ENGAGING FOR AFRICA: POPULAR SONGS BY AFRICAN STUDENTS IN YUGOSLAVIA

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Shared positions on anti-colonialism, anti-racism, and international brotherhood marked the transnational ties between Yugoslavia and several African countries in the context of the Non-Aligned Movement. From the 1960s to the end of the 1980s, through exchange programs and scholarships, students from Africa studied in Yugoslavia and participated in its cultural and political life, also through varied musical experiences ranging from folklore groups to popular music bands. By examining some of their popular music productions, this article investigates how non-aligned alliances and political aspects of the presence of African students in Yugoslavia were reflected in the music they performed. Most songs, mainly covers and in a few cases new compositions, focused on love or light topics, but a few addressed anticolonialism and contemporary African politics or discussed African ways of life and aspirations. In Swahili and English, these pieces display multiple inspirations from various musical genres. They prompt questions about the singers' communication aims and strategies, the tracks' production, as well as issues of audience reception and understanding, influenced not only by the competence in the songs' languages but also by the familiarity with the cultural references, political climate, and engagement with the singers' creative expression.

Keywords: African popular songs, Yugoslavia, non-alignment, anti-colonialism

Since the early 1960s, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY, hereafter: Yugoslavia) and many African countries[1] engaged in extensive exchanges and collaborative initiatives through the international network of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and its transcultural sharing of ethical and political principles. These initiatives spanned trade and industrial production, investment, scientific oversight of development projects, artistic

[1] Yugoslavia cooperated with all African countries, including those still under colonial rule, except South Africa and Rhodesia, whose racist regimes were condemned by the NAM.

partnerships, and the provision of government scholarships for international study. The choice to invest in the cooperation among NAM members was grounded in a shared commitment to global peace, anti-colonialism, self-determination, and international solidarity – principles closely linked to their ideological stance against the polarizing influence of the Cold War superpowers and rival blocs.

In this context, the presence of African – and more broadly, extra-European – students in Yugoslavia served as a tangible expression of the international cooperation fostered by the Yugoslav government. For thousands of young people from the Global South, studying in Yugoslavia between the 1960s and 1980s meant full immersion in a different society and access to an education they could later draw on in their personal and professional lives. At the same time, this phenomenon represented one of the main ways in which the Yugoslav population encountered foreigners and experienced, firsthand, the practical expression of Yugoslavia's ethical and political values as articulated through its foreign policy. In this sense, the Non-Aligned Movement's political framework shaped Yugoslav-African relations and had concrete effects on everyday life, facilitating interactions as well as letting frictions emerge between people who otherwise might never have met (Wright 2022).

In this unique political and social setting, did the music performed by international students play a special role? Did it reflect, engage with, or critique the official discourse of international solidarity, anti-colonialism, and self-determination promoted by the NAM, or the political realities of their home and host countries? In this article, I try to address these questions by looking at the intersection of music by African students, with a special focus on those from sub-Saharan countries, with the mentioned political themes that were relevant in the period 1960s-1980s. Several elements can contribute to connoting music as politically engaged: lyrics, musical style or genre, performers' positioning, performance venues, occasions of live performances, and surrounding discourses (Baker 2024). Considering music by African students, I look at performances and productions that can be considered politically engaged by examining some of these aspects. In performances of traditional folklore music, modalities of presentation of ensembles, performance occasions, and venues appear as central in adding political meaning to such performances. In popular songs, which are the main focus of this article, I am especially interested in the performers' background and lyrics conveying statements about anti-colonialism, self-determination, and relations between Africa and the Global North. In my survey of the musical activities of students from Africa in Yugoslavia, such pieces are rare, outnumbered by songs on lighter issues. However, they appear particularly interesting to explore the performers' own perspectives and how they positioned themselves as both performers and Africans within Yugoslav society.

This work is primarily based on discographic and archival sources; however, the documentation on the considered songs and performers in radio, TV, and record company archives is scarce and scattered. Interviews were also conducted with relevant interlocutors, while the performers themselves were in most cases not traceable. The sources'

incompleteness and sometimes contradictions pose challenges to fully comprehending the scope of the considered music performances and productions within the personal and artistic trajectories of their performers, as well as their reception. For this reason, I balance my interpretations by carefully presenting the available documentation and contextualizing it within the specific cultural and social context of Yugoslavia.

My core discussion focuses on three songs by African performers that were recorded and circulated in Yugoslavia, each engaging with political or cultural themes related to Africa. The first two songs, both in Swahili, were recorded during the 1960s and are marked by their explicit and compelling political messages. The first, "Mchezo ya uhuru" by Ugandan Ahmed Taib, sheds light on the topicality of anti-colonialism, despite the ambiguities emerging about its record production and presentation. The second piece, "Lumumba", performed by the Belgrade band Elipse with Congolese singer Edi Dekeng, commemorates the African independence leader and condemns colonialists. Following a gap in the production of politically engaged songs during the 1970s, the third piece, sung in both Swahili and English by Kenyan artist Steve Hannington, was recorded in the 1980s and presents a renewed image of African identity, lifestyle, and aspirations while simultaneously reflecting the singer's peculiar positionality. Throughout my discussion, the use of foreign languages in the lyrics raises important questions about how Yugoslav audiences understood or interpreted the songs, and points to broader issues concerning the expectations of the performers and the intended communicative function of their music. Across these examples, changing messages emerge in the music of African students in Yugoslavia, revealing the contradictions as well as the evolving priorities in the cultural and political relationships between African nations and Yugoslavia over the three decades under consideration.

Before examining these songs, I first outline Yugoslavia's collaborative policies with African countries and the broader phenomenon of Global South students in Yugoslavia and then I examine the political uses of traditional and folklore music performances.

NONALIGNMENT SHAPING COOPERATION BETWEEN YUGOSLAVIA AND AFRICAN COUNTRIES

After breaking the alliance with the Soviet Union in 1948, Yugoslavia pursued a "third way" in the Cold War between the capitalism of the Western Bloc and the communism of the USSR. Internationally, this politics took shape through the Non-Aligned Movement. Founded in Belgrade in 1961, it was mostly composed of Asian and African nations (the only European one was Yugoslavia),[2] which had freed themselves from the yoke of

[2] While Cyprus is often considered an Asian country geographically, it has been closely related to Europe, historically and culturally, as its current EU membership emphasizes. Cyprus's president, Archbishop Makarios III, participated in the 1961 Belgrade Conference, and from that year until 2004, Cyprus was a member of the NAM. Malta, another European country, joined the NAM in 1973 until 2004, when it joined the EU, like Cyprus.

colonialism and did not want to be under the influence of one of the two blocs.[3] In the NAM, Yugoslavia found space for its financial sustainability and international prestige by establishing and developing economic and diplomatic relations with Asian and African countries (Kilibarda 2010). In line with principles guiding non-alignment, Yugoslavia supported the commitment to world peace and non-intervention through its non-affiliation to any bloc, as well as global justice and equality articulated in particular as anti-colonialism, anti-racism, and international brotherhood – ideals resonating with the peculiar form that Socialism took in Yugoslavia (Jakovina 2011; Stubbs 2023; Westad 2005).

