

**Physical violence against Third World students in the Soviet Union.  
Exploring communist racism, 1960-1991.**

Verbal and physical violence against Third World students in the USSR was not a sporadic phenomenon. From the beginning of the educational exchange tens of Southern students fell victims of violent attacks, while some of them were found dead under mysterious circumstances. Clashes, conflicts and violent incidents both inside and outside the universities provoked the disillusionment of foreign students and embarrassed the authorities, which were nevertheless constantly denying the existence of racism. Yet obviously racism was not eradicated from the socialist societies.

The aim of this project is to examine the violent incidents reported in various sources and to explore the reasons behind those phenomena. Besides the racial prejudices, there is strong evidence that violence was the consequence of the resentment of Soviet students and citizens against the “privileges” the Southern guests. The latter occupied places in universities and residences, had better stipends than their Soviet colleagues, enjoyed a freer everyday life, travelled abroad and had access to Western products. In the eyes of many Soviets the Southern guests were “parasites” and “predators”, living at the expense of Soviet people, yet abusing of his hospitality. Soviets felt that themselves were making enormous sacrifices for “ungrateful” persons who were enjoying a more privileged life than them. Several sources demonstrate that such a popular mood lied behind the incidents of violence. They are also evidencing that violence against Third World students constituted a pitiful kind of protest against the Soviet government, which was spending the country’s precious resources for dubious and unpopular international policies.

Starting from the case of the USSR, this project expands to the GDR and aims at testing the above working hypotheses through comparative research on other European communist countries.

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