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Southern African Students in Southeast Europe: Education and Experiences in 1960s Yugoslavia

As most of the liberation movements in Southern Africa had a left-leaning or Marxist ideological foundation, close ties to socialist countries were established in the early 1960s and the Soviet Union and other Eastern European states were main suppliers of military equipment.¹ “Eastern” aid to Southern Africa was, however, not limited to weapons and political support: education and training were an integral part of the assistance.² The historical constellation of the Cold War and the involvement of the “ideological blocs”, the Western democratic-capitalist camp under the United States and the Eastern Marxist-Leninist socialist states led by the Soviet Union (and partly China), in Africa’s decolonization “opened up new channels to venture abroad, gain knowledge, qualifications and experiences.”³ Education became an important factor in international cultural relations and scholarships took young Southern Africans not only to schools in already independent African countries but to Northern America, Western and Eastern Europe as well.⁴

1 Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), *Southern Africa: the escalation of a conflict. A politico-military study*, New York: Praeger, 1976, p. 63.

2 For the Soviet educational aid to Africa see the thesis of C. Katsakioris, *Leçons soviétiques. La formation des étudiants africains et arabes en URSS pendant la guerre froide*, Paris: École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2015, and C. Katsakioris, “Creating a Socialist Intelligentsia. Soviet Educational Aid and its Impact on Africa (1960–1991)”, *Cahiers d’Études africaines* 57 (2017) 2, pp. 259–287.

3 E. Burton, “Introduction: Journeys of education and struggle: African mobility in times of decolonization and the Cold War”, *Stichproben. Wiener Zeitschrift für kritische Afrikastudien* 18 (2018) 34, pp. 1–17, at 1.

4 SWANU’s early leaders were educated in Sweden during the 1960s and some young men, who would later become prominent SWAPO members, studied in the United States. See C. Williams, “Education in Exile: International Scholarships, Cold War Politics, and Conflicts among SWAPO Members in Tanzania, 1961–1968”, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 43 (2017) 1, pp. 125–141, at 126. For the importance of educational exchange and culture during the Cold War see L. Bu, “Educational exchange and Cultural Diplomacy in the Cold War”, *Journal of American Studies* 33 (1999) 3, pp. 393–415; J.-F. Sirinelli and G.-H. Soutou (eds.), *Culture et guerre froide*, Paris: Sorbonne Université Presses, 2008, and D. Cauter, *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy during the Cold War*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Yugoslavia, following its own socialist path, not being part of the Soviet-dominated Eastern bloc and a leader of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), was one of the main supporters of the liberation movements in Southern Africa. Anticolonialism was an integral part of Yugoslavia's foreign policy and the country took up Southern African issues when it became clear that Portugal and the white minority rulers in South Africa and Rhodesia tried to preserve power and the status quo. Yugoslavia broke diplomatic ties with the apartheid regime, closed its consular office in Johannesburg in 1963,⁵ and established diplomatic relations with Portugal only after the Carnation Revolution in 1974,⁶ although there have been contacts with the Portuguese Communist Party and the Portuguese National Liberation Front before the Revolution.⁷ Tito evoked the problem of Southern Africa during his speeches, whether on international gatherings or at the congresses of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. In 1969, he stated that "the international community is obligated to support the peoples of Angola, Mozambique, the South African Republic, Rhodesia, Guinea-Bissau and other territories in their struggle for total liberation and to take swift action to liquidate all remnants of colonialism."⁸ Nearly a decade later, as the problem of Africa's South was still not solved, he reaffirmed his country's position: "In Southern Africa, the only true solution is the complete liquidation of the remnants of colonialism and racism, securing the independence of Namibia and Zimbabwe, and the abolition of apartheid in the South African Republic."⁹ The conflicts in Southern Africa were key issues at the different NAM conferences, where member states were urged to financially and militarily support the freedom fighters in the Portuguese colonial territories, to break diplomatic ties with Portugal, not accept Southern Rhodesia's independence if proclaimed under white minority rule, and boycott South African goods.¹⁰

5 J. Kalley, E. Schoeman, and L. Andor (eds.), *Southern African political history: a chronology of key political events from independence to mid-1997*, Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999, p. 333.

6 C. Hunt and L. Sobel, *Portuguese revolution, 1974–76*, New York: Facts on File, 1976, p. 76.

7 See Arhiv Jugoslavije (AJ), 507 Savez komunista Jugoslavije (SKJ) – međunarodna komisija – Portugal.

8 Speech at the 9th Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) in March 1969, in: J.B. Tito, *Ausgewählte Reden und Schriften: Vol. III, 1945–1979*, Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1984, p. 439.