Recent scholarship investigating the role of Yugoslavia in the NAM problematized the mainstream perception of its idealist and unselfish commitment by highlighting its interests in economic cooperation and international visibility (Kilibarda 2010; Stubbs 2023). In addition, the Yugoslav narratives connecting past domination of the region by the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires and the partisan movement with colonialism and decolonial struggles were criticized (Baker 2018; Vučetić and Betts 2017). Finally, Yugoslavia's antiracism was deconstructed, showing how global notions of race and whiteness shaped official relations between Yugoslavia and countries of the Global South (Baker 2018; Kilibarda 2010; Subotic and Vucetic 2019; Vucetic 2017; Vučetić and Betts 2017; Wright 2022).

While Yugoslavia's international political engagement was not entirely free from prejudices and was at times less idealistic than its official rhetoric suggested, the country nonetheless actively promoted concrete cooperation initiatives. These took the form of cultural, economic, and diplomatic exchanges with numerous African nations. A range of Yugoslav professionals – including medical doctors, engineers, architects, agricultural experts, and veterinarians – participated in or oversaw development projects in non-aligned countries. At the same time, students from African and Asian nations went to study at Yugoslav secondary schools and universities, supported primarily by Yugoslav government scholarships, though in some cases also funded by their home governments or through private means. International students from the Global South began arriving in Yugoslavia as early as the 1950s, initially coming mostly from Southeast Asia and the Middle East. From the 1960s onward, however, the number of African students steadily increased (Bondžić 2010, 2014; Dugonjic-Rodwin and Mladenović 2023; Kuč 2019; Rucker-Chang 2020).

As with other international students from the Global South, the majority of African students in Yugoslavia were male, while female students remained a minority for a long time, mostly absent from public memory (Bonfiglioli 2023: 50; Dugonjić-Rodwin and Mladenović 2023: 343), although their numbers gradually increased over time. Most African students came from relatively affluent backgrounds and did not necessarily have a communist political orientation (Dugonjić-Rodwin and Mladenović 2023: 348). In fact, political alignment with Yugoslavia was not a criterion for receiving a scholarship – unlike

[3] The NAM built on and expanded the principles elaborated during the first Afro-Asian Conference held in Bandung in 1955, i.e. opposition to colonialism and neo-colonialism and international cooperation among countries that refused both American and Soviet influence (Byrne 2015).

in Eastern Bloc countries (ibid.: 343–344). Their first year in Yugoslavia was usually dedicated to learning the official language of the Republic where their university was located: Serbo-Croatian in Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia, and Montenegro; Slovene in Slovenia; and Macedonian in Macedonia. However, language barriers often slowed academic progress. Like other international students, African students actively participated in Yugoslav social, political, and cultural life. They engaged with local organizations – student, municipal, or political – as well as with international student associations. In addition, they formed their own organizations, often oriented around national or pan-African identities. They were a vocal and active part of Yugoslav society, indeed, according to Dugonjic-Rodwin and Mladenović (2023: 350), "Much of the political action in Yugoslavia, including public demonstrations in favour of decolonization, was due to the political activism of international students, as recognized by officials at committee meetings."

Most African students left Yugoslavia after completing their studies, returning to their home countries or relocating to Europe or North America. Some remained after graduation but left during the 1990s, primarily due to the wars and the breakup of the Federation. Only a few still reside in the post-Yugoslav states.

AFRICAN STUDENTS' MUSICAL EXPERIENCES

African students in Yugoslavia engaged in diverse musical activities as both performers and audiences, ranging from African traditional music to different popular music genres (Baker 2018; Cimardi 2024; Kovačič 2019; Radinović 2014). While Yugoslavia was more open to Western influences than other Eastern European countries – particularly in popular music – prior to the 1960s, it had little direct contact with people from outside Europe or exposure to their musical traditions, unlike most Western European countries with colonial histories. African students brought the novelty of African traditional and popular music, previously accessible only to a limited extent and mostly via radio or records, and additionally explored Afro-Latin and African American styles. Considering this, the political climate and the NAM principles shaping international students' presence in Yugoslavia, how did the themes of Africa and politics emerge or find expression in the music they performed?

In the field of traditional music,[4] African student associations in the principal Yugoslav university cities included folklore groups. In Zagreb[5] and Ljubljana,[6] these ensembles date

[4] There is no information about students performing traditional repertoires as soloists, probably because it required musical expertise that most students did not have.

[5] In Zagreb, the Organization of African Students (*Organizacija afričkih studenata u Zagrebu*) existed since 1967 ("Kronika" 1967a: 15). Along with a folklore ensemble connected with the International Student Friendship Club (MSKP: *Međunarodni Studentski Klub Prijateljstva*) and constituted by Asian as well as African students ("Sastanci" 1967: 12–13), there were also different troupes tied to specific African countries ("Kronika" 1967b: 8–10).

[6] In Ljubljana, the first documented show by a troupe of African students was by the folklore ensemble of the African Students Union in the Socialist Republic of Slovenia (ZAŠ v SRS: *Zveza Afriških študentov v*

to the late 1960s and early 1970s. They were composed of African students who played and danced African repertoires adapted for the stage while wearing traditional costumes. Besides different cultural events and national anniversaries of African countries, these folklore groups regularly performed for the celebrations of Africa Day ("Kronika" 1967b: 10; int. Max Zimani, 23 May 2023), commemorating the foundation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), on 25 May – incidentally also a national holiday in Yugoslavia: the Day of Youth and President Tito's official birthday. Besides students, important city and state personalities were invited to these formal events, which included formal presentations and speeches. Africa Day carried the political connotation of anticolonialism and Pan-Africanism, and the involvement of folklore groups showed that African students stood by and supported the OAU's principles through music.

