

THE STRUGGLE FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA
AND
THE WAR IN ANGOLA
A Position Paper By
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Among the liberation struggles which have taken place within the world today, the struggle for Southern Africa is among the most critical. It is critical to the oppressed peoples of Southern Africa who dare to liberate their nations from imperialism; critical to the Union of South Africa which must retain the oppressed nations surrounding it under apartheid rule to insure its own survival; and critical to Western imperialism, principally the United States, whose interests are heavily tied to South Africa and Zimbabwe/Rhodesia for its immense wealth of resources, its rich investment returns, and strategic military importance.

The war in Angola, formerly Portugal's richest colony, cannot be separated from the general liberation movement for Southern Africa. Like Mozambique, Angola is an indispensable front in the anti-imperialist offensive. Like its neighbor to the east, Zimbabwe/Rhodesia, and its neighbor to the south, Namibia/South West Africa, it cannot be completely liberated until all the oppressed Southern African peoples are free. This cannot occur until imperialism's ally, the Union of South Africa, is defeated in its expansionist designs, and the Black African majority overthrows its white minority ruling class and expels Western/U.S. imperialism.

It is within this context that the Angolan conflict must be examined.

Angola: A Short History

Angola is by no means a stranger to oppression and exploitation. In the 400 years of Portugal's forcible intervention into Angolan history, 5,000,000 Angolans were sold into slavery to Brazil, the Caribbean, and the Portuguese court. It has served Portuguese colonial interest as an agricultural colony

Angola's principal ethnic groups today include the Ovimbundu, (which is the largest group), the Kimbundu, Bakongo, Lunda-Kioko-Tchokue, and Ganguela peoples. When Portuguese explorers first came to what is now known as Angola, a number of kingdoms existed within that territory. Among these were the kingdoms of the Congo, Ngola, Lunda, and Benguela. The most famous was that of the Congo, an agricultural society which produced mainly for subsistence.

Though the Congo and other kingdoms initially related to Portugal on the basis of trade, the latter's insatiable appetite for the profits offered by the slave trade moved it to attempt to enslave the Angolan people. This, in turn, prompted the various kingdoms to engage in a protracted, though largely unsuccessful, struggle against Portugal.

While this resistance was unable to force Portugal out of Angola (largely due to Portuguese success in promoting tribal rivalries), it was nonetheless able to block Portuguese penetration into the Angolan interior until the early 20th century. Angolan nationalism had its birth in the rural resistance waged by the various ethnic groups. The Portuguese sought to crush this resistance by physically eliminating traditional tribal chiefs, expropriating lands, destroying tribal structure, imposing a sovereignty tax, and instituting forced labor.

Simultaneously, direct Portuguese domination meant a greater influx of the native population to the cities where, in the late twenties and early thirties, a movement began to develop. Though the urban population was considered "assimilated", they nonetheless carried out mass actions against Portuguese colonialism. A number of political associations developed which faced police terror in the form of the Portuguese secret police.

The urban movement came to maturity after the end of the Second World War. Prior to the war, the political organizations which had formed sought better economic and social conditions through legal pressure. As Portuguese repression

intensified, however, more and more Angolans came to realize the impossibility of fighting colonialism through legal reforms.

The leap the movement took after the war found students using the legal organizations to promote a literacy campaign and the study of the international situation and the nature of fascism. Out of this movement came the clandestine organizations: Party of Struggle of Africans of Angola (PLUA), Movement for the National Independence of Angola (MINA), which joined the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). These organizations based themselves mainly among the urban population.

In Leopoldville and Brazzaville (then in the Belgian Congo), a number of nationalist groups formed in the late fifties. These included the Popular Union of Angola (UPA), formerly the Union of the Population of North Angola (UPNA), the Alliance dos Naturais do Enclave de Cabinda (ANEC), today known as the Movement for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (MLEC), and the Alianza dos Naterais de Maguela do Zombo (ALIAZO).

The History of the Three Liberation Groups in Angola

In the earlier history of the Angolan liberation struggle, the scene was dominated by two factions. The first is the groups which have been under the leadership of Holden Roberto and have, for the most part, a base among the rural population in the northern part of the country. The second is the grouping of forces centered around the capital city, Luanda, the central part of the country stretching more or less directly east of Luanda, and generally associated with the MPLA.

The Front for the National Liberation of Angola grew out of several groups.

The earliest of these appear to be the Union of the Population of North Angola (UPNA), a group founded mainly by Angolans living in the Belgian Congo, in 1954. Besides propaganda, their main activity was an attempt to have their nominee named successor to the Congo monarchy. They lost to a Catholic nominee of the Portuguese (the UPNA being mainly a Protestant grouping).