9 Speech at the 11th Congress of the LCY in June 1978, in: *ibid.*, p. 564.

10 Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries in Cairo 1964. Programme for Peace and International Cooperation. Declaration as Adopted by the Conference, 1964. See under http://cns.miis.edu/nam/documents/Official_Document/2nd_Summit_FD_Cairo_Declaration_1964.pdf (accessed 5 January 2019).

Yugoslavia established relations with the liberation movements in Southern Africa in the early 1960s.¹¹ Contacts were established and strengthened during multinational meetings such as NAM conferences, where liberation movements would send representatives, through the offices of liberation movements in free African countries, and through visits of liberation leaders to Yugoslavia. One of the most important Yugoslav authorities dealing with the relations with liberation movements was the Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia (SSRNJ – Socijalistički savez radnog naroda Jugoslavije), the country's socio-political mass organization.¹²

Along with Yugoslav diplomatic, material, and military support to young states and liberation movements, the country granted scholarships to young people from the “Global South”. By doing so, Yugoslavia responded to the need of the newly independent countries and national liberation movements for well-educated young people who could take the reins of the social and economic development within their respective country.¹³ Between 1955 and 1984, Yugoslavia granted 7,900 scholarships for countries of the “Global South”, liberation movements and friendly parties. Over 2,800 grantees from 90 countries, liberation movements, and friendly parties came to Yugoslavia during the period 1977–1984 alone. The foreign students received educational and professional training on all levels and for short or long-term periods.¹⁴ Starting from the early 1960s, this educational aid also led young Southern Africans to Yugoslav schools and universities.

This chapter focuses on some of the first scholarship grantees from Southern Africa (Angola, Mozambique, Southwest Africa (Namibia), Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), and South Africa) in Yugoslavia in the 1960s and their individual journeys to receive overseas education. Based on archival documents from Belgrade, and using a qualitative content analysis,¹⁵ this chapter provides information on the education and experiences of Southern Africans in Yugoslavia. Though many of these grantees left Yugoslavia with negative experiences and

11 See the dossiers under AJ, 507 SKJ – Angola; Mozambik; Namibija; Južnoafrička Republika.

12 Ibid.

13 D. Bondžić, “Stipendisti iz Indije i Burme u Jugoslaviji 1951–1955”, in: S. Selinić (ed.), *Spoljna politika Jugoslavije: 1950–1961*, Beograd: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2008, pp. 558–570, and D. Bondžić, “Strani studenti u Jugoslaviji 1956–1961”, *Istorija 20. Veka* (2010) 2, 2010, pp. 67–78. For the importance of trained young people in postcolonial states see Katsakioris, *Leçons*, chapter 2.

14 D. Miljković (ed.), *Yugoslavia 1945–1985: Statistical Review*, Beograd: Savezni Zavod za Statistiku, 1986, pp. 175–176.

15 The methodological approach is based on P. Mayring, *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse: Grundlagen und Techniken*, Weinheim: Beltz, 2010.

often without a diploma, this would not be an obstacle for the continuation of cooperation between Yugoslavia and the liberation movements.

Angola

Yugoslavia's involvement in Southern Africa was most visible in Angola. According to Piero Gleijeses, Soviet interest in that country was limited after the failed Simba Revolution in the DR Congo in 1964 and the overthrow of Nkrumah in Ghana in 1966, and the Soviets mistrusted the leadership of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), especially Agostinho Neto, and were not impressed by the military capacities of the liberation movement. Furthermore, the Angolans were caught up in the Sino-Soviet conflict, with each side pressuring the Africans to condemn the other one in order to obtain more aid. Neto refused to do this.¹⁶ After independence, Prime Minister Lopo do Nascimento summed up MPLA's view of the Soviet Union in a meeting with Tito: "We think that since the Soviet Union is the biggest and economically strongest socialist country, it should bear some burden in the development of our country and provide us aid, but in no way does this mean that they can do whatever they want in Angola."¹⁷ Soviet mistrust towards the MPLA, suspicions that the movement was pro-Chinese and, above all, the internal difficulties and struggles of the liberation movement led to a radical reduction of Soviet aid from 1972 until 1974, when Neto regained total control of the MPLA.¹⁸ During that period, when the Angolans were under heavy Portuguese attack and the Soviet Union and its satellite states stopped their aid, Yugoslavia, following their own foreign political agenda, continued to support the MPLA. Neto confirmed Yugoslavia's role in 1977 when he declared that Yugoslavia's help was "constant, firm, and generous", and "extraordinary".¹⁹ Malcolm Toon, US Ambassador to Yugoslavia remarked in 1973 that Tito "clearly enjoys his role as a patriarch of guerrilla liberation struggle."²⁰ Financial and military support continued once the liberation

16 P. Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions. Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–1976*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002, pp. 242–243.

17 Memcon (Tito, Nascimento), 20 July 1976, p. 6, Tito Archive, in: P. Gleijeses, *Visions of Freedom. Havana, Washington, Pretoria and the struggle for southern Africa, 1976–1991*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013, p. 75.

