

2017

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Roundtable Editors: Thomas Maddux and Diane Labrosse
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Roundtable Review
Volume XVIII, No. 19 (2017)
20 March 2017

Philip Muehlenbeck. *Czechoslovakia in Africa, 1945-1968*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. ISBN: 978-1-137-56144-2 (hardcover, \$100.00).

URL: <http://www.tiny.cc/Roundtable-XVIII-19>

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Introduction by Andy DeRoche, Front Range Community College

Students of the history of the international relations of Africa during the Cold War already respect Philip Muehlenbeck as a significant scholar based on his earlier examination of the Kennedy years, and with this effort, *Czechoslovakia in Africa*, he has made another important contribution to the literature. Based on careful research in both Czechoslovakian and U.S. archives and a strong grasp of the relevant secondary sources for broad context, Muehlenbeck's book once again displays his persuasive writing style and insightful analysis. His argument that Czechoslovakia initiated major activities in a wide range of African countries even before World War II, and intensified this involvement during the years 1945 to 1968 primarily for economic reasons, is compelling and convincing.

Muehlenbeck further attributes Czech actions, which in many ways outweighed Soviet interest in Africa, to factors such as the resulting international prestige from playing such a role and also Czech officials' belief that what they were doing was morally correct. Piero Gleijeses demonstrated in the case of Cuba that smaller nations sometimes punched above their weight during the Cold War, and Muehlenbeck makes a similar point here regarding Czechoslovakia.¹ This book adds another very important piece to the puzzle of foreign-relations history during the Cold War, and should be consulted by all scholars of post-WWII African international affairs.

Of the three reviewers, the lone dissent is offered by Alanna O'Malley, who criticizes the structure of the book, finds fault with the argument, and questions the focus on the Africa policy of President John Kennedy in the final chapter. All of these are certainly points that can be debated or discussed, and Muehlenbeck addresses them ably in his response. O'Malley also mentions editing errors in *Czechoslovakia in Africa*.

In his review, Sergey Mazov, the esteemed scholar of Soviet-African relations, agrees to some extent with O'Malley criticism of the book's structure, suggesting that a strictly chronological approach would have flowed more smoothly. Mazov, the author of the very important study entitled *A Distant Front in the Cold War*, offers significantly more praise than criticism for Muehlenbeck's book, however.² He starts by praising the research, as well as the topic in general, judging this to be "the first and yet the only monograph in English on the subject." He points out that Muehlenbeck successfully "debunks the myth created by Western scholars during the Cold War that Czechoslovakia behaved merely as a Soviet proxy." He identifies several specific examples of how the documents utilized by Muehlenbeck revised our understanding of important issues, such as how Czech diplomats were more astute in their analysis of Sékou Touré in Guinea than the Soviets were. Mazov also approves of the book's sections on Mali, Ghana, and Nigeria. He concludes with particularly strong praise for Muehlenbeck's examination of the experiences of African students in Czechoslovakia.

¹ Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

² Sergey Mazov, *A Distant Front in the Cold War: The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956-1964* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

The third reviewer, Maxim Matusevich, the respected author of many important articles and two books on Russian/Soviet relations with Africa.³ His judgement regarding Muehlenbeck's book is the most positive of the three in this roundtable. Matusevich praises *Czechoslovakia in Africa* for its many "revelations" from the archives. He applauds Muehlenbeck for making a "compelling and well documented case" for Czech autonomy from the Soviet Union in its policies in Africa during the early Cold War. Matusevich also singles out the significance of Muehlenbeck's linking Cold-War Czech policies to a long pre-Communist history of relations with Africa. He concludes by assessing the tragic turning point of the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, which represented the end not only of reform in Prague but also of the Czech "moment in Africa." He rightly ends by praising Muehlenbeck for bringing this "heretofore largely unknown chapter of the Cold War" to light for scholars of Africa around the world.

In one of the most popular tracks on his 1977 album *Bat Out of Hell*, singer Meat Loaf crooned "Two Out of Three Ain't Bad." In baseball, if a batter gets two hits in three at bats, it is a very good day. For a basketball player, making 67% of her shots is extremely successful, and the same goes for the completion rate of a quarterback in American football. Out of the three reviewers in this roundtable on Philip Muehlenbeck's study of Czechoslovakia's policies towards Africa during the early Cold War, two offer glowing panegyrics for the book. If my vote in this intro counts, by the way, it is three out of four. O'Malley deserves credit for providing a dissent, so let the debates begin!

Participants:

Philip E. Muehlenbeck, a Professorial Lecturer in history at George Washington University, is the author of *Betting on the Africans: John F. Kennedy's Courting of African Nationalist Leaders* (Oxford University Press, 2012) and *Czechoslovakia in Africa, 1945-1968* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) and editor of *Religion and the Cold War: A Global Perspective* (Vanderbilt University Press, 2012) and *Race, Ethnicity, and the Cold War: A Global Perspective* (Vanderbilt University Press, 2012). He is currently completing two additional edited volumes: *Gender, Sexuality, and the Cold War: A Global Perspective* (Vanderbilt University Press, 2017) and *Warsaw Pact Intervention in the Third World: Aid and Influence in the Cold War* (IB Tauris, forthcoming). Muehlenbeck is also the series editor of a new book series with Vanderbilt University Press titled "The Cold War: Global Perspectives".

Andy DeRoche teaches history at Front Range Community College. His recent publications include *Kenneth Kaunda, the United States and Southern Africa* (Bloomsbury, 2016) and "Asserting African Agency: Kenneth Kaunda and the USA, 1964-1980," *Diplomatic History* 40:5 (November 2016): 975-1001. DeRoche's next project will compare the experiences of a U.S. hockey player, Eric Weinrich, and a Zambian soccer player, Collins Mbesuma, as athletes on the global stage at the end of the Cold War.

Alanna O'Malley is Assistant Professor at the Institute for History in Leiden University. Her first book, *The Diplomacy of Decolonization, America, Britain and the United Nations during the Congo Crisis, 1960-1964* is forthcoming with Manchester University Press.

³ Maxim Matusevich, *Africa in Russia, Russia in Africa: Three Centuries of Encounters* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2006); Maxim Matusevich, *No Easy Row for a Russian How: Ideology and Pragmatism in Nigerian-Soviet Relations, 1960-1991* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003).

