought to train elites at universities. While rewarding loyal militants, the parties also needed *quadros* who would assume specific responsibilities, from doctors at the movements' hospitals to political representatives abroad, and would form the nucleus of elites in the future independent states. Eager to educate a socialist-minded and friendly intelligentsia, the USSR provided assistance. This was the *raison d'être* of the Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow. Inspired by the Bolsheviks' workers' faculties, the preparatory faculty of Lumumba University initially offered up to three years' teaching to allow students, who otherwise would never qualify, to pursue studies in higher education.⁴⁵ When necessary, affirmative action policies were implemented by other schools as well.

In view of these constraints, opportunities, and objectives, the chosen few who made it to universities were typically men, committed militants, who had usually, but not necessarily, attended school in an urban center or in exile, and were very close to the party leadership, or youth leaders themselves. A medical student at

⁴⁴ TsDAVO, f. 4621, op. 13, d. 3870, l. 62.

⁴⁵ C. Katsakioris, 'The Lumumba University in Moscow: Higher Education for a Soviet-Third World Alliance', *Journal of Global History*, 14, 2 (2019), 281–300.

Lumumba University and leader of UNEMO in the USSR, Simeão Massango had attended secondary school in Maputo and worked as a medical assistant before joining FRELIMO in Tanzania.⁴⁶ His compatriot, Alberto Cassimo, who studied economics at Moscow State University and after independence became Mozambique's central banker, had attended the School of Industry and Trade in Quelimane and worked for the Voice of FRELIMO radio program.⁴⁷ Trained in a protestant seminary and as a soldier in Cairo, António Zengazenga was a protégé of FRELIMO's Vice-President, Reverend Urias Simango. As was usually the case with poorly educated youths, who could hardly enroll in medicine or economics, he studied Russian Language and Literature.⁴⁸ Among MPLA activists, António Tomás Medeiros, who earned his PhD in medicine in Simferopol, was a *mestiço* from São Tomé. He had attended Lisbon University for five years and edited the colonial students' journal *Mensagem*. In 1962, Medeiros became one of the pro-Soviet founders of the Federation of African Students in the Soviet Union.⁴⁹ The future President of Angola, Eduardo dos Santos, who attended the Baku Oil Institute, was a committed militant raised in Luanda.

Among PAIGC youths, there existed social, political and ethnical lines of division. On the one side stood the majority of students, who had rarely completed secondary level education. They came from Guinea-Bissau and had found refuge in neighboring Guinea-Conakry and Senegal.⁵⁰ This was the case of Estêvão António Tavares and José Luís Barbosa, student leaders in Kiev and Leningrad who, as we will see, were accused and sentenced for organizing an anti-party conspiracy.⁵¹ On the other side, there was a minority of better-educated students with close ties to the leadership. José Turpin, for example, who studied International Relations at Kiev State University, was the brother of Eliseu, one of the six founders of PAIGC and the only Guinean. Osvaldo Lopes da Silva, who studied at the prestigious Plekhanov Institute of Economics in Moscow and afterwards became Minister of Economic Planning, was a Cape Verdean Amílcar Cabral trusted as a representative of PAIGC in the USSR.⁵² The other Cape Verdean was Amílcar's brother, Fernando Cabral, who studied medicine at Lumumba University.

46 S. Massango, *Alte Heimat Mosambik: Vergangenes und Zukunftssträume* (Leipzig 2013).

47 C. Darch, *Historical Dictionary of Mozambique* (London 2019), 83.

48 A. Disse Zengazenga, *Memórias de um Rebelde: Uma Vida Pela Independência e Democracia em Moçambique* (Scotts Valley, CA 2013).

49 M. do Rosário Rosinha and A. Freudenthal (eds), *MENSAGEM: Casa dos Estudantes do Império, 1944–1994* (Lisbon 2015). See also, *António Tomás Medeiros: Entrevistado por Elsa Sertório*, (Lisbon 2015), 20–1.

50 My interview with António Tomás Medeiros, Lisbon, 22 January 2019. Also, letters addressed to me in February 2019 by Simeão Massango and António Disse Zengazenga. I am grateful to all of them for having helped me to clarify this issue.

51 Both are also mentioned in Leopoldo Amado, *Guineidade e Africanidade: Estudos, Crónicas, Ensaios e Outros Textos* (Lisbon 2012), 94.

52 Cabral's letter to the KMO, Conakry, 20 December 1962: RGASPI, f. M-3, op. 3, d. 28, l. 658. On Osvaldo da Silva, see also B. Davidson, 'Republics of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde', in B. Szajkowski (ed), *Marxist Governments: A World Survey*, volume 2, (London 1983), 366.