18 Gleijeses, *Missions*, p. 243.

19 Quotation from an Interview with Neto, "Informe", in Primer Congreso, p. 48, cited in: Gleijeses, *Missions*, p. 243.

20 Toon to DOS, 5 March 1973, p. 2, cited in: Gleijeses, *Missions*, p. 243.

war ended. Yugoslavia was crucial in arming the People's Armed Forces of Liberation of Angola (FAPLA) by sending a cargo ship of weapons and armoured cars, which were unloaded in Porte Noire in the Republic of Congo in April 1975 and then smuggled into Angola.²¹ Paulo Jorge, Angola's foreign minister from 1976–1984, remarked that until the establishment of Cuban military mission in Angola in August 1975 and Cuba's strong involvement in Angola after that, "the country that helped the MPLA the most was Yugoslavia."²²

A 19-year-old Angolan²³ from Mpete, a Congolese town close to the Angolan border,²⁴ residing in Léopoldville, arrived in 1963 in Yugoslavia. His scholarship candidature was submitted by the Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile (GRAE), led by the National Liberation Front of Angola (FNLA), and signed by the FNLA leader Holden Roberto.²⁵ After missing the date for the entrance examination at a Higher School of Economics in Zagreb in September 1964 due to a medical treatment, the student finally passed his language test in January 1965, but did not pass any school exams for the year 1964/65. In December 1965, authorities noted that he had not come back from his medical treatment in Switzerland, and in April 1966 his scholarship was cancelled.²⁶ According to a report of the Institute for International Technical Cooperation (*Zavod za međunarodnu tehničku saradnju – ZAMTES*) of the Socialist Republic of Croatia, there were a few Angolan students at the same school in Zagreb. "As a group", the report noted, "Angolan students had the least amount of fore-knowledge, especially in mathematics. But they put in a lot of effort, so that they are on a level with their colleagues and could continue their studies. Regarding behaviour, discipline, and work ethics, there were complaints about them, but the situation

21 Gleijeses, *Missions*, pp. 348–349.

22 Interview with Jorge in: L. Lara, *A história do MPLA*, Luanda: private collection, n.d., p. 161, cited in: Gleijeses, *Missions*, p. 349.

23 For privacy reasons, I do not mention names of former students.

24 Probably from exiled Angolan parents or long time Angolan residents in the Congo. Holden Roberto's family moved from Portuguese-Angola to Léopoldville in 1925, two years after his birth. See W.M. James, *Historical Dictionary of Angola*, Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2011, p. 231. Tens of thousands of Angolan Bakongo lived in the Lower Congo area and were later joined by leaders of the Angolan Bakongo peasantry who moved across the Congo border. See J.A. Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution: Exile Politics and Guerilla Warfare (1962–1976)*, Vol. 2, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1978, p. 3.

25 AJ, 208 Savezni zavod za međunarodnu tehničku saradnju – 214 Angola, CANDIDATURE 22. July 1963.

26 *Ibid.*, 1963–06 and Informacije o stipendistima koji se nisu vratili u našu zemlju nakon ferija, 4. December 1965.

back home is occupying them from time to time and could have an impact on the continuity of their work.”²⁷

Another 19-year old Angolan arrived in 1963, sent by the *Confederação Geral dos Trabalhadores de Angola* (CGTA), a Catholic trade union organization exiled in Kinshasa.²⁸ This student started at a vocational school in Kranj/SR Slovenia, where he was trained as a telecommunication mechanic and went back to Congo in 1966. During his time in Kranj, he wrote to officials that he felt quite isolated and that he did not get any news from officials, contrary to his compatriots in Zagreb, and that he could not leave the country during his summer holidays, because his passport had expired. He urged the Yugoslav officials to ask the Congolese embassy for a renewal. The Commission for International Relations responded, telling him that hopefully he had made friends with other Angolans and Africans at his school and that the city union council would invite him for a conversation regarding his stay.²⁹ Two years after his return to Africa, he wrote a letter to Yugoslav authorities, wishing to get another scholarship and continue his studies, now in a secondary technical school. He stated that he had difficulties in the Congo, where the authorities would not recognize his diploma and he had to pass additional exams. The Council of the Union of Yugoslav syndicates, which made his first stay possible, did not accept individual applications and asked him to send his application to the CGTA. The Council told the Bureau of International Cooperation that they would not consider his application, as their position was “that the cadre from countries fighting for independence, should be available to their liberation movements, once they completed their studies in Yugoslavia.” Regarding the former student, the Council thought that the candidate was avoiding his obligations to the syndicate which had sent him to Yugoslavia and thus would not recommend another scholarship.³⁰

In his work on the Angolan revolution, John A. Marcum also mentions one young Luandan who studied electronics in Yugoslavia from 1963 to 1969. He had left Angola on a scholarship arranged by the *União das Populações de Angola* (UPA), a predecessor organization of the FNLA in Kinshasa.³¹ After his return

27 Ibid., Izvod iz izveštaja tehničke pomoći SR Hrvatske o stipendistima u 1963/1964 školskoj godini. ZAMTES was one of the state agencies dealing with foreign students in Yugoslavia. The federal institute in Belgrade was overseeing the republican institutes of the six constituent republics of Yugoslavia.