Similar practices occurred in Belgrade, where various groups of African students performed at the Museum of African Art – The Veda and Dr Zdravko Pečar Collection. In 1983, during an event dedicated to Angolan poetry and songs, students together with pupils (children) from Angola performed "revolutionary songs and traditional dances", as described in the museum's press release. Photographic documentation of the evening shows the singers praising independence from Portuguese colonial rule while wearing t-shirts with the image of Angola's independence leader and first President, Agostinho Neto, and traditional dances in traditional attire, publicly displaying a continuity between their country's cultural heritage and its anticolonial engagement.[7]

Mobilizing traditional music in the context of Africa Day celebrations or events honoring Angola's independence (which emphasized the songs' revolutionary content and also included visual praise of Neto) illustrates the use of musical heritage and "revolutionary" repertoires to stand by the ideals of Pan-Africanism and anticolonialism. Conversely, these principles – embraced and promoted, with different emphases, by individual African countries, the OAU, and the NAM – shaped part of the performance of African traditional and neo-traditional music in Yugoslavia, along with lighter entertainment or representational venues. The official venues of these events and the presence of Yugoslav authorities as well as citizens, along with international students, marked the publicness of these political messages and Yugoslav solidarity with them. African students' public engagement against colonialism and in support of Pan-Africanism also emerged in the publications of their (African or international students') associations, like the *Bilten ZAŠ u SRS* (Bulletin of the African Students Union in the Socialist Republic of Slovenia) and *Glas Afrike* (The Voice of Africa) in Ljubljana or *Solidarnost* (Solidarity) in Zagreb. More broadly, it reflected both their direct involvement in the programs enabled by these same

SR Sloveniji) in 1971 at the Museum of Non-European Cultures in Goričane (SEM Archive, Folder "Reklamni oglasi Muzeja Goričane": RTV Propagandni oddelek, 20 June 1971).

[7] Folder X "Programi", Muzej afričke umetnosti (MAU; The Museum of African Art) Archive: the available written and photographic documentation briefly describes the event but does not supply precise information on the music and dance program.

ideals and the contemporaneity of anticolonialism and Pan-Africanism in certain African and European circles.

While this political use of music was characterized by the performance context and the explanatory introduction of the pieces to the audience, in popular music, the lyrics of a few songs dealt directly with anticolonial topics or Africa's aspirations. The production and performance of popular music relied on a different economic model and offered greater income opportunities than traditional music. While participation in folklore groups was voluntary, as part of the associationism connected with African students' organizations, popular music could offer the possibility of some income. Notwithstanding their scholarships, African students usually also needed a side job or other income-generating activity to support themselves during their university years. Some opportunities were offered by student and youth cooperatives, while some students navigated employment possibilities as tourist guides, photographers, actors, or musicians (Dugonjic-Rodwin and Mladenović 2023: 350).

They explored popular music as soloists, performing in all-African bands, or in groups mostly composed of Yugoslav musicians. Some experiences remained localized and undocumented, like the 1960s Belgrade band of Congolese musicians Crni panteri (The Black Panthers). A few can be reconstructed through visual documentation and oral history, like the 1980s Ljubljana band Afro Sound. Finally, others became well-known and their performances remain in their record production, as well as in magazines and TV reports, like the 1960s band Elipse and Ugandan singer Ahmed Taib, the Zagreb-based Guinean artist Mohamed Sow between the late 1960s and the 1980s, and the Belgrade-based Kenyan singer and actor Steve Hannington.

While most popular music production and interpretation by African performers in Yugoslavia was in English or Serbo-Croatian and followed the musical conventions of well-established genres in American or Yugoslav popular music, a few songs stood out for their linguistic and musical peculiarity. In the 1960s, two songs were produced with strong lyrics supporting African independence, and, after a lack of engaged songs in the 1970s, in the 1980s another piece presented Yugoslav (or more broadly European) cooperation with Africa through a new lens. The following discussion focuses on these case studies.

ANTICOLONIALISM IN THE 1960s: A DANCE OF FREEDOM OR A NEW DANCE?

Ahmed Taib[8] was a Ugandan from the northwest region of Arua, who moved to Yugoslavia for his university studies and, between 1961 and 1967, was a part-time student of Arabic and English at the Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo. In this period, he was also active as

[8] I sincerely thank colleagues Damir Imamović and Adisa Bašić for their help in retracing information about Ahmed Taib at the University of Sarajevo and the Radio and Television Bosnia and Herzegovina.

a singer (Debevec 2010). It is difficult to estimate his popularity, but he certainly engaged in music for some years, as both the presence of his recordings at the radio archives in Sarajevo and Belgrade and his international record production show. Throughout these recordings, his talent as a singer and his flexibility in different styles stand out. In 1964, he released his first single for the West German label SABA (SB3040)[9] and, the following year, an EP record for the Yugoslav company Jugoton (EPY3396), which I discuss below. In 1966 and 1967, he recorded two songs for Radio Sarajevo,[10] and in 1967/68 his third and last record was released by the Austrian company Figaro (ft67–609 g).[11] In his first two records, Taib performed popular music pieces influenced by ballroom rhumba, bossa nova, and calypso; in his recordings for Radio Sarajevo and in his third record, he sang local (*zabavna*, i.e., popular) and *Schlager* pieces, without Afro-Latin or Afro-Caribbean influences. In his record production predominantly dealing with light-hearted themes, the song discussed below emerges as a singular instance of explicit political engagement.

The Jugoton disc includes four tracks, which Taib sings in Swahili, accompanied by the ensemble of Yugoslav musician Kornelije Kovač. The tracks were recorded at the studios of Radio Sarajevo, where Kovač worked as a producer, in two sessions in 1964. A representative of Jugoton, Hamdija Salković, collaborated with the radio and pitched the record project.[12] This was aimed at the internal market, even though Swahili was largely unfamiliar to the local population, whereas many students from East and Central Africa were well acquainted with it. Side B comprises two different Swahili versions of the tracks on Taib's first single[13] and side A features two new songs. The first track, labeled "Mchezo mpiya" (New Dance), has very powerful anticolonial lyrics and a danceable accompaniment. The second track, labeled "Mchezo ya uhuru" (Dance of Freedom), also features dance music and presents bossa nova as the new favorite genre in Africa. An analysis of the content of the lyrics shows that they do not coincide with the titles and suggests that the titles were swapped.

[9] It included the songs "Wasifa" and "Wenn du auch einsam bist".

[10] Respectively "Tiket tvist" and "Izgubljeni cvijet".

[11] It featured the songs "Sugar-Baby-Train" and "It's a Long Way to Your Heart".