Unavoidably, given the realities of recruitment, students with different levels often attended the same classes at preparatory faculties and this provoked grievances. Fernando Cabral raised this issue in a letter he addressed to the Student Council of the USSR in December 1962. 'I think that mixing students with different levels in the same class should be avoided,' he wrote, adding that, 'In my preparatory class for medicine there are students who have not attended secondary education at all and others who have completed it, and this is in nobody's interest.' Concerned with the students' overall academic level, he hinted that the party had sent him to study not at Lumumba University but in one of the mainstream and more prestigious medical institutes of Moscow. Regarding his own and the African students' mood in the USSR, he made the following remarks:

Personally, I am very happy in Moscow and my studies go very well, as was expected. Overall, I think that each African student who above all wants to receive an education and a specialization so as to be useful tomorrow for his people, to be an honest man, has all the means he needs. Only those who believe in the 'paradise' of the West probably do not feel at ease in the Soviet Union.⁵³

At the same time, he also addressed a complaint to the Soviet organizations about holidays. During the holidays the Komsomol used to organize excursions and summer camps, construction brigades or vacations in collective farms, where students worked for a few hours and interacted with the local population. Beyond these options, Fernando Cabral exhorted the Soviet organizations:

To do their best to allow students to spend their holidays outside the Soviet Union. It is true, he added, that [in the USSR] we have the possibility of practicing the language, but it is also true that becoming familiar with other countries, customs, and societies will enable us to confront life today and [consider] for the tomorrow of our countries which way of life is more suitable to our own people. I can imagine the difficulties which would have to be overcome to organize holidays [abroad]. But I am sure you will not spare any effort to do it.⁵⁴

It is safe to argue that the Soviets who read the letter were not pleased with Fernando's liberal views and desire to 'become familiar with other countries, customs, and societies', obviously including the West, and as a matter of fact they invested no effort to facilitate such trips. After all, Third World students were there to learn from the Soviet experience and implement the lessons learned in their countries, not to reflect on 'which way of life was more suitable'. At Lumumba

⁵³ Letter in French, Moscow 7 December 1962, and the letter's translation in Russian: RGASPI, f. M-3, op.3, d. 29, ll. 344-9. 'Above all' is underscored by Fernando Cabral.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, l. 345. Cabral added that he wanted to return to Guinea-Conakry, but it is obvious from his letter that he had in mind the possibility to travel to European and other countries.

University, passports were seized during the early sixties to prevent the students from travelling abroad and eventually migrating to the West.⁵⁵ Foreign parties agreed with this measure. Fernando, therefore, could only realize his wish once he had completed his degree in the USSR and pursued specialization in Sweden.⁵⁶

A glimpse into the political, social, and material context is necessary. African students arrived in the USSR in the halcyon days of de-Stalinization and liberalization. They quickly set up national and pan-African organizations, or other unions. One of them was the African-Brazilian Solidarity Committee that students from the Portuguese colonies and Brazil created at Lumumba University.⁵⁷ Even though the USSR was still recovering from the disaster of the Second World War and living standards were low, the Third World students' scholarships were three times as high as those of Soviets. The popular mood was also affected by major international developments. If the Cuban Revolution sparked enthusiasm, China's assault against the USSR and the subsequent Sino-Soviet rift provoked enormous frustration among Soviet citizens. The Mozambican student leader, Simeão Massango, captured this mood when he recalled his discussion with a group of Soviet citizens who openly criticized the CPSU for having supported China and Yugoslavia. These countries, the citizens argued, benefitted from, but betrayed, the USSR.⁵⁸ China's stance was tantamount to ungratefulness. This climate in turn nourished xenophobia and suspicion vis-à-vis the Third World and was very often an underlying cause of incidents of verbal and physical violence against students of color. Such incidents occurred frequently. The death of a Ghanaian student in Moscow in December 1963 under mysterious circumstances triggered a massive protest of African students in Red Square.⁵⁹

It was against this background that unfolded the so-called '*complot*' *anti-Partido*, the anti-party 'conspiracy', which led to the repatriation and punishment of eight PAIGC students in May 1964. In reality, the conspiracy consisted in the creation of a Guinean opposition group, sometimes misleadingly referred to as the *grupo de Moscovo*. Under the leadership of Estêvão António Tavares and José Luís Barbosa, both Guineans, the group openly criticized the Cape Verdean leadership of the party. It ended up controlling the PAIGC section in the USSR and envisioned spreading its influence in other socialist countries, starting in East Germany. The catalyst of the sedition, according to the extraordinary PAIGC commission which examined the case under the auspices of Amílcar Cabral, was the 'extremely

55 W. Nmlle Appleton, *Friendship University Moscow: The Student Trap* (Stuttgart 1965).

56 Tor Sellström, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa: Solidarity and Assistance, 1970–1994*, volume 2 (Uppsala 2002), 55, footnote 5.