In 1958 the UPNA was replaced by the Union of the People of Angola (UPA), headed by Holden Roberto, an Angolan resident in the Congo and nephew of the monarchical candidate of the UPNA. A large spontaneous rebellion in northern Angola erupted in March 1961, in which the UPA participated. After the rebellion, the UPA joined another emigre group in the Congo, the Angolan Democratic Party, and formed the FNLA.

In 1962 a provisional Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile (GRAE) was established, headquartered in Leopoldville. It was at one time recognized by 28 African states. After several defections by a number of prominent leaders within FNLA it became quite obvious that the organization's main support came from emigres and Roberto's Bacongo-speaking people in northern Angola. In the years since then, the FNLA has mainly been concentrated in the north and in Zaire/Belgian Congo. This has been even more true after the formation of the National Union for the Total Liberation of Angola (UNITA) in 1966.

Jonas Savimbi, head of UNITA, came from a prominent family of the Ovimbundu people (the largest ethnic grouping in Angola). He was the foreign minister of Roberto's GRAE and, according to Savimbi, broke with the organization because of its "tribalism, conservatism, and open collaboration with U.S. imperialism."

For most of its existence, UNITA was based primarily among the Ovimbundu

people in southern Angola. It developed within Angola as the third major force in the country's revolutionary movement, scoring successes against the Portuguese as well as participating in the ongoing fratricidal warfare against the other two groups.

The last group is the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). It was established in 1956 as a union of several parties. Originating from Luanda, Angola's capital city, the actual social character of the movement has too often been obscured. Though all three of Angola's liberation groups are headed by the educated elite, the MPLA has been accused most often of being "assimilados"-- a term associated in most contexts with the educated elite and mulattoes. Note, however, that in the Portuguese territories the term "assimilado" also includes various kinds of urban laborers. In other words, the term is not limited to those with a certain skin color or education. Assimilados also represent the broadest social strata.

The MPLA emerged out of a long developing movement in the capital city to become the first group to undertake systematic armed struggle over vast areas of Angola. At one time the organization claimed 50,000 members. Among the trends which formed the MPLA was a small Marxist youth group (considered by some sources to have been an Angolan Communist Party) which joined the PLUA in 1955.

In 1963 a split occurred within the organization, and a prominent MPLA leader, Viriato da Cruz, went over to the FNLA. Generally the struggle seemed to revolve around competition for leadership of the organization between the various social strata. Another significant split was the defection of a military unit (from MPLA to the FNLA) led by Daniel Chipenda. According to sources within the Zimbabwe African National Union, the split centered around Chipenda's

advocacy of the use of South African troops by MPLA in an unholy alliance. It is believed that Chipenda played a significant role in bringing about the alliance between the FNLA, UNITA, and the Union of South Africa.

Of the three groups, MPLA has by far the most extensive program. It is a comprehensive program of national (people's) democracy involving planned development, nationalization of enemy holdings, democratic rights, etc. Both FNLA and UNITA, on the other hand, are motivated by much narrower views of nationalism. Outside of independence and the formation of some kind of democratic state, no concrete programmatic proposals came from either group.

It must be noted that the three groups have historically been engaged in fratricidal conflict, fighting each other as often as they fought the Portuguese. This has been true despite periodic attempts to unify in the struggle against Portuguese colonialism.

Unity Government

In examining the call for a government of national unity based upon a coalition between FNLA, UNITA, and MPLA, one must begin with some general assumptions. First, a distinction must be made between independence from Portugal and independence from neo-colonialism/imperialism nominally administered by a "native" puppet regime but controlled by US and Western European capital. Formal independence from Portugal by no means precluded the latter. The facts are that two of the three liberation movements, FNLA and UNITA, were heavily financed and generously supplied with troops by US/European imperialism.

National self-determination means independence from all forms of foreign domination. To promote the facade of a national coalition government of the three groups, as President Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger did repeatedly, is deceptive. To attempt to convince the Angolan people that such a coalition

would serve their best interests serves imperialism, not national liberation.

We must offer comradely criticism to the People's Republic of China for persistently calling for a "Government of National Unity" in Angola and attacking the progressive roles played by the Soviet Union and Cuba in supporting the Angolan liberation struggle led by the MPLA.

Angola's People Have Defeated Imperialism

The victory of the Angolan people under the leadership of the MPLA is now a fact of history and can be analyzed in retrospect.

