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ARTICLE



Introduction: recovering the forgotten left feminist networks

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ABSTRACT

The introduction to the special issue *Socialist Women in the East-South Interaction of the Global Sixties* provides an overview of the four featured contributions and situates them within a larger historical context of feminist exchange between Eastern Europe and the Global South. The goal of the special issue is to recover the rich, yet overlooked, history of left feminist networks that developed during the Cold War – proceeding and in many ways anticipating – the rise of second wave feminism in the West and its transnational endeavors. It highlights the important connections between the movements of the Global Sixties and the earlier leftist, antifascist, and anticolonial struggles. These East-South feminist interactions took many forms, from formal conferences to the transnational circulation of discourses and imaginaries of women's emancipation and anticolonial solidarity across Cold War borders. These different encounters contributed to shaping the era's visions of gender equality and anticolonial transnational solidarity. Challenging the conventional views of Eastern European women's organizations as mere representatives of "state feminism," the Introduction underlines the importance of recognizing women's agency, including under authoritarian regimes, and calls for a redefinition of both Second and Third World feminists as key actors forging new understandings of women's rights and advancing the international commitment to gender equality and anticolonialism.

KEYWORDS

Women's history; Cold War history; WIDF; left feminism; women's movements; East-South relations; anticolonialism

Demands for women's political, economic, and social rights were central to the upheavals of the Global Sixties, serving as both a linchpin of the feminist movement and a significant dimension of other movements, from the struggle for civil rights in the United States to the counterculture and the New Left across the globe.¹ However, most of the existing literature focuses on the rise of so-called "second wave" feminism (coming after the suffrage movement) in the US and Western Europe, often viewed as the definitive example of women's political mobilization of the era.² Although recent scholarship has begun to show a deeper understanding of women's agency in forging alternative feminist networks during the Global Sixties and beyond, the narrative of the Western-centric feminist revolution continues to dominate.³

The contributions in this volume challenge this dominant approach to women and the Global Sixties. They position feminist networks between the Global South and communist Eastern Europe as central to the era's visions of gender equality and anticolonial

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transnational solidarity. The authors open new conversations and research avenues regarding socialist feminism between the Global East or Second World – defined here as the Soviet Union, member states of the Eastern Bloc, and Yugoslavia – and the Global South, referring to countries then classified as “developing” or Third World.

We use the term “feminist” even though most female activists from Eastern Europe and the Global South did not identify themselves as such. In socialist discourses, the term was associated with bourgeois or liberal women’s movements that emerged in the nineteenth century to propel the emancipation of women as a social group, including the pursuit of suffrage, legal equality, and access to education and professions. Instead, socialist female activists identified with a broader and intersectional understanding of equality of the sexes embedded in various socialist and communist traditions, although not all of them were formally members of socialist or communist parties. Traditionally, socialist movements promoted gender equality within the broader Marxist ideology of class equality. In the context of decolonization after 1945, these ideas were also strongly connected to racial equality and anticolonial solidarity. Both were part of the official platform of the Soviet bloc, but also of left-leaning, newly independent states in the Global South. Both often helped facilitate the interaction between women from the Second and Third Worlds.

The goals of this thematic volume are twofold. First, the articles contribute to the burgeoning scholarship on East-South relations during the Cold War by uncovering global socialist feminist networks predating those forged by Western liberal feminists in subsequent decades. Second, the articles foreground a gender perspective in studying the Global Sixties by emphasizing the multiplicity of women’s movements and their contributions to the dynamic global feminist revolutions during that era.

These East-South feminist interactions encompassed a range of activities, from personal meetings to the circulation of discourses and imaginaries of women’s emancipation and anticolonial solidarity across Cold War borders.⁴ For example, communist activists from the Global South such as Panamanian Felicia Santizo visited multiple Eastern Bloc countries in response to official invitations, as discussed by Katherine Marino in this volume. South-South exchanges also increased with decolonization, through initiatives such as the Afro-Asian women’s conference in Cairo in 1961 and the Tricontinental Conference in Havana in 1966. As demonstrated by Alberto Garcia Molinero’s contribution, the latter gathered a strong representation of leftist women from varied geopolitical camps, including leaders of state socialist women’s organizations from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