57 Letter in Russian addressed to the KMO by Angolan and Brazilian founding members of the Committee, 10 February 1963: RGASPI, f. M-3, op. 3, d. 28, l. 615.

58 Massango, *Alte Heimat Mosambik*, 120.

59 Julie Hessler, 'Death of an African student in Moscow'; Constantin Katsakioris, 'Burden or Allies? Third World Students and Internationalist Duty through Soviet Eyes', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 18, 3 (2017), 539–67.

unfortunate incident' that occurred in December 1963 against Júlio Silva, a PAIGC student at the preparatory faculty of Kiev State University.⁶⁰

As this incident coincided with the death of the Ghanaian student and the protest march in Moscow, on which the Soviet authorities and organizations were focused, it remained under-reported. It is nevertheless evident from both PAIGC and Soviet sources that it was an incident of violence. Most likely it was one of the 'undesirable incidents against foreign students' referred to in a Komsomol report of early 1964 and described explicitly as 'the beating of foreign students that took place on New Year's Eve in Kharkov, Lvov and Kiev'.⁶¹ Kiev, in particular, had witnessed several very serious racially-motivated incidents of violence. African students had staged protests, whereas their leaders, among them the PAIGC students' representative, Osvaldo Lopes da Silva, had expressed their discontent to the Ukrainian Minister of Education and the Komsomol general secretary.⁶²

It was thus the incident against Júlio Silva in the context of the December 1963 general unrest which lit the fuse of sedition among PAIGC students. Júlio Silva himself verbally attacked Kiev University and the Soviet Union, which led to his expulsion from the USSR.⁶³ Other students followed suit and attacked the Soviet Union, Amílcar Cabral's leadership, and PAIGC's alliance with the Eastern Bloc. The exact wording chosen by the students to lambaste the leadership has not been recorded in the documents. Two elements, however, indicate the direction the sedition took. First, student leaders Tavares and Barbosa proclaimed that 'they were Africans' and engaged in Pan-African anti-Soviet politics in Kiev and Leningrad, where the student unions opposed the participation of North Africans and pro-Soviet elements. This appeared to be an assault against both the racially-mixed Cape Verdean leadership of PAIGC and its Soviet allies.⁶⁴ Second, and closely related to the first point, many students adhered to Maoism, whose messages of radicalism and Afro-Asian solidarity that excluded the Eastern Bloc had an enormous appeal for African students experiencing racism.

Indeed, in the aftermath of the congress of the Federation of African Students in the Soviet Union that took place in Moscow in October 1963, not only PAIGC but also MPLA students sided with the Maoist unions. As a result, the Maoists took over the Federation from its pro-Soviet founders.⁶⁵ This development coincided with the rise of Maoism in the African student movement in both France and

60 'Relatório da Comissão especial encarregue do estudo e julgamento da tentativa de "complot" anti-Partido por parte dos estudantes bolséiros', May-June 1964, Mario Soares Foundation (hereafter FMS), Amílcar Cabral Archive, page 1-15.

61 RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 46, d. 353, ll. 19-20.

62 Copy of the 1962 report in Ukrainian the Minister, Yuri Dadenkov, addressed to the Central Committee of the Ukrainian CP: TsDAVO, f. 4621, op. 6, d. 54, ll. 31-6. Silva is cited on l. 34. He was then studying at the preparatory faculty of Kiev State University.

63 See the Ministry's order of exclusion of Silva, 18 September 1964: TsDAVO, f. 4621, op. 6, d. 77, l. 76.

64 'Relatório', FMS, 5.

65 Report apparently of February 1965: RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 46, d. 403, ll. 176-81, here l. 178.

French-speaking Africa.⁶⁶ To make matters worse, the congress of the Union of African Students in Europe (UASE) that was held in Moscow in March 1964 elected a pro-Chinese secretariat.⁶⁷ In the midst of the Sino-Soviet collision, for the Soviet hosts these developments meant a red line had been crossed. For the PAIGC and the MPLA too, their students' behavior was not just a simple case of indiscipline. It made plain as day that many educated militants of the younger generation were not prepared to unconditionally follow the leaders' line. It undermined the parties' authority in the eyes of African students and Soviet hosts, endangered the Soviets' trust in the parties' selection criteria, and put at risk the precious civil aid they received from the USSR.