Maxim Matusevich is an Associate Professor of Global History at Seton Hall University where he also directs an interdisciplinary program in Russian and East European Studies. Professor Matusevich is the author of *No Easy Row for a Russian Hoe: Ideology and Pragmatism in Nigerian-Soviet Relations, 1960-1991* (Africa World Press, 2003) and editor of *Africa in Russia, Russia in Africa: Three Centuries of Encounters* (Africa World Press, 2007). He has published extensively on the history of Soviet/Russian-African ties and the history of African-American travel in the Soviet Union. Professor Matusevich has been awarded a number of prestigious grants and research fellowships, including the Fulbright Grant, the National Endowment for Humanities Fellowship, the Kennan Institute residential fellowship at the Woodrow Wilson Center, the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute residential fellowship (Harvard University), and others. His current research focuses on the history of socialist mobility during the Cold War as well as the history of African-American political and cultural engagement with the Soviet Union.

Sergey Mazov is a Doctor of Sciences (history) and Chief Research Fellow at the Center for African Studies, Institute of World History, Russian Academy of Sciences. He was a Cold War International History Project Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center in 2003. Publications include: *A Distant Front in the Cold War. The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956-1964* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2010), H-Diplo forum, 2011; *Kholodnaya voyina v "serdtse Afriki". SSSR i kongolezskiy krizis, 1960-1964. [Cold War in the "Heart of Africa". USSR and the Congo Crisis, 1960-1964]*. Moscow: Universitet Dmitriya Pozharskogo, 2015; *Le travail idéologique auprès des étudiants africains dans les établissements d'enseignement supérieur soviétiques. 1re moitié des années 1960* in *Étudier à l'Est. Expériences de diplômés africains*. Monique de Saint Martin, Grazia Scarfo Ghellab et Kamal Mellakh (dir.). Paris: Karthala–FMSH, 2015.

Review by Maxim Matusevich, Seton Hall University

When it comes to Africa, scholars of the Cold War (this reviewer included) have long considered Communist Czechoslovakia to have been a de facto stand-in for the Soviet Union. At various crucial points of the Cold War in Africa, the Czechoslovaks appeared to have put themselves at the service of their Moscow patrons. Whether concluding a mammoth arms deal with Gamal Nasser's Egypt or providing the field artillery and aircraft to the Federalists during the Biafra War, Prague acted as a surrogate for the Soviet Union. At least this has long been the conventional opinion, which Philip Muehlenbeck sets out to challenge and modify in his new book.

Muehlenbeck draws on the existing literature on the history of Cold War entanglements in Africa, a number of memoirs, and select primary sources (some already published as edited collections—both in English and in Czech—but also the Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State kept at the National Archives, the holdings of the Dwight Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy Presidential Libraries, the National Archives of the Czech Republic, and some other repositories) to make a compelling and well documented case for the reassessment of Czechoslovakia's involvement in Africa prior to the Soviet invasion of 1968. While the author stops short of denying the existence of a connection between Soviet foreign policy ambitions and Czechoslovakia's pursuits in Africa during the first two decades of the Cold War, he nevertheless proposes that Prague enjoyed a significant degree of autonomy in charting its own diplomatic course on the continent. For example, Czechoslovakia continued to enjoy a close (and mutually profitable) economic relationship with the Republic of South Africa long after other communist nations had severed most of their ties with the apartheid state (44). On the eve of independence in British East Africa, Czechoslovak diplomats had made inroads both in Uganda and Kenya and established ties with the two major political parties—Milton Obote's Ugandan People's Congress (UPC) and Jomo Kenyatta's Kenyan African National Union (KANU). Significantly this was happening at the time when the Soviets' access to East African nationalists remained limited at best (41-42). Muehlenbeck finds the same pattern of largely independent diplomatic entrepreneurship elsewhere, including in Egypt, where, in 1955, the Czechoslovaks inked one of the most notorious and consequential arms deals of the Cold-War era. Historians tend to view this agreement as essential to Moscow's push to extend its influence in the Third World, especially in the aftermath of the Bandung Non-Aligned Conference in April 1955. Muehlenbeck complicates this conventional interpretation, pointing out that the Egyptian arms deal perfectly fit the pattern of Czechoslovakia's traditional economic initiatives (some of them predating the Communist regime), including arms sales, which constituted an important source of revenue for the Czechoslovak state.

One of the revelations of Muehlenbeck's research is the degree and depth of Czechoslovak involvement on the continent as well as its long history. The author traces Prague's diplomatic and commercial presence in Ethiopia, Morocco, and parts of colonial Africa to the early post-World War I period when such Czech mega companies as Bata and Škoda first made their appearance and achieved a modicum of commercial prominence on the continent. While historians of the Cold War (and the Soviet Union) are often tempted to see the transition to communism as a clean break with the past, Muehlenbeck reminds his readers that communist regimes often inherited the foreign policy and business connections of their predecessors. For example, the fact that Bata had enjoyed enormous popularity in colonial Nigeria made it so much easier for Communist Czechoslovakia to establish economic ties with a largely pro-Western and conservative independent Nigeria. Prague's staunch support for the independence and territorial integrity of Ethiopia during the fascist Italian invasion of 1935-1938 generated enough good will in Addis Ababa to carry over into the post-World War II period and ensure Prague's friendly relations with the pro-Western regime of Haile

Selassie (20-22). It is quite remarkable how much more experience in terms of conducting business and diplomacy in Africa the Czechoslovaks had when compared with the Soviets or pretty much any other nation of the 'socialist camp.'

Muehlenbeck's examination of the history of Czechoslovak presence in Africa is revealing, as it places in a historical perspective the prominent role Communist Czechoslovakia played in some of the most dramatic Cold-War crises in Africa during the 1950s and 1960s. It also modifies the usual view of Prague toeing the Soviet line in the Third World. Additionally, it invites scholars of the Cold War to pay closer attention to the Soviet satellites' independent agency in the developing world. It has already been suggested that Fidel Castro's Cuba, for example, pursued its own foreign policy agenda (sometimes overlapping with, but on other occasions independent of Moscow) when interfering in such Cold-War hotspots as Angola, the Horn of Africa, and elsewhere. By focusing on the ostensibly 'minor' Cold-War actor, Muehlenbeck expands and complicates the story of Cold-War contests in the Third World and effectively 'decolonizes' the common narrative focusing on the superpowers.¹ In case of Communist Czechoslovakia in Africa, not only was the presumptive student more experienced and knowledgeable than the teacher (the Soviet Union) but in some important cases (Egypt, Belgian Congo, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, etc.) it was exactly this expertise (and technical know-how) that at least partially informed Soviet foreign-policy initiatives.