In addition to forging East-South feminist bonds through international gatherings and state visits, female professionals from Eastern Europe played an important role in transnational expert exchange and in journalistic reporting on the postcolonial world. As Réka Krizmanics shows, Hungarian female professionals contributed to developing modern healthcare in Africa and Asia, while Polish female journalists reported from Korean and Vietnamese war zones, as discussed by Agnieszka Mrozik. All the contributions in this volume demonstrate how the era saw hitherto marginalized voices move to the forefront – in particular, those of women from the “peripheries” of the two superpowers, the US and the Soviet Union. They illustrate what historian Judy Tzu-Chun Wu has identified as a simultaneous rise of “Third-Worldism and multiple forms of feminisms.”⁵

While scholars have increasingly acknowledged the agency of women of color in the United States and women in the Global South as part of rethinking transnational feminist history, due to the centrality of postcolonial feminist thought, socialist and post-socialist experiences of women's activism often get "lost in translation."⁶ Despite extensive discussion of the need to reframe questions of agency of women's organizations under state socialism, women in communist Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union are still often perceived as passive objects of state policies, or, if active within official women's organizations, as complicit with the authoritarian regimes.⁷ Such approaches limit our historical understanding of cross-border exchanges and the ways in which the socialist model of women's emancipation traveled globally and was negotiated by multiple players, including socialist women from Eastern Europe and the Global South. This volume is intended to help advance more nuanced perspectives.

Gender equality and East-South exchanges during the Global Sixties

Legal gender equality was implemented in communist Eastern Europe approximately two decades earlier than in the West. By the late 1940s, many of the rights that Western feminists fought for during the Global Sixties, including the right to abortion, were already the norm in state socialist Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. As Francisca de Haan's studies of international women's initiatives in the 1950s and 1960s have demonstrated, "it was not the West that 'led' in terms of women's rights."⁸ Rather, a global left feminism developed and spearheaded many of the initiatives later taken up by Western liberal feminists.

We use the term "left feminism" as an umbrella designation that includes diverse orientations within broader leftist movements and state socialist women's organizations that became active on the global stage after 1945. Despite multiple understandings of leftism, these movements' agenda, to use the words of de Haan, challenged the idea that "(real) feminism was and is a single-issue (gender-only) rather than a multi-issue concern."⁹ The women who led state socialist women's organizations from 1945 forward were often the "left feminists" of the 1930s, including communists, former students, and antifascist partisans determined to advance women's rights through revolutionary change, as in the case of Yugoslavia in the 1930s and 1940s.¹⁰ Often, interwar and wartime communist activists regarded liberal feminism as too moderate and ineffective, in particular during the rise of Nazi Germany and the establishment of collaborationist regimes in many European countries. In the wake of the Holocaust and Cold War polarization, many leftist activists around the world came to share this view.

The most prominent organization representing global left feminism was the Women's International Democratic Federation, or WIDF, established in Paris in 1945 and led by French antifascist female scientist Eugénie Cotton (1881–1967). As de Haan argues, the WIDF pursued "broader goals than the mainstream women's organizations; formally these were the defense of peace, and the struggle for women's rights and children's well-being, but anti-colonialism and anti-racism became increasingly important goals as well."¹¹ WIDF leaders adopted an openly pro-Soviet stance, in the belief that the emerging communist system provided a viable path toward both gender and racial equality.

Women's equal rights were established first in revolutionary Russia in 1917 and then, in 1945, in Eastern European countries that became part of the Soviet sphere of influence.

Although not the result of grassroots feminist movements, these state-led gender equality policies revolutionized women's status, including their economic position and participation in political life. This is not to idealize the policy and practice of gender equality under communism, whose contradictions and limitations have been extensively examined in the existing literature.¹² Nevertheless, many women were empowered by their new status and sought to secure similar advances for women in postcolonial countries.

The WIDF's anticolonial engagement was visible from its beginnings. In 1948, a WIDF delegation traveled to Asia and documented the arduous conditions of working women in India, Burma, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam. The report underscored the gap between the actual living conditions in so-called "non-self-governing territories" and the commitments of the United Nations Charter signed by many colonial countries in June 1945, which included an obligation to promote the well-being of their inhabitants.¹³ The WIDF report on Western war crimes in the Korean War resulted in the group's expulsion from France and relocation to East Berlin.¹⁴ The organization denounced colonial and neo-imperial wars from a pacifist and maternalist standpoint, which appealed to many women across the world. Female activists in postcolonial states often looked to Eastern Europe rather than the West in how they imagined equality and the modernization of gender relations in their homelands. For example, Molinero points to the Tricontinental Conference as a forum for disseminating information on the status of women in communist countries and influencing revolutionary movements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In a similar way, Felicia Santizo felt especially inspired by the Czechoslovak socialist modernization project, deeming it more appropriate for a small country like Panama than the Soviet model.