[12] Letter from Hamdija Salković to Pero Gotovac, 3 December 1964. Jugoton Archive, Croatia Records. In the Yugoslav region, the close connection between local radios and record companies in terms of performers' selection and promotion developed during the previous decades, as demonstrated by Dora Dunatov (2024).

[13] The first track is an interpretation of "Wasifa" in Swahili (with partially different content), in a slightly faster tempo but including the final yodel; the second song, "Kasafiri", is a faster Swahili version of "Wenn du auch einsam bist". In the SABA record, "Wasifa" is credited to Ronny Hein (lyrics) and Joe Garwin (aka Hermann Sattler, music) and "Wenn du auch einsam bist" to Heinz Schumacher (lyrics) and Hermann Sattler (aka Joe Garwin, music). Taib most likely contributed the refrain in Swahili and some words in English, whereas verses are in German, and it is possible that he also suggested the song's melody while Joe Garwin did the arrangement. In the Jugoton archive, the composer of these tracks is listed as anonymous (all the pieces are described as of "traditional and folk" origin), and the genre is labeled as *zabavna* (popular) music (Osnovni podaci o snimci: "Mchezo mpiya", "Mchezo ya uhuru", "Wasifa", "Kasifiri". Jugoton Archive, Croatia Records). It is not clear whether the SABA versions or the Jugoton ones were recorded first.

"Mchezo mpiya"[14] – New Dance (as per the record sleeve and label title)

Sisi zote watu ya Afrika tunapenda uhuru	We all people of Africa love freedom
sisi zote watu ya Afrika tunapenda uhuru	we all people of Africa love freedom
uhuru wetu, uhuru wetu, ana shida kila kitu kwa dunia	our freedom, our freedom, no problem for anything in the world
wazungu, mwendezeni ulaya	whites, go back to Europe
Watoto ya Afrika wanacheza leo mchezo ya uhuru	The children of Africa today play the game of freedom
watoto ya Afrika wanacheza leo mchezo ya uhuru	the children of Africa today play the game of freedom
uhuru wetu, uhuru wetu, uhuru ni kitu ghali sana	our freedom, our freedom, freedom is something very dear
wazungu, wendezeni ulaya	whites, go back to Europe

"Mchezo ya uhuru" – Dance of Freedom (as per the record sleeve and label title)[15]

Mchezo ya rumba sasa hatutacheza kwa nyumba	Now we do not play/dance rumba anymore in the house
maana lake tuna mcheza mpya sana	because we have a new music/dance
wa kila nchi wanapenda sana	people from every country love it so much
maana lake kweli ni chezo zuri sana	because it is really a good music/dance
Ukikwenda Kairo, ukikwenda Ghana	If you go to Cairo, if you go to Ghana
watu wote huko wanacheza bossanova	all the people there are playing/dancing bossa nova
watu wa Uganda na vile Kenya	people of Uganda and those of Kenya
na Tanganyika wanapenda bossanova	and of Tanganyika love bossa nova

Both titles contain the word *mchezo*, derived from the verb *kucheza*, which has many senses: playing (music, sports, games), dancing, and being loose. The ambiguity between "playing music" and "dancing" emerges in the lyrics. However, it is the first song that talks about freedom (*uhurru*) understood as the independence of African peoples from colonialists who are asked to leave the African soil (*wazungu, wendezeni ulaya*). The second song has a much lighter content, celebrating bossa nova as the new craze in various

[14] Transcription and translation by Roberto Gaudioso, to whom I am very grateful. The song has an ABB music and lyric structure: for brevity, the B repetition is omitted in the verbal transcription. This song and the following one discussed here can be listened to online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GA8xyyVDXY&ab_channel=electricjogging (accessed 4 March 2025).

[15] Transcription: Roberto Gaudioso; translation: Roberto Gaudioso and Laibor Kalanga. This song too has an ABB music and lyric structure, and in the transcription, the B repetition is omitted.

African countries. Why were the songs mistitled? Was it a simple swapping mistake due to inaccuracy? Was it due to the Jugoton editorial team not knowing Swahili? In all the documents at the Jugoton archive, the two pieces have the wrong title. So, the information could have been incorrectly recorded in Sarajevo, reaching the Jugoton headquarters in Zagreb already corrupt.[16]

The mistake could have happened because both titles start with "mchezo". The title's translation on the record is "dance" (*ples*), itself a modification of the translation supplied by Salković, the Jugoton agent in Sarajevo: *igra*, which preserved some of the eclecticism of the original Swahili word, combining playing and dancing.[17] So, there was a voluntary edit in the title translation at Jugoton, probably to conform them to standard Croatian.

Some words in the lyrics might have convinced the persons handling the recordings that the titles they received were swapped and they intervened to change them. Indeed, the second song does not talk of liberation but describes bossa nova as the new favorite dance after rumba in Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania. These countries had joined the NAM as independent nations in the early 1960s and the Jugoton staff, as well as Yugoslav listeners, could easily connect them to the anticolonial struggle for freedom. On the other hand, in order to understand the lyrics of the first song, one had to know Swahili. Because of the unfamiliarity of the Yugoslav audience with it, it is possible that assigning the title "Dance of Freedom" to the song mentioning newly independent African countries was a mistake by the Jugoton staff, confusing the two songs.

Nonetheless, the wrong labeling of the song titles could have also been deliberate and intended to let the listeners connect those countries with the struggle for liberation expressed by the title "Dance of Freedom", thus spreading the message against colonization and sensitizing the Yugoslav audience to socialist solidarity. However, colliding with this reading is the presentation on the record sleeve, which does not mention the struggle for independence in Africa but rests on imaginaries of exoticized Africanness through the description of Taib's music, undermining the anticolonial character of the song and the cosmopolitanism of the music (Cimardi 2024).

[16] I could locate only the tracks on side B in the Radio Sarajevo archive, so it is not possible to determine whether the tracks of side A were wrongly classified already there. For unknown reasons, the copy of the EP preserved at Radio Belgrade correctly attributes the titles to the recordings.

[17] Letter from Hamadija Salković to Pero Gotovac, 3 December 1964. Jugoton Archive, Croatia Records.



Fig. 1. Side A of Ahmed Taib's 1965 EP.

