

inspirational figure of the early women's social movement — Madam Efunroye Tinubu (1805–87), a business tycoon and a powerful political voice in Abeokuta and Lagos. The memory of Tinubu became a symbol of the social movement during the Abeokuta tax revolts. For the women who led the revolts of the new era, the past inspired and provided symbolic validation to the women's social movements. Critical to a broader understanding of women's place in colonial change, as in the case of Abeokuta, is how three elements of the new political formations — the AWU, the traditional authorities represented by the Alake Ademola, and the Egba Central Council — dealt with the crisis and tensions that developed in Egba society because of the taxation of women.

The book is excellently researched and written, and is an outstanding contribution to the history and understanding of the gendered nature of social movements in colonial Nigeria. It demonstrates how women negotiated the colonial encounter and the patriarchal structures of both the colonial state and indigenous politics. Yet, the book would benefit from a regional/national approach that helps the readers understand the local and transnational ways people forged ideas and interpreted the changes they confronted and how the conditions developing in Abeokuta occurred elsewhere and were often forged by the same factors. The Great Upheaval centralized women's political engagement and activism in colonial Nigeria and the changing political landscape of the 1950s, particularly women's activism that resulted from the distinctive political moment in Abeokuta. The book ties several themes including politics, ethnic identity, gender, and women's social movement into an easily accessible and readable book.

doi:10.1017/S0021853723000750

Racism, Study, and Cold War Solidarities

African Students in East Germany, 1949–1975

By Sara Pugach. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2022. Pp. 274. \$75.00, hardcover (ISBN: 9780472075560); \$29.95, paperback (ISBN: 9780472055562).

Eric Burton 

University of Innsbruck

(Received 21 June 2023; accepted 9 December 2023)

Keywords: Cold War; education; international relations; migration; racism

Sara Pugach's *African Students in East Germany* recounts the educational migration of thousands of young Africans to attend universities and other institutions of higher learning in socialist East Germany. Focusing on the 1950s and 1960s, Pugach bridges various fields, including postwar histories of Germany and Africa, transnational histories of migration, and the overlapping dynamics of Cold War competition and decolonization. While there is a growing body of articles and book chapters on African student migration to communist-ruled countries, Pugach's account is among the first monographs on the subject.¹

¹Recent monographs on African students and (worker-)trainees in state-socialist Eastern Europe include M. C. Schenck, *Remembering African Labor Migration to the Second World. Socialist Mobilities between Angola, Mozambique, and East*



The book's motivation emerges from a seeming paradox. As mentioned in both the introduction and conclusion, Pugach is responding to accounts of racism that have received new salience with the success of right-wing organizations in Germany, particularly (though by no means exclusively) in the formerly socialist East. Her study asks how this is this possible, given that representatives of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) championed their state's role as an ally of African states and liberation movements fighting against colonialism, apartheid, and racism.

Her analysis suggests that even under the conditions of an officially antiracist regime between 1949 and 1990, numerous African students experienced discrimination at various levels. However, as racism was seen as corollary of capitalism that socialist society had overcome, these instances were not publicly acknowledged. Pugach argues that this contradiction between antiracist ideology and racist discrimination on the ground grew from earlier forms of racialized thinking in imperial, interwar, and Nazi Germany that 'carried over into the GDR' (11). *African Students in East Germany* suggests a contradiction between superficial, official antiracism — the 'surface' of educational anti-imperialist support, as Pugach puts it (129) — and a deep-seated tradition of racialized thinking in terms of citizenship and belonging that informed the views of some GDR bureaucrats and citizens. One may ask here to what extent this story of lingering imperial and fascist attitudes is particularly German; and one may add that antiracist thought and anti-imperial solidarity, too, have deep historical roots, even though not all East Germans might have embraced or practiced these ideals uniformly.

African Students in East Germany makes three important contributions, all of which profit from Pugach's skillful use of her Africanist perspective and training, which has often been lacking in the history of African migration to Eastern bloc countries. First, Pugach successfully highlights the complicated nature of students' trajectories prior to their arrival in East Germany, particularly when their home countries were not yet politically independent. In the early 1960s, many young Zambians and Kenyans had to pass through the Tanganyikan towns of Mbeya and Dar es Salaam or Egypt's capital Cairo before they could catch planes and ships to the Eastern bloc. It was largely thanks to arrangements made by representatives of liberation movements with offices in these cities that overland and overseas journeys became possible, even if they frequently remained hazardous and uncertain (Chapter Two). The book is both broad and comparative and bracingly specific, as when Pugach discusses the bureaucratic intricacies and antitribalism that determined how official scholarships to study abroad were allocated in postcolonial Ghana (Chapter Three). Such novel insights are possible due to Pugach's intense work with archival sources from Accra, Nairobi, and Lusaka, in addition to mining the huge repositories of East German universities, ministries, mass organizations, and the state security service Stasi. Through her multiarchival work and lucid analysis that connects various national, colonial, and postcolonial contexts, Pugach unveils the variety of actors and interests at play.