The final act was played out between May and June 1964 at PAIGC's headquarters in Conakry, where the eight oppositionists were judged by an extraordinary commission. Although the degree of their complicity varied, they were all found guilty for "having addressed provocative words to their schools' directors", "spoken against the interests of our Party and people", envisioned "destroying the Party's authority", "cultivated hostility against the people and the government of the country that hosts our students", and plenty of other seditious acts, behind which, the commission concluded, lay the "Portuguese hand". One of the students (José Turé), who "always opposed the Party and its leaders in the student union meetings", apparently, "attempted to obtain a visa to spend his holidays in Europe". Tavares and Barbosa were also accused of "having secret connections with foreign embassies in the USSR". During the Conakry trial, both of them persisted in their opposition and refused any self-criticism. They were excluded from the party forever. The rest of the students saw their party membership and scholarship suspended. Osvaldo Lopes da Silva and Carlos Correia, a student leader in East Germany whom Tavares had approached, were credited with having revealed the oppositionists' plans.⁶⁸

The MPLA also reacted to these events which, along with the case of the five FNLA sympathizers mentioned earlier, raised concerns. Students were warned to strictly adhere to the party line, as they indeed did in February 1965 during the second congress of the Federation of African Students in the Soviet Union. In a dramatic vote that tilted the balance in favor of the pro-Soviet bloc, both MPLA and PAIGC representatives voted pro-Soviet and anti-Maoist. The Komsomol was relieved.⁶⁹ Furthermore, following an MPLA request to the CPSU, a one-month

66 F. Blum, 'Trajectoires militantes et reconversions. À propos de la Fédération des étudiants d'Afrique noire en France (FEANF) et des années 68', *Genèses*, 107, 2 (2017), 106–30; P. Bianchini, 'Le mouvement étudiant sénégalais: un essai d'interprétation', in M.C. Diop (ed), *La société sénégalaise entre le local et le global* (Paris 2002), 359–95. For Maoism in the East German context and its appeal to African students, see Q. Slobodian, 'The Maoist Enemy: China's challenge in 1960 East Germany', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 51, 3 (2016), 635–59.

67 See the booklet of the UASE with the resolutions of the Moscow congress and the document entitled, 'Short History of the UASE', in: RGASPI, f. M-3, op. 3, d. 264, ll. 133–53 for the first and d. 274, ll. 34–41 for the second.

68 'Relatório', FMS, 1–9, and the Commission's Decision immediately after the 'Relatório'.

69 On these developments, see the Komsomol report, 22 February 1965 in: RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 46, d. 403, ll. 65–70.

summer camp was set up especially for Angolan students near Rostov, where they intensively studied Marxism-Leninism under the auspices of Komsomol cadres and instructors.⁷⁰

Yet the PAIGC and the MPLA were not alone in growing anxious about their students. Simeão Massango recalls that in 1967 Eduardo Mondlane had become suspicious of the UNEMO-USSR section and that during a meeting in Moscow in the presence of Amílcar Cabral, Agostinho Neto, and many students, he publicly asked him whether he had taken positions against FRELIMO and against him personally.⁷¹ This episode was part of Mondlane's confrontation with UNEMO's overseas sections, which is usually reduced to Mondlane's conflict with Mozambican students studying in the United States. Indeed, in early 1967, UNEMO-US issued a statement denouncing Mondlane's leadership.⁷² In his well-known response, the White Paper of December 1967, Mondlane retorted that, although the students were the primary beneficiaries of the people's struggle, "instigated by imperialists and for purely egotistical reasons and their corruption", they pursued their individual objectives, refused to serve the fatherland, and defected to the West.⁷³ UNEMO's US section then issued a vitriolic reply casting Mondlane as an arrogant academic, married to a woman from an imperialist country, questioning his 'moral integrity', and even accusing him of the physical elimination of oppositionists.⁷⁴

Although no similar open confrontation occurred in the Soviet context, there was no smoke without fire. UNEMO-USSR did resist pressure from Dar es Salaam, for instance, to join the section of the General Union of the Students from Black Africa under Portuguese Colonial Domination in the USSR along with the MPLA and PAIGC youths.⁷⁵ It considered itself as an independent-minded organization, comprised of young intellectuals, and refused to be reduced to a mere youth branch of FRELIMO. Ironically, UNEMO's role model was no other than the liberal academic, Eduardo Mondlane.⁷⁶ Beyond their differences, UNEMO's independent stance, the '*complot*' *anti-Partido*, and the students' anti-Soviet reactions all had one thing in common. They brought to the surface the sharp tension between the Western-educated and cosmopolitan leaders and the younger generation of students who considered themselves to be rising national elites. Unlike rank-and-file cadres, university students aspired to co-lead the national movement. At the same time, they aspired to pursue normal student

70 It was during in the summer of 1966, see the Komsomol report of 14 October 1966 in: RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 39, d. 34, l. 14.