This volume challenges recent attempts by some scholars to redefine state socialism as partaking in twentieth-century neocolonialism, "stretching from the former Soviet Union in the East to the United States and Canada in the West."¹⁵ According to these interpretations, women and minority groups were "colonized" by the state through socialist modernization projects. We consider such approaches oversimplified and ahistorical, as they deny subjectivity to historical actors on the ground. In contrast, the articles in this volume emphasize the agency and complexity of women's interactions with the state and global feminisms. The authors challenge the rigid binaries between "state" and "women," and question essentialized notions of both gender and socialism. While recognizing the constraints of the authoritarian context, including state-imposed censorship, they demonstrate that women negotiated the boundaries of authoritarian systems and tested their possibilities. State socialism thus emerges as dynamic and diverse, rather than static and generic. At the same time, by shifting the focus from the state to women's networks, the authors in this volume highlight socialist female activists' agency, even if those women nominally represented the state.

Indeed, the dismissal of Eastern European women's activism as simply "state feminism" that amounted to the slavish following of the male communist leaders' agenda does not hold up when confronted with archival documents. No doubt, women faced ideological constraints, but they still exercised agency and many used party-state institutions to further women's interests. Krizmanics's analysis of Hungarian female medical professionals' work in Algeria highlights the distinct mobilities and benefits women derived from gender equality policies in their home country that were not available to women in

the capitalist West. Although still grounded in patriarchal gender structures, state-led equality policies benefited women by providing access to education, professions, and subsidized childcare. These policies in turn enabled some women to become experts and join larger groups of professionals who traveled to the postcolonial world to assist in modernization efforts. In a similar way, as Mrozik illustrates, Polish female journalists were among the first female war correspondents in Korea and Vietnam, reporting on atrocities with a particular focus on the conflicts' impact on women and children. As evidenced in Mrozik's discussion, the ideological goal of sending an explicit anticapitalist message did not impede these reports from revealing the depth of human suffering caused by colonial warfare. Moreover, these reports underlined women's agency amid colonial warfare, portraying them not only as victims but also as guerilla fighters, nurses, teachers, and farmers.

Hungarian and Polish women acted as representatives of their states but did not hesitate to assert their own agendas. They challenged communist leaders back home when their expectations were not met. As Krizmanics illustrates, Hungarian female doctors and nurses demanded adequate working conditions and resources from the Hungarian state to perform their duties in decolonized Algeria, holding the state responsible for fulfilling its promise of effective assistance to the "developing" world.

International organizing of socialist women played an important role in promoting feminist exchanges between the Second and Third Worlds. These exchanges were not without frictions, however. Recent studies of the WIDF have underlined not only the multiple forms of solidarity but also the ambivalences and power divides that emerged within the East-South interaction. This became evident, for example, in relations with Sub-Saharan Africa, including the gift exchanges between women's organizations in the Soviet Union and Mozambique, or in the summer programs designed by Bulgarian activists for women's organizations in Zambia.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the incorporation of new women's organizations from the Global South within the WIDF from the 1960s onward gradually shifted the group's agenda, making it more attentive to anticolonial and postcolonial demands – and ultimately, more pluralist.¹⁷

Although not devoid of "white saviorism" and racialized perceptions, Eastern European female activists forged long-lasting relationships with their counterparts in the Global South. Feelings of solidarity often emerged around common past experiences of revolutionary engagement and the commitment to build welfare infrastructures providing women healthcare, childcare, and maternity benefits.¹⁸ The ideas and actions of women from the East and South produced significant international shifts that affected international law, women's organizing, and global public imagination. As Marino demonstrates, the Black Panamanian feminist and communist Felicia Santizo drew on her interaction with the WIDF and official women's organizations in Eastern Europe to organize women in her own country and resist US military involvement in Panama.

