

Mozambican president and liberation leader. Dr. Betancourt later worked as a doctor on a mission in Angola and cites his family's history as a motivation to volunteer for Ebola response in West Africa.

The past is always present in Cuba's relationship with Africa. Included in *Red Zone* are a number of photographs; images of the Ebola response are paired with older images of Cuban doctors and leaders in other African nations during their independence movements. Gómez writes much about Cuba's history of solidarity with the continent, yet he cannot avoid placing that solidarity in the context of Cuba's fraught relationship with the United States. This can be distracting from the stated purpose of the book. A unique feature of Cuban history is that it created this solidarity on its own, independent of larger nations. Cuba sent volunteers to West Africa at the direct invitation of the affected countries, based on their shared histories, and did not need or wait for coordination from any other government. Why center the United States in a story about Cuba-African relations?

On the other hand, there would be no Henry Reeve International Medical Brigade without that fraught U.S.-Cuba history. This special medical unit was founded in 2005 as a response to President Bush's refusal of Cuban offers of assistance to areas affected by Hurricane Katrina. The enmity between the two countries continues to affect their ability to join forces during crises. Gómez discusses this further in the concluding chapter titled, "David, Goliath, and Other Reflections," in which a secondary purpose emerges. *Red Zone* provides a Cuban socialist critique of the neoliberal paradigm of international aid and development projects.

Although Ubieta Gómez heavily praises the work of the medical brigade for implementing the ideals of the Cuban Revolution, it was surprising to learn in a chapter titled, "The Women," that Cuban women were not allowed to volunteer for Ebola response, and female healthcare workers who were already on missions in West Africa were not allowed to stay. Gómez avoids critiquing this decision or questioning the weak reasons given for this policy. He does reproduce a letter from Dr. Eneida Álvarez Horta, coordinator of the Permanent Cuban Brigade in Sierra Leone, to the Cuban Public Health Ministry, expressing her dismay at the policy and asking to stay. He does not provide any quotes from the women affected.

Red Zone provides a distinctively Cuban perspective on the West African Ebola epidemic, informed by Cuba's special relationship to the African continent and specialization in international medical missions. The Cuban healthcare workers who volunteered for this emergency mission in West Africa provide their own demonstration of revolutionary ideals and international solidarity. The book's narrative casts a critical eye on the nature of international aid work, but often fails to turn that eye on itself.

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Allen F. Isaacman and Barbara S. Isaacman. 2020. *Mozambique's Samora Machel: A Life Cut Short*. Athens: Ohio University Press. 257 pp.

The book—a concise biographical account of the Mozambican revolutionary leader Samora Machel—has a special taste due to the entanglement of both authors with the recent history of Mozambique. Since the 1960s, Allan and Barbara Isaacman have been interacting with the country, building relations in multiple ways, sometimes for short periods on research trips or as

habitual residents in their time as university professors. During this period of war, revolution, and liberation they held firm to their commitment to social justice and the struggle for freedom in Southern Africa. At first, it might sound like something that could be problematic, as in the classic formula: researchers must keep a certain distance from their object of study. But the Isaacmans handle it with mastery. Their relation to the country and its people is seen and felt throughout the book in the vivid ways they depict everyday life in Mozambique and the richness of details concerning Samora Machel's trajectory.

The book's prologue discusses and reflects upon the matters already addressed here, the authors' relations to the story they present, and the challenge of representing such a complex and ambiguous figure as Samora Machel. Of course, this is a common problem in every biographical work, but it poses a greater task due to the still disputed memory and legacy of Samora, as seen in chapter nine. This chapter and the prologue have a complementary dynamic between them, given that each shows different perspectives on the uses and politics of memory.

The discussion of the chapters will follow a chronological order whereas the narrative is organized mostly diachronically. In this sense, the first two chapters cover Machel's early life and the sociopolitical context of a *preto* living under Portuguese colonial rule. Many interesting aspects of Machel's personality are introduced here. For example, his fierce attitude towards injustice and prejudice was not a byproduct of his later socialist and revolutionary education. It was a combination of his family education and the harshness experienced and witnessed in his youth. In 1974, reflecting on his formation as a revolutionary, he said "perhaps you might expect me to say I read Lenin and all other books, but that is not the way it happened. As a boy I went with my father. He was forced to raise cotton, I learned from the way he was cheated when he brought his crop to sell. From my own life I was led to FRELIMO" (p. 49). Eleven years before this statement, Samora and a fellow anticolonialist activist fled to Dar es Salam to join FRELIMO and fulfill his revolutionary vocation.