Second, Pugach demonstrates the gendered character of pathways and experiences. Due to a number of factors, only 10 to 12 per cent of all students from African countries were women (142). Even Zambia's United National Independence Party (UNIP), which Pugach singles out for its exceptional dedication to promote female students' mobility, could not overcome many of the obstacles that remained. In the GDR, officials' dealings with sexual relationships, pregnancies (abortions were illegal until 1972), and marriages had to navigate imperatives of solidarity, socialist morality, and the often restrictive attitudes of sending states (or anticolonial parties such as UNIP) (Chapter Five). A case in point is a Nigerian student who was sentenced and expelled for his alleged role as a middleman in facilitating over sixty illegal abortions between

Germany (Cham, 2023); J. Otto, *Fachkräfte für die Entwicklung. Fortbildungskooperationen zwischen Ghana und den beiden deutschen Staaten, 1956–1976* (Berlin, 2022); A. Schade, *Das Exil von ANC-Mitgliedern in der DDR. Eine transnationale Verflechtungsgeschichte um Solidarität im Kalten Krieg* (Berlin, 2022); S. Boltovskaja, *Bildungsmigranten aus dem subsaharischen Afrika in Moskau und St. Petersburg: Selbst- und Fremdbilder* (Herbolzheim, 2014).

1962 and 1965, having ‘crudely transgressed against the morality of our workers’, as the court’s verdict put it (141).

The third major contribution of the book is the perceptive and wide-ranging, yet nuanced portrayal of African student politics (Chapter Four). Pugach shows that students were not only moved by grievances about racism and other challenges encountered in Eastern Europe, but also influenced by increasing authoritarianism, regime changes, and violent conflict in countries like Guinea, Nigeria, Kenya, and Ghana. These dynamics shaped the lives of students abroad, who in turn sought to influence the futures of their countries. In such situations, students also pointed out the hypocrisy of the East German state when it sided with oppressive African elites for diplomatic reasons rather than supporting popular movements, including Marxist-Leninist groups (127).

In reconstructing these interactions and underlying interests, Pugach acknowledges the epistemological limits of the archival record. Ulterior motives and feelings of anxiety, for instance regarding interracial relationships, are rarely explicit in the accounts of East German functionaries, and information on graduates’ lives after their sojourn in East Germany is often unavailable. This is where Pugach’s occasional use of memoirs and interviews becomes particularly important, to complement and complicate information drawn from the transnational paper trail. Although the footnotes show that most of the analysis in the chapters relies on archival records, these alternative sources add texture and important counterperspectives.

Pugach ends her account not with German reunification in 1990, but instead in 1975. After the Ethiopian Revolution and independence in Mozambique and Angola, the composition of the student body in the GDR changed, at the same time that an influx of so-called contract workers diversified the trajectories and experiences of Africans in East Germany. Additionally, economic concerns led the state to partially commercialize scholarships. The history of the remaining fifteen years and the aftermath of German reunification thus still remains to be written.

Although Pugach emphasizes a particular German history of racialized thinking and practices, she does not make a case for a (East) German *Sonderweg*, a special path of history unlike those of all other European countries. In a global history perspective, it would be interesting to relate Pugach’s work with accounts of the contradictions between official antiracist solidarity and unacknowledged discrimination elsewhere — given that these tensions also shaped institutions and experiences of African students in state-socialist Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and China, as well as nonaligned India and Egypt.

Historians of Africa will appreciate Pugach’s insights into the transnational character of political activism, state-building, and development strategies through student migration. Seemingly effortlessly, she integrates histories of Germany and Africa, people and states, high politics and daily lives to form one coherent whole. The book provides valuable insights into the complexities of African student migration to communist-ruled countries in general and their experiences within East Germany in particular. It will be required reading on the subject for many years to come.

doi:10.1017/S0021853723000695