Sonically, the EP tracks are ballroom rhumba, calypso, and bossa nova.[18] Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Latin dance music forms could be the result of Kovač's arrangement since the sleeve notes indicate his intervention in giving the songs "a contemporary physiognomy" (Gotovac 1965). Already in the interwar period, Afro-Latin and Afro-Caribbean styles started to be popularized in Yugoslavia,[19] and in the 1950s, they were well integrated in the local music and dance scenes, as shown by hit rumba and calypso songs licensed as EP compilations by the Yugoslav music industry, or interpreted by local or European singers.[20] This likely contributed to the musical base from which Kovač took inspiration for his arrangements. In the 1960s, rumba and calypso were also very popular across Africa and Taib was most likely already familiar with them before Kovač's arrangement.[21] Furthermore, in several African countries, these genres were associated with freedom from colonization and modernity (Dorsch 2010), in line with the content of Taib's song. It is unclear whether Jugoton[22] and Pero Gotovac, who wrote the record's liner notes, honestly

[18] I thank Sydney Hutchinson for her expert commentaries on the style of these tracks. The corresponding songs on the SABA singles are labelled as "calypso".

[19] The Yugoslav record industry already featured genres such as rumba or tango in the 1930s (see Katarinčić 2025 and browse: https://www.ief.hr/en/research/projects/project-diskograf/croatian-e-discography/).

[20] For instance, Jugoton released some of Harry Belafonte's hits in "Calypso", EPRC9064; a single with two calypso songs performed by Kvartet Radar and Flo Sandon's in "Calypso Italiano/Star-O", D4167 (1958); and a rumba song in Gaby Novak's "Gaby Novak", EPY3042 (1959).

[21] As well as before Joe Garwin's arrangement for the SABA single.

[22] As mentioned, in the Jugoton documentation, the composer of these tracks is anonymous and the pieces are described as traditional and of folk origin, while the genre is labeled as *zabavna* (popular) music; different interpretations of the tracks on side B were copyrighted in Taib's German single.

thought that these pieces were "traditional and of folk origin" or if the description on the record's sleeve aimed at depicting the songs as appealing to the audience by exoticizing Taib's origin, emphasizing that "he brought all the temperament, musicality and sense of rhythm of his compatriots with him to Europe" (Gotovac 1965).

Sadly, Taib's voice emerges only in his songs' lyrics. To my knowledge, no interviews with him have survived and the main sources of information are his records and the associated documentation. In 1964, he had an address in West Germany, but he was in Sarajevo at least twice to record these tracks.[23] It seems he did not follow the production of the Jugoton disc including the sleeves, indeed he ceded all the rights and revenues from this record to Kornelije Kovač's ensemble.[24] However, Taib was also interested in releasing this EP in Uganda and Kenya, countries where Swahili is widely spoken,[25] although it seems that this project was not realized. In the 1960s, Swahili became both the official African language of several newly independent countries and the language of the OAU and, thus, a key instrument in shaping Africa's post-colonial identity. Considering this, Taib most probably targeted students from East and Central Africa in Yugoslavia as his primary audience, but Swahili was also an ideological choice stressing Pan-Africanism in the anticolonial content of his song. On the other hand, it is possible that, in the case he saw the sleeve notes before production, he did not consider them relevant, as they were addressed to Yugoslav listeners.

The data on "Mchezo ya uhuru" and its record are ambiguous on multiple levels and overall give the impression of a misalignment of the record content and its presentation. They also echo the complexities in applying NAM values in practice: internationalism is reflected in the production of a record by an African performer; however he is presented while retracing exoticizing stereotypes, and anticolonialism shapes the record's content, but this message remains opaque to most listeners. Nonetheless, "Mchezo ya uhuru" remains a historical testimony to a specific historical moment: a song opposing Africa's oppression, performed in Swahili by an African student only two years after his homeland's independence from colonial rule, and during his stay in Yugoslavia within the framework of NAM cooperation.

ANTICOLONIALISM IN THE 1960S: "LUMUMBA"

The Belgrade band Elipse mostly performed covers of American popular music and a few new songs in Serbo-Croatian. In their production, the song "Lumumba"[26] stands out

[23] From the available sources, one gets a sense that Taib considered settling in a different country and weighed the opportunities in studying and a musical career.

[24] Izjava (Statement), 29 June 1964, signed by Ahmed Taib. Jugoton Archive, Croatia Records.

[25] Anonymous document. Jugoton Archive, Croatia Records.

[26] The song, as well as the complete Elipse CD of which it is part, is available online on different platforms, including YouTube, at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xEPX4DxRRyA&list=PLYH9BCJ-vP2KK5Z9Qyr0lgFUrhuIaMlXv&index=20&ab_channel=Elipse-Topic (accessed 4 March 2025).

as a unique example of political engagement. It is dedicated to Congolese independence leader and then prime minister of the independent Republic of Congo, Patrice Lumumba, whose assassination in 1961 caused an international uproar and who was celebrated in many other songs worldwide during the 1960s and later.[27]

The collaboration between the Congolese singer Edi Dekeng and the Yugoslav members of Elipse was critical in redefining the band's style, but also in recording this song about the African leader. "Lumumba" was recorded between 1967, the year when Dekeng joined the band Elipse, and 1968, when the group disbanded. During that period, the band enjoyed great success, recorded intensively, and often appeared on TV (Elipse 1999; Janjatović 2024: 106). Elipse had existed since 1962–63 and played mostly beat and surf rock. In its first line-up,[28] it achieved a fair amount of success: it recorded two EPs and won the first edition of the Belgrade Guitar Festival Gitarijada in 1966. Then, Elipse members started to be interested in a turn to rhythm and blues and soul: this happened with Dekeng joining the band as a singer, together with three brass players.[29] Dekeng himself had been musically active for some years: in 1964 as the singer of the band Crni panteri (The Black Panthers), composed of six other compatriots, and, after its disbandment, he continued performing.[30] In its line-up with Dekeng, Elipse recorded one EP in 1968, *Le Telephone* (PGP-RTBEP50328), containing covers of Nino Ferrer and Otis Redding, as well as the new funk song in Serbo-Croatian, "Za one što na licu nose bore" (For those who carry wrinkles on their faces), allegedly the first Yugoslav funk piece (Radinović 2014).[31] Other covers of well-known soul and funk songs were recorded by Elipse and featured in the posthumous CD based on the recordings of RTB, Radio Television Belgrade (Elipse 1999).