In chapters three and four, we delve into his liberation war years. Not only the strategies and conflicts against external foes—Portuguese colonial forces—are depicted here, but also the internal struggles that FRELIMO had to go through. Under Eduardo Mondlane's leadership, FRELIMO acquired enough prominence to become the main Mozambican anticolonial movement, later converting into a united front in order to integrate other revolutionary groups and strengthen its cause. Meanwhile, it did not take long for Samora to stand out militarily and as a leader, bringing him closer to Mondlane and guaranteeing the respect of a large part of FRELIMO's personnel. With Mondlane's murder there were some disputes over who should lead the group, resulting in a division of power in which Machel was nominated military leader. Other than the narrative that follows the military strategies and conflicts along the Tete region and Niassa river, this section ends with an interesting description of Machel's role in the peace treaty resulting from the unexpected downfall of the Estado Novo by the Carnation Revolution.

Whereas previous chapters can be divided into two parts—his early life and the liberation war years—the third part of the book is encompassed by four chapters (5-8) that cover his period as president of Mozambique and the mysterious conditions involving his death. After independence, not only had the people of Mozambique had to rebuild a country wounded by years of war, deal with the "burden of independence" (among other expenses, a \$500 million

debt related to the Cahora Bassa Dam), and deconstruct the structures of coloniality but also had to handle international pressure caused by the Cold War and the ever-growing tension between FRELIMO and the apartheid states, Rhodesia and South Africa. Furthermore, the adoption of socialism was compromised by those drawbacks, resulting in some concessions made to the neoliberal apparatus (IMF and World Bank) in 1982. However complex and turbulent the era may seem, we must not lose sight of one thing: Samora Machel kept the country united—even against RENAMO’s attempts to overthrow the government—and independent—dealing with the east and the west. Sadly, his story ends in a plane crash in 1986, about which many speculations have been made, but few have been answered by the investigations so far.

Overall, this book represents another relevant effort on the dissemination of African history as part of the Ohio Short Histories of Africa. And it poses, due to its length, as an accessible introduction to the recent history of Mozambique and a solid overview of Samora Machel’s life.

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John M. Janzen, Harold F. Miller, and John C. Yoder (eds.). 2021. *Mennonites and Post-Colonial African Studies*. London: Routledge. 298 pp.

What do Mennonites have to do with postcolonial African Studies? Before receiving and reading this excellent edited volume, and reflecting on the title, I thought that maybe Mennonite missionaries had had some continental wide effect on African Christianity which I was unaware of. But this was not the case at all. This volume is about the various African Studies scholars and researchers from the Mennonite tradition—which stresses service to others in particular—who have contributed to the field of African Studies since independence. More precisely, as laid out in the introduction, the book claims to examine the evolution of postcolonial African Studies—particularly decolonization and development—through the lens of scholars of African Studies from the Anabaptist tradition. Intensely personal at times, and biographical in scope, this collection of essays takes its readers through four general sections: Pioneers, Professors, Practitioners, and Observations from the outside.

The Pioneers section highlights three early Africanists from the Mennonite tradition: Donald Jacobs, Melvin Loewen, and Davide W. Shenk. What struck me as very interesting about this section was the overlap in American religious institutions, African religious movements, and American academic institutions among Jacobs and Shenk in particular. Jacobs began his career as a Mennonite missionary in Tanganyika in the 1950s and became deeply affected by and a participant in the East African Revival. Fascinated by the religious encounters in East Africa, Jacobs earned a Ph.D. in cultural anthropology at New York University by 1961 and afterwards returned to East Africa to apply his anthropological insights to his missionary enterprise. David Shenk, alternatively, was born in Tanganyika to Mennonite missionary parents in the 1930s. By the 1940s, Shenk was significantly influenced by the East African Revival as well and also did some graduate work at New York University where he crossed paths with Jacobs. He returned to East Africa as a missionary and spent a significant amount of his career engaging with Islam originally in Somalia and later Kenya. Jacobs and Shenk were