Upon Portugal's granting of formal independence to Angola, a two-pronged attack was launched against the progressive forces of the MPLA, headquartered in Luanda. This was a concerted effort from the beginning, which included UNITA/FNLA, neo-colonialism's puppets, troops from Zaire, South African troops, U.S./European mercenaries, as well as the CIA. (FNLA's Holden Roberto, in addition to his ties to Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko, a dutiful neo-colonial puppet, has also been on the CIA's payroll since 1961).

These forces clearly intended to re-enslave the Angolan people and divide Angola into spheres of influence. Zaire's Mobutu hoped through his brother-in-law, Holden Roberto, to eventually re-establish the Bacongo Tribal Federation, which spanned the present-day borders of Angola, Zaire, and the People's Republic of the Congo. More specifically, Roberto and Mobutu hoped to secure the oil-rich enclave of Cabinda in northern Angola for both Zaire and U.S. imperialism.

South Africa's tiny ruling oligarchy hoped to extend South West Africa/Namibia's northern border with Angola approximately two hundred miles, into Angola. This would have reduced the power of the South West African People's

Organization (SWAPO), which maintained a number of bases in Angola near the South West African border. Pretoria also hoped to secure the Kuene River dam and the hydro-electric complex in southern Angola for exclusive use by South African settlers in Namibia/South West Africa.

It was in the face of the immediate and direct threat on an international scale to the newly-achieved Angolan independence that the MPLA appealed to the Cuban people for troops to assist in Angola's defense. The depth, therefore, of the Angolan people's victory must be viewed from a world-wide perspective. The Angolan liberation struggle again forced the reactionary tendencies in Africa to reveal themselves while once more exposing U.S./European opposition to true African independence and self-determination.

As the anti-imperialist forces came closer to victory, the imperialists explicitly revealed their opposition to African self-determination. The racist propaganda attack upon MPLA's support among the Angolan people and Cuba's role as "a tool" of the Soviet Union became so intense that the former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Daniel P. Moynihan, had the audacity to warn independent Africa of the danger of Soviet aggression. This came at a time when U.S. capital was financing two of the liberation groups and supporting South African expansion into Angola.

As the defeat of the neo-colonialist forces became increasingly apparent, however, countries around the world came to support and recognize the Angolan people under MPLA leadership. Significantly, the deadlock a month earlier in the Organization of African Unity was broken, with the majority recognizing the MPLA.

Some idea of the meaning of the defense of imperialism/neo-colonialism by FNLA and UNITA may be gathered from an excerpt from an article entitled,

"Mercenaries: A Bloody Shambles," which appeared in the February 28 issue of Time magazine:

"Last week, though, other returning British mercenaries told a far grimmer story of comrades who had been summarily executed by their own leaders. According to Scotland Yard, who questioned the mercenaries on their return, a notorious FNLA mercenary known as "Colonel Callan" ordered 14 men shot after accusing them of 'cowardice in the face of the enemy,' when they asked to be sent home."

Of Callan it also said, "They said he spent his time shooting black tribesmen just for fun."

Wilfred Burchett, a correspondent for the Guardian newspaper in Africa and Asia, wrote in the weekly's February 25, 1976 issue,

"Later when UNITA and FNLA joined forces against the MPLA, they drafted about 100 each of the UNITA and FNLA nominees into their respective armed forces. The remaining 500 were arrested as pro-MPLA or suspected sympathizers and jailed at a former Portuguese concentration camp at Capola, 55 miles from Silva Porto. A few days ago, as MPLA forces got closer to the city of Savimbi's headquarters, they were taken out in batches of 10 and 20 and shot, their bodies falling or being thrown into the nearby Quequena River. Firing squads were unable to finish their work before the arrival of the MPLA troops and Domingo Neto and his little band were among about 75 survivors of the original 500 (eyewitness account by Domingo Neto, an MPLA cadre)."

Of the MPLA and its Cuban allies, Burchett writes:

"In many respects, from the accounts of the local population and from journalists who have been following the war since it started, the firm realism of MPLA leadership and the exemplary behavior of their Cuban allies is strongly reminiscent of the NLF in South Viet Nam, just as the behavior of the FNLA-UNITA and their troops is reminiscent of that of the Saigon puppets and their allies."

The victory of the MPLA has greatly advanced the liberation struggle of the Namibian people against South Africa by dealing a blow to South African aggression in Angola. The Angolan people are now in a better position to aid the South West African People's Organization, which has worked closely with Angola's anti-imperialist forces for a free southern Africa. Further, the Angolan victory denies imperialism another essential base in its futile

attempt to maintain the illegal Ian Smith regime in Zimbabwe/Rhodesia. Already in a state of war with neighboring Mozambique and counting the days until the liberation forces send them packing, the Smith regime looked to Angola as a possible brake on the insurgent people's movement if FNLA and UNITA had triumphed. With the anti-imperialists' victory in Angola, there is little hope left for the Smith regime, short of U.S. intervention, which seems less likely in view of the events in Angola.