71 Massango, *Alte Heimat Mosambik*, 98–101.

72 Marcum, *Conceiving Mozambique*, 116.

73 Reproduced in Bragança and Wallerstein, *African Liberation Reader*, 107–14, here 111.

74 D. L. Wheeler, 'A Document for the History of African Nationalism: The UNEMO "White Paper" of 1968, a Student Reply to Eduardo Mondlane's 1967 Paper', *African Historical Studies*, 3, 1 (1970), 169–80. This confrontation has been thoroughly analyzed in Panzer's, *Pedagogy of Revolution*.

75 This should be a section of the Algiers-based UGEAN (*União Geral dos Estudantes da África Negrasob Dominação Colonial Portuguesa*).

76 This is clear in Massango's, *Alte Heimat Mosambik*.

lives as their leaders' example, which in their eyes was a necessary precondition for fulfilling their role as *quadros nacionais*.

However, the exigencies of escalating wars and intra-movement conflicts were not compatible with liberal academic lives and long studies abroad, and the students' political activity transgressed the limits of the leaders' tolerance. Several other issues that concerned both university and non-university students also irritated the parties. Prolonging or attempting to prolong the duration of studies abroad by enrolling in a PhD program, transferring from a technical to a higher educational institution, or even repeating one academic year was very unwelcome and suspicious, but did occasionally happen. Getting married or pregnant was equally suspicious as a strategy for postponing the return, but not that rare. Defecting to a third country was a betrayal.

The Soviet Union and the other socialist countries understood the liberation movements' concerns and, generally, responded positively to their requests. Mondlane hailed Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Romania for taking effective measures to prevent the 'desertions' of Mozambican students to African or Western countries.⁷⁷ Amílcar Cabral's frequent telegrams, indicating which students should enrol in a university program or return to participate in the liberation struggle and when, were received by the Komsomol almost like orders.⁷⁸ At party request, the Komsomol facilitated the youth leaders' trips to Algiers or Dar es Salaam for political purposes. It also organized the annual 'Meeting of solidarity with students and youths from countries fighting against colonialism and for national liberation', bringing together students from Portuguese Africa with their Soviet and Portuguese peers.⁷⁹

The Soviets, however, were not eager to oversee every student from Portuguese Africa, nor discriminate against them, and their stance often embarrassed the parties. An Angolan student in Kiev, who got married and had child with a Soviet woman, was allowed to repeat one academic year when his family faced health issues.⁸⁰ His compatriot, who studied in Baku, no other than the future president Eduardo dos Santos, did not face any obstacles in marrying Tatiana Kukanova. Another Angolan student married a Soviet woman, who eventually experienced some difficulty with her employment in the USSR and migration to Africa. In the end, however, Agostinho Neto seemed bewildered. In a letter he addressed to the Solidarity Committee in July 1968, he reiterated the following request: "We ask you, following the discussions we have had several times, not to encourage our students' marriages with young Soviet women, because this creates many problems. According to the rules of our organization, militants can get married only with the special permission of our organization." Neto also protested

77 Bragança and Wallerstein, *African Liberation Reader*, 111.

78 See Cabral's telegrams in: RGASPI, f. M-3, op. 3, d. 348, ll. 157-8 and d. 584, ll. 48-54.

79 See the list of participants and the program of the meeting, 26-27 April 1969: RGASPI, f. M-3, op. 3, d. 496, ll. 139-40.