In view of the above, the Nigerian Civil War offers a case in point. When, to the astonishment of international observers, the Soviets chose sides in the war by siding with the Federalists against Biafra, many of the arms that flowed to Lagos originated in Czechoslovakia, a country that had long established its reputation in Nigeria as an advanced manufacturing power (117-120). It is telling that both the Federalists and the Biafrans had come to count on Prague in their struggle. Prague's eventual decision to toe the Soviet line and supply Lagos with arms and aircraft was met with dismay by the Biafran secessionists, some of whom had close personal and educational links to both the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia.² The Biafran War also presents a fascinating example of foreign engagements serving as a litmus test of loyalty to the 'big brother' by Soviet satellites. Czechoslovakia's aid to Lagos became one of the points of debate and contention during the Prague Spring of 1968. As noted by political scientist S.E. Orobator, Czechoslovak reformers sought to disengage from Nigeria; a reconsideration of a conflict in a distant African nation and Prague's involvement in it emerged as one of the rallying points for the opposition. By dropping its support for the Federalists, the Dubcek government sought to distance itself from Moscow.³ By shifting their sympathies towards Biafra, the reformers underscored the seriousness of their intentions to break with the Soviets. In this regard, the Biafran

¹ See, John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006); Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2007). On 'decolonizing' of the Cuban agency in the Cold War, see Mark Laffey and Jutta Weldes, "Decolonizing the Cuban Missile Crisis," *International Studies Quarterly* 52:3 (2008): 555-577. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2008.00515.x>.

² See, Maxim Matusevich, *No Easy Row for a Russian Hoe: Ideology and Pragmatism in Nigerian-Soviet Relations, 1960-1991* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003).

³ S.E Orobator, "The Nigerian Civil War and the Invasion of Czechoslovakia," *African Affairs* 82:327 (April 1983): 201-214. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.afraf.a097507>.

war attained an important symbolic significance for the Czechoslovak dissidents (as it did, by the way, for some of the dissidents in the Soviet Union).

The last chapter of the book (Chapter 5) presents the story of Czechoslovakia's withdrawal from Africa that accelerated by the end of the 1960s, especially in the aftermath of the Soviet invasion of 1968. This reviewer is inclined to single out this particular chapter for some of its important insights. For the Soviets and their allies, the 1960s was the decade that contained a great but ultimately unfulfilled promise of Africa's advancement towards scientific socialism. While the early years of the decade saw the rise of Soviet-friendly regimes in Guinea, Ghana, Mali, and Algeria, accompanied by the Soviet Union's deepening commitments on the continent, the second half of the 1960s proved to be a disappointment as one after another of the Soviet friends in Africa were either overthrown (Ghana, Mali, Algeria) or distanced themselves from Moscow (Guinea). Muehlenbeck's work sheds new light on some of the dynamics of this process of alienation. He attributes the string of the Soviet camp's failures in Africa to both the peculiarities of Soviet (and Czechoslovak) engagement with Africa and a dramatic change in the U.S. interaction with independent African states. As exhaustively demonstrated by Russian historian Sergey Mazov in his recent work on the Soviet presence in West Africa (a book that clearly influenced some of Muehlenbeck's conclusions), African elites, who were keenly attuned to the necessities of modernization, grew disappointed with the quality and capabilities of Soviet (read: socialist) technology. Diplomats from the socialist countries often exhibited a striking ignorance of local cultures, and few of them were fluent in local or even colonial languages.⁴ Thousands of African students took advantage of generous educational scholarships offered to African nations by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. However, it has been often observed that few of the Africans who spent lengthy periods of time behind the proverbial 'iron curtain' came back enthused with Soviet ideology or taken by socialist lifestyles.⁵ Muehlenbeck apparently finds these arguments compelling, but also draws on the archival record (mostly U.S. State Department) to trace at least some of the Soviet and Czechoslovak failures to the new approach to Africa adopted by the administration of John F. Kennedy, an approach that paid off handsomely during the dramatic days of the Cuban Missile Crisis (October 1962), when the Kennedy administration successfully lobbied a number of West African nations to close their airspace and air fields to Soviet aircraft. On Kennedy's watch, the U.S. grew considerably less apprehensive of African nationalism and its potential to turn into Communism. Whereas Eisenhower rebuffed and snubbed such firebrands as Lumumba, Nkrumah, or Touré, Kennedy tried to engage with them. He also felt less shackled to the needs and sensibilities of America's West European allies, having made a strategic (and wise) decision to stop seeing red under every African leader's bed and to quietly 'wait out' the Soviets. And here too, Czechoslovakia came to play a role disproportionate to its modest size and limited economic potential. The Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 severely damaged the image of the Soviet Union and its satellites across Africa. The tragic events of August 1968 marked more than a failure of Czechoslovak reformers to leave Moscow's orbit, they also signified the end of the Czechoslovak 'moment' in Africa—an important but heretofore largely unknown chapter of the Cold War.

⁴ Sergey Mazov, *A Distant Front in the Cold War: The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956-1964* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

⁵ See, for example, Constantine Katsakioris, "The Soviet-South Encounter: Tensions in the Friendship with Afro-Asian Partners, 1945-1965," in Patryk Babiracki and Kenyon Zimmer, eds., *Cold War Crossing: International Travel and Exchange across the Soviet Block, 1940s-1960s* (Arlington: The University of Texas at Arlington, 2014).

Review by Sergey Mazov, Institute of World History, Russian Academy of Sciences

It is hard even for professional Africanists to imagine that studying the Czechoslovak involvement in Africa could result in revising some episodes of the Cold War on its African front. The role of Czechoslovakia in Africa was *a priori* considered insignificant given its relatively small territory and population, its undersized economy, and a well-established reputation as a Soviet proxy after 1949.

When Philip Muehlenbeck began to examine Czech archival documents pertaining to Africa, his original intention “was to use this research as a small part of a larger study on Cold War era competition for African civilian aviation markets.” Soon he realized that he had “stumbled upon a gold mine of archival materials which had the potential to change the way scholars think of the Cold War in Africa” (ix).

