THE COLD WAR IN THE THIRD WORLD

EDITED BY

ROBERT J. McMAHON

"This volume vividly illuminates how the Cold War shaped developments in the Third World and how nationalist leaders in Asia, Africa, and Latin America sought to assert their agency and modernization projects in a bipolar world. There is no better introduction to this subject than this collection of essays by some of the world's most eminent scholars."

—Melvyn P. Leffler, author of *For the Soul of Mankind*

"Examining both regions and functional topics, these penetrating essays illuminate the ways in which the Cold War and the states and societies in the Third World interacted and shaped each other. The volume is filled with current research for the experts but also is accessible to a wide audience."

—Robert Jervis, Columbia University

The Cold War in the Third World explores the complex interrelationships between the Soviet-American struggle for global preeminence and the rise of the Third World. Those two distinct but overlapping phenomena placed a powerful stamp on world history throughout the second half of the twentieth century. Featuring original essays by twelve leading scholars, this collection examines the influence of the newly emerging states of the Third World on the course of the Cold War and on the international behavior and priorities of the two superpowers. It also analyzes the impact of the Cold War on the developing states and societies of Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. Blending the new, internationalist approaches to the Cold War with the latest research on the global south in a tumultuous era of decolonization and state-building, *The Cold War in the Third World* bring together diverse strands of scholarship to address some of the most compelling issues in modern world history.

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CONTENTS

6

AFRICA'S COLD WAR

JEFFREY JAMES BYRNE

A half-century after the major wave of decolonization, and two decades after the end of the Cold War, the subfield of African international history is flourishing. Perhaps most visibly, numerous scholars have taken advantage of new archival opportunities (in Africa and beyond) to rewrite the histories of key events such as the Algerian War of Independence or the 1975 Angolan Crisis, for example, while others would argue essentially that independent Africa allows unique insights into systemic global changes, such as the promotion of human rights and the universal recognition of state sovereignty.[1] Indeed, the concerns of international historians, imperial historians, and Africanists have converged in certain respects, since the "new" international history's emphasis on "decentralizing" the Cold War and on sociocultural transnational phenomena is quite similar to recent trends in imperial history, and the new international historians' relentless pursuit of novel sources and alternative perspectives can often appear to be a spiritual successor to longstanding efforts to "decolonize" African history (and that of other postcolonial regions).[2] In short, independent Africa has warranted international historians' increased attention not only by dint of its size and the simple passage of time, but also because some of the barriers between these separate lines of intellectual inquiry are disappearing. The continent has become one of the most important areas for understanding the superpowers' modernizing ideologies, the normative bases of international society, the imperial qualities of American power, or even the fundamental nature of the Cold War itself.

Accordingly, this chapter argues that the histories of the Cold War and modern Africa are inextricably connected—African developments affected the evolution of the global contest between the United States and the Soviet

Union, and, probably to greater degree, the Cold War had a profound and lasting impact across that continent. Without dismissing the important continuities between the colonial and postcolonial periods, or suggesting that Africa was simply a blank canvas for outside forces to illustrate as they pleased, a focus on historical *dis*continuities reveals that the relatively brief Cold War era entailed profound consequences because it coincided with the uniquely impressionable years of decolonization. To fully appreciate the significance of the interaction between the Cold War phenomena, it is necessary to overcome the misleading appearance of inevitability that has set in since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the high-profile failures of so many of Africa's postcolonial endeavors. The end of Europe's empires was above all a time of optimism, ambition, and uncertainty, when even the most fundamental questions about the shape of things to come had no clear answer. At the same time, the Cold War's geopolitical, intellectual, and ideological battles were at their peak intensity and offered irresistible opportunities for Africa's new elites to cope with their daunting responsibilities. Indeed, the extent of the Cold War's legacy can be easily overlooked precisely because it was so deeply implanted in decolonizing Africa's unset political foundations.

Three aspects of the Cold War's legacy are considered here, two of which can be considered "constructive" in the sense that they contributed to the creation of the continental postcolonial order, for better or for worse, while the third seems to have been an almost entirely negative phenomenon. The first was the surprisingly rapid implementation of the sovereign-state model of political organization throughout Africa, as opposed to the various notions of pan-African, regional, or semi-imperial integration that had many advocates and good prospects up to at least the late 1950s. Without the context of the pervasive American-Soviet contest, African and European leaders would not have both so quickly embraced this version of decolonization. Second, the Cold War's ideological dimensions greatly influenced the expression of anticolonial sentiment, in organizational as well as ideational terms, and subsequently also the domestic agendas of many African leaders after independence. As the Ghanaian president Kwame Nkrumah told an audience in New York in 1958, "We cannot tell our peoples that material benefits and growth and modern progress are not for them. If we do, they will throw us out and seek other leaders who promise more. . . . Africa has to modernize."[3] In some instances, the initial euphoria of decolonization combined with the rhetoric of revolution, modernization, and social transformation to instill national elites with genuinely utopian ambitions.

