

Colloquium “In from the Cold: Eastern Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa and Cultural Diplomacy during the Cold War”, Bucharest, June 17, 2016.

Organized by:

The Regional Francophone Centre for Advanced Research in Social Sciences (CEREFREA Villa Noël), Bucharest

In partnership with:

National Archives of Romania

Portuguese Embassy in Bucharest

Camões Institute for Cooperation and Language, Portugal

Call for Papers

In 1955, the Afro-Asian Conference held at Bandung, Indonesia, was a historical marker. Representatives of newly independent states came together to discuss the fate of African and Asian nations in face of the superpower’s political ambitions over the “Third World.” The “Bandung spirit” would epitomize the commitment to anti-colonialism and neutralism during the Cold War. In 1961, the Belgrade Summit crystallized this state of affairs as it advocated an eminently independent path for the “Third World”: the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). This shift from neutralism to non-alignment co-existed with important historical events, such as the Sino-Soviet split and the Sino-Indian conflict. In the early 1960s, as the “Second world” of socialist countries was strongly divided and the decolonization process in Africa took off, new ideological and political fronts were opened in the global Cold War. Africa became an important battleground on which a myriad of political projects were confronted and played out, from anti-colonialism and socialist solidarity to “third worldism”, non-alignment or Pan-africanism. In this context, cultural diplomacy became an important strategy for building cultural ties and fostering forms of political identification among different, sometimes estranged, actors.

Drawing on these premises, the colloquium intends to address the practices of cultural diplomacy between Sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern Europe or the “Second and the Third world”, as entry path for the intricacies of the global Cold War. **One persistent gap within the literature is the comprehensive discussion of the educational, scientific and cultural exchanges between European socialist countries to Sub-Saharan ones.**

The scope of the colloquium is to analyze the pursuit of foreign policy through cultural channels, from broadcasting to educational programmes and to various forms of cultural, scientific and personnel exchanges. We are interested in the agency of African and Eastern European actors as they negotiated their place and status in Cold War hierarchies, beyond the Soviet hegemony. While USSR’s involvement in Sub-Saharan Africa has been widely explored, there is still little scholarship on the connections between Sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern European countries such as Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia or the former Yugoslavia, but not only.

The colloquium invites scholars from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds (history, political sciences, sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, art history, etc.) to offer a multifaceted reading of how the cultural, institutional, political, and individual interactions between socialist Eastern Europe and postcolonial Africa came into being under the impact of the global Cold War and decolonization. We encourage interested scholars to send paper proposals for 20 minutes presentations on any of the following

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thematic areas (topics related to these areas will also be welcomed):

- *Diplomatic exchanges*: official visits and the performative politics of cultural diplomacy.
- *Educational and Scientific Exchanges*: African students in socialist Eastern Europe and Eastern European teachers and instructors in Africa.
- *Actors and Agency*: individuals and organizations involved in cultural diplomacy.
- *Cultural and Scientific Partnerships*: Africa and Eastern Europe in literature, visual and performing arts.
- *Ideology and Cultural Diplomacy*: Ideological and cultural fronts in the Cold War.
- *The domestic politics of diplomacy*: establishing the nexus between domestic and foreign policy.

Potential contributors should submit a short abstract (no more than 200 words) and a brief biography (no more than 15 lines) to the organizers (iolanda.vasile@gmail.com, caio.simoed@graduateinstitute.ch), **no later than May 1st, 2016**, Documents can be submitted in **either English or French**.

Notification of acceptance will be sent out on **May 5, 2016**.

While the conference will be bilingual, in English and French, no simultaneous translation will be provided.

We intend to publish a collection of the presentations as an edited volume or journal issue.

A photo exhibition on Ceaușescu’s official visits to Angola (1979, 1987) and Mozambique (1983), created in partnership with Romanian National Archives, will be inaugurated during the colloquium. If speakers would like to present any photographic or poster material at the colloquium, please state so in your abstract.

Limited funds are available to cover the expenses (travel or accommodation) for French-speaking colleagues affiliated with AUF (Francophone University Association) member institutions in Eastern and Central Europe. Please indicate in your acceptance email whether you will be seeking this funding.

Organizing Committee:

Caio Simões de ARAÚJO (University of Geneva)

Iolanda VASILE (Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra & West University, Timisoara)

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