Muehlenbeck is not the first who started to develop this gold mine. Studies by Czech historians, primarily three encyclopedic-type reference books on Czechoslovak activities in sub-Saharan Africa¹, Francophone Africa², and the Middle East³ were of great help for his work. The merit of Muehlenbeck’s book is not only that he obtained new documents in Czech archives, but that he also complemented information collected by Czech colleagues with mostly unknown facts gleaned from documents contained in archives of Ghana, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States. He places the African policy of Czechoslovakia within the context of the Cold War and decolonization and has produced the first and yet the only monograph in English on the subject. Should he have used documents stored in Russian archives, his study would have been more comprehensive, for they contain scattered but important facts on Czechoslovak policies and actions in Africa. That said, it should be noted that many Russian documents on the Cold War in Africa are still closed to researchers.

The author organizes his book on a chronological principle and around major cases. It consists of three roughly chronological chapters on Czechoslovakia’s relations with two groups of African countries separated by two thematic chapters. Chapter 1 traces the establishment and the development from 1945 to 1962 of Prague’s relations with “conservative” (i.e. West-leaning) African states—Ethiopia, Egypt, Morocco, Somalia, Nigeria, the Belgian Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Dahomey (Benin), Niger, Tanganyika (Tanzania), Uganda, Kenya, and South Africa. Chapter 2 comprises case studies on Czechoslovakia’s relations with ‘radical’ (i.e. East-leaning) states—Guinea, Ghana, Mali, and the Congo. Chapter 3 explores Czechoslovakia’s arms supplies to Africa in 1954-1968. Chapter 4 examines Prague’s aviation assistance to the continent. The final chapter discusses the causes and effects of the decline in Czechoslovak involvement in Africa in 1962-1968. This structure results in breaks in the narrative and repeats that the author could have avoided if he had followed chronological principle. It would be logical to

¹ Petr Zidek and Karel Sieber, *Československo subsaharská Afrika v letech 1948-1989* [Czechoslovakia and Sub-Saharan Africa 1948-1989] (Prague: Ústav mezinárodních vstahů, 2007).

² Petr Zidek, *Československo a francouzská Afrika 1948-1968* [Czechoslovakia and French Africa 1948-1968] (Prague: Nakladatelství Libri, 2006).

³ Petr Zidek and Karel Sieber, *Československo a Blízký východ v letech 1948-1989* [Czechoslovakia and the Middle East 1948-1989] (Prague: Ústav mezinárodních vstahů, 2009).

include military and aviation assistance in the sections on relations with particular countries and to allocate a special section to the aid provided for African national liberation movements.

Muehlenbeck debunks the myth created by Western scholars during the Cold War that Czechoslovakia behaved in Africa merely as a Soviet proxy⁴, arguing that it “had significantly more autonomy from the Soviet Union in conducting its foreign relations with Africa than has previously been presumed” (2). The overall message that emerges from his book is that Czechoslovakia as a junior Soviet ally was more or less autonomous in pursuing its African policy, and sometimes deviated from Moscow’s line.

Czechoslovakia established relations with Africa before it joined the socialist camp in 1948, and maintained ties with the continent at a time when the Soviet Union was not active there. As a newly independent state created in Central Europe after World War I, Czechoslovakia pursued an active foreign policy in the interwar years. It established consulates and honorary consul offices in nearly every region of Africa where Ethiopia, Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, British East Africa, and the Belgian Congo all became important trading partners.

Czechoslovakia eagerly responded to the changes in Soviet foreign policy initiated by Premier Nikita Khrushchev, who consolidated power after Joseph Stalin’s death in 1953. He replaced the two-camp theory with a more sophisticated world view by recognizing neutralism as a separate and positive force and considering most African countries as being anti-imperialist rather than the preserves of imperialism. The USSR tried to exploit a growing anticolonial drive to its advantage and to penetrate Africa, a new and promising front in the Cold War.

The first move in Africa of Czechoslovakia as a socialist state was its spectacular arms deal with Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser. Then, in September 1955, Czechoslovakian weapons including aircraft, armored personnel carriers, tanks, and howitzer cannons began to pour into Egypt, sending shockwaves across the Western world. Muehlenbeck disputes the position of those historians who claim that it was actually a Soviet-Egyptian transaction with Prague simply serving as a tool of senior ally to promote its interest in the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa. Drawing on documents and facts, the author argues that Nasser approached Czechoslovakia for weapons. After long negotiations it agreed “on its own accord and for his own economic self-interest, and was not directed by Moscow to do so” (95). He does not belittle the role of the USSR, stressing that it provided financial and political backing for the deal and partially negotiated it.

Czechoslovakia was entrusted to be at the forefront of establishing relations with radical African states. The visit of the Czechoslovak trade delegation to Conakry in November 1958 was the first formal contact between newly independent Guinea and the Soviet bloc. The ČSSR opened its embassy in Conakry in March 1959, a month before the Soviet embassy appeared there. It contributed greatly to the salvation of Sékou Touré’s regime from the economic consequences of the blockade of Guinea declared by the West after it voted against the constitution of the Fifth French Republic and for complete and immediate independence in September 1958. Czechoslovakia became Guinea’s second biggest donor and provided extensive technical and economic assistance including arms supplies. Archival documents obtained by Muehlenbeck revealed that Czechoslovak politicians doubted the sincerity of Touré’s public anti-imperialist rhetoric (60). Their opinion turned out to

⁴ C. F. Beck, “Czechoslovakia’s Penetration of Africa, 1955-1962,” *World Politics* 15:3 (1963), 403. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/2009470>.

be more astute than that of their Soviet colleagues. To the Soviets the expulsion of their ambassador from Guinea in 1961 under a false pretext, as well as Toure's subsequent shift toward the West, came as a complete surprise.

The author rightly assumes that Czechoslovakia had taken advantage of the situation when Mali was looking for non-French alternative sources of aid following the break-up of the Mali Federation in August 1960, which had been initiated by Senegal with the apparent French backing, and the U.S. reluctance to meet Malian needs in solidarity with Paris. Moscow consented to Prague's initiation of a close relationship with Mali and its lobbying of the interests of the Soviet bloc there.

Radical African states more willingly cooperated with the ČSSR than with the Soviet Union in such a sensitive issue as security. Czechoslovakia granted the request of the Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah "to help finance and build in Ghana a guerilla training center in order to facilitate Nkrumah's support for national liberation movements from across Africa" (75). It also helped Ghana to reorganize its counterintelligence program and assist in an investigation of one of the attempts on Nkrumah's life. A salient issue of Czechoslovak-Malian relations was intelligence cooperation, especially assistance in building Malian counterintelligence capabilities.