For many women in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, the Fifties and Sixties were a time of anticolonial revolutions, wars, and postcolonial state building, which included the creation of both state-sponsored and oppositional women's organizations. Feminist activism, including left feminism, in Africa, Asia, and Latin America was far from unitary and often depended on activists' relation to those in rule. In India, for example, communist activists founded the National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW) after the 1953 WIDF Copenhagen congress, distancing itself from the liberal and more moderate

All India Women's Conference (AIWC), founded in the 1920s, which was closer to the ruling Congress Party and affiliated with the International Alliance of Women (IAW).¹⁹ Revolutionary changes also shaped women's organizing in Cuba, where the creation of the state-sponsored Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) after the revolution of 1959 marginalized the earlier leftist activism of the Democratic Federation of Cuban Women (FDMC), affiliated with the WIDF since 1948. Nonetheless, the FMC continued to rely on existing WIDF connections and even expanded them.²⁰ The WIDF often offered a platform to left-wing women who challenged authoritarian, anticommunist regimes in their respective countries. Some national organizations affiliated with the WIDF were brutally repressed, as in the case of Indonesia, where women active in the umbrella organization Gerwani were accused of sexual debauchery and killed during the massacres of over half a million communist activists in the CIA-backed coup of 1965.²¹

In countries such as Mexico and Japan that had strong radical student movements in the 1960s, young women's care work – often dismissed in mainstream narratives as simply “support work” for activism – was central to conducting strikes and protests at universities.²² Mexican and Japanese female participants of the New Left often rejected “liberal ideas of the individual citizen whose isolated actions would guarantee peace or democracy, insisting instead on identifying sources of conflict and organizing collectively.”²³ They called for challenges to capitalist economic structures as essential to the true liberation of women and men alike. In a similar manner, in an era that saw the expansion of educational and professional possibilities, many women in postcolonial states sought to reconfigure the scope of their gender identities – for example, in Tunisia, where visions of “modern womanhood” fostered by the state-sponsored National Union of Tunisian Women (UNFT) under Bourguiba sometimes clashed with alternative social spaces emerging as a result of Sixties movements.²⁴

Women in Eastern Europe and the Global South could read about their countries, including the achievements of their respective women's movements, in the multilingual WIDF magazine *Women of the Whole World*, and, in some cases, in their national women's magazines. Leaders of state-sponsored women's organizations engaged in bilateral meetings that connected through WIDF, nonaligned, and UN networks, often traveling abroad based on their professional interests and expertise. During their visits, international guests typically toured educational institutions, factories, and childcare and healthcare facilities to exchange knowledge on issues perceived as directly relevant to women.²⁵ The communist countries actively sought to strengthen the relevance of their models to the postcolonial world. As Molinero demonstrates, Zuleikha Seidmamedova (1919–99), World War II heroine and female pioneer in Azerbaijani aviation, attended the Tricontinental Conference together with other Azerbaijani and Uzbek female activists. This confirms the findings of historian Christine Varga-Harris, who has argued that Soviet women of color were intentionally made prominent in cultural representations of the Soviet system aimed at postcolonial countries.²⁶

The pragmatic component of East-South interaction for women was equally important. Given the geopolitical and cultural competition between East and West regarding the Third World, women's organizations and female leaders sought support wherever possible, strategically navigating between Western liberal women's organizations and those, such as the WIDF, associated with the communist camp. In many Global South countries, local women's organizations were divided along ideological lines, with some

affiliated with Western (and occasionally colonial) women's organizations and others with the WIDF.²⁷ Depending on the context, however, women sometimes crossed those lines. Historians Pascale Barthelemy and Sara Panata describe African activists' contacts with the pro-Soviet WIDF as well as with competing pro-Western organizations – the IAW, the International Council of Women (ICW), and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) – as a form of “strategic pragmatism” that allowed female activists to be more flexible than their male counterparts.²⁸ Similarly, in their cooperation with socialist women's networks, we should not assume that feminists from the Global South held uncritical views of state socialist gender relations or other communist policies. Global South activists often voiced their discontent at the higher echelons of the WIDF itself, especially in relation to the predominance of European leaders and the need to include more women from Asia, Africa, and Latin America in decision-making bodies.²⁹

These perceptions, however, cannot be reduced to what some scholars have labeled as “socialist racialism.”³⁰ Regardless of prejudice or “white ignorance,” socialist internationalism offered an alternative language and platform for articulating resistance against the dominant, capitalist-driven ideology of racialized colonialism. Eastern European women who engaged in it, as demonstrated in this volume, were often motivated by the memory and, in some cases, personal experiences of wartime Nazi genocidal policies. As the authors in this volume demonstrate, socialist internationalism needs to be historicized rather than dismissed to uncover the complexity of East-South relations and global feminism.