28 Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution*, p. 160.

29 AJ, 208–214, Letters dated 19 July 1965 and 20 December 1965.

30 AJ, 208–214, Bivši stipendista iz Angole-molba za stipendiju, 17 September 1969.

31 See Marcum, *Angolan Revolution*, pp. 9, 391.

to Africa, he was very involved in the FNLA and became a member of the GRAE Council of Ministers, where he was appointed minister of the interior by Holden Roberto.³²

Mozambique

In Mozambique, the liberation movement FRELIMO began receiving aid from the Organization of African Unity at the beginning of the war of independence in 1964. Eduardo Mondlane, the president of the movement, counted the Soviet Union, China, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria among “FRELIMO’s most important sources of supplies.”³³

In November 1964, a group of three Mozambican students, two residing in Kenya and one in Ghana, sent by the *União Geral dos Estudantes da África Negra sob dominação colonial portuguesa* (UGEAN) in Algiers via the Yugoslav Student Association, arrived in Yugoslavia and started auto mechanics training in Maribor.³⁴ From the start, however, officials noted they showed disinterest regarding their training and often skipped lessons. The trainees requested to be transferred to a university in order to study agriculture, medicine, and economics. Yugoslav officials rejected their wishes and asked the students to undergo a knowledge test, as the Mozambican students did not have the qualifications to enter a high school. The students were sent to Belgrade to learn Serbo-Croatian, undergo knowledge tests and were then to be sent to schools, which would match their results and skills. In October 1965, two students, after passing the test, were to be sent to a secondary school of economics and to a training school for nurses. Both disappeared a few days after the test results and were believed to be in France. The third student was sentenced to two months in prison in Maribor because he had injured a fellow student from Uganda with a knife. Authorities planned on sending him back to Algiers, where he had stayed prior to his arrival in Yugoslavia. A few days after his release from prison, he disappeared.³⁵

A member of the National Democratic Union of Mozambique (UDENAMO), also arriving from Kenya in 1964, started at a higher school of economics and then transferred to a school of public administration. After failing in school and unwilling to continue his studies, he tried to go to Switzerland, but was re-

³² Ibid., pp. 188, 391.

³³ SIPRI, *Southern Africa*, p. 99.

³⁴ AJ, 208–361 Mozambik, Stipendisti iz Mozambika-ukidanje stipendije, 28 December 1965.

³⁵ Ibid.

fused entry to Austria or Italy, as he did not possess a visa for these countries.³⁶ After a short prison time because of assault, he was allowed to leave Yugoslavia for Kinshasa. The Yugoslav embassy in Zambia has been told by a representative of UDENAMO that the student should go to the DR Congo to meet with the Angolan leader Holden Roberto.³⁷

A Mozambican residing in Dar es Salaam arrived in 1963 and started his training as an electronics technician in Maribor in 1964. Months before he should have passed his final exams in 1967, he asked for another scholarship, now to study mechanical engineering. The Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia (SSRNJ) was in favour of such a request, for FRELIMO was not able to send students for the 1967/68 academic year and because the movement's leadership and especially Uria Simango were interested in that kind of prolongation.³⁸ ZAMTES, however, rejected the proposition and could not grant another scholarship to the student. The student did not pass all his exams for his final school year and left the country while he was supposed to prepare his correctional exams. Thus, his scholarship was cancelled. In April 1967, he sent a letter to his former landlord in Maribor from Stuttgart, West Germany.³⁹

Namibia

SWAPO's Sam Nujoma visited Yugoslavia on several occasions, thanking the country for its "consistent and unreserved support and material assistance",⁴⁰ and SWAPO's vice president Mishake Muyango was guest at the 10th Congress of the Yugoslav League of Communists.⁴¹ SSRNJ, the country's largest and most influential mass organization, had close relations with SWAPO and worked towards the opening of an information bureau in Belgrade. Between 1970 and 1974, SSRNJ helped SWAPO with financial and military equipment and SWAPO asked for more support in the following years – weapons and munition for 2000 soldiers, medicine and medical equipment, and education of technical staff.⁴²

³⁶ AJ, 208–361, Zabeleška o razgovoru sa bivšim stipendistom iz Mozambika, 21 February 1967.

³⁷ Ibid., Interna zabeleška br. 75/232, 12 April 1967.