80 Document signed by the rector of the Kiev Medical Institute, 4 July 1968: TsDAVO, f. 4621, op. 13, d. 778, l. 99.

because an MPLA female graduate had not yet returned: “We do not know where she is and when she will be sent back to our country,” he wrote.⁸¹

The reply sent on 29 October by the Solidarity Committee’s secretary, Nikolai Basanov, probably did not appease Neto. The female student in question had indeed graduated from the Kharkov School of Machine-Building more than a year ago. “We know that she married her Malian friend,” but “we have no idea about their future plans”, Basanov wrote and added, “On the issue of marriages of students who study in the USSR, the Committee is in an awkward position and cannot make any commitment. It is up to your representatives to find the most appropriate way to explain your party’s decisions on these matters the MPLA students.” Basanov closed his letter by sending Neto his “best wishes for good health and success in the noble MPLA activities in the struggle against Portuguese colonialism and for the liberation of Angola”.⁸² When he visited the Solidarity Committee in January 1973, Neto once again castigated the Soviet authorities for registering marriages without the MPLA’s permission and requested that graduation certificates were sent directly to Dar es Salaam. His last point aimed to prevent the *quadros* from migrating to third countries.⁸³

Even if the Soviets opposed discrimination, female students were still very far from being equal to their male peers. The reasons why in the sixties women made up 10 per cent or less of all African students in the USSR and all over Europe are well known. FRELIMO, the MPLA, and especially the PAIGC committed themselves to fighting women’s oppression through revolutionary mobilization and education. MPLA female students in the USSR vindicated the party’s trust. In 1970, Clarissa Pinto was awarded the Prize for the best student at Lumumba University.⁸⁴ Her compatriot, Maria Celeste Pereira Kounta, the poorly educated daughter of Luandan clerks, became a brilliant linguist and the first Director of the Angolan National Institute of Languages.⁸⁵ Soviet-trained Guinean nurses Carmen Pereira and Titina Sila made history, Pereira as the first female member of PAIGC’s Executive Committee and Sila as the iconic female soldier who was killed in 1973.⁸⁶ Pereira, and Teodora Inácia Gomes who attended the Kiev Institute of Pedagogy in the mid-1960s, became leaders of the women’s movement and lawmakers in Guinea-Bissau.⁸⁷

81 Letter in French sent from Dar es Salaam, 14 July 1968: GARF, f. R-9540, op. 1, d. 246, ll. 7–8.

82 Ibid., l. 9, also in French.

83 Shubin, *Hot ‘Cold War’*, 24.

84 This was the Prize of the Democratic Republic of Sudan. See the Decision of the Lumumba University Student Council, 21 October 1970: Central Administration of Archives of Moscow (hereafter TsMAM), f. 3061, op. 1, d. 1231, l. 47.

85 See her ‘Rapport sur la situation des langues africaines: Langues nationales en Angola,’ in UNESCO, *Langues africaines. Documents de la réunion d’experts sur la transcription et l’harmonisation des langues africaines* (Paris 1981), 164–71. I learnt about Kounta’s social background from my interview with António Tomás Medeiros (22 January 2019).

86 Titina (Ernestina) Sila was killed on her way to Amílcar Cabral’s funeral.

87 P. Godinho Gomes, ‘A Mulher guineense como sujeito e objecto do debate histórico contemporâneo. Excertos da história de vida de Teodora Inácia Gomes’, CODESRIA, *Creating African Futures in an Era of Global Transformations: Challenges and Prospects* (Dakar 2015).

Yet these examples constituted exceptions that confirmed the rule of male-dominated university education and student politics. Both the national youth organizations and the Pan-African unions were completely dominated by men, who also attended international conferences and festivals. The most prestigious university placements, in international relations, medicine, or economics, were reserved for men, whereas women were usually trained as medical assistants. Of the 138 PAIGC students studying in the USSR in 1974–5, 30 were women attending the Donetsk School of Medical Assistants.⁸⁸ All the UNEMO leaders were male university students, while Mozambican women used to attend the one-year program at the Komsomol School. Even there, however, they were not spared discrimination. When two of them got pregnant, Mondlane protested to the School, which seemed to share his views, and sent one student back to Tanzania.⁸⁹ Similarly, when a PAIGC student at the Donetsk School “returned from the summer holidays pregnant”, she “was rebuked by the school’s administration for immoral behavior and strongly criticized by the representatives of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau [sic]”, noted a report.⁹⁰ While this was the fate of women members of liberation movements, men who had love affairs or started families in the USSR never faced similar consequences.

The issues of marriage, the duration of studies, and migration to third countries, were extensively discussed between Mondlane’s successor, Samora Machel, and Soviet officials at the offices of the Solidarity Committee on 18 June 1973. Machel stated that “marriages should be made possible only with the permission of both the Soviet authorities and FRELIMO”. He then stressed that, “because of their long stay in the USSR, the majority of students are completely disconnected from FRELIMO’s ongoing struggle in Mozambique”. For this reason, he asked the Soviets to reject the applications for a PhD program which two graduate students in economics had submitted. “It is particularly sad,” he commented, “that their applications are motivated not by their quest for education, but by their desire to extend their stay in the USSR and avoid participating in the liberation struggle.” Machel added that graduation certificates should not be awarded in the USSR, that FRELIMO was interested in training students at secondary and professional-technical schools, and that trips to capitalist countries should be prevented. Instead, he said, during holidays, “Students should be sent to work in construction brigades, hospitals, factories, and industries in the most remote regions of Siberia and Central Asia.”⁹¹