[27] Many Congolese artists dedicated songs to Lumumba in the genre of Congolese rumba, like "Vive Patrice Lumumba" by Orchestre African Fiesta (1960), "Lumumba, héros national" (1961), and "Liwa ya emery" (1961) by Franco Luambo and the O.K. Jazz band, and later "Lumumba" by Franklin Boukaka (1967). Other African artists also paid tribute to the Prime Minister of independent Congo through music: Dorothy Masuka with "Lumumba" in 1961 and Miryam Makeba with a song with the same title (released in 1970 album *Keep me in Mind*). Finally, outside the African continent, two other pieces celebrating Lumumba originated from Communist countries: "Son a Lumumba" by Cuban Carlos Puebla (1961) and "Pesnya o Lumumbe" (Song on Lumumba) by Soviet baritone Petr Kirichek, from the album "Sibirskiy vals 1939–1961" (Siberian Waltz 1939–1961), released in 2014.

[28] Between 1962 and 1967, the band included: Momčilo Radovanović, Radomir Dmitrović, Minja Tasić, Vladimir Furduj, Zoran Simjanović, Božidar Knežević, Kosta Ignjatović, Bojan Hreljac, Slobodan Skakić, Simeun Vuković, and Aleksandar Mandić (Janjatović 2024: 106).

[29] In 1967, besides Dekeng, Nikola Zembić, Dragan Kuprijanov, and Zoran Jurkić joined the band (Janjatović 2024: 106).

[30] In 1967, Dekeng recorded the song "Bobi Smit" with actor Dušan Golumbovski, which was broadcast on the TVB (Television Belgrade) show *Koncert za ludi mladi svet* (Concert for crazy youth). This song in Serbo-Croatian criticized the Vietnam War and is available at: https://youtu.be/mz9_UFfJcpQ (accessed 22 October 2025).

[31] "Za one što na licu nose bore" was written by Vladimir Kanić, who reported that because of its lyrics referring to the fall of the government, Elipse member Zoran Simjanović was summoned for questioning ("Kanić: Moj otac je imao salon za plakanje" 2012).



Fig. 2. CD *Za prijatelje (1963–1968)* by Elipse.

Zoran Simjanović, keyboard player of Elipse and later composer and professor at the University of Arts in Belgrade, recalled that most of the members of Crni panteri were supporters of Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba, including Edi Dekeng, whose father was a wealthy Lumumbist.[32] In archival and record data, the author of the lyrics and music of "Lumumba" is not credited. It is likely that Dekeng or some members of his former band Crni panteri wrote it, but, unfortunately, no documentation is available to that effect. The lyrics are in Swahili, which was spoken in the Democratic Republic of Congo,[33] besides being a symbol and medium of African unity and freedom, especially in the 1960s.

"Lumumba"

Siku ile Lumumba aliomba[34] Kongo	The day Lumumba asked for Congo
hakuna mutu alikuwa naye pale	no one was with him there
sasa inafika wengine wamesema yao	now others are coming and saying their views
sababu gani? ile yote ni kijicho?	why all this? Is it envy?

[32] Program *Rok istorija*, ARH 269879, Archive Radio Televizija Srbije.

[33] In "Lumumba", a Congolese variant of Swahili is employed, which is significantly different from the standard one because it has never been codified. Furthermore, for some words, a difference in a vowel or syllable not clearly spelled can change the word's meaning. A linguistic analysis of the lyrics is beyond the scope of this article and both the transcription and translation in English above are a compromise on diverging interpretations, which I discussed with linguists Maud Devos and Roberto Gaudioso.

[34] The verb *kuomba* can mean "to ask for, request, beg" depending on the context and/or the Swahili variant.

Kongo aiko ya mabeleji	Congo does not belong to the Belgians
namna ile waoa na wazaa	this way they marry and give birth
Kongo ya wakongomani	Congo belongs to the Congolese
Ibeleji ya mabeleji	Belgium to the Belgians

The song's lyrics and music have an AABABA structure.[35] The lyrics in section A are quite allusive, placing Lumumba alone in taking the government of Congo (by winning the elections held immediately after independence) and opposing him to newcomers, who could be interpreted as other Congolese politicians, former Belgian colonialists, or international powers like the USA and the USSR, fighting the Cold War on African soil. Section B is very direct in referring to anticolonialism and the independence of Congo from the Belgians, implying that the newcomers previously mentioned are indeed the former colonialists, still interfering with Congolese matters.

Musically, the piece is characterized by the rhythmic and timbral components of the accompaniment and harmonized voices. The accompaniment discreetly supplies the background on which voices occupy most of the sonic space: various percussion instruments perform steady patterns, the guitar marks the main beat and the bass guitar provides the main harmonic support for the singing. In section A, harmonized voices perform homophonically, while in B Dekeng sings the lyrics and the band vocalizes in the background.

There is no data on how often Elipse performed this song in their numerous concerts in 1967–1968 or on its possible broadcast on the radio and television. The recording might have remained stored in RTB archives until the 1990s, when a short fragment of the song was used in the background in a 1993 episode of the TV program *Rok istorija*[36] and then, in 1999, it was released on Elipse's CD. The quick disbandment of the band in late 1968 also reduced the period when the song could have been performed live.[37] The piece was certainly not one of the emblems of Elipse as a rock and soul band, but since it was recorded by RTB, it was most likely also part of the band's live repertoire.

Hence, the question of the purpose and positionality of the song's author(s) and performers, but also its reception, arises. The fact that Dekeng came from a family supporting Lumumba, similar to the members of his first band, explains the stand in exalting the Congolese leader's position in the song and strongly claiming Congo's independence. For this song, as for the previous one, the context of non-alignment and Yugoslavia's

[35] For brevity, the transcription reports parts A and B just once.

[36] ARH 269879, Archive Radio Televizija Srbije.