Finally, the last legacy of the Cold War, or its parting gift, was the emphatic puncturing of these lofty dreams. The superpowers' proxy wars achieved their maximum destructiveness in the Horn and southern Africa in the 1970s and 1980s, while in the economic sphere those traveling the socialist road ran out of gas just as the Reagan administration's neoliberal "counterrevolution" in development policy effectively eradicated statist and left-wing models throughout the continent. Thus the Cold War played a key role in the disappointments of the postcolonial era, raising expectations as well as dashing them. But if Africa can claim a disproportionate share of that conflict's victims, so too did it boast many of its most ardent combatants, whether they wielded Kalashnikovs or megaphones.

The African State System and the Cold War Order

Although Africa's Cold War immediately conjures images of interminable proxy wars, guerrilla campaigns, revolutions, coups, and countercoups, in hindsight perhaps the most significant consequence of the superpowers' multidimensional rivalry was to encourage the creation of a continent-wide state system solid enough to withstand even the most severe instability surging within it. Rebels crossed borders without redrawing them, and regimes could rise and fall rapidly without changing the basic characteristic of the countries they governed. Indeed, while American and Soviet policymakers frequently sought to alter a state's government or orientation, on the whole they actually demonstrated a rather conservative Westphalian conception of international politics as far as Africa was concerned, since their subversive schemes rarely if ever went so far as to challenge countries' basic legitimacy or territorial integrity. This surprisingly durable state system was the product of an unspoken consensus forged in the late 1950s and early 1960s between the superpowers, the retreating European imperialists, and emergent nationalist elites, who each preferred this version of postcolonial Africa to the other possibilities touted at the time. International society's recognition of state sovereignty helped secure the position of national regimes, and a clientelist paradigm immediately set in throughout the continent as a result of British and French desires to "manage" decolonization and the escalating competition for influence between the outside powers.

It is easy to forget how quickly this transformation occurred. Even in the late 1950s it was not a foregone conclusion that Africa's complex layers of imperial control and diverse visions of the postcolonial order would be completely supplanted by the sovereign-state model. After all, at the beginning

of the decade most anticolonialist politicians and activists still spoke in terms of reforming colonialism rather than eliminating it, and there was widespread support at both ends of the imperial relationship for transitioning toward some sort of "interdependency" between metropole and colony.[4] Most African leaders did not seem to believe that the colonial territories, especially the smaller ones, could be economically viable on their own, while imperial interests were determined to preserve as many of their assets there as possible. There was no agreement on the definition of "decolonization," which was in fact not an event but a prolonged process of negotiation. Describing the "imperialism of decolonization," historians Wm. Roger Louis and Ronald Robinson have pointed out that the British Empire had already become a complex set of unequal accommodations between diverse metropolitan interests and local protonationalists, and they used the term "imperialism of decolonization" to describe London's efforts to orchestrate the peaceful "transfer of power" to whichever local candidates would best accommodate Britain's continued economic and political influence.[5] French strategy was initially more cautious and characteristically more systematic, but it is notable that it was the French government led by Prime Minister Guy Mollet—not African anticolonialists—that favored devolving autonomy to the individual territories of French West Africa through the 1956 *loi-cadre*, which devolved certain powers to local colonial administrations and instituted major legal and electoral reforms. The *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain* (RDA) had lobbied instead for West Africa to be treated as a single entity, and Senegal's Léopold Sédar Senghor warned presciently that this "balkanization" suited imperial interests more than African and that it would create elites preoccupied with local concerns and dependent on French patronage.[6]

The evolution of the British and French strategies of decolonization shows that, contrary to post facto nationalist historiographies, the creation of independent states was at least as much the product of imperialist design as anticolonialist aspiration. Pan-Africanism, the RDA's West African federalism, and the spirit of "Maghrib unity" were all prominent examples of the internationalist or transnationalist spirit of anticolonial militancy up to that point, a philosophy that believed in strength in numbers and saw schemes such as the *loi-cadre* as a continuation of the old colonial "divide and rule" strategy. While still immersed in postwar London's cosmopolitan pan-African scene, for example, Kwame Nkrumah had vociferously denounced narrow-minded territorial nationalism.[7] However, on his return to the Gold Coast, he himself became one of the most pointed examples of the trend Senghor had predicted by becoming a committed

Ghanaian nationalist who, after initially confronting colonial authorities, then took power in Accra with London's blessing. Similarly, Paris granted Morocco and Tunisia their independence in 1956 precisely in order to counter the spirit of North African solidarity and isolate the Algerian *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN).[8] Ghana and North Africa would each become focal points of Cold War tensions, but at this juncture the colonial powers felt only moderate pressure from the Cold War context. Neither superpower showed much direct interest in Africa, and Washington's first instinct tended to be to buttress its allies' imperial positions in the name of "stability." Indeed, in the early 1950s, the French authorities in Cote d'Ivoire and the new apartheid government in Pretoria both used the specter of Communism in a crude fashion to justify suppressing African anticolonialism.[9]