Between destalinization and decolonization: recovering socialist feminist voices

The Sixties were a dynamic time for the communist world.³¹ The death of Soviet leader Joseph Stalin in March 1953 marked the beginning of de-Stalinization, also known as the Thaw, which aimed at dismantling most of the elements of the repressive Stalinist system. For Eastern European countries, the Thaw yielded diverse paths as the new Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, rehabilitated the concept of “national roads” to socialism. This shift was marked by reconciliation with Tito's Yugoslavia, which had been expelled from the Eastern Bloc in 1948 due to its pursuit of a path to socialism that diverged from the Soviet model. Following Khrushchev's Secret Speech denouncing Stalin's crimes at the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Party in February 1956, Eastern European countries embarked on their own versions of socialism. Although they experimented with domestic policies, most Eastern European states remained politically and militarily allied with the Soviet Union. The Soviets delineated the limits of Eastern European autonomy, as evidenced in the crushing of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 and the Prague Spring of 1968.³²

Domestic reforms and national paths to socialism entailed redefining relationships with the outside world. As historian Robert Honsby has recently argued, “one of the most significant themes running through the Soviet Sixties – and one of the sharpest breaks with late Stalinism – was the expanding presence of the outside world inside the USSR.”³³ Interest in the outside world was especially pronounced in Eastern Europe, where the quest for a post-Stalinist identity often involved opening up to both the West and the

postcolonial world.³⁴ The Third World acquired a distinct position in the global endeavors of Eastern European countries, becoming the new arena for defining non-capitalist modernity during the era of de-Stalinization and decolonization.

The time of the Thaw in the communist world coincided with pivotal developments in the Global South. These included the 1955 Bandung Conference and the 1959 Cuban Revolution. Although scholars have recognized the centrality of the Third World to the Cold War, the mutual impact of the communist world on the Third World has not been thoroughly researched.³⁵ In particular, while Soviet policies in the Global South have received some attention, the involvement of Eastern European countries – often on different terms from those of the Soviets – has not been explored to the same extent.³⁶ These endeavors included expert transfer, humanitarian aid, military assistance, transfer of knowledge, specific schemes for modernization, cultural diplomacy, and intellectual exchange. As Theodora Dragostinova and Malgorzata Fidelis have argued, Eastern European states emerged “as important players by promoting their own ideas of modernity, progress, humanism, culture, and everyday life that modified, challenged, or undermined the alleged all-encompassing ‘Soviet model.’”³⁷

Moreover, nonaligned Yugoslavia carved out an independent role in East-South cooperation, supporting many anticolonial movements such as the National Liberation Front in Algeria and organizing the first Conference of Non-Aligned Movements and Heads of State in Belgrade in 1961. However, the moderate stance of the Yugoslavs soon clashed with the more radical anti-imperialist position of the Cubans within the nonaligned movement.³⁸

As recent scholarship has demonstrated, Eastern European professionals helped build the infrastructure of postcolonial states and pursued cultural diplomacy to foster solidarity – however aspirational – between people of the Global East and Global South.³⁹ At the same time, more work on the East-South exchanges is needed from the perspective of postcolonial states and on grassroots exchanges beyond high-level diplomacy among heads of states and their representatives. This research should include the perspectives of workers, artists, and journalists who traveled across borders, as recently highlighted by the Afro-Asian Network Research Group.⁴⁰

The authors in this volume faced the dual challenge of “finding women in the sources” and uncovering a significant but forgotten aspect of the global Cold War – the connections between Eastern Europe and the Global South.⁴¹ As a result, they all engage in trailblazing research and methodologies. Issues of memory play an important role in each article, as the authors contend with multiple silences in both the available documentation and the public remembrance of socialist internationalism. After the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989, socialist internationalism was erased from public memory, dismissed as a failed policy imposed by dictatorial regimes. Instead, the new liberal democratic elites in postcommunist states proclaimed a “return to Europe,” which was understood as rejoining the idealized white “European civilization” that Eastern European countries were allegedly separated from by the Soviet power. This resulted in the termination of agreements and exchange programs with the postcolonial world, including the expulsion of African and Asian students. A similar erasure of the memory of internationalist socialist projects occurred in the Global South after 1989, along with the end of aid programs from the socialist bloc.

