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At the end of the last year, a valuable contribution to the study of African liberation wars and their Eastern European patrons, suppliers, role models, and allies came in the form of an edited volume under the accomplished editorship of and with contributions from some of the most prominent names in the field. The edited volume about Southern African liberation movements and the East is framed in the context of global history and the concept of networks and entanglements. It is important to say that the editors decided to define the “East” (the authors also use the term the Global East) as the space that includes all countries of the Warsaw Pact, but also China and Yugoslavia – a choice which they predicate not on the artificial homogeneity of the socialist world but rather on its diversity and by acknowledging national differences not only of China and Yugoslavia but also individual countries within the socialist bloc. The exclusion of Cuba was explained by its geographical position in the Western Hemisphere, but not the exclusion of Vietnam and North Korea (p. 5). The volume’s quality is easily recognizable in its combination of methods of global history that puts African movements, ideologies, and wars in the context of networks between them and their benefactors with their different interests, policies, and contributions, with micro histories, a prosopography approach to individual fighters and scholarship recipients and their movements, training, agendas, and connections in the East.

This volume is focused on the period from the beginning of the 1960s when a large number of African countries gained their independence. Strong liberation movements had emerged in places where decolonization was violently suppressed, particularly in Southern Africa, in societies which blocked every social mobility, in the so-called settler colonies with racist laws (in South Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, the South African Republic, and occupied Namibia), and the societies with an archaic colonial system (Portuguese Angola and Mozambique). Chronologically, the volume ends with the independence of “the last colony,” Namibia, in March 1990, an event that some of the contributors consider as the end of the Cold War in Africa.

The volume excellently challenges the paradigm of “national” liberation, correctly pointing out the transnational aspects of African liberation; this approach makes sense in both continental and transcontinental contexts (p. 11). Fighters from Southern Africa neither thought of themselves only as fighters for liberation within national borders nor were their connections unambiguous. Many of them traveled from Belgrade to Moscow and Beijing and back. Sources that contributors to this volume use are very diverse: they use letters, itineraries, notebooks and manuals for military training, photographs, reports from teachers, ambassadors, and spies from colonial powers, socialist and Western countries, and oral histories. As the editors emphasize, they hope that this volume would be an invitation for further research.

After an excellent introduction that sets the contextual and theoretical frameworks, the volume begins with Eric Burton's chapter entitled "Hubs of Decolonization. African liberation movements and the Global Cold War 'East'. Transnational Activism," on the "hubs of decolonization" without which these connections would not exist. Burton uses this innovative concept, which is connected to the well-known concept of a "gatekeeper state" introduced by Africanist Frederick Cooper, to show, using case studies of Accra, Cairo, and Dar es Salaam, how these cities functioned as gathering spaces for liberation movements. These cities also functioned as the "gates" toward Eastern Europe and, through the embassies of Eastern European countries, as the watchtowers from which they observed the East. It is a worthy approach because of its well-selected case studies. Cairo was the seat of the Arab League, and, between 1956–1970, Nasser's support of these connections fitted into his foreign policy concepts of pan-Arab, pan-Islamic, and pan-African activism. Under Nkrumah's dynamic leadership from 1955–1966, Accra pursued continental activism and founded a school for guerilla leaders. Dar es Salaam was the seat of the Committee of Nine, which acted within the Organization of African Unity against colonization. According to Ryszard Kapuscinski's romanticized memoir, in the 1960s in Accra one could see Mugabe sitting at one table, Mondlane and Kaunda at another table. This shows the entangled networks of guerillas who would later become the leaders of African states.

In the chapter on the Namibian liberation movement ("SWAPO's 'Eastern' Connections, 1966–1989") Chris Saunders brings an interesting overview of this organization's relations with the East. It was the last state that gained independence, and he illustrates heterogeneity and the rise and fall of its "Eastern" supporters. He delineates SWAPO's connections with the USSR as well as with the German Democratic Republic. Anja Schade and Ulrich van der Hayden examine the European side of this transnational activism from the perspective of the German Democratic Republic ("GDR Solidarity with the ANC of South Africa"). They skillfully examine how different actors, from the trade union to the ruling party, built connections with Southern African communists but also with Mandela's African National Congress – the liberation movement that dismantled apartheid in South Africa. They explore particularly the topic of "exiles" and how solidarity towards them was used to demonstrate the humane side of German socialism.

Helder Adegar Fonseca uses recently declassified intelligence archives of the Portuguese Army in a very innovative way. He goes beyond the mere reconstruction of the events and uses interrogation records to reconstruct training, worldview, and connections between Angolan guerillas and socialist countries, as well as relationships between guerillas with and without "socialist experience" ("The Military Training of Angolan Guerillas in Socialist Countries: A Prosopographical Approach 1961–1974"). His work is especially important for examining the forms of work with guerillas and the ubiquity of "safe havens," i.e., training camps in socialist countries and friendly African states. Natalia Telepneva examines the public image of liberation struggles in Southern Africa by focusing on the career of a Soviet journalist, Oleg Ignat'ev ("Letters from Angola': Soviet Print Media and the Liberation of Angola and Mozambique, 1961–1975"). By looking at Ignat'ev, Telepneva builds a very interesting comparative account in which journalists appear as the interpreters of African revolutions but also as informal intermediaries between the USSR and liberation movements. While the editors point at the

parallels with the famous Polish journalist Ryszard Kapuscinski, I would like to emphasize that Yugoslav journalist, historian, diplomat, and the founder of the Museum of African Art, Zdravko Pečar, belongs to the same intellectual and ideological circles and served as an informal intermediary between Belgrade and Algiers in the 1950s and 1960s.

In his work on Yugoslav aid to liberation movements in Portuguese colonies, Milorad Lazić emphasizes the uniqueness of the Yugoslav role in the Global South. In their struggle for prestige but also in their efforts to differentiate from other “Easterners,” Yugoslavs showed ideological flexibility toward liberation movements which allowed them, despite limited material resources, to position themselves as potential benefactors in both Mozambique and Angola. In Angola, towards the end of the war (1974–1975), they even assumed – albeit shortly – the role of the main supporter of the most successful movement – Agostinho Neto’s MPLA. His work is complemented by Nedžad Kuč’s chapter on Southern African students in Yugoslavia in the 1960s. He shows how the different goals of liberation movements, Yugoslavia, but also students themselves, could create several different trajectories – from dropping out of school in search of a “better life” in Western Europe to becoming Yugoslavia’s “unofficial ambassadors” in Southern Africa after finishing school.

Although the volume has one important map that shows “education and military host centers in the East” (p. 109), it would be more complete and approachable to the reader (one who is already familiar with the topic as well as one who wants to get familiar with the scope of “socialist solidarity”) if a descriptive map (or maps) of Southern Africa during decolonization had been included. Illustrations are drawn from the diverse source material and show the rich source base of this book. Among the illustrations is the photograph of Agostinho Neto Street in Belgrade and the commemorative plaque that is dedicated to this African guerilla and political leader. The volume is equipped with a subject index.

The volume on South African liberation movements and their “Eastern” connection is an excellent addition to the field. We can look at it as a part of a wider phenomenon of the study of the networks that formed between Eastern Europe and Africa during the Cold War. The authors also open many new paths for future research. All contributions to this volume demonstrate the usefulness of the concepts and methods of global and transnational history in the study of multiple and complex connections between Africa and Eastern Europe when these were at their historical apex.