In this respect, the Suez Crisis of 1956 stands out as the major turning point for the Cold War in Africa, for it forced a change in thinking for Britain, France, the United States, Soviet Union, and African anticolonialists alike. First, the spectacle of the two superpowers forcing British and French soldiers out of Egypt showed that the Cold War could be used to gain leverage over the imperialists, and in the longer run validated Gamal Abdel Nasser's use of nonalignment not as passive neutrality, but as an assertive and proactive strategy of exploiting international tensions. The leaders of the Algerian FLN, for example, now concluded that if they were to prevail against the French, then "Algeria must become a pressure point in the bidding war between the two great powers," and accordingly reached out to the Communist bloc for support.[10] Second, and in relation to the previous point, Suez greatly increased Washington's and Moscow's interest in the continent, since it alerted the Soviets to the new diplomatic opportunities there and convinced the Americans that their European friends could not be relied on to manage the situation.[11]

Additionally, Suez accelerated the abandonment of federalist or transnationalist notions of the postcolonial order in favor of state sovereignty and nationalist agendas. Nasser's commitment to pan-Arabism notwithstanding, the crisis had confirmed the nationalization of the vital canal and granted total independence to Egypt after many decades of only nominal sovereignty. The triumph of the occasion thus helped make national independence the new "gold standard" of anticolonial achievement. Yet the imperialists and nationalists agreed on this outcome, for London, Paris, and Brussels subsequently altered course by hastening decolonization even as they agreed to this new, more maximal definition of its endpoint. The British now cooperated closely with the Americans to ensure the smoothest

possible transfer of power to the most reliable-seeming local candidates so far as Cold War alignments and Western commercial interests were concerned.[12] In contrast, however, many French policymakers concluded from Suez that they were now actually competing with Washington for influence in francophone Africa, and Charles de Gaulle warned his foreign minister, Maurice Couve de Murville, that they would be very foolish to cede their position in their former colonies to the United States through some misguided sense of Western solidarity. Consequently, his French Community proposal of 1958 implemented a far more complete version of African independence than French officials could countenance even a few years earlier, but it still featured certain curtailments on economic and diplomatic sovereignty in order to prevent the former colonies from slipping naturally into an American orbit, as had already happened with Morocco and Tunisia.[13]

The cases of Guinea, Ghana, and "Belgian" Congo demonstrated the onset of nationalist "balkanization" and Cold War competition by the beginning of the 1960s. Historian Elizabeth Schmidt has recently argued that it was Cold War ideological tensions with the RDA that led to Guinea seceding from the movement and rejecting membership in the French Community in the first place, but certainly after independence Guinea and Ghana served as precedents for decolonization leading quickly to clientelism and authoritarianism.[14] Over the following years, Ahmed Sékou Touré and Nkrumah oscillated between dependency on the two superpowers and their former colonial metropole, searching for the "best deal" in terms of economic and state-building support. Regardless of their orientation at any given moment, the Cold War competition generally seemed to encourage the consolidation of dictatorial regimes. At one point, the KGB assumed responsibility for the personal security of both men, while the CIA plotted either to win them over or to overthrow them, successfully achieving the former with Touré in 1962 and the latter with Nkrumah four years later. In both cases, the country was the geopolitical prize.[15] "Belgian" Congo was a similar case, although Patrice Lumumba offers an example of badly miscalculating the dangerous game of exploiting Cold War tensions. Crucially, for all of the instability in Congo in the early 1960s, in the long run both superpowers backed their clients' efforts to unify the country (at the expense of democracy). In that sense, chaotic Congo paradoxically testifies to the *solidity* of the new African state system.[16]

Finally, it is worth reinforcing the point that intense Cold War competition and clientelism was quite compatible with the era of internationally recognized sovereignty. One political scientist has used the term "quasi-state" to describe those countries, quite numerous in Africa, that were too weak

to defend or assert their territorial integrity without the legitimation of a seat in the UN General Assembly, and this phenomenon offered a powerful motivation for anticolonial elites to abandon pan-African dreams or other constructs in favor of the Western state—the universally accepted building block of global politics.[17] Moreover, not only did international norms constrain external powers from explicitly breaking up states or redrawing borders (if they had so desired), in many cases that seat in New York was actually the vital prize being contested. The two Germanies, the two Chinas, and Israel battled one another throughout the Cold War to secure African governments' diplomatic recognition; and in this competition between Bonn and Berlin, Beijing and Taipei, and Tel Aviv and its Arab foes, even the weakest and poorest African country boasted a General Assembly vote equal to anyone else's. In return, inducements of development assistance and military aid served to further strengthen the continent's state structures and regimes.[18]