The articles go beyond “adding” women to the picture of East-South relations. Rather, they demonstrate how female activists experienced globality, including the ways in which the increasing interconnectedness of the Sixties enabled them to claim agency and global involvement. To this end, the authors meticulously unearth the names of women and reconstruct their roles using previously untapped archival materials. For example, Molinero explores Cuban archives of the Organization of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America (OSPAAL) to retrieve information about the number and origin of female participants in the Tricontinental Conference. Similarly, Krizmanics examines the Ministry of Health’s records in Hungary to identify female medical professionals who worked in Africa. Mrozik’s analysis, at the same time, shows that there is still much to uncover from underutilized communist sources, such as press reports and books, to illuminate the roles of largely forgotten female journalists who served as conduits between East and South. These journalists played key roles in the production of knowledge about the Third World in Eastern Europe. Finally, Marino’s critical reading of US Army surveillance files allows her to illuminate details about Santizo’s feminist activism as well as the gendered and racialized contexts she faced in US-occupied Panama.

In this volume, authors such as Marino and Mrozik explore the potential of biographical approaches to recover socialist feminist networks, building on the existing works that discuss East-South connections through the lives of individual female activists. For example, the renewed interest in the biographies and autobiographies of socialist feminist women worldwide has culminated in the publication of a comprehensive handbook, edited by Francisca de Haan, detailing the lives of communist women activists around the globe.⁴² Some of the most prominent activists, such as the Nigerian freedom fighter and WIDF activist Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, have also been featured in broader transnational feminist history surveys.⁴³ Memoirs and personal testimonies from female activists themselves constitute a promising body of sources for studying the WIDF and other East-South connections. Given the dispersed nature of the archives, these biographical writings have been invaluable in recovering the East-South feminist past. A prominent example is the recently published travelogue of Malobika Chattopadhyay, which focuses on her experiences as secretary of the Asian Commission at the headquarters of the WIDF in East Berlin between 1984 and 1987.⁴⁴

Employing innovative methodologies, the authors offer a fresh perspective on the concept of the Global Sixties from a socialist feminist perspective. Contrary to established narratives that trace the origins of feminist international activism to the West, the articles identify East-South women’s interactions as a more accurate starting point for international feminism. As early as 1945, with the establishment of the WIDF and its international congresses, women socialist activists from Eastern Europe and the Global South emerged as the primary driving force behind global left feminism.⁴⁵ Together with left-wing women’s groups and organizations in Western Europe and the United States associated with the WIDF, they paved the way for the emergence of second wave feminism in the 1960s and 1970s.⁴⁶ By seeing women’s equality as interdependent and connected to social and racial equality, these movements and their activists provided grounded and groundbreaking elaborations of intersectionality.

Indeed, from the perspective of women’s organizations, the interaction between East and South feminists reached its peak before the 1960s. Marino’s article highlights how the WIDF and East European women inspired Panamanian feminism in the early 1950s, laying

the foundation for later activism. The bonds between East and South women, however, persisted and expanded into other areas during the 1960s, including postcolonial state building and the global media. As Mrozik demonstrates, for several Polish female journalists, reporting on colonial warfare was a continuation of their antifascist and anticolonial activism. In this light, the analyses of East-South feminism in this volume decenter 1968 as a metaphor for the Global Sixties and instead underline the critical role of earlier leftist activism in setting the stage for the global events of that year.⁴⁷

The articles in this volume explore a wide range of women's activism connecting Eastern Europe and the Global South. The volume opens with Agnieszka Mrozik's contribution, focusing on three Polish female journalists who served as war correspondents in Korea and Vietnam: Monika Warneńska, Wanda Tycner, and Halina Krzywdzianka. The author analyzes their personal and professional paths to becoming war correspondents and their depictions of women and children in postcolonial war zones in the official Polish media from the 1950s through the early 1970s. The analysis highlights the attempts to build bonds of identification between young women in Poland and female anticolonial fighters, as well as between Polish historical experiences and colonial exploitation in the Global South. In the process, Mrozik raises important questions about memory and the erasure of women's contributions to both war correspondence and to fostering solidarity between the Second and Third Worlds during the Cold War.