Finally, Machel deplored the fact that a graduate of the Faculty of Agriculture of Lumumba University, Paulo Emílio Marqueza, had sought to build a career in the Ivory Coast, before migrating to West Germany.⁹² Machel was not ill-informed. Three former UNEMO leaders in the USSR, “We, Paulo Emílio

88 Report by the rector: TsDAVO, f. 4621, op. 13, d. 3428, ll. 71–2.

89 School’s report, 8 September 1967: RGASPI, f. M-3, op. 5, d. 202, l. 14.

90 Most likely of 1974: TsDAVO, f. 4621, op. 13, d. 2991, l. 76.

91 For a detailed account of this discussion, see GARF, R-9606, op. 1, d. 5948, ll. 77–9.

92 *Ibid.*, ll. 78–9.

Marqueza, Antonio Zengazenga and myself,” Massango notes in his memoirs, “met in West Berlin”.⁹³ Zengazenga adds more names in his own memoirs and recalls a meeting of oppositionists that took place “at the Student House Siegmunds Hof” in West Berlin “on 28 August 1971”. By that time, indeed, West Germany hosted several Mozambican *quadros* educated in the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc. “All of us who studied in Moscow and quite a few from Prague,” Zengazenga continues, “found ourselves in [West] Berlin after the end of our studies.”⁹⁴ “Many compatriots had come to West Berlin from the GDR and Czechoslovakia,” Massango notes, “fearing that the new party leadership in Dar es Salaam would persist with its Stalinist methods of purges.”⁹⁵ The figure of a ruthless Machel waiting for the educated elites in Dar es Salaam or Maputo informs the narrative of exile.

“An issue that deserves more attention,” noted a Soviet report of 1974 referring to members of liberation movements,

is that students do not want to return to their country after they complete their studies in the Soviet Union. Instead, many of them prefer to seek a job in a Western European country and severe contacts with the liberation movements in the fatherland, a phenomenon that occurred several times especially with Mozambicans. The last example is the defection of three FRELIMO members, graduates of Soviet universities, to the Portuguese side.⁹⁶

Zengazenga became leader of the anti-FRELIMO Committee for Mozambique Union and attended a conference of the World Anti-Communist League to denounce both FRELIMO and Marxism-Leninism.⁹⁷ The anti-PAIGC student leader, José Barbosa, according to one source, stayed in Senegal and collaborated with the Americans.⁹⁸ His comrade, Estêvão Tavares, pursued his opposition also from Senegal and returned to Guinea-Bissau as a Minister of Education only after the 1980 coup brought about the divorce with Cape Verde. Another one of the eight anti-PAIGC militants, Samba Lamine Mané, held a ministry in Guinea-Bissau in the 1980s.⁹⁹ As all these cases suggest, far from being a short episode of disillusionment, opposition politics that brewed in the Soviet Union resulted in a lasting confrontation with the Marxist parties and eventually in a rift with socialist internationalism.

93 Massango, *Alte Heimat Mosambik*, 122.

94 Zengazenga, *Memórias de um Rebelde*, 57.

95 Massango, *Alte Heimat Mosambik*, 136–7.

96 Report by the All-Union Council for the Affairs of Foreign Students: RGASPI, f. M-3, op 8, d. 857, l. 57.

97 A. Zengazenga, ‘Also Mozambique is a captive nation. Speech delivered at the Captive Nations Rally in Brussels on July 22nd 1990’, *ABN Correspondence: Bulletin of the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations*, XLI, 5 (1990), 35–6.

98 Amado, *Guineidade e Africanidade*, 90, footnote 102.

99 John Paxton (ed), *The Statesman's Year-book: Statistical and Historical Annual of the States of the World for the Year 1983–1984* (London 1983), 571.