[37] The band split up based on deciding to dedicate themselves to a musical career or continuing their studies. After the disbandment, some, like Dekeng, who graduated in Medicine and then moved to Germany and later to the USA, finished their studies; others continued making music, like Zoran Simjanović who registered at the Music Academy and had a successful career as a composer, or as Bojan Hreljac and Vladimir Furduj who joined the Korni Grupa (Zoran Simjanović, Archive Radio Televizija Srbije, ARH 269879).

foreign policies delineate a background sympathetic to African countries' struggle against colonialism and their neutrality in the conflicting global scenario of the Cold War. The Civil War in Katanga, which started shortly after Lumumba's election, saw the influence of Belgians and U.S. Americans, who considered the Congolese leader's fierce anticolonialism and philo-communist orientation as a threat. These foreign forces were also secretly involved in Lumumba's murder, which happened after he asked for Soviet help in Katanga, following his unanswered call for UN support. Lumumba's killing provoked huge protests and manifestations worldwide, including Yugoslavia, where Belgrade students gathered in mass demonstrations and attacked the Belgian Embassy (Dugonjic-Rodwin and Mladenović 2023: 332). People in Belgrade, where Dekeng was based, were familiar with the Congolese political situation and with the injustice of Lumumba's fate, within the broader context of anticolonialism and Cold War neutrality. As for "Mchezo ya uhuru", the choice of the Swahili language by the author(s) seems itself a political one: an African idiom, as opposed to European colonial ones, the language of the OAU that represented Africa's unity, cultural pride, and its commitment to anti-colonialism and independence. While it was understood by East and Central African students, Swahili compromised the understanding of the song's lyrics by Elipse's Yugoslav public. In the song, the only intelligible words for the Yugoslav audience, who mostly did not know Swahili, were probably Lumumba and Congo. In the said political context, these two keywords were, however, probably enough for the public to make sense of the song's message and appreciate it. Musically, the style is very different from the rock and soul repertoire of the band, letting this piece stand out with its message supporting the claim for freedom and justice for Africa.

Similar to "Mchezo ya uhuru", it is difficult to make conclusive claims about the reception of "Lumumba" among the audience. The first song appears to have circulated mainly via records, either played privately or broadcast on the radio, where it is unlikely that any explanatory introduction was provided. In the case of "Lumumba", however, while the song was not released on record, it was probably broadcast by Belgrade radio and TV, and, most importantly, the band probably performed it live. In that context, and particularly given how it differed from other pieces in Elipse's repertoire, the song's meaning could have been conveyed to the public, rendering it easily understandable for Yugoslav audiences, who were already familiar with the international political situation.

THE 1980s: A NEW PRESENCE OF AFRICA IN POPULAR MUSIC

During the 1970s, a decade during which the enthusiasm for decolonization started to be tainted by disillusionment, besides a few compositions by Mohamed Sow (the early 1970s) and the starting career of Steve Hannington (the late 1970s), it seems that no other African student recorded popular music and no songs dealing with anticolonialism or Africa were produced. On the other hand, the performance of traditional music in politically connoted

contexts continued since the previous decade and in the following one. What marked the 1970s was the beginning of the phenomenon of *Afro disko*. In Ljubljana and Zagreb, African students organized nights at which they DJed and played a range of African, African American, Afro-Caribbean, and Afro-Latin popular music. These venues were open to anyone and, through the experience of participating in these events and getting in touch with African people and music, helped making local and African youth closer (int. Max Zimani, 31 May 2023; Baron Samba, 5 July 2023; Joseph Rakotorahalahy, 21 August 2023; Paulos Worku, 7 September 2023; Simo Grbić, 25 January 2024; Sam Bushara, 1 March 2024).

A return to the theme of Africa's aspirations in popular music produced by African students happened in the 1980s. In 1981, a group of Libyans studying at the University of Belgrade, The Green Wings, released the album *Jamahiriya* (ULP852) with Jugoton and the support of the Libyan Embassy. Most of the tracks (in Serbo-Croatian or Arabic) combine rock with influences of Arab traditional music. Some praise Libya and Muammar Gaddafi (featured on the record's cover) and his political philosophy exposed in the "Green Book" (Radinović 2014), one is dedicated to the Palestinian movement Al Fatah and the record also includes an interpretation of the *sevdalinka* (traditional Bosnian folk song) "Moj dilbere" (My darling). Unfortunately, the performers are not credited on the record and no further information on the band or on the album could be found so far.

In the same years, references to Africa recurred in some of the songs by Jungo Chokwe, aka Steve Hannington.[38] Hannington moved from Kenya to Yugoslavia for his secondary education and continued studying at university. He had an interest in making music and recorded his first singles in the late 1970s. A TV commercial in the 1980s launched his career in music and on TV (Cimardi 2024; Nenić 2022). Most of the pieces recorded by Hannington in English, Swahili, and Serbo-Croatian deal with love and enjoying music and dance. The first reference to Africa in his pieces appears in his 1980 single "Hey Afrika" (SY23669), containing a double version of this song in English and Swahili. Through the bilingual lyrics, a cheerful snapshot of Africa is offered, presenting people meeting on the street in Africa, greeting each other with the Swahili word *jambo* (hello). A similar joyous and lighthearted representation of Africa returns in his song "Everybody on a Safari".[39] In these two songs, as well as in the one discussed in detail below, the discourse on Africa does not touch anticolonialism or decolonization, but rather offers snapshots of some of the continent's cultural traits and emphasizes connections between Africa and Yugoslavia.

[38] On some records, his name also appears as Steven Hannington. In Serbia, his name was usually transliterated as Stiv Hanington and he was also known as Steva Šumadinac (Nenić 2022).

[39] The eponymous record (H.A.P. LP001), in addition to this piece, also contains songs from his previous albums. It was released (year unknown) in Kenya by Hannington Alulu Productions (his own enterprise) and likely had limited distribution in Europe.



Fig. 3. Side A of the album *Vama s poštovanjem* by Steve Hannington.

In Hannington's second album, *Vama s poštovanjem* (To you, with respect) (PGP-RTB2122790), released in 1987, a more articulated discourse on Africa, its self-awareness, and aspirations emerge with the track "Let's Go to Afrika". Alternating between Swahili and English, the lyrics depict a lively image of Africa and invite people to go there. Africans are portrayed as busy working for their daily life as well as for the common good of their country and longing for peace, unity, and friendly relations.

"Let's Go to Afrika"

Ewenda u Afrika, wandaliya, wandaliya o (2x)	Go to Africa, they are doing, they are doing (2x)
Ewenda u Afrika, wanasema, wanasema yo	go to Africa, they are saying, they are saying
Etujakamoja tujenga taifa leto	together we build our nation
Ewenda u Afrika, wanapenda, wanapenda yo	go to Africa, they love, they love
Ewenda u Afrika, tufanya bikisa	go to Africa, we do great things
	Com'on baby, com'on baby, let's go – [speech] let's go to Africa
	com'on baby, com'on baby, let's go move – [speech] everybody is welcome
	com'on baby, com'on baby, let's go
	com'on baby, com'on baby, let's move

