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TRANSLATION OF TWO ARTICLES

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AFTER HIS VISITS TO ANGOLA IN 1974



The war of liberation against the Portuguese colonialism in Africa has got at least double effect. The aggressive war of the Portuguese army against the liberation movements MPLA in Angola, FRELIMO in Mozambique and PAIGC in Guinea-Bissau was turned against Portuguese fascism in the country itself and in the colonies. The immediate contact of many Portuguese officers and soldiers with the brutal colonial reality made them rethink. For a conservative world outside the political and ideological awakening with the Portuguese army came as a shock. The weakest link of imperialism was broken up from inside.

The political consequences were fast discernible in Portugal and in the African colonies. On August 26, 1974, the new Portuguese government agreed with PAIGC on self-determination for Guinea-Bissau. On September 8, 1974, FRELIMO and the Portuguese government signed an agreement of independence for Mozambique.

But in Angola the situation was more complicated. Not until the power had shifted in favour of the Left in Portugal and after the liberation movement MPLA had accomplished a broad political offensive in Angola could it be agreed upon in Algarve in Portugal, on January 15, 1975, that the country would gain independence and get a transitory government. The transitory government took over on January 31, 1975, with equal representation from MPLA, UNITA, FNLA and the Portuguese government which is in charge of defence matters.

But before this agreement came about the "liberation movement" FNLA had, together with CIA advisers, made an unsuccessful coup d'etat in Angola's capital Luanda on November 15, 1974. Instead of a power take over under neo-colonial rule, the unsuccessful attempt of coup d'etat paved the way to the present treaty of independence that came into existence at the initiative of MPLA and the Portuguese government.

An Economic Great Power

Angola is a large country with abundant resources of raw materials, the "Crown jewels" of the Portuguese colonial empire. It is also a very beautiful country with changing scenery. There are large jungles, savannahs, fertile tablelands, nice forest areas, an extensive system of rivers, and along the Atlantic shore, sandy beaches for miles. Besides the climate is very pleasant with nearly eternal summer interrupted only by some months of rainy periods.

The surface is three times as large as Sweden (1,246,700 km²), but it is very sparsely populated with only about 6 million inhabitants (4 inhab./km²), of whom 500,000 are of European descent. The capital Luanda with around 500,000 inhabitants has a modern, European appearance, and reminds one of a beautiful city by the Mediterranean. But it is also characterized by deep social and economic inequality. Close to 300,000 people live in slum quarters without water and electricity in the so-called "MUCEQUES".

Already today Angola's economy has a leading position in Africa with a GNP of about 2 billion dollars. The economic future prospects will, with all certainty, make Angola a super power in Africa. According to American secretsatellites there are close to unlimited mineral resources in the country, mainly iron, copper, gold and diamonds, but also important alloying minerals like manganese and tungsten. Iron ore has been exploited mainly by Krupp (Germany) and Bethelhem Steel (USA).

Extraction of diamonds has been monopolized by the Diamang Company owned by De Beers (South Africa) and the Morgan Bank (USA). Another strategic resource is the enormous oil deposits in Cabinda and other parts of Angola. Gulf Oil estimates that by 1980 100 million tons of crude oil will be extracted (Gulf Oil has the most important rights of exploitation together with Exxon, Petrofina, a Belgian company, and Total, a French company). There are today two refineries in Angola. The capacity of the refinery in Luanda is close to 1 million tons/year, and in Lobito, 2 million tons/year. Another refinery is under construction in the city of Ambrizete in northern Angola.

Another important source of energy is also water. It is calculated that the well-rivered Angola could exploit approximately 300 billion kwh, i.e., as much as the water power exploited in Sweden until now. Today only 9 % of the water supply is built out in Angola.

Angola has got a comprehensive farm production too. It cultivates coffee, sisal, corn, cotton, palm oil, tobacco and bananas. Angola is the world's fourth producer of coffee. Coffee production is almost entirely controlled by Portuguese capital.

Live stock is considerable with 1.5 million cows and 0.5 million pigs. Angola is the third fishing nation in Africa (about 300,000 tons per year). Angola also has an already developed road system with roughly 70,000 km of roads that were built to a large extent for the Portuguese troupe transport during the war of liberation.

The railroad network is extensive, 3,300 km, with particularly the important Benguela railroad (owned by British capital) that runs right across Angola from the harbour cities Benguela and Lobito