Examining Czechoslovak policy toward the Congo, Muehlenbeck comes to a cogent conclusion that Moscow did not give Czechoslovakia a fair amount of autonomy in dealing with the Congolese crisis in 1960-1961, which turned 'the heart of Africa' into the first 'hot spot' of the Cold War in sub-Saharan Africa. According to handwritten notes from the meeting between Czechoslovak and Soviet officials in Moscow in 9 August 1960, "Moscow had told Prague that it should provide Lumumba with maximum amount of human and material assistance possible, with the exceptions of arms" (66). This despite the fact that it was exactly arms that Congolese premier really needed in order to suppress the separatist regime in Katanga. And Czechoslovakia, which was notorious for its arms exports to Africa, had to limit its aid to Lumumba's government the provisioning of "food, medicine, trucks, and logistical aviation assistance to help transport Ghanaian and Guinean troops to the Congo to participate in the UN Operation" (66). Vladimir Ronin, in his comprehensive study on Russian/Soviet contacts and relations with the Congo, argues that federal troops were advancing in Katanga in August 1960 "under the de facto command of three officers-advisers from Czechoslovakia."⁵ In the light of the facts given by Muehlenbeck, this claim, which is based on no reference to the sources, looks very doubtful.

The author makes a factual error in the section dealing with Czechoslovak relations with the self-proclaimed government of the Congo established in Stanleyville in December 1960 by Lumumba's successor, Antoine Gizenga. He writes that Pierre Mulele, Gizenga's envoy, "visited Prague from 5-14 March 1961 to sign trade agreement between Czechoslovakia and the government in Stanleyville and to negotiate ČSA's (Czechoslovak

⁵ Vladimir Ronin, *Russkoe Kongo 1870-1970. Kniga-memorial*. ["Russian Congo" 1870-1970. Book-memorial] Vol. II (Moscow: Dom Russkogo Zarubezh'ya imeni Aleksandra Solzhenitsyna Russkyi Pur', 2009), 406.

State Airlines) assistance in helping to develop a Congolese national airline” (82). It is an established fact that Mulele was in Moscow from 7-14 March 1961, conducting negotiations with senior Soviet officials.⁶

Junior Moscow allies could provide military aid to one of the warring parties in the conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa only with full Soviet approval. Muehlenbeck’s case study of Czechoslovakia’s attitude toward Biafra, in Eastern Nigeria, which unilaterally declared independence on 30 May 1967, is a good example. In Czechoslovak internal papers the federal Nigerian government is referred to as “feudal and Muslim,” while Biafra is characterized as “relatively more progressive.” The ČSSR considered supplying arms to Eastern Nigeria through a third-party intermediary, and Czechoslovak officials tried to convince their Soviet colleagues to support Biafra, but eventually, “albeit somewhat reluctantly,” Prague followed Moscow’s lead in upholding the federal government. It was no coincidence that during the short period of political liberalization in Czechoslovakia in 1968 its “foreign policy became increasingly pro-Biafra” (120-122).

Czechoslovakia’s influence in Africa began to wane in 1962. The ČSSR was able to establish seemingly solid relations with radical states, but these relations proved to be fragile and heavily dependent on the vagaries of local politics and on the effective political and economic intervention of Western powers. The ruling regimes in friendly states were overthrown (Algeria in 1965, Ghana in 1966, Mali in 1968) or shifted their Cold-War orientation toward the West (Guinea in 1962). Many economic projects failed, and bilateral trade declined. The fall of Khrushchev in 1964 resulted in reducing Soviet interest to sub-Saharan Africa. In 1968 the Prague Spring toppled from power the KSČ (Communist Party of Czechoslovakia) leaders who had initiated and implemented Czechoslovakia’s ambitious African policy. The new leaders, who came to power on the bayonets of the Warsaw Pact troops, which invaded Czechoslovakia in August 1968, found the former course in Africa wasteful, unnecessary, and “chose to greatly reduce Prague’s involvement on the continent and to defer guidance in its African policies to Moscow” (186).

In some instances Muehlenbeck’s book is somewhat controversial. He contrasts Prague’s policies towards ‘conservative’ and ‘radical’ states. In the first case, he argues, Czechoslovak involvement was “based primarily on mutually beneficial economic relations” whereas in the second the aim was to consolidate political and economic independence of the radical states “through generous aid” (50). This division seems artificial. Economic cooperation with the conservative states was not always profitable, and economic assistance to the radical states was not always altruistic. Czechoslovak African policies were predicated on a balanced mixture of pragmatic and ideological considerations. Rendering substantial assistance to the ideologically compatible regimes of Guinea, Ghana, Mali and the Congo the ČSSR did not sacrifice its national interest, which included recruiting potential allies. When dealing with the conservative states, ideological tribute was paid to upholding the ‘worldwide revolutionary process’ and financial and other aid was provided to indigenous Marxist organizations, such as the African Independence Party (PAI) in Senegal and Nigerien Democratic Union (UDN), more commonly known as Sawaba.

Sometimes mercantile interests prevailed over ideological principles. After 1956, Czechoslovak consulates first in Cape Town and then in Johannesburg remained the only Communist diplomatic outposts in southern Africa. The ČSSR valued relations with apartheid regime, which was frequently labelled ‘fascist’ by the media of socialist countries, for it was a lucrative trade partner and an important source of much needed hard

⁶ Sergey Mazov, *A Distant Front in the Cold War. The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956-1954* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 165-167.

currency. The USSR confidentially urged Czechoslovakia to maintain relations with the Republic of South Africa as it was interested in having a reliable intermediary to negotiate with Pretoria on bilateral issues. Until 1964 Prague resisted pressure from UN and officials and from either of South Africa's leading national liberation movements, the South African Communist Party (SACP) or the African National Congress (ANC) to close its consulate in South Africa. In 1964 it agreed to close the consulate, but continued trade relations with South Africa.

The author writes mostly on economic, political, and military aspects of Czechoslovak involvement in Africa, hardly paying attention to cultural ties and human relations. There is only one section—and an excellent one—on African students in Czechoslovakia. A brief overview of how the Czechoslovak media covered the events in Africa would be quite appropriate. Two famous travelers, the journalists and writers Jíří Hanzelka and Miroslav Zigmund, who crossed the African continent from north to south in a “Tatra 87” car and left vivid and informative travel essays translated into several languages,⁷ as well as the other Czechoslovak explorers of Africa, would have been worth mentioning.