Angola's Importance to South Africa

The Union of South Africa has historically sought to dominate southern Africa economically and politically. It has provided crucial support for the tottering illegal Smith regime. It dominates, politically and economically, the small Black African nations of Lesotho, Swaziland, and Botswana as satellite states, and has held Namibia/South West Africa under colonial domination against the wishes of the Namibian people. World opinion and scores of UN resolutions have condemned its actions, demanding Namibian independence and self-determination. South Africa depends upon these states as buffers against independent Black Africa and the growing southern African liberation movements, and as ready markets for its expanding production.

Pretoria has also enjoyed a fruitful relationship with Portugal's former colonies, Angola and Mozambique. In the era of Portuguese colonialism, South Africa and Portugal had a number of agreements regarding these two territories. These included the importation of laborers from Mozambique for work in South African mines, for which South Africa paid Portugal a fee of six dollars a head for 200,000 laborers a year since 1960; the unlimited exploitation of the two territories' natural resources by South Africa (largely controlled by US capital); and the development of oil and hydro-electric power

for South African use.

Of Portugal's former colonies, Angola is by far the richest. Its extraordinary mineral and agricultural wealth, including diamonds, iron, and manganese ore, bauxite, copper, potash, platinum, coffee, sugar, tobacco, cotton, and sisal, make it an indispensable area for imperialist exploitation. Now that Angola has been found to contain one of Africa's largest oil reserves as well as an abundant hydroelectric potential, it is in a position to significantly influence South African development in view of that country's dependence upon foreign oil and electric power. This position is made all the more crucial when the United Nations' sanctions against foreign oil shipments to South Africa are considered. Consider, too, the trade sanctions enacted against this country by the Organization of African Unity. The increasing isolation South Africa experiences makes Angola's oil and hydro-electric resources extremely important.

Angola, although experiencing relatively little labor exportation, has a dam under construction in its southern-most area at the Kuene River near its border with South West Africa. As mentioned earlier, this was one of South Africa's key military targets during the Angolan struggle. Like Mozambique's Cabora Bassa, it was largely financed by South African and U.S. capital, and like Caborra Bassa, the South Africans lost it to the people's self-determination.

Angola's two main extractive industries, diamonds and oil, have been controlled by U.S. and South African interests. Its diamond industry is controlled by the Angolan Diamond Co. (Diamang), a subsidiary of the Anglo-American Corp., a South African-based corporation with considerable U.S. interest. Oil has remained solely within the hands of U.S. finance capital. At the end of 1972,

Gulf Oil's investment in Angola reached \$209 million, accounting for 60% of the Portuguese expenditures necessary to retain (at that period) Angola as a province of Portugal. Gulf Oil's subsidiary, Cabinda Gulf Oil Co., backed by Chase Manhattan Bank and the National City Bank of New York, operated under a fifty year concession producing 7.5 million tons of oil yearly since 1969. South Africa has an acute oil shortage, which Cabinda is more than capable of filling, as well as the needs of southern Africa as a whole.

It should be noted that upon the declaration of the People's Republic of Angola, Gulf Oil cancelled payments to Angola for the use of Cabinda. The payments, which came to more than \$100 million a year, made up half of Angola's yearly net income. It is not difficult to imagine the profits Gulf Oil enjoyed as a result of its exclusive exploitation rights at Cabinda.

We must also re-emphasize the strategic importance of Angola's southern border. It has served, and now continues to serve, as the operational base for the South West African People's Organization. SWAPO is now an honored guest of the PRA. This is a key breakthrough for the escalating struggle of the Namibian/South West African people for the liberation of their country from illegal South African domination. It represents a very important step in further isolating and defeating South Africa's power by breaching its buffer zone between captive Namibia and anti-imperialist Angola, opening up 5000 miles of hostile border.

Southern Africa's Importance to the United States

While it is clear that the United States has considerable interests in Angola, as does its South African partner, that investment must be viewed from its inseparable link to South African capital, and therefore its large stake in the maintenance of U.S. imperialism in southern Africa through

South African domination of that region. In military terms, the trend has more than matured. To protect its investments in Angola and Mozambique, and to maintain captive "friends" for South Africa, the U.S. government has pumped \$80 million a year from 1962-70 to Portugal and \$200 million between 1970-75.