³⁸ AJ, 208–361, SSRNJ Komisija za međunarodnu saradnju i veze, 23 June 1967.

³⁹ Ibid., Stipendista iz Mozambika, 5 July 1967.

⁴⁰ AJ, 507, Namibija, IX, 85/6.

⁴¹ Ibid., IX, 85/5.

⁴² Ibid.

A Namibian student arrived in November 1961 and started at the faculty of medicine in Zagreb, but he showed no interest in his course, was isolated from his fellow students, did not pass his exams to enter the third school year and was seen reading more American magazines than scientific literature. He asked for a transfer to the faculty of Philosophy, but officials rejected this, because his movement had asked him to study medicine, which was also his wish in the application. The student then asked to leave the country. In one of his meetings with ZAMTES, he expressed the wish to go to West Germany, as life in Yugoslavia was not good. Yugoslav authorities were surprised by such a claim, as they had done their best to accept and support him.⁴³ Finding it difficult to settle in Switzerland, where he applied for a residence permit, he wrote to ZAMTES and asked for a return to Yugoslavia and a continuation of his scholarship. Authorities rejected this as his scholarship was cancelled with his departure from the country and because applications had to go through SWAPO.⁴⁴

Another SWAPO member's stay in Yugoslavia was short. Arriving in Yugoslavia in October 1963, he was trained at the vocational school in Kranj. A year later, his training was cancelled due to indiscipline. His appeal to the League of Communists of Yugoslavia to send him back to the school, as he did not want to leave the country without a diploma, was in vain. In December 1964, he was sent back to Dar es Salaam.⁴⁵

In 1966, a Namibian student completed a three-year auto mechanic training in Novi Sad. The trainee expressed his wish to stay longer in Yugoslavia, and his request was supported by SWAPO from Dar es Salaam, but the Yugoslav authorities did not want to grant him another scholarship because he was too old (36 years) and because he had a low general education.⁴⁶ His return to Dar es Salaam proved to be difficult. Tanzania was reluctant to take in SWAPO students because one of their students in Belgrade had given an interview to Radio Beograd, where he criticized Tanzania for not being able to employ students after their return.⁴⁷ In April 1968, the former trainee wrote a letter to ZAMTES, asking for another scholarship to continue his studies in Yugoslavia. He wrote that he had not found work in Dar

43 AJ, 208–372 Jugozapadna Afrika, Informacije o studiju 3 stip. iz Jugozapadne Afrike, 11 October 1963.

44 Ibid., Letter, 16 March 1965.

45 Ibid., 2 June 1963 and letter to the League of Communists, 14 March 1964.

46 Ibid., Zahtev za produženje stipendije, 11 July 1966. For problems regarding age and educational level of Namibian students see Williams, "Education", p. 139, and C. Williams, *National Liberation in Postcolonial Southern Africa. A Historical Ethnography of SWAPO's Exile Camps*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, p. 77.

47 AJ, 208–372, Stipendisti u Servisu TAM Novi Sad, 22 July 1966.

es Salaam for over a year and was now in Nairobi, Kenya. Yugoslav authorities explained to him that they would not accept individual applications and that he should contact Kenyan authorities for further information.⁴⁸ In August 1968, ZAMTES received a letter from SWANU (SWAPO's rival liberation movement) from Nairobi, which stated that the former trainee, without the job he was promised in Dar es Salaam, had moved to Nairobi and was now part of that liberation movement. The letter was signed by none other than the above mentioned SWAPO member who had been sent off from a Yugoslav school after one year and who was now the representative of SWANU in East Africa.⁴⁹ After his return to Tanzania from Yugoslavia, he left Dar es Salaam for Nairobi, where he was given a scholarship by the United Nations⁵⁰ and apparently became an official of SWANU. As Yugoslavia's SSRNJ had not established any relations with SWANU, it did not follow up on the request for another scholarship.⁵¹

After accomplishing a three-year training as a radio and television mechanic in Niš in 1965, Yugoslav authorities were satisfied with the educational trajectory of another Namibian student and allowed him to start a new training as an electrical technician in September 1965. However, the student went to West Germany during the summer holidays in July and did not return to Yugoslavia.⁵² Two other Namibians who attended an electro-technical school in Slovenia were suspended for skipping classes and boycotting internships. After their suspension, both requested to go back to Dar es Salaam. While waiting in Belgrade for a transit visa for Egypt, the students accused authorities of discrimination, even though Yugoslav authorities were paying for their stay in Belgrade.⁵³ After getting plane tickets to Dar es Salaam with layover in Cairo, the students falsified them into tickets to New York via Paris and redesigned their identity certificates and the stamps on their entry and exit visas for Yugoslavia. For this criminal act, they were arrested. As they were foreign citizens who had "for two years enjoyed the hospitality and the scholarships"⁵⁴ of the Yugoslav government, the Secretariat for Internal Affairs released them, conducted them to the airport and handed them their tickets after they were on the plane going to Africa. Yugoslav officials assumed that the students would present an invented story to their liberation movement about their return, claiming they were the victims of Yugoslav dis-