A similar biographical approach is undertaken by Katherine Marino, who explores WIDF networks in Latin America and the Caribbean through the life story of the Afro-Panamanian feminist communist Felicia Santizo (1893–1965). The relationship that Santizo forged with the WIDF enabled her to travel to the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia in the early 1950s. Inspired by communist women's activism, Santizo founded WIDF-affiliated women's groups in Panama, making her a target of anticommunist surveillance, until she moved to Cuba in the early 1960s. To contextualize Santizo's story, Marino explores the prehistory of the long Sixties, emphasizing the formative experiences of Black left feminists in the Americas, which included forging networks with the socialist female activists in Europe. The Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc's official stance against racism and colonialism became a source of empowerment for leaders like Santizo. Although Santizo died in 1965 in Cuba, her legacy shaped subsequent anticolonial struggles in Panama.

Réka Krizmanics's article aims to recover the experiences of Hungarian female medical professionals in Africa and Asia, and their interaction with local communities in the larger context of expert mobility between Eastern Europe and the Global South. The author explores the remarkable opportunities Eastern European professional women had to become global actors and contribute their expertise to develop modern infrastructure in postcolonial states. However, the case of female medical experts – often sent with the primary purpose of performing gendered care work – also reveals the limits of gender equality under communism. Based on her case study, Krizmanics proposes a broader conceptualization of East-South relations as a component of the “increasing global interconnectedness” of the Sixties, countering the Western-centric implications of “globalization.”

The volume closes with Alberto Garcia Molinero's contribution, focusing on the participation of women from the Second and Third Worlds at the Tricontinental Conference in Havana in 1966, showcasing the unique space that postrevolutionary Cuba created for constructing East-South bridges. The Tricontinental became a major

forum for women's organizing, with the leading roles played by the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) and the WIDF. The subsequent women's gatherings facilitated by the Tricontinental predated the UN-organized world conferences on women. Molinero's article concludes with a reflection on the early 1990s, a period relevant to all four studies in this volume, which necessitated an abrupt adjustment to the new post-Cold War global order. As the East-South networks disintegrated, organizations associated with the Tricontinental sought new alliances while relegating memories of cooperation with the Eastern Bloc to the margins.

Notes

1. For further discussion of the scholarship on women and Sixties movements, see, for example, Evans, "Sons, Daughters, and Patriarchy" 331–47. For recent works on gender dimension of the Sixties, see, for example, Golin, *Women Who Invented the Sixties*; and Schieder, *Coed Revolution*.
2. See, for example, Clifford, Gildea and Warring, "Gender and Sexuality," 239–57; and Rosen, *The World Split Open*.
3. Bonfiglioli and Ghodsee, "Vanishing Act," 168–72; Donert, "Women's Rights and Global Socialism," 1–22; and de Haan, "Continuing Cold War Paradigms in Western Historiography," 547–73.
4. See, for example, Bonfiglioli, "Cold War Gendered Imaginaries of Citizenship," 167.
5. Tzu-Chun Wu, "The U.S. 1968," 714.
6. For further discussion, see Tlostanova, Thapar-Björkert, and Koobak, "The Postsocialist 'Missing Other' of Transnational Feminism?" 81–87; and Cîrstocea, *La fin de la femme rouge?*
7. Funk "A very tangled knot," 344–60; Ghodsee, "Untangling the Knot," 248–52; and de Haan, "Forum: Ten Years After."
8. de Haan, "The Global Left-Feminist 1960s," 238.
9. de Haan, "Eugénie Cotton, Pak Chong-ae, and Claudia Jones," 182.
10. Grubački, "Communism, Left Feminism, and Generations in the 1930s."
11. de Haan, "The Global Left-Feminist 1960s," 231.
12. For recent work on women in communist Eastern Europe, see, for example, Bonfiglioli, *Women and Industry in the Balkans*; Fidelis, *Women, Communism, and Industrialization*; and Massino, *Ambiguous Transitions*.
13. *The Women of Asia and Africa*. Documents. Budapest, December 1948. See also Gradskova, *The Women's International Democratic Federation*, 80–84.
14. *We accuse. Report of the Committee of the Women's International Democratic Federation in Korea*, May 16–27, 1951. See also Gradskova, *The Women's International Democratic Federation*, 67.
15. Todorova, *Unequal Under Socialism*, 6.
16. Banks, "Sewing Machines for Socialism?" 27–40; and Ghodsee, *Second World, Second Sex*.
17. Gradskova, *The Women's International Democratic Federation*; and Gradskova, "The WIDF's Work for Women's Rights," 155–78.
18. Bonfiglioli, "Women's Internationalism and Yugoslav-Indian Connections," 454; Bonfiglioli, "Representing Women's Non-Aligned Encounters."
19. Chakravartty and Chotani, *Charting a New Path*.
20. Chase, *Revolution Within the Revolution*.
21. Wieringa, "Sexual Slander and the 1965/66 Mass Killings in Indonesia."
22. Schieder, *Coed Revolution*, 14.
23. *Ibid.*, 167.
24. Kallander, *Tunisia's Modern Woman*.
25. Bonfiglioli, "Representing Women's Non-Aligned Encounters."
26. Varga-Harris, "Between National Tradition and Western Modernization."