On the other hand, student leaders Osvaldo Lopes da Silva and Carlos Correia, who had denounced the oppositionists, became prominent politicians in Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau respectively. Correia served several times as Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau and is perhaps the most successful example of Eastern Bloc-trained colonial students after Eduardo dos Santos. Other prominent graduates, such as the Czechoslovak-educated President of Mozambique, Felipe Nyusi, and the Soviet-educated President of Angola, João Lourenço, belong to the post-colonial generation.¹⁰⁰

While wrestling with the Herculean tasks of revolution and nation-building, the MPLA, the PAIGC, and FRELIMO also sought to train doctors, nurses, technicians, engineers, and teachers for their immediate and future needs. Responding to their requests, Moscow put at their disposal several scholarships every year. By the second half of the 1960s, however, the three parties did not fill the annual quota anymore. Although tens of militants were waiting for their turn in Conakry, Brazzaville or Dar es Salaam, and even though Moscow, an extremely reliable ally, was always eager to increase the number of scholarships, as she did for all of Africa, the three parties drastically reduced their requests. Consequently, new enrolments decreased and, as Table 2 illustrates, the number of students, which reached a peak in 1966/7, declined significantly until 1973/4. Mozambican students almost exited the Soviet Union. Another significant trend, which applied especially to FRELIMO and the PAIGC, was the shift towards training students at professional-technical schools at the expense of university training.

The causes of these developments are, on the one hand, to be found in the African theaters of revolution: in the escalating anticolonial wars, the sharp conflict that opposed rival ethno-political movements in Angola, and the equally ethno-political internal crisis that shook FRELIMO and culminated in Mondlane's assassination. On the other hand, however, they also lay in what turned out to be a particularly conflictual relationship between party leaders and overseas students.

Contrary to the leaders' expectations, the students' privileged condition did not always assure loyalty and strict discipline in return. Following their leaders' example, many students deemed it legitimate to pursue their studies uninterrupted, travel and accumulate experiences, have love affairs and start a family, while being considered as the nation's elite. University students were much more likely to oppose the leadership and find employment in a third country, opposition politics being an additional motive behind their decision to migrate. The fact that UNEMO students studying in the Eastern Bloc migrated to West Germany and fought against FRELIMO, that PAIGC students contested the pro-Soviet line and the authority of the Cape Verdean leadership, or that a Yugoslavian-educated Angolan became Holden Roberto's lieutenant in the FNLA,¹⁰¹ were some facts that influenced the

100 Felipe Jacinto Nyusi studied engineering at Brno University, while João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço attended the Lenin Military-Political Academy of the Red Army in Moscow.

101 Ngola Kabangu became Minister of Interior in Holden Roberto's government in exile. See Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution*, volume 2, 188.

leaders' views regarding overseas training. In Mondlane's and Machel's eyes, university students were increasingly seen not as new men, but as a liability for the movement. These were also the principal reasons behind the parties' decision to reduce the number of students studying in the USSR and to opt instead for the training of technicians and nurses.


As well as being less likely to oppose the leadership, most technicians and nurses, according to many accounts, immediately put their skills at the service of the liberation movements. The Kharkov School of Machine-Building took pride in its Angolan mechanics, who fought alongside MPLA soldiers.¹⁰² Nurses trained at the 2nd Kiev School of Medical Assistants treated wounded fighters in liberated zones inside Guinea-Bissau and were killed.¹⁰³ Others served alongside Cuban and Eastern Bloc-trained doctors at PAIGC's hospital in Guinea-Conakry.¹⁰⁴ "The majority of former scholarship holders," estimated a 1972 Solidarity Committee report which referred to both students and political cadres, "put the experience and knowledge they acquired in the USSR at the service of the liberation movements."¹⁰⁵

Even though it is hard to draw a comprehensive picture of the students' trajectories, evidence provided by scholars, primary documents, memoirs, and plenty of secondary sources suggests that there is much truth in the Committee's report. At the same time, as this paper has tried to show, several neglected episodes of this story also deserve attention and explanation. Younger members of liberation movements questioned the authority of party leaders and presented them with a serious political and ideological challenge. They questioned the alliance with the USSR and protested against racism. Many students expressed individualism through various actions and sought refuge in third countries, like West Germany. Behind the narrative of new men, both the Soviets and the parties were fully aware of these phenomena and took measures to intervene. Ultimately, the Soviet Union was not only a safe haven of anti-imperialism and internationalist solidarity; it was also a theater of opposition politics and of the conflict that pitted students against leaders in the liberation movements.

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102 Report of 1970 by the school's rector, A. Maiboroda: TsDAVO, f. 4261, op. 13, d. 1379, l. 114.

103 Report of 1970 by the school's rector, V. Tratsuk: TsDAVO, f. 4261, op. 13, d. 1378, ll. 36–9.

104 Piero Gleijeses, 'The First Ambassadors: Cuba's Contribution to Guinea-Bissau's War of Independence', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 29, 1 (1997), 68–70.

105 GARF, f. R-9606, op. 1, d. 5355, l. 65.

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