

2017

H-Diplo

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Article Review
No. 707
30 June 2017

Article Review Editors: Thomas Maddux and Diane Labrosse
Web and Production Editor: George Fujii

George Roberts. "The Assassination of Eduardo Mondlane: FRELIMO, Tanzania, and the Politics of Exile in Dar es Salaam." *Cold War History* 17:1 (February 2017): 1-19. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14682745.2016.1246542>.

URL: <http://tiny.cc/AR707>

Review by **Natalia Telepneva**, UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES)

The assassination of Front for Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) leader Eduardo Mondlane has long been considered one of the greatest unsolved mysteries in the history of post-colonial Africa. Compelling and well-written, George Roberts's article reconstructs the events leading up to Mondlane's murder in February 1969 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's capital, which serves as a setting for various actors in the article.

While Mondlane's assassination forms part of the narrative, the article provides a detailed analysis of exile politics in Dar es Salaam, a "Cold War city at the intersection of Cold War and decolonisation" (5). Dar es Salaam is transformed into a 'Cold War city' in part because of the politics of Tanzania's first president, Julius Nyerere, who hosted and supported a number of African liberation movements, FRELIMO being the most important. Roberts provides a sense of the political and social life in the capital city, filled with men and women from all walks of life—local politicians, foreign diplomats, journalists, spies—who would gather in restaurants, hotels, and bars to make deals, exchange news, and gossip. However, it was the 1964 Revolution in Zanzibar, and the subsequent turbulence in East Africa, that thrust Dar es Salaam into the international spotlight, thus intensifying the Cold War in the region. Dar es Salaam, or 'Rumourville,' as Nyerere called his capital, thus becomes a focal point of local and global rivalries. With its main headquarters based in Dar es Salaam, FRELIMO's internal divisions were affected by and contributed to local, regional and global rivalries, as the U.S., China, the Soviet Union, and Tanzanian political actors all vied for influence over the liberation movement.

Roberts analyses divisions inside FRELIMO and how these contributed to the crisis in the movement that erupted in 1968 and that was contributed to Mondlane's assassination the following year. Perhaps the most interesting part of the narrative for international historians is the analysis of the intersection between Tanzanian, FRELIMO, and Cold War politics, specifically the discussion of Lawi Sijaona, an influential official in the office of Tanzania's second Vice President, Rashid Kawawa and his campaign to discredit Mondlane. The final section in the article is dedicated to the key question: as to "Who killed Eduardo Mondlane." While Roberts has not found the 'smoking gun' that solves the murder, he goes through various

theories about the assassination, with evidence pointing to Mondlane's rivals inside FRELIMO, Tanzanian politicians, international actors and the Portuguese secret service, especially Aginter press, a clandestine Portuguese anti-Communist organization. The very nature of the mystery, the silences and debates surrounding it, raise interesting questions about the nature of Portuguese state, post-colonial African politics, and the role of (dis)information and propaganda during the Cold War.

In many ways, the article is an example of a recent trend in Cold War history that attempts to bring the so-called 'peripheral actors' into the mainstream study of global developments. While the article makes references to Soviet, U.S., and East German actors in the unfolding drama, the main emphasis is on the interactions of exiles from Mozambique and their Tanzanian hosts in the African city of Dar es Salaam. The article thus contributes to a recent trend of 'decentralising' the Cold War narrative and placing local actors and developments in conversation with the global. Roberts thus reinstates the case that Africans were the subjects of their own liberation. While the author does not, with the exception of some good memoirs, use many primary African documents, the very extensive use of secondary literature, and Western and East German documents provide a good sense of politics in the city.¹ The main achievement of the article is that the author gives a fairly equal portrayal of various factors in FRELIMO's micro politics: internal rivalries, Tanzanian politics, and the Cold-war context.

The choice of Dar es Salaam as the setting and analytical framework for the article thus has many advantages. Indeed, the framework of a city allows for analysis of individuals and groups in specific geographical locations—a useful tool to move beyond national or binary 'Cold-war' categories. This article thus builds on early work on cities such as London or Paris as crucial spaces for interaction and exchange for anti-imperialist activists.² Dar es Salaam is more than a setting for the unfolding drama. Roberts argues that not only did Mondlane use Dar es Salaam's "position at the epicentre of international politics in sub-Saharan Africa" in a way to attract aid and support, but that it was used by FRELIMO's rivals to subvert it (18). This is one of the most interesting arguments in the article, and it adds a great deal to current literature on the diplomacy of the liberation movements.³

However, it is still unclear that Mondlane's assassination—the ultimate act of subversion—had anything to do with the city's permissive and rumour-ridden environment. While the author seems more inclined to believe that the assassination was undertaken by Sijaona working in collaboration with the Portuguese, the article asks more compelling questions about the murder and the surrounding investigation than it answers. That is not the author's fault; from the outset Roberts states that solving the mystery is not the goal of the

¹ Sérgio Vieira, *Participei, por isso Testemunho* (Maputo: Ndjira, 2011); Helder Martins, *Porquê Sakrani?: Memórias Dum Médico Duma Guerrilha Esquecida* (Maputo: Terceiro Milênio, 2001)

² Marc Matera, *Black London: The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015); Michael Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); James R. Brennan, *Taifa: Making Nation and Race in Urban Tanzania* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012)

³ For a recent discussion of current research into the international links of the liberation movements in Southern Africa, see Jocelyn Alexander, JoAnn McGregor & Blessing-Miles Tendi "The Transnational Histories of Southern African Liberation Movements: An Introduction", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 43:1 (2017): 1-12.

article. Still, the gap makes it difficult to establish a link between local politics, the global context, and Mondlane's assassination.

The article leaves us wanting more in terms of the analysis as to what daily life in Dar es Salaam actually meant for the politics of its inhabitants—the daily interactions that people had, the personal contacts that were forged, the ideational implications of such exchanges, and the implications this had for the struggles in southern Africa. Was Dar es Salaam under Nyerere for the anti-colonial nationalists what London or Paris was for black anti-imperialist activists in the interwar period? While the article's conclusions are limited, the author has done an excellent job of illuminating the various angles of a fascinating international episode that asks hugely interesting questions about the interplay between the local and the global during the Cold War in Africa.

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