Likewise, the United States has supplied South Africa with covert military aid in defiance of the sanctions it officially supported. A London Times article of January 1, 1969 revealed, "American light aircraft, which could be useful for counterinsurgency, are being assembled (in South Africa) under license." W.J. Pomeroy writes:

"Also manufactured under license is the NATO FN rifle, with which the entire South African army and police force are equipped. This would require American approval in NATO committees. The president of the outlawed Southwest African People's Organization, Sam Nujoma, said in a statement on August 27, 1970, that the United States had sold to South Africa radar and heat detection devices of the type used for anti-guerilla operations in Viet Nam and had sent technicians and blueprints for the F104 jet fighter to the Turin Fiat plant in Italy from which military aircraft were sent to South Africa."

An examination of U.S. imperialism's relationship to South African apartheid is, therefore, necessary.

South African apartheid, a system based upon the brutal subjugation of the country's 15 million Black people and 2.6 million "Coloreds" by the reactionary interest within the white settler population of 3.6 million, is well known and widely condemned by the nations of the world.

Prominent among world opinion against the horror of apartheid is the United States. In the early 60's, beginning in 1960 (the year of the Sharpeville Massacre, in which 1000 unarmed Black Africans demonstrating peacefully against apartheid were fired upon by South African police, who killed 69 and wounded several hundred), the United States government support U.N. resolutions condemning apartheid and calling for worldwide sanctions of arms and ammunition

as well as all types of military vehicles, against South Africa.

During the same period, U.S. capital began to rapidly increase its penetration of the South African economy. World outrage at the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960 was intense enough to precipitate an acute economic crisis in South Africa. W.J. Pomeroy's Apartheid Axis/United States and South Africa states:

In expectation of a possible collapse, capital began to leave the country - \$225 million in the months after March 1960 (Sharpeville Massacre) - and foreign interests held back from further investment. At this point American bankers extended a \$30 million loan to the Anglo-American Corporation, South Africa's biggest monopoly, at the plea of its president, Harry Oppenheimer. Such an extension of confidence by important American interests reversed the tide, and once again foreign capital flowed into South Africa, strengthening the apartheid regime"(our emphasis).

Thus U.S. capital had ample opportunity to strike a staggering blow against apartheid by merely following the trend of world capital away from South Africa. Instead, a conscious decision was made to preserve and bolster the racist regime. The reason for this move can be found in imperialism's requirement of an obedient watchdog to insure the extensive investments in southern Africa, to say nothing of Africa as a whole.

U.S. capital is rapidly gaining upon that of Great Britain as the principal force behind the South African economy. Three hundred major corporations now hold considerable investments in South Africa. These include General Motors, Ford, Chrysler, International Harvester, Union Carbide, IBM, Polaroid, Goodyear, Firestone, the First City National Bank, Chase Manhattan Bank, Kennecott Copper, U.S. Steel, etc., etc.

Britain, because of its historical relationship to South Africa and its increasing dependence upon the rich returns the country offers, still retains the largest share of the South African economy - \$4,014,000,000

in 1968. Since the consolidation of the apartheid system in 1948, however, U.S. investment has been the more active force, growing at a much greater pace than Britain. U.S. dominance of the capitalist market after World War II through the middle sixties saw U.S. corporations directly controlling 10% of British industry and 20% of British exports by 1970. The rate of return for British investment in South Africa has remained a steady 12%, while the rate for U.S. capital increased to 20%.

Note that as a principal U.S. ally, though a declining economic imperialist power, Great Britain depends much more on its investments in South Africa, so much so that if the economy of South Africa were to collapse, it would be severely crippled. U.S. capital would not suffer serious effects, although it would be hurt. It is involved in South Africa largely due to its extensive involvement with British capital, which depends upon South Africa's resources. U.S. capital is mainly interested in large profits and expansion into new markets.

U.S. investments in Zimbabwe/Rhodesia and Namibia/South West Africa are already extensive and increasing quite rapidly. Zimbabwe is a country abundantly rich in gold, asbestos, iron, steel, and chrome; it contains investments from U.S. mining corporations exceeding \$55 million. Union Carbide and Foote Mineral Co. are the most prominent U.S. corporations there, and were instrumental in influencing Congress to break economic sanctions against Rhodesia to buy that country's chrome.

Namibia also has direct U.S. investments of \$55 million. The Tsumeb Corporation, which is the country's biggest, is controlled by two U.S. mining firms, American Metals Climax, and Newmont Mining. The Tidewater Oil Co. of South West Africa/Namibia (owned by J. Paul Getty) has the dominant

interest in the diamond Mining and Utility Co. of Namibia.