Africa in the Shadow of Wilson and Lenin

As recent scholarship suggests, the Cold War's ideological dimensions had at least as great an impact on the decolonizing world as geopolitical trends.[19] Africa was no exception, as the continent's new leaders found the United States and Soviet Union offering appealing prepackaged solutions to the daunting social and economic challenges before them, while the optimism that characterized the immediate postcolonial moment encouraged them to think big and act boldly. In other words, not only did the superpowers (and certain lesser powers) materially and financially abet many of independent Africa's misguided development strategies and authoritarian policies, the rhetorically supercharged atmosphere of the Cold War era inspired those policies in the first place. Yet, it is also true that the prevailing ideological currents manifested themselves most often through the widespread adoption of certain political *practices*, as opposed to *ideas*. A common sight throughout Africa in the 1960s and 1970s was the regime that publically distanced itself from either bloc's doctrine by pursuing a supposedly "authentic" or nativist revolution that nevertheless relied on the substance of the Leninist and especially Bolshevik examples in a practical and operational sense. Thus, although only a small minority of African elites (or would-be elites) were conscious converts to Soviet-Chinese Communism or American liberal capitalism, those hegemonic messages helped postcolonial regimes to define their goals—and the methods to achieve them.

First of all, to a significant degree practically all of the continent's protonationalists can be considered products of the Wilsonian-Leninist century. Certainly, numerous intellectuals and political and religious leaders had already been challenging their European conquerors on their own terms for decades, using the language of the Enlightenment, the American civil rights movement, and the Bible, but in 1918 President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points elevated the liberal critique of colonialism to a new level of public awareness and moral authority, and together Wilson and Lenin provided the actual tools for anticolonial forces to dismantle the imperial order.[20] Wilson himself and the League of Nations emphatically declined to support that effort, yet "Wilsonianism" as a strategy of harnessing international opinion still grew in potency alongside the United States' geopolitical ascendency, with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Atlantic Charter of 1941 promising to succeed where the league had failed, and obliging the British government and de Gaulle's Free French movement to commit to the liberal agenda in the campaign against fascism. Consequently, a Nigerian serviceman observed in 1945 that "we all overseas soldiers are coming back home with new ideas.... We want freedom and nothing but freedom," to which his compatriot and comrade-in-arms Mokwugo Okoye added that "revolutionary ideas were set afloat during the 193945 war."[21] Moreover, the Wilsonian message was not simply a source of inspiration, since in practical terms it also offered Africans a viable international strategy of "playing the American card," which Algerian anticolonialists first attempted during the U.S. army's wartime occupation, and then perfected in the course of the FLN's liberation struggle a decade later.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the ideological divide, Lenin's *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1917) was of unquestioned importance in shaping several generations of African elites' conception of the international economy, and their continent's role within it. Though Lenin's slim volume represented almost the entire Soviet literature on the "colonial question" until the early 1960s, his basic description of imperialism as a Western-controlled global system that rapaciously exploited the developing world for raw materials and monopolistic markets had achieved the status of conventional wisdom in Africa's nationalist circles by that point. As early as 1927, the African National Congress (ANC) president, J. T. Gumede, demonstrated the relevance of Marxist analysis to conditions in Africa. "These people on the farms work from four in the morning till seven at night for next to nothing," he said. "Those in the mines—what do they get? They get two shillings a day. They have to go down [into] the bowels of the earth to bring up gold to enrich the capitalist."[22] *Imperialism*'s

central thesis correlated well with the African experience of colonialism and capitalism to that point, but vitally also suggested an actionable remedy for underdevelopment: minimizing dependence on the capitalist international trading system through nationalization, industrialization, and self-sufficiency.

Even after some early admirers of the Soviet Union, such as the Trinidadian pan-African activist George Padmore, recoiled from the realities of life there, a great many nationalist figures still desired to implement Communism's programmatic content so long as it could be stripped of undesirable ideological and cultural baggage. Guinea's Touré, for example, espoused Marxism in its "African dress," or "the Marxism which had served to mobilize the African populations, and in particular the working class... amputated of its characteristics which did not correspond to African realities," while Algeria's Ahmed Ben Bella explained that Islam precluded him from sharing the Communists' philosophy, but that he had to "admit the force of their economic reasoning."[23] In fact, the Leninist critique of the existing structures of global trade was so widely accepted that even an avowedly capitalist, Western-oriented country like Kenya still subscribed to its own form of "African socialism." The theory's elegant simplicity increased its transmissibility and adaptability—even to the point of dovetailing nicely with the postcolonial invention of tradition and national myth-making.[24]