Kabaleze kabana Bagadu bagadu bagadu	
	And if you are going to Africa, you are welcome – [speech] alright baby, we are coming
	A lot of people working hard for their daily bread – [speech] we are going to help too
	In Africa we don't need no more war – [speech] well, that's right
	All we need is love, peace and unity – [speech] we are all brothers and sisters, everybody knows that
Ewenda u Afrika, wandaliya, wandaliya o 2x	Go to Africa, they are doing, they are doing 2x
Ewenda u Afrika, wanaimba, wanaimba yo	go to Africa, they are singing, they are singing
	Com'on baby, com'on baby, let's go
	com'on baby, com'on baby, let's go move 2x
	[speech] Hello, how are you? I am very well…
	[speech] when we say jambo, it means hello
	[speech] everybody, you're welcome

The album *Vama s poštovanjem* embraces different genres: from what Hannington defined as Afro funk – his personal combination of African American and African influences[40] – to newly composed popular songs in Serbo-Croatian. This record corresponded to the apex of Hannington's popularity in Yugoslavia, Serbia especially, where he was very present in the media and had become a familiar personality on TV. After more than a decade of living in Yugoslavia and almost the same time making his way in music and TV, his public persona combined the Otherness of his African origin but also the proximity of being a member of Yugoslav society (Cimardi 2024; Nenić 2022). "Let's Go to Afrika" gives both a verbal (alternating Swahili and English) and sonic (disco music influences and frequent brief spoken breaks and choruses) expression to his self-positioning across continents: Africa and Europe. He indeed does not refer to his native country, Kenya, but speaks generally of Africa and seems to address an audience probably also beyond the Yugoslav one by using the English language.[41]

[40] The track "Samba ba ba lu" in this record is labeled "Afro funk" and Hannington explains his view of Afro funk in a later interview: Chams Media TV 2020, "I was the Michael Jackson of Serbia – Steven Hannington Alulu": www.youtube.com/watch?v=uiEPoIZiZmg (accessed 28 March 2025).

[41] The video of the song, available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=nCxaJZhlfyE (accessed 28 March 2025), reinforces this self-presentation (Cimardi 2024).

The message about Africa in the songs "Mchezo ya uhuru" and "Lumumba" was carried in the value-charged language of Swahili, which reduced its reception among Yugoslavs. Hannington's choice of mixing Swahili with English, not only in "Let's go to Africa", but also in other songs, surely reflected his approach to music but also marked a significant effort in the communicability of his lyrics without abandoning Swahili as the official language of his country and marker of African unity, this latter a theme that recurs in his songs mentioning Africa. Thanks to his positionality in Yugoslav society and the public persona he built in his long career in the country, he could present Africa closer to Yugoslavia and promote the connection between them – a connection that in the late 1980s was already solidly established through the NAM networks.

Many transformations occurred in Yugoslav society and its popular music scenes between the 1960s and 1980s, which undoubtedly affected the opportunities, influences, and status of African musicians in the country. By the 1980s, Yugoslav engagement in the NAM moved from an emphasis on anticolonialism to cooperation toward economic development and justice. Also, a wider variety of music styles and genres, multiple scenes, more diverse infrastructure, an established recording industry, specialized media, and improved conditions of music labor were far more developed than two decades earlier. This is also why Hannington's success and audience were surely broader than those of Ahmed Taib and Elipse in the 1960s, who had shorter careers and less exposure in the media.

CONCLUSIONS

Shared stands in support of anticolonialism and international brotherhood framed the scholarship schemes through which thousands of African youth went to study in Yugoslavia. These values also permeated Yugoslav international official policies and reached the local population through propaganda but also through the very presence of a sizable number of foreign students in the Federation. Given the political climate that shaped the encounter between Yugoslavs and African students, one could have expected many songs connecting the African background of the students to their present in Yugoslavia with political content or related to their visions. However, most popular music productions of African students addressed love themes or took the form of cover versions, and only a few of their popular songs' lyrics express political action and engagement. Nonetheless, their political activism emerged in other spaces, where performances of traditional folklore music were also featured, such as celebrations, manifestations, public discussions, and events organized by various associations.

The scenario reconstructed in these pages reflects the development and focus of the public discussion on Africa in Yugoslavia as well as the positionality of African students across the decades. While the 1960s saw the long-awaited independence of many African countries and, in parallel, NAM's strong activism for anti-colonialism, decolonization, and

self-determination, this engagement slowly faded in the 1970s, also because most of the founding leaders were not there anymore (Westad 2005: 107). In the 1980s, Africa's independence was not so topical anymore, while reciprocal knowledge and connections between African countries and Yugoslavia were in place but still required mediation and engagement. The discussed songs reflected these changing times and also show a progressive integration of African students in Yugoslav society through the different presentation of their perspectives, moving from anticolonialism to intercultural knowledge and the broadening of the expected audience of their songs.[42]

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ANGAŽMAN ZA AFRIKU: POPULARNE PJESME AFRIČKIH STUDENATA U JUGOSLAVIJI

Zajednički stavovi o antikolonijalizmu, antirasizmu i bratstvu među narodima obilježili su transnacionalne veze između Jugoslavije i nekoliko afričkih zemalja u kontekstu Pokreta nesvrstanih. Od 1960-ih do kraja 1980-ih, na temelju programa razmjene i stipendija, afrički su studenti studirali u Jugoslaviji te sudjelovali u njezinu kulturnom i političkom životu. To je uključivalo i raznolika glazbena iskustva, od sudjelovanja u folklornim skupinama do djelovanja u popularnim glazbenim sastavima. U ovom se članku, na temelju analize odabranih primjera popularne glazbe afričkih studenata, proučava kako su se elementi nesvrstanosti te političke posljedice njihove prisutnosti u Jugoslaviji odražavali u glazbi koju su izvodili. Većina pjesama (uglavnom je riječ o obradama, a u nekoliko slučajeva i o novim skladbama) bavila se ljubavnim ili lakim temama, no neke su tematizirale antikolonijalizam, suvremenu afričku politiku, način života u Africi te težnje tamošnjeg stanovništva. Te su skladbe pisane na svahiliju i engleskom jeziku, a inspiraciju vuku iz različitih glazbenih žanrova. Iz njihove analize proizlaze i nova pitanja: što su pjevači željeli komunicirati i na koji način, koje su bile okolnosti produkcije navedenih pjesama te kakva je bila njihova recepcija, odnosno kako ih je publika shvaćala. Sve se to veže ne samo uz (ne)poznavanje jezika na kojem su pjesme izvođene već i uz (ne)poznavanje kulturnih referenci, kao i uz političku klimu te angažman publike potreban za vrednovanje kreativnosti izvođača.

Ključne riječi: afričke popularne pjesme, Jugoslavija, nesvrstanost, antikolonijalizam