The shortcomings of Muehlenbeck's book are too minor to call into question its importance as a comprehensive study and a valuable product of hard work in archives. The book should be read by those interested in Africa's history and politics, as well as in the history of the Cold War. The author has presented to the English-speaking world the unknown Czechoslovakia, as another European country, which used to be an important actor on the African scene.

⁷ Jíří Hanzelka, Miroslav Zigmund. *Afrika snů a skutečnosti* [Africa of Dreams and Reality]. 2. díl. Praha, Družstevní práce, 1952, 1. vydání.

Review by Alanna O'Malley, Leiden University

The activities of Czechoslovakia in Africa during the years of upheaval across the continent as colonialism was overthrown and newly-independent countries vied for the attention of the super-powers is a topic with great potential. This book, while uncovering previously under-studied sources in Czech and adding some interesting points of detail to some of the political crises across Africa during these years, does not fulfill its broader promise of providing “a fuller understanding of how the Cold War played out in Africa” (190). This is largely for two reasons. One is that the heavily narrative style of the book renders the reader in search of an argument, largely because much of the analysis, as it moves from country to country, lacks substantial grounding in the broader interwoven contexts of decolonization and the Cold War. Second, the combined chronological and thematic structure tends to treat subjects like Czechoslovakian arms sales and civil aviation assistance to African states in isolation from each other, making it difficult to trace the logical evolution of Prague’s approach towards Africa from 1945-1968. These issues are analyzed based on the author’s hypothesis that Prague had some autonomy from Moscow in its African policies. As provocative as this claim is, the evidence provided is largely circumstantial at best.

Muehlenbeck argues that arms deals between Czechoslovakia and African countries such as Ethiopia from 1928 and Egypt in 1955 were an effort to create relationships of dependency with Third-World states who would henceforth be reliant on Czechoslovakia for “training, spare parts and ammunition” (87). Before turning to the Czechoslovak-Egyptian arms deal in 1955, as an example of Prague’s autonomy from Moscow, Muehlenbeck provides some context by arguing that Prague’s sale of weapons to the Guatemalan leader Jacobo Arbenz Guzman in May 1954 was interpreted by the United States as a clear marker of Guzman’s Communist credentials, which led to its decision to overthrow his regime a month later. (90) For Egypt’s Prime Minister Gamel Abdel Nasser, an arms deal with Prague therefore, posed some danger of retaliation from the United States. The author contests the conventional portrayal of Czechoslovakia as a proxy for Moscow by pointing to Prague’s agency in shaping and executing the deal, despite any fears Nasser may have had about its outward appearance. Revealing that Czechoslovakia negotiated an arms deal with Egypt as early as 1951, he argues that after the Bandung Conference in April 1955, Nasser and the Soviet Ambassador to Egypt Daniel Solod agreed to a deal but opted to work out the negotiations in Prague, leading to a formal agreement between Egypt and Czechoslovakia on 12 September 1956 (92).

In this portrayal of events, Moscow is relegated to a minimal role, helping Cairo finance its purchase with goods and hard currency. This, in Muehlenbeck’s view, renders the deal “legitimately a commercial transaction between Czechoslovakia and Egypt” (94). It may indeed have been a commercial arrangement, but it was no doubt also political. As Egypt was the second largest importer of arms in the Third World behind China during these years, it seems unlikely that Moscow’s only role was to facilitate Egyptian finance for the deal. Indeed, the conclusion of a commercial transaction also served Soviet interests in expanding the Soviet Union’s influence with Nasser, who in turn was an important African ally to states such as Ghana, Mali and Morocco. Moreover, Prague’s ‘autonomous’ role in concluding an arms deal with Egypt is not reflected, nor developed further in the analysis of similar transactions with Sudan and Nigeria.

Muehlenbeck argues that Czechoslovakia resisted pressure from Moscow to conclude an arms deal with Khartoum in 1963 so that Soviet bloc could extend its influence in Africa. Prague feared the creation of an ‘anti-Egyptian bloc’ which would be detrimental to its prosperous relations with Nasser and may have led to a Sudanese alliance with Ethiopia which would militarize the region. (96) While this may have been the case, frustratingly, Muehlenbeck simply notes “It is unclear why Czechoslovakia was still uninterested in selling

weapons to the Sudanese” (96-97). Without providing a nuanced investigation of Prague’s position, nor a discussion of why Czechoslovakia sought to resist Moscow or how it did so, the author asserts in the next sentence that this situation demonstrates “Prague’s autonomy over its arms exports.” (97)

In Nigeria, the opposite situation prevailed as Prague followed Moscow’s lead by selling arms to the federal government of Nigeria in support of its campaign to quash the secession of Biafra in 1967. Maintaining the conception of arms deals as wholly commercial ventures without political motivation, the author argues that: “For Prague, this was a strictly commercial transaction, as it leaned towards supporting Biafra politically” (120). He concludes several lines later that having failed to persuade Moscow to support Biafra, “Prague, albeit somewhat reluctantly, followed Moscow’s lead in supporting the Gowon government” (120). This is in complete contrast to the hypothesis that Prague had autonomy over the Czech arms trade and in fact suggests that it was unable to prevent its own weapons being supplied to the Nigerian Government for use against the Biafra leaders towards whom Czechoslovakia was politically sympathetic.

Where there is real room to assert the central argument is in the analysis of Alexander Dubcek support for Biafra in 1968 when Prague replaced military aid to Lagos with humanitarian aid to Biafra. Muehlenbeck marks this as “one of the few instances during the Cold War when a Warsaw Pact member differed publicly with the Soviet Union’s military assistance policy” (122). However, this is an argument which, he acknowledges, has already been made by Stanley Orobator and Bruce Porter (224).¹

Exacerbating the problem of the use of select and circumstantial evidence to back up many of his main arguments (although this could also be the result of limited access to Czech files) is also the way in which interesting points of detail are presented but not substantially developed. Muehlenbeck argues that Czechoslovakia became “guilt[y] by association” (103) by financing and supporting Ghanaian Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah’s subversive activities against his conservative neighbors, who did not share his Pan-African dream, in Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Togo. When the Togolese Premier Sylvanus Olympio was assassinated in Lome in 1961, “Czechoslovakia’s relations with Togo became practically nonexistent.” (104) Again, a discussion of exactly how this happened, what role Czechoslovakia played in the assassination, and what were the affects with other African allies could have transformed this detail into a new and potentially useful argument to support the main hypothesis, rather than a tangential aside as it appears here. Another example, which brings some lively imagery to the landscape of Czech relations across the continent, is the revelation that Uganda paid for an arms deal with Prague in 1968 with the largest transport of exotic animals captured from the wild. But without further elaboration, the reader is left to speculate on how exactly such a deal was negotiated and executed.