Moreover, an important element in socialism's appeal was that it effectively asserted the primacy of politics over economics and facilitated the expansion of state control. Accordingly, it was in the area of political organization and development that the ideas of Karl Marx, Lenin, and later Mao Zedong had their greatest influence. The role of left-wing methods of labor mobilization, popular protest, and underground activism in African anticolonialism from the 1920s onward is well established, but the trend continued after independence as most of the continent's governments quickly set about creating one-party dictatorships with more than a passing resemblance to Joseph Stalin's Soviet Union in terms of the structures of governance, nomenclature, and political culture.[25] Unapologetically despotic heads of state defended authoritarian rule on the basis that it reflected "authentic" African culture—"Can anyone tell me if he has ever known an African village where there were two chiefs?" Mobutu Sese Seko asked—or that independence was still too fragile to resist external centripetal forces and internal subnational tensions with supposedly manipulable and corruptible democratic institutions. However, there was hardly much precolonial precedent for political police forces and pervasive unitary party organizations that disseminated national ideology and monitored the population, while

the cults of personality diligently crafted around someone like Mobutu were hardly the resumption of "traditional" sources of legitimacy, despite the symbolism. Not that the Zairean state functioned anywhere near as effectively as the Soviet Union, but the intent of replicating Bolshevism's proven methods of building a state and holding power was clear, and these methods were valid regardless of a regime's actual orientation vis-à-vis the Cold War. Also reflecting the times, the 1961 founding of the Nkrumah Ideological Institute, a center for training Ghana's future administrators and bureaucrats, reflected the widely held belief that a conscious ideology was another vital ingredient of governance.

Of course, numerous liberation movements and revolutionary groups offered the most vivid use of Communist methods of political organization. As the leader of the nationalist movement of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (*Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde*, PAIGC), Amilcar Carbral, told a Cuban journalist in 1968, "[A]lready a wealth of experience has been gained in the national liberation armed struggle throughout the world[;] the Chinese people fought[,] the Vietnamese people have been fighting more than 25 years.... [They] have struggled and have made known to the world their experiences."[26] However, in the case of such liberation movements, their reliance on Communist revolutionary practices tended to instill an appreciation for revolutionary ideology in a way that was not necessarily true of nationalist regimes that gained power peacefully. When African rebels traveled to Beijing and Hanoi, their hosts stressed the ideological underpinnings of a successful guerrilla campaign, underlining the necessity of some degree of political education to maintain discipline and a compelling revolutionary agenda to win the peasantry's loyalty.[27] This message was also passed from one generation to another within the transnational network of guerrilla training camps and safe havens in places like Congo-Brazzaville, Egypt, and Tanzania. By the late 1960s, for example, Algerian instructors taught their trainees from Angola, Mozambique, Rhodesia, and elsewhere that "the main enemy is imperialism, and the final objective is to establish democratic and progressive regimes with a program for social revolution.... Consequently, victory depends on an ideological clarification within the movements themselves."[28]

The emergence of a more overtly Marxist-inspired trend in Africa in the late 1960s and early 1970s is therefore partly attributable to the fact that movements such as the PAIGC, the Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO), and the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) had been struggling in this radicalizing transnational underground for nearly a decade already.[29] Additionally, the Cold War's geopolitical

sands were shifting in favor of "orthodox" (from Moscow's perspective) Marxist-Leninism as opposed to autonomous socialist experiments. On the one hand, some of the liberation movements' primary sponsors and inspirations, such as Cuba, were themselves hewing more faithfully to Soviet economic advice and development strategies on account of the poor outcomes of their own homegrown efforts. On the other hand, Leonid Brezhnev's Kremlin appraised Third World radicalism conservatively, believing that the ideological flexibility Nikita Khrushchev had shown toward "African socialists" and their ilk had backfired badly.[30] Therefore, Moscow was more receptive to Fidel Castro's strong advocacy on behalf of Cabral's PAIGC and Agostinho Neto's MPLA in the early 1970s because the Cuban leader was himself more deferential to Soviet wisdom than before, and the African nationalists had the same incentive to "say the right things" to win Soviet approval.[31] Similarly, although the left-wing military coups in Somalia in 1969 and Ethiopia in 1974 were products of those countries' internal circumstances, it follows that Muhammad Siad Barre and Mengistu Haile Mariam may have been motivated to use such strikingly orthodox Communist pageantry and rhetoric in order to cement their alliances with a Soviet Union that now assessed revolutionaries by stricter standards.

If it seems that Lenin ultimately cast a longer shadow over Africa than his American contemporary, Wilson, it is because the Bolshevik leader's genius in the art of seizing, holding, and extending state power had no equal, and no postcolonial leader could afford to ignore that example, regardless of ideological preferences. Single-party rule and "democratic centralism" appealed even to solid Western allies like Mobutu or Tunisia's Habib Bourguiba, although of course Stalin's talent for surveillance and self-aggrandizement also earned many admirers. Nonetheless—and somewhat paradoxically—the Wilsonian principles of self-determination and a rules-bound international society continued to dominate the diplomatic behavior even of highly authoritarian states. It was international law, after all, that guaranteed their sovereignty, and numerous despots habitually invoked liberal principles in the context of their relations with the industrialized world, while flouting them daily in the governing of their own people.