With such a rich investment return potential and the wealth of resources southern Africa offers, there is no question that U.S. imperialism will defend its interests all the more tenaciously, since it is in decline and rich investments are hard to find. South Africa is its main hope against the anti-imperialist movement. The U.S. must use it again and again to stem the tide of revolution precisely as witnessed by its intervention in Angola; this is the price to be paid for U.S. imperialist tenure in southern Africa.

Southern Africa and the U.S. Working Class

The role of U.S. imperialism in southern Africa has a number of far-reaching effects for the people of the United States. Quite evidently, it attempts to pit the southern African people against the people of the U.S. by using the U.S. government to support the racist/fascist regimes in South West Africa, Rhodesia, and South Africa, and to extend this oppression to Angola.

It is imperialism, the dominance and export of finance capital, which undermines our way of life. Fundamentally an aggressive system, imperialism is actually the logical extension of the concentration of various domestic markets under the control of a small number of giant corporations to the realm of dominating world markets in the same way.

To protect this system of world-wide exploitation, we are called upon by our government to defend imperialism by laying down our lives, as tens of thousands did in Viet Nam. Regarding Angola, many Viet Nam veterans were recruited by the CIA to defend Gulf "right to exploitation."

As working people, we pay for imperialism's exploitation rights through

decreased production and rising unemployment in our country in favor of greater exploitation of our southern African brothers and sisters by the same corporations who exploit our labor power here - General Motors, Chrysler, Ford, Union Carbide, International Harvester, IBM, etc.

When we are working, we are threatened by the production rate which the company enjoys because our southern African brothers and sisters are not allowed to unionize and are exploited as semi-slaves under fascist regimes. In effect, the competition promoted by the multi-national companies between U.S. workers and southern African workers tends to drive our wages down and increase our productivity, just as they have succeeded in doing in southern Africa.

The success of strikes by U.S. workers is also undermined since multi-national corporations shift the burden of production to the plants where strikes are prohibited by law and therefore use captive labor to break them. This logic also follows regarding the decisions to produce outside the U.S. where labor costs are high, to places like southern Africa and other regions where workers endure higher exploitation rates, and investment returns are therefore greater. Both working classes suffer. Southern African workers face naked exploitation with no legal redress, and U.S. workers endure declining living standards and increasing unemployment.

The political role of the multi-national must lastly be addressed. Giant corporations like Ford and General Motors, which promote racial discrimination in the U.S., do it to a much larger extent by their support of white minority regimes in southern Africa. Their actions clearly underline international support of racism. The political economy of racism which has

historically divided the U.S. working class, has its over-developed twin in the racism U.S. imperialism supports in southern Africa.

Our View: Victory to the MPLA

We view the MPLA as the legitimate liberation movement in Angola, and recognize the People's Republic of Angola as the legitimate government of the Angolan people.

While Soviet revisionism is a danger and must be carefully and vigilantly opposed, the main danger is clearly that of South African/U.S. imperialism, which has a clear stake in southern African dependence and will clearly be defeated only after prolonged struggle. When FNLA and UNITA united with South Africa and Western imperialism, it betrayed the anti-imperialist struggle of the Angolan people by exposing it to imperialism's direct intervention and subversion. The MPLA, on the other hand, has consistently fought U.S. South African intervention as have its allies, the Cubans, and continue to put Soviet aid to good use.

While we support the MPLA, we recognize that it has committed a serious error in failing to build a strong worker-peasant alliance - a mistake that must be rectified if the organization is to build a government truly representative of the Angolan people. While a unity government including all three groups has been and continues to be an impossibility because of the antagonistic differences between the groups around the struggle against imperialism, it will nonetheless be necessary in the interest of real national unity to include the healthy and progressive elements within UNITA in the MPLA government (though clearly within a limited capacity) in order to expand its base among the Ovimbundu people.

The issue of the nature and effects of Soviet aid must be squarely faced because certain U.S. Marxist-Leninists have distorted its influence way out of proportion in the guise of making a polemic against the two Superpowers, seeing them as exactly alike in their actions. Also, not to deal with this point is to fail to understand why certain nations of the Third World, along with many national liberation organizations, have relations with the Soviet Union and accept its aid and political support.