48 Ibid., Letter to ZAMTES, SR Serbia, 20 April 1968 and letter to student, 30 April 1968.

49 Ibid., Letter to the Yugoslav Embassy in Kenya, 15 August 1968.

50 Williams, *National Liberation*, p. 81.

51 AJ, 208–372, Letter, 6 September 1968.

52 AJ, 208–372, Stipendista iz Jugozapadne Afrike, 23 November 1965.

53 Ibid., Ukidanje stipendije, 19 October 1966.

54 Ibid., Letter to ZAMTES, 2 November 1966.

crimination, and so the arrest and court documents were sent to the embassy in Dar es Salaam, as proof to SWAPO about what had happened.⁵⁵

South Africa

A member of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) arrived in Belgrade in November 1962 and started a language class. He had stated in his application that he wanted to study geology, but now expressed the wish to study medicine. The student showed no interest in learning Serbo-Croatian and the language teachers reported that he wanted to go to Western Europe. In April 1963, he requested an exit visa to go to West Germany, where he wanted to participate at the Congress of African Students in Bonn. After a dispute with authorities, who wanted to check with the PAC first, he came back to the office of ZAMTES with two compatriots who had been given permission to leave for the Congress by the Commission of International Cultural Relations. Finally, ZAMTES authorized his request and the three students left for West Germany but they did not return to Yugoslavia.⁵⁶ In 1965, another three South African students, who had been in Yugoslavia for not more than a year and were attending an electrotechnical school in Slovenia, left to travel across Western Europe with permission from their respective parties, the ANC and PAC, and did not return to continue their studies.⁵⁷

After studying at the University of Ljubljana for only a few months in 1964, a South African student's tuberculosis worsened. The ANC made arrangements with the *Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund* in East Berlin for the student to receive medical treatment.⁵⁸ Before leaving for the GDR, the student wrote a letter to Yugoslav authorities, asking to be allowed to come back to continue with his studies after his treatment. "I like Yugoslavia", he wrote, "and I should be very happy to be welcomed back."⁵⁹

Two other students who arrived in 1963 were sent back home in December of 1964 because of indiscipline. ZAMTES tried to discuss the behaviour, the missed chances and the opportunities given by Yugoslavia, but the students accused officials of being of "the white people, who had divided Africa" and compared Yugoslavia to colonialists. The day of their departure, they got drunk and shouted insults with other African students at the airport, all waiting to be sent back

55 Ibid., Stipendisti iz Jugozapadne Afrike, 3 November 1966.

56 AJ, 208–371 Južna Afrika, Informacija, 24 June 1963.

57 Ibid., Ukidanje stipendije trojici stipendista iz Južne Afrike, 9 February 1966.

58 Ibid., 671–151, 13 March 1965.

59 Ibid., Prepis to foreign students commission [sic].

home.⁶⁰ ZAMTES told the SSRNJ to be more careful to select suitable grantees. Any work with such students as these two “is completely pointless and only means loss of time and money.”⁶¹ Of ten grantees from South Africa, seven left Yugoslavia voluntarily (six going to the Federal Republic of Germany), one was transferred to the GDR due to illness, two were sent back home due to indiscipline and only one left the country with a diploma, finishing an electro-mechanic training in Slovenia.⁶²

Southern Rhodesia

An African from Southern Rhodesia finished a one-year training at a journalist school in Belgrade and interned at the newspapers “Borba” and “Politika”, and at “Radio Beograd”. In his last month in the country, he did a study tour (Skoplje, Titograd, Dubrovnik, Split, Zagreb) and visited factories, industrial parks, and institutions.⁶³ In his report to ZAMTES, he wrote that he had seen “how they put socialism into operation. Therefor [sic] for my people, my going back to Southern Rhodesia means the coming back of the first pioneer of SOCIALISM [sic].”⁶⁴ In Yugoslavia, he was given the chance to study and deepen his knowledge about socialism, the political, social and cultural system of Yugoslavia. “I was then aware”, he wrote, “that what the capitalist journalists write about socialism is intoxicated speculation.”⁶⁵ For the Southern Rhodesian, the training of a foreigner as a journalist meant that Yugoslavia had “trained an unpaid ambassador” who is in touch with “every man in the country” and “with the world”. In a politically and ideologically divided world, “the duty of this unpaid Ambassador” is to counteract “the speculation by exposing the truth about Yugoslavia [sic].”⁶⁶ During his stay, he faced financial difficulties “like all foreign students” but was “able to bear them”. He did not want to suggest that the scholarships were too little but accommodation costs were so high “that it leaves a person with almost little to be able to feed on let alone the buying of clothes.”⁶⁷ He also gave advice on how to improve the Institute of Journalism in Belgrade:

⁶⁰ Ibid., Informacija, 26 January 1965.