Cold War Endgames: A Collaterally Damaged Continent

If the first half of Africa's Cold War can be judged to have had a mix of positive and negative consequences for the people who lived there, in the 1970s and 1980s the superpowers' rivalry inflicted a catalog of destructive

forces and tragic events on the continent with scarcely any silver linings to speak of. Most prominently, proxy wars in places like the Horn, Angola, and Mozambique devastated whole societies and reinforced the popular perception (outside the United States and the Soviet Union at least) that American and Soviet policymakers were conscienceless cynics who played lightly with the lives of the "darker nations." Indeed it is morally imperative for any accounting of the Cold War to acknowledge that many of its most direct casualties were African—nearly a million in Mozambique alone. Likewise, the continent would claim a great number of the Cold War's "indirect" victims—that is, those who suffered the consequences of ideological warfare or revolutionary experimentation. In fact, the widespread economic devastation of the 1980s is probably of greater long-term significance for the continent as a whole than even proxy wars such as those in Angola and Mozambique, since it affected every country and emphatically extinguished any remaining embers of postcolonial optimism. While various African governments and leaders believed themselves in the early 1970s to be on the verge of creating a New International Economic Order (NIEO), which would multiply the revenues of commodities-exporting countries and underwrite their ambitious domestic development goals, within a decade the twin excesses of socialism run amok and a neoliberal capitalist "counterrevolution" had ground these dreams into dust.

Recently scholars have been especially prolific on the subject of the superpowers' interference in southern Africa's liberation struggles during this period. In addition to the steady progress of declassification in Western countries, historians have taken advantage of research opportunities in the archives of the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, South Africa, and Cuba (among others) to shed new light on the motivations of regional governments, liberation movements, and their foreign allies.[32] The decolonization of southern Africa seems to have been so much more violent than elsewhere—Congo-Zaire being an exceptional case of direct superpower intervention—because of the combination of white intransigence and a narrower space for maneuver between the two superpowers. Both the white minority regimes and their nationalist foes enjoyed only as much freedom of action as their external backers allowed through diplomatic, financial, or material assistance. With China now being a clear enemy of the USSR, Cuban involvement being as intolerable to the Americans as the Soviet kind, and the intransigence of Portugal and apartheid Pretoria not offering the same opportunity for a sort of ambiguously aligned, postcolonial middle ground vis-à-vis the Cold War as many former French and British colonies had enjoyed, local actors effectively had to opt for either Washington or

Moscow to fulfill their aims. Thus, when these outside interests decided to tip the balance, as occurred most vividly with the three Angolan nationalist movements in 1975, they encouraged the escalation of violence as well as simply facilitating it. Consequently, the end of the Cold War's ideological battle resolved the region's main contentions: the ANC accepted capitalism; Pretoria embraced democracy; Mozambique gradually quieted; and though bloodshed continued, in Angola in particular, the fighting was no longer really about anything other than profits and power.[33]

The Soviet and American proxy wars in the Horn of Africa in the late 1970s were similarly devastating for the region and its peoples. When the avowedly Marxist Derg took control in Ethiopia, Moscow switched its attentions to Addis Ababa from Siad Barre's less ideologically gratifying regime next door, and then intervened massively to save its new ally from the Somali invasion in late 1977 and early 1978. As in Angola, Cuban troops played a vital role, but this time the Soviet leadership actually chose to send their own officers, military advisors, tank crews, and fighter pilots, and the entire operation was supported by an impressive "air bridge" that conveyed armaments and supplies directly from the USSR to the front lines. The combined effect of the successful Soviet-Cuban interventions in Angola and Ethiopia outraged U.S. policymakers, with Jimmy Carter's national security advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, famously recording in his memoirs that Soviet-American détente lay "buried in the sands" of the Ogaden Desert where most of the fighting took place. For this reason, the Ethiopian-Somali War is perhaps the strongest example of African events directly affecting the ebb and flow of the Cold War, but this achievement brought only lingering horrors for the Horn's inhabitants. Siad Barre's military defeat and his defection from the socialist road started to undermine the integrity of Somalia itself, leading directly to the state's collapse in the late 1980s and its continuing miseries.[34]