First, Soviet aid to the MPLA must be seen in the context of Soviet aid to Africa at large, for the purpose of what the USSR calls "building the non-capitalist road of development in Africa." This is a policy that goes back to the mid-1950's and encompasses Soviet aid to Ghana, Guinea, Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Mozambique, Uganda, Libya, Somalia, Guinea-Bissau, as well as Angola. It is not our purpose in this paper to analyze the pros and cons of this Soviet theory on the "non-capitalist path of development" in the developing world. However, it is possible to state two major conclusions on the effects of Soviet aid coming out of this theory, which make it quite different from the "aid" rendered by the U.S. and West European imperialist nations. The first point is that none of the above-mentioned recipients of aid from the USSR can be labelled as "Soviet puppets." Second, when some African nations have wanted to terminate relations with the USSR, the Soviets have packed up and left (e.g. Egypt). Neither of these two claims can be made about the client states of U.S. and Western European imperialism.

On the same level we can say that the basis of Soviet aid to national liberation groups has been to weaken the resource areas of U.S. and Western imperialism (as they view them) around the world. In Africa and Asia this has meant an opposition to all efforts of Western neo-colonialism. While this

anti-U.S. strategy of the USSR is not a revolutionary policy in itself, it is not hard to see why, given the current objective situation in the Third World, the U.S. or U.S. sponsored ruling cliques are the major enemy of national liberation movements and the Soviet policy is helpful to those liberation struggles. Thus, the effect of Soviet aid is to encourage independence struggles in the developing nations to follow the "non-capitalist path" with a maximum amount of freedom from the economics and politics of Western imperialism which presently dominates them.

There has been much talk about the "Soviet danger in Africa" by certain U.S. left organizations. This, too, has been totally exaggerated. There are no Communist parties in Africa that have state power, or are leading independence or national liberation struggles which can be said to follow the line of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on questions dealing with the international situation, or on questions of national development, or on their own internal problems of "nation building." Neither can it be said that any of the "national front" governments in African countries moving in a socialist direction are following the leadership of the CPSU.

We must criticize the intentions and methods of Soviet aid and relations with certain African nations and the priorities and politics of such aid, which may not always be in the best interests of the African nations themselves. However, we believe that these nations and movements can best make that criticism themselves from within the context of their own situations.

A final point must be mentioned on the theory of the "Soviet danger in Africa," in response to those who argue that Soviet "friendship" with African nations will lead to control of the markets and economies of these developing

countries. This argument simply does not coincide with the economic facts of life for the underdeveloped world.

The key markets for the natural and economic resources of Angola (coffee, oil, diamonds) and most other Third World nations are controlled by U.S. imperialism as the leader of the world capitalist system, and this will continue for the foreseeable future. The USSR does not have the basis to control the economic life of these Third World nations even if it so desired.

As to whether MPLA is a puppet of the Soviet Union, we are confident that the organization's stated program of non-alignment is the program which will be followed and that the Vietnamese example of independence can and will be repeated.

Also we applaud the heroic example that Cuba has set, answering the MPLA request for support against a combined reactionary movement facing potentially overwhelming aggression.

World-wide support for MPLA and the People's Republic of Angola is increasing. The Organization of African Unity has recognized the People's Republic of Angola (after much internal struggle). Non-African recognition of the P.R.A. includes Brazil, Bulgaria, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, North VietNam, East Germany, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, Romania, South VietNam, Soviet Union, Syria, Yugoslavia, Belgium, People's Republic of Yemen, and East Timor.

Organizations in North America and within the U.S. left which recognize the P.R.A. include Eritreans for Liberation in North America, Organization of Arab Students in the U.S. and Canada, Iranian Students Association (World Federation), The Union of Vietnamese in the U.S., Communist Labor Party of North America, Communist Party USA, the Guardian newspaper, El Comite, Philadelphia Workers Organizing Committee, Spark, News and Letters, and Youth Against War and Fascism.

Within the context of the Angolan liberation struggle, specifically the events of this year, a number of groups in the U.S. have taken positions which amount to nothing less than national chauvinism. Prominent among these is the October League, whose positions have exemplified this tendency among the anti-revisionist left. Because OL is the best known of the organizations holding chauvinistic positions on Angola, our comradely criticisms are directed at OL as representative of the others.

While the OL has had a credible history of practice within the working class and national liberation struggles in this country, we feel its pursuit of their "Superpowers Out of Everywhere" theme may prove to be their ultimate downfall. Certainly, no Marxist-Leninist party can claim vanguard leadership on the basis of fighting US imperialism at home while aligning with it everywhere else. Objectively, OL has aligned with the most reactionary, most racist and most militaristic faction of the US bourgeoisie.