The role that Czechoslovakia played in acting as a serious supporter of African nationalism is one that Muehlenbeck develops well, particularly in examining Czech activities in Angola. He claims that independence leaders such as the National Liberation Front of Angola (FNLA) leader Holden Roberto and Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile (GRAE) Foreign Minister Jonas Savimbi turned towards Czechoslovakia in 1963 because “unlike the West it was serious in supporting African national liberation

¹ Stanley Orobator, “The Nigerian Civil War and the Invasion of Czechoslovakia”, *African Affairs* 82:327 (April 1983): 201-214. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.afraf.a097507>. Bruce D. Porter, *The USSR in Third World Conflicts: Soviet Arms and Diplomacy in Local Wars, 1945-1980* (New York: Cambridge University Press), 103.

movements [sic] fight against colonialism” (108). Moscow, however, supported the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) under Agostinho Neto and so unsurprisingly, Prague “decided to maintain contact with the FNLA, but not to provide it with material support at this juncture” (108-109). Furthermore, a paragraph later the author notes that “after consultations with the Soviet Union, Algeria and Ghana in January 1965, Prague decided to restore financial support for the MPLA and end its relationship with the FNLA” (109). Even in the area of arms sales, the earlier arena for autonomy, under an agreement with the Soviets regarding Angola, Czechoslovakia conceded not to supply weapons to the MPLA “because the Soviets wanted to control the flow of weapons themselves” (109). The Angolan appeal to Czechoslovakia should have been analyzed in the wider context, especially the Western vote to defeat a United Nations (UN) resolution calling for Lisbon to grant Angola independence in 1965. Here, Roberto and Savimbi’s appeals to Prague are analyzed as being only on the basis of Czechoslovakia’s support of anti-colonialism when in reality this was also a strategic effort to secure access to arms and court the attention of the Soviet bloc as was characteristic of opportunistic African nationalist leaders. In any event, Moscow again called the shots in Prague’s relationship with rebel forces, despite whatever anti-colonial assurances passed between Czech diplomats and the FNLA.

Surprisingly, Czechoslovakia almost entirely disappears by the last chapter which, echoing Muehlenbeck’s earlier work, is much more focused on the increasing U.S. role in Africa, under the Presidency of John F. Kennedy. Where one would expect some analysis of Prague’s different approach towards Africa after the Prague Spring in 1968, instead, there are pages on the details of the State Department’s relationship with Guinea and Mali. Here again is a good moment to have carved out more clearly how Prague conceived of and approached African leaders after the coup or how policies changed and perceptions shifted. Moreover, in order to follow the logic of earlier arguments, at this juncture reorientation of Prague’s approach to Africa visa-a-vis Moscow should have been traced. Only four pages are devoted to how the election of the more hard-line leader Gustáv Husák impacted upon Czechoslovakia’s approach to Africa, and the fate of the commercial transactions that had earlier been agreed. (183-187)

The inconsistencies of the book’s arguments are hindered further by the scant attention paid to typographic and academic details. Unfortunate errors have Katanga ‘succeeding’ instead of seceding from Congo in 1960 (65), when the “General Assembly voted to send a peacekeeping contingent to the Congo” (65) when it was in fact the Security Council. The Congolese leader is wrongly referred to as Antoine ‘Ginzenga’ instead of ‘Gizenga.’ (83). Moreover the author refers to Guinea, Mali and Ghana as ‘radical’ African states, despite the fact that they were in fact the closest allies of the Soviet bloc throughout the period under study.

The author pivots the whole narrative around the argument that Prague was antonymous from Moscow in its relations in Africa, when the evidence is consistently to the contrary. Rather, Muehlenbeck’s very interesting and new information on Czech activities could usefully have been used to question why the Soviet bloc’s penetration of Africa was not more successful given the large and clearly well-developed network of Soviet and Czech influence with African leaders. This would have been an important contribution to tracing the trajectories of Soviet power in Africa which would have added an illuminating perspective on the evolution of the Cold War across the continent. A more compelling contribution would also have fleshed out the role of smaller states in the Cold War, thereby demarking the complexity, rather than the teleology, of Soviet bloc activity in Africa. Instead, this largely factual account, which lacks context and seems very much to be driven by an overly close reading of the archives, does not contribute a clear perspective, thus missing an opportunity to turn this book into an enlightened contribution to the historiography of the Cold War in Africa.

Author's Response by Philip E. Muehlenbeck, George Washington University

I want to thank Tom Maddux for organizing this roundtable, Andy DeRoche for providing the introduction, and Diane Labrosse for editing it. I am honored and grateful that scholars the caliber of Maxim Matusevich, Sergey Mazov, and Alanna O'Malley took the time to engage with my scholarship and participate in this roundtable.

Czechoslovakia in Africa was essentially a side project for me. I had not initially intended to write a book about Czechoslovakia's involvement in Africa until I discovered the wealth of archival material available.¹ Despite the fact that I had previously written a book about United States policy toward Africa during the 1950s and 1960s, I had very little knowledge of the role that Czechoslovakia played on the continent during those years.² After discovering that the only publications on this topic were written in Czech, I decided to write this book so the English speaking world could discover the intense involvement Czechoslovakia had with Africa during the Cold War.

During the process of researching the book a theme began to emerge that Czechoslovakia had significantly more autonomy from the Soviet Union in conducting its foreign relations with Africa than has previously been presumed. Czechoslovakia's involvement in Africa occurred before it was a Soviet satellite, and even predated World War II. Therefore, it is difficult to sustain an argument that communist Czechoslovakia only became involved with Africa at the behest of Moscow, when Prague had already developed ties to nearly every region of the continent before Czechoslovakia went Communist, and at a time when the Soviet Union completely ignored Africa (and before most of Africa became self-governing, for that matter). Moreover, at the beginning of 1960, while the Soviet Union only had formal diplomatic relations with two states in sub-Saharan Africa, Czechoslovakia had already established relations with five, and Prague would continue to have more embassies in Africa than Moscow during the period covered in my study.

Although O'Malley claims that "the book renders the reader in search of an argument" I feel that my thesis—that in its African policies Czechoslovakia had significantly more autonomy from the Soviet Union than was previously believed to have been the case, and in fact that it was often Prague, rather than Moscow, which led the way for Soviet bloc efforts on the African continent—is stated quite clearly multiple times within the introduction. Furthermore, the other two reviewers were clearly able to identify this thesis.