27. See, for example, Sackeyfio-Lenoch, “Women’s International Alliances in an Emergent Ghana,” 27–56; and Allman, “The Disappearing of Hannah Kudjoe,” 13–35. On Francophone Africa, see Barthélémy, “Macoucou in Beijing,” 17–33.
28. Barthélémy and Panata, “Militantes africaines et organisations féminines internationales.”
29. Gradskova, *The Women’s International Democratic Federation*, 120.
30. Todorova, *Unequal Under Socialism*, 16.
31. For an overview of the Sixties in the socialist world, see Gorsuch and Koenker, *The Socialist Sixties*.
32. For further discussion of de-Stalinization, see, for example, Kozlov and Gilburd, eds. *The Thaw: Soviet Society and Culture during the 1950s and 1960s*. For Eastern Europe, see Feinberg, *Communism in Eastern Europe*, esp. Chapters 3 and 4.
33. Honsby, *The Soviet Sixties*, 206.
34. See, for example, Fidelis, *Imagining the World from Behind the Iron Curtain*.
35. On the centrality of the Third World to the Cold War confrontations, see Westad, *The Global Cold War*.
36. See, for example, Iandolo, *Arrested Development*; and Engerman, *The Price of Aid*. For pioneering research on Eastern European interaction with the Global South, see Mark and Betts, eds. *Socialism Goes Global*.
37. Dragostinova and Fidelis, “Introduction. Beyond the Iron Curtain,” 577.
38. Dinkel, *The Non-Aligned Movement*.
39. See, for example, Yordanov, *Our Comrades in Havana*; Dragostinova, *The Cold War from the Margins*; Stanek, *Architecture in Global Socialism*; Mazurek, “Polish Economists in Nehru’s India,” 588–610; and Harisch, “East German Friendship Brigades and Specialists in Angola,” 291–324.
40. Afro-Asian Networks Research Collective, “Manifesto: Networks of Decolonisation in Asia and Africa,” 176–82. See also Stolte and Lewis, *The Lives of Cold War Afro-Asianism*.
41. For further discussion of creating new archives and reading “against the grain” to “reconstruct the lives of women in the past,” see Chaudhuri, Katz, and Perry, “Introduction”.
42. de Haan, ed. *The Palgrave Handbook of Communist Women Activists around the World*; and de Haan, “Eugénie Cotton, Pak Chong-ae, and Claudia Jones,” 174–89.
43. Delap, *Feminisms*.
44. Roy, “The Call of the World,” 237–62.
45. Grabowska, “Beyond the ‘Development’ Paradigm,” 147–72.
46. Tambor, *The Lost Wave*; Weigand, *Red Feminism*; and Horowitz, *Betty Friedan and the Making of the Feminine Mystique*.
47. This perspective also challenges the conceptualization of the global 1968 as pointing “toward the economic and political transformation of the 1970s rather than the more certain world of the 1950s and early 1960s.” Westad, “Preface,” xx. It is worth noting that the 1950s and early 1960s were anything but “certain” in Eastern Europe and the Global South.

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