⁶¹ Ibid., Savezni zavod za medj. tehn. saradnju, 22 January 1965.

⁶² Listed in ZAMTES’s dossier AJ, 208–371.

⁶³ AJ, 208–370 Južna Rodezija, Izveštaj, 4 November 1963.

⁶⁴ Ibid., Report to the Technical Assistance, 17 October 1963.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

lectures should be in English, lectures of the previous years should be provided to students, and there should be a press of its own so students could practise. Had he not been called by the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) to return to Africa, he had planned to start studying sociology in Yugoslavia. He concluded his report in the hope that if "one day all goes well" in his country, he will be offered another scholarship by Yugoslavia.⁶⁸

A compatriot of the journalist had a different experience. A year and a half after his arrival in 1962, he wrote that his impression of the country had "greatly changed". The better he knew the country and the longer he stayed, "the more I grow to hate my conditions of living. I have been so much humiliated, degraded, tortured, discriminated against and the like." It seems that problems with accommodation were the main reason for his discontent. "The cost of living is so high and my income so low that I have been forced to live below the bread and butter line. [...] I have been refused visitors of all kinds and have been subjected to conditions which are common to a prisoner. I have been refused admittance in certain eating places and other places of entertainment", the student reported.⁶⁹ The officials had a different view on his complaints. For them, his "hypersensitivity", intensified by his "complex of racial discrimination and inferiority" had brought him to a false perception of Yugoslavia. He had had problems with the families he stayed with and the people he had had contact with.⁷⁰

The same year ZAMTES received complaints from Cairo: ZAPU's representative in Egypt stated that some of their students had complained about their conditions of education and general treatment in Yugoslavia. The representative mentioned three students, one with problems with accommodation, one who had been released from hospital while still ill and a third who had complained about how they had been treated in school. Yugoslav officials told him that there had been similar remarks by other students in the past, but that during a visit from a ZAPU leader the complaints had proved to be without any foundation, exaggerated and often tendentious. It was suggested that a ZAPU representative should come to Yugoslavia and talk to the students. The SSRNJ replied to Cairo that the students' allegations did not match the facts.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., Prepis, 5 March 1965.

⁷⁰ Ibid., Letter annexed to Rešenje, 1 October 1964.

⁷¹ Ibid., Kairo Br. 6, 5 January 1965.

Conclusion

Individuals from the “Global South” arrived on scholarships in the socialist, non-aligned, internationalist state of Yugoslavia and, like elsewhere in the East and the West, encountered many problems. Some of the students started their journey with inadequate preparation for the experience abroad, high expectations, and an insufficient educational level.⁷² Lack of Serbo-Croatian language skills, accommodation difficulties, and tense correspondence with bureaucracy complicated their stay in a new environment that was in many ways extremely different from the foreign students’ home countries. Cases of discrimination and racism towards dark skinned students were reported and made the integration into the new society more difficult, while authorities sometimes downplayed the complaints.⁷³ The rate of students leaving Yugoslavia without a diploma was high.⁷⁴ Students were sent back home due to low school performances and lack of discipline whereas others took the opportunity to look for a better life in Western Europe, leaving their Yugoslav scholarships and their obligations to their liberation movements behind them.

These individual trajectories of Southern African students were not an obstacle for the continuation of the scholarships offered by Yugoslavia to Southern Africa, however. According to UNESCO-statistics, Yugoslavia hosted 5 students from non-self-governing African territories⁷⁵ in 1962, 15 in 1965 and 12 in 1968.⁷⁶ 2 South Africans enrolled as students in 1967, 4 in 1969, four in 1976, and 2 in 1978.⁷⁷ 2 Angolan students were present in Yugoslavia in 1974, 9 in 1977, and 5

⁷² Williams, “Education”, pp. 130, 139; Williams, *National Liberation*, p. 77, and O. Klineberg and H. von Alemann, *International Educational Exchange. An Assessment of its Nature and its Prospects*, Den Haag: Mouton, 1976, pp. 230, 240.

⁷³ See M. Lazić, “Neki problemi stranih studenata na jugoslovenskim univerzitetima šezdesetih godina XX veka, sa posebnim osvrtom na afričke studente”, in: *Godišnjak za društvenu istoriju* 16 (2009) 2, pp. 61–78.

⁷⁴ See lists in: AJ, 208, 214 and 361. However, such high numbers of non-graduates were not unique to Southern Africa students, as many students from Ghana left the country without a diploma in the same period. See AJ, 208–76 Ghana.