One of my concerns when writing this book was that scholars whose research focuses on the Soviet Union may be reluctant to accept an argument that Czechoslovakia's role in the Cold War in Africa was not completely subservient to Moscow. I was pleasantly surprised then when Mazov and Matusevich—two of the most eminent scholars in Soviet-African relations—accepted the validity of this thesis in their reviews. Mazov writes that my book "debunks the myth created by Western scholars during the Cold War that Czechoslovakia behaved in Africa merely as a Soviet proxy" and Matusevich adds that the book makes "a

¹ The primary resource material for this book is primarily from the Archive of the Czech Foreign Ministry and the National Archives of the Czech Republic, both located in Prague.

² Philip E. Muehlenbeck, *Betting on the Africans: John F. Kennedy's Courting of African Nationalist Leaders* (Oxford University Press, 2012). See the H-Diplo Roundtable on the book at <https://issforum.org/roundtables/PDF/Roundtable-XIV-3.pdf>.

compelling and well documented case for the reassessment of Czechoslovakia’s involvement in Africa.” Although I was unable to utilize Soviet documents in my research, it is worth pointing out that Mazov suggests that the Soviet archives would support, rather than discredit, my thesis. I also note that Natalia Telepneva—using both Soviet and Czechoslovak archival materials—reached the same conclusion in her recently completed dissertation on Soviet bloc assistance to the national liberation movements in Portuguese Africa.³

The level of coordination between the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact junior allies in the developing world as well as the degree of autonomy each Eastern European state had in pursuing its own policies independent of Moscow is an understudied topic in Cold War studies. *Czechoslovakia in Africa* argues that Prague had substantial autonomy in its African policies, but presumably the relative level of autonomy of Moscow’s junior allies varied over time, location, and between Eastern European capitals. I have gathered the findings of a group of historians working in the archives of each of the former Soviet bloc states in an attempt to tackle this question more comprehensively in a future project.⁴

I am perplexed by O’Malley’s criticism that I should not have referred to Ghana, Guinea, and Mali as radical states because in her words “they were in fact the closest allies of the Soviet bloc throughout the period under study.” Indeed, within Africa these states were the closest to the Soviet bloc, and that is exactly why they are referred to as ‘radical states.’ This is not my nomenclature, but rather is a common descriptor used extensively within contemporary government documents from the United States, United Kingdom, and Czechoslovakia. Additionally, nearly all scholars of the Cold War in Africa (including Mazov multiple times within his review for this roundtable as well as in his own book on Soviet involvement in West Africa and the Congo) use this terminology as well.⁵ I highly doubt that anyone who studies the Cold War in West Africa would question referring to these states as ‘radical.’ This comment, along with others such as her reference to the “election” of Gustáv Husák, make questionable statements about how communist governments functioned, and undermine the criticisms in the review of *Czechoslovakia in Africa*.

O’Malley’s review also makes several factual mistakes (such as the aforementioned reference to a leader of a communist country having been elected) and reaches conclusions which lack nuance. It is unclear, for example, how she determined that “Moscow again called the shots in Prague’s relationship with rebel forces [in Portuguese Africa].” She does not provide any sources to support this claim. Basing my argument on Czechoslovak language primary sources, I have argued that it was Czechoslovakia, and not the Soviet Union, which was at the forefront of the Soviet-bloc effort to aid groups such as the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) and the People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). Telepneva (again utilizing both Soviet and Czechoslovak archival material) also concludes that Prague was sending military and economic aid to the national liberation movements in Portuguese Africa well

³ Natalia Telepneva, “Our Sacred Duty: The Soviet Union, the Liberation Movements in the Portuguese Colonies, and the Cold War, 1961-1975,” Ph.D. diss., The London School of Economics and Political Science, 2014.

⁴ Philip E. Muehlenbeck and Natalia Telepneva, eds., *Warsaw Pact Intervention in the Third World: Aid and Influence in the Cold War* (IB Tauris, forthcoming).

⁵ Sergey Mazov, *A Distant Front in the Cold War: The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956-1964* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2010).

in advance of the Soviet Union (and without consulting Moscow in beforehand).⁶ Similarly, O'Malley concludes that because Moscow derived political benefit from the 1955 Czechoslovak arms sale to Egypt that this somehow disproves my argument that Czechoslovakia's involvement was primarily determined by economic, and not political motivations, as if the two cannot be both be true (I explicitly argue that the deal was primarily political for Moscow and economical for Prague).

Regarding Mazov's statement that Congo-Stanleyville government official Pierre Mulele could not have been in Prague from 5-14 March 1961 because "it is an established fact" that he was in Moscow from March 7-14, I have no reason to doubt Mazov's claim. My source for the date range of Mulele's visit to Prague was a Czech-language secondary source, not a primary-source document. It was common for African leaders to make a stop in Prague either on their way to or from Moscow, so it is probable that Mulele was in Prague from March 5-7 before continuing on to Moscow and was likely in Prague again on the 14th on his way back to Africa (since most Africans travelled to the Soviet bloc through Prague via Czechoslovak State Airlines).

Mazov also makes an astute point when he writes that "Czechoslovak African policies were predicated on a balanced mixture of pragmatic and ideological considerations." This is undoubtedly true and it was not my intention to imply otherwise. For Czechoslovak policymakers, economic considerations were more prominent in relations with 'conservative' states and ideological considerations were more important in relations with the 'radical' states but this was not a zero sum or either/or proposition.

I will be the first to admit the shortcomings of *Czechoslovakia in Africa*. It was never intended to be a comprehensive history of Czechoslovakia's bilateral relations with any given country, or even Africa as a whole. Rather, its goal was to demonstrate the breadth and diversity of Prague's relations with Africa from 1945-1968 by summarizing its relations with a wide spectrum of African states. There is plenty of room for other scholars to build upon this foundation. Further research in Soviet and African archives or utilization of oral history interviews and Czechoslovak newspaper and cultural sources would allow us to learn even more about Czechoslovakia's activities in Africa. To my surprise, a few enterprising graduate students have already contacted me stating that *Czechoslovakia in Africa* has inspired them to study Czechoslovak-African relations as their doctoral research projects. For an author there is no more gratifying way to validate the worth of a book project than that.

⁶ Telepneva, "Our Sacred Duty."