Upon reading recent articles in The Call (OL's newspaper) on Angola, we are very critical of the lack of concrete facts and information they provide their readers, as compared with the lengthy, in-depth reporting of the Guardian newspaper. Instead of any serious attempt at making a concrete analysis of the internal contradictions, process and forces in Angola, OL prattles on and on about the "treachery" and "intervention" of the Soviet Union as if the actions of this Superpower were primary and overrode the actual struggle itself occurring in that Southern African country.

Besides being so obsessed with the "co-equal danger" of the Soviet Union to the point they shun their primary task as US revolutionaries to expose and fight their own bourgeoisie, OL resorts to distorting history and facts in order to prove their point. As an example of their dishonesty, not once in their December 1975, January 1976, and February 1976 issues of The Call do they ever mention that Holden Roberto, leader of the FNLA, had been on the

CIA payroll for 15 years. Yet they continued to call for a government of national unity with this paid agent of US imperialism.

In the February, 1976 issue of The Call, OL vehemently condemns the Soviet Union and Cuba for sending military aid and troops to Angola on the side of the MPLA while virtually passing over the aid paid by the US to the other two "heroic liberation forces." And in this same article they charge such aid to the MPLA is "directly contrary to the principles of proletarian internationalism" and the responsibility for this shameful military intervention "lies squarely on the shoulders of the Soviet revisionist authorities in Moscow." Not once do they mention that it was the US that first escalated the conflict in Angola and that the Soviet Union's increased military assistance came only to offset this CIA "aid" and at the request of the MPLA itself.

Furthermore, OL's demand for an immediate end to all foreign intervention, while sounding as if it defends the right of self-determination, actually covers up the counter-revolutionary role of the US in doing its best to subvert and destroy the Angolan people's self-determination while attempting to impose mass murderers, rapists and thieves as the rulers of neo-colonialist Angola.

We can only speculate what kind of Anti-VietNam War movement would have been built around a slogan like "Superpowers Out of Viet Nam." Besides feeding into the strong anti-communism prevalent in the US, it would have conveniently let the hawks in Washington, D.C. off the hook and obscured the reactionary role of US imperialism. Even though the Vietnamese liberation forces also received massive military aid from the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, no honest Marxist-Leninist would even consider that such a deceptive slogan might have had any validity in VietNam. Yet it is raised regarding Angola. Why? Is the MPLA not the only true liberation force in Angola as was the NLF in South VietNam? Is the MPLA any less committed towards achieving independence or pursuing a policy of non-alignment and self-reliance than the NLF? Why does the OL imply that the MPLA is just a puppet whose strings are pulled from

Moscow? Such insinuations made about the Vietnamese freedom fighters would have brought forth a tremendous outcry of rage from the Marxist-Leninist left. Yet, many honest revolutionaries accept this line on Angola without batting an eye.

The shame of the OL's position goes deeper than any distortion of facts or non-dialectical thinking. Behind all the revolutionary sounding slogans is an arrogant and blatant national chauvinism. How arrogant to deny the MPLA the vital aid it needs to struggle against US imperialism and South African apartheid in Angola! How arrogant to dictate the terms of struggle for another people's movement and the conditions for possible support! How chauvinist to suggest that a people's movement that has waged a consistent and determined struggle for 15 years with thousands of martyrs to US imperialism and Portuguese colonialism will give it all up or allow themselves to be consumed by a new super-power "colonizer" without a fight!

The Detroit Marxist Leninist Organization believes that the greatest dangers to the Southern African liberation struggles are the twin evils of US imperialism and South African apartheid. Therefore, as US revolutionaries we see our principal task to help build the movement in this country to force the US completely out of that area. Furthermore, we firmly believe it is the responsibility of Marxist-Leninists to do more than just raise empty slogans. It is not enough to uphold the principle of self-determination for Angola in the abstract. It must be raised specifically, and in Angola this means recognizing the MPLA and fighting for its defense against CIA intervention.

The liberation of Angola is another step towards the total liberation of Southern Africa. As the Southern African situation continues to develop, it will affect the American people more and more. The heavy rate of exploitation not only means misery and suffering for African workers, it questions job security and

depresses wages for US workers as well. Eventual US military intervention to save South Africa is an increasing possibility in the next five years. With an investment return of 20%, with 70% of the non-communist world's gold supply and with the strategic military importance of the area, we can count on US capital to employ every means at its disposal to stem the tide of liberation.

Zimbabwe is another Angola waiting in the wings, as is Namibia -- all tremendously rich in the very resources US capital, with its contracting markets, increasingly needs.

We are confident, though, that with the active intervention of the American people against US foreign policy in Southern Africa, as witnessed by Angola, and the mounting victories of the various African Liberation movements, US imperialist designs will be defeated.

Nuez, Granma, Havana



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