Moreover, victorious Ethiopia also consumed itself in the decade following the Derg's ascent, marking a grim denouement to thirty years of Soviet-African cooperation in pursuit of socialist development and modernization.[35] On account of the Derg's claimed devotion to Marxist-Leninism, Soviet officials accepted or even approved of Mengistu's bloody "Red Terror," unleashed on perceived internal enemies and counterrevolutionaries in 1977.[36] Evidence from the Soviet archives shows that the Kremlin was determined to prevent the reemergence in Addis Ababa of "nationalistic moods" that expressed growing skepticism about the economic benefits of relations with the socialist bloc, while the West supposedly lurked with the intent of seducing Moscow's new ally away from it.[37] "It is precisely

the economic factor that the Western countries are bearing in mind as they pursue a long-term struggle for Ethiopia," warned an August 1978 report from the Soviet embassy there. "They will push Ethiopia toward economic collaboration with the West...to encourage the Ethiopian leadership, if not to supplant, then to cut back on the influence of the USSR."[38] Therefore, Mengistu continued to enjoy Moscow's support as he instigated a catastrophically reckless campaign to transform Ethiopian society, employing ruinously intensive "socialist" farming practices that resulted in deforestation, soil erosion, and man-made famines in the mid-1980s that cost millions of lives. While the latter, widely reported tragedy tarnished the reputation of Moscow's advice and socialism as a development strategy for poor countries, it also completed Soviet officials' growing disillusionment with Africa and the Third World.

By then, Africa was already feeling the full effects of what some scholars dub the neoliberal "counterrevolution" in economic thought and development theory. The Reagan administration quickly appointed convinced neoliberals to run the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which demanded that developing countries ruthlessly cut state budgets, yield to the logic of comparative advantage in the "rational" global market, and terminate expensive policies intended to promote national self-sufficiency and diversification. Tanzania's Julius Nyerere was not alone in perceiving a Western conspiracy to force poor countries to abandon socialism. "When did the IMF become an international Ministry of Finance? When did nations agree to surrender to it their powers of decision making?" he asked Dar-es-Salaam's diplomatic community on New Year's Day, 1980. "[The IMF] has an ideology of economic and social development which it is trying to impose on poor countries irrespective of our own clearly stated policies."[39] As the pioneer of *ujamaa*, Tanzania's unique bid for socialist self-dependence, Nyerere resisted neoliberal reforms until he stepped down from the presidency several years later, but thereafter the country's officials agreed to fundamentally alter the structure of their economy in accordance with the IMF's wishes.[40] So, too, did other would-be shop windows of African socialism, such as Algeria and Ghana.

However, not even the traditionally Western-oriented countries, like Côte d'Ivoire, were spared the counterrevolution's strictures. At independence, Félix Houphouet-Boigny had famously wagered Nkrumah that Ivoirean capitalism would outperform Ghanaian socialism, and indeed his country had enjoyed the best economic performance in sub-Saharan Africa by staying tied to the French currency system and concentrating on maximizing exports of the two colonial crops (cocoa and coffee). Yet Côte d'Ivoire

suffered a serious debt crisis when market prices collapsed in the 1980s, and submitted to repeated IMF-mandated reforms that erased the prosperity gains of the past two decades and saw social indices stagnate.[41] Overall, from 1980 to 1990, income per capita in Sub-Saharan Africa declined by 30 percent relative to the West.[42] The neoliberal counterrevolution thus acted as a great leveling force across a diverse continent: the ideological debates, hopes, experiments, successes, and failures of the 1960s and 1970s were rendered irrelevant by the Washington consensus and its generally immiserating effects, at least in the short-term.[43]

Perhaps because there is blood enough in this tale to soak everyone's hands, passions often run high in the retelling of the late Cold War in Africa. Defenders of the Soviet and Cuban involvement in southern Africa rightly point out that Moscow and Havana were on the side of black liberation, while American policymakers have preferred to gloss over their continued support for Pretoria as a regional bulwark against Communism during the 1980s (including even cooperation with the civilian aspects of South Africa's nuclear program) in order to emphasize instead Washington's successful peace-making efforts throughout the region at the end of the decade and in the early 1990s.[44] Both sides like to evoke Nelson Mandela, provider of the only firm moral ground amid the ruins of bygone realpolitik and ideological imperatives.

Likewise, in the economic realm, socialism and capitalism each emerged from the 1980s with damaged reputations in the African context. The defenders of neoliberal structural adjustment would argue that the long-term benefits outweigh the short-term damage, but it is certainly true that the IMF's agents in particular were focused narrowly on abstract economic theories and measures of success, not social concerns and human consequences, and the same criticism can be leveled at the planners of misguided revolutionary experiments such as Ethiopia's. Notably, whereas transnational liberation movements gravitated towards radicalism in the 1960s and 1970s, by the end of the 1980s at least some exiled ANC activists had abandoned their hopes for rapid socioeconomic transformation in post-apartheid South Africa after witnessing firsthand the failures of such dreams in countries such as Zambia.[45] On the whole, therefore, Africa looks to have suffered severe collateral damage from the superpowers' high-stakes geopolitical and ideological confrontations in the closing stages of the Cold War, greatly contributing to the widespread pessimism gripping the continent.

The coincidence of the totalizing conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union with the vital, impressionable period of decolonization affected Africa in significant and lasting ways. It helped shape the

fundamental political structures of the postcolonial era, inspire dreams of a prosperous and modern independence, and enable nationalist elites to take and hold onto power in the deceptively durable countries left among the detritus of empire.