⁷⁵ For UNESCO, the group of Non-Self.-Gov-Terr. in Africa consisted of: Angola, Cape Verde Islands, Comoro Islands, Equatorial Guinea, the Afars and the Issas, ifni, Mozambique, Namibia, Portuguese Guinea, St. Helena & Deps, São Tomé and Príncipe, Seychelles, Spanish Sahara, Southern Rhodesia and the French Overseas “département de la Réunion”. See UNESCO, *Statistics of students abroad 1962–1968*, Paris: UNESCO, 1971, p. 64 of Part II.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 64 of Part II.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 47 of Part II, and UNESCO, *Statistics of students abroad 1969–1963*, Paris: UNESCO, 1976, p. 80, and UNESCO, *Statistics of students abroad 1974–1978*, Paris: UNESCO, 1982, p. 67.

in 1978.⁷⁸ These numbers only showed the young people enrolled at a higher education institution and not the number of grantees trained at vocational secondary schools. Between Angola's independence and Neto's visit to Belgrade in April 1977, Yugoslavia provided Angola with \$10 million in military aid (plus \$4 million that had not been transferred), 46 scholarships for Angolan students and training in Belgrade for 28 future diplomats, 56 security personnel, and 25 factory workers.⁷⁹ For the academic year 1976/77, the SSRNJ offered 15 scholarships for short-term training, secondary school, and university education; for 1979/80 89 and for 1983/84 125 scholarships.⁸⁰

After 1953, Yugoslavia emerged as a leader of the Non-Alignment Movement as it launched a diplomatic offensive in the "Global South", looking for closer relations with the African and Asian nations as well as with national liberation movements. Yugoslavia continued to be a close friend of liberation movements and South African leaders knew that the country was one of its supporters. From the point of view of the liberation movements, the most important part of Yugoslav aid was the military, material, financial, and political support. The education aid could be regarded as less crucial in times of armed conflict, therefore the difficulties and dropouts were not detrimental to the relationship with Yugoslavia. However, the liberation movements also knew that Yugoslavia was one of the places where they could send their adherents for further education, which would be needed when liberation was acquired.

As a leader of the NAM, and due to its foreign political ideology, Yugoslavia provided military, material, and financial aid to Southern African liberation movements. The idea behind educational aid was to offer an education to young people in need, but also, from a foreign political point of view, to use the soft power of international education and scholarships. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union with its People's Friendship University, later Patrice Lumumba University, and the United States with the Fulbright-Program, as well as many other Socialist and Western countries engaged in the education of foreign citizens. Governments offered support and opportunities to those who wished to study in a foreign country or did not have the financial means to study abroad, while at the same time expecting the international student mo-

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁷⁹ Memcon (Tito, Neto), 23 April 1977, p. 10, Tito Archive, cited in: Gleijeses, *Visions*, p. 77.

⁸⁰ Odbor Predsedništva Savezne konferencije SSRNJ za pomoć oslobodilačkim pokretima i žrtvama agresije et al. (eds.), *Antikolonijalna revolucija, socijalna politička i ekonomska emancipacija u svetu: međunarodni odnosi, položaj i perspektive oslobodilačkih pokreta u svetu: Jugoslavija i oslobodilački pokreti*, Gornji Milanovac: Dečje novine, 1985, p. 451.

bility to work in favour of their foreign political ambitions.⁸¹ Similarly, in Yugoslavia, the rapporteur Dušan Popović emphasized the importance of scholarships for foreign citizens and noted at a meeting of the commission for international relations of the SSRNJ in 1959 that Western and Eastern European states were active in educating the new foreign intelligentsia. He urged Yugoslavia to expand its scholarship programme, to take care of the foreign students and to influence them on an ideological and political level, so that the country's interests could be achieved.⁸² The Southern Rhodesian student who called himself an “unpaid ambassador” for Yugoslavia after his journalist training assumed a role of representing his host country. The difficulties that authorities and students encountered and the high number of unsuccessful students were not seen as a reason to end granting scholarships to Southern Africans. Relationship-building and influencing young people through many generations remained important.

81 A.F. de Lima Jr., “The Role of International Educational Exchanges in Public Diplomacy”, *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 3 (2007) 3, pp. 234–251; J.M. Mitchell, *International Cultural Relations*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1986, p. 2 and chapter 15; Bu, “Educational Exchange”, p. 397, and R. Djagalov and C. Evans, “Moskau 1960. Wie man sich eine sowjetische Freundschaft mit der Dritten Welt vorstellte”, in: A. Hilger (ed.), *Die Sowjetunion und die Dritte Welt. UdSSR, Staatssozialismus und Antikolonialismus im Kalten Krieg 1945–1991*, München: R. Oldenbourg, 2009, pp. 83–105.

82 Bondžić, “Strani studenti”, pp. 71–72.