One of the earliest, and perhaps the most profound, consequences of the Cold War order was to help channel anticolonial sentiment into nationalist expression—first because the major powers had established a world of states in 1945, and African politicians had to conform to this paradigm in order to seem "credible," "reasonable," or simply comprehensible before international opinion; and second because the irresistible logic of clientelism encouraged the consolidation of state power and the prioritization of *national* interests above other causes. Yet, while the triumph of nationalism and the creation of dozens of independent African states was undoubtedly a positive change from the unjust colonial order, it did by necessity entail the death of certain alternative visions. By 1966, for example, Julius Nyerere recognized that these new political structures almost certainly precluded the implementation of any concrete form of pan-African unity. "For the truth is that there are now 36 different nationalities in free Africa," he told a crowd of Zambian university students. "Each state is separate from the others: each is a sovereign entity... which is responsible to the people of its own area—and only them.... Let us be honest and admit that [nationalism and pan-Africanism] have already conflicted."[46] Likewise, independence doomed the long-standing dream of Maghrib unity, since Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia immediately found themselves locked into antagonistic Cold War client-patron relationships and on opposing sides of the era's main left-wing ideological fault line. Even efforts of federalism between philosophically kindred states foundered on the prerogatives of national interests, as was the case for the attempted union of Ghana and Guinea in late 1950s. In short, the realities of the Cold War international system certainly contributed to shattering the sense of internationalist solidarity that had characterized the anticolonial independence movement.

The Cold War's effect on postcolonial dreams of nation- and state-building is also clear, with the modernizing ideologies of East and West promising fast and effective solutions to the poverty gripping most African societies. Though few postcolonial elites actually embraced Communism or Western capitalism without modification or adaptation, the key programmatic elements of those doctrines were fused with new nationalist mythologies to legitimate the rule of the few over the many. In combination, the hopeful expectancy that independence brought and the convincing futurism of Cold War rhetoric were almost guaranteed to disappoint, but the disillusionment

was deeper and came more quickly than most would have thought possible in those early days of bunting and celebration. Whereas nationalist elites cultivated an aura of sacrifice and asceticism at first, especially in the self-avowed "revolutionary" countries, by the late 1980s they had almost universally succumbed to the tempting comforts of villas, limousines, and schooling abroad for their children, while simultaneously cutting back on the modernizing social programs once hailed as the nation's raison d'être. In 1992, an Angolan novelist and former MPLA militant, Artur Carlos Maurício Pestana dos Santos, captured the post–Cold War mood with *A Geração da Utopia* (The generation of utopia). This semifictional chronicle followed a group of young revolutionaries from the enthusiasm and danger of the 1960s and 1970s through to a dispiriting decade of postcolonial corruption, complacency, and rampant globalization—the "most savage capitalism seen on Earth"—that the author believed threatened the very fabric of the Angolan nation.[47]

In the two decades since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the changes in U.S. policy toward Africa have being telling. From the unprecedented decision to send American troops into Somalia in 1993, to the subsequent refusal to be drawn into other major conflicts where no national security interests are at stake—such as Rwanda, Congo, and Sudan—it is clear that Washington feels neither constrained nor compelled by a geopolitical rivalry such as that which existed with the USSR. Interestingly, since the end of the Cold War, American policymakers have openly countenanced the idea of redrawing Africa's borders, either in the troubled Great Lakes region or, most currently, the southern half of Sudan. While sustained violence between subnational ethnic or religious groups has inspired such proposals, conflict of that nature has been a common enough occurrence since the late 1950s, so perhaps the key development is the disappearance of Communist diplomatic and material support for the centralizing, nationalist factions that would accuse the United States of neoimperialist, divide-and-rule tactics. For all the discussion of Beijing's support for the government in Khartoum in the early twenty-first century, China's interests in Africa are emphatically business-minded and nonideological, precluding a new Cold War–like dynamic.[48]

Above all, it should be recognized that the continent was not simply a passive victim of outside interference, since its postcolonial elites exploited geopolitical tensions and fought the Cold War's ideological battles as ardently—and frequently more bloodily—as their peers elsewhere. Not that the degree of local empowerment should be exaggerated either, for the penalty for miscalculation vis-à-vis the great powers was severe, but African

states did often benefit significantly from the contest between Washington and Moscow.[49] While superpower competition fueled proxy wars and insurgencies, it also enabled the state-building schemes that at least produced a marked improvement in social indicators such as life expectancy and literacy rates during the 1960s and 1970s.[50] In the final analysis, therefore, it is difficult to say whether the reduction in clientelist opportunities since the 1980s is an unambiguous improvement for Africa. In light of the traumas of that decade and subsequent years, it may even be that the worst aspect of the Cold War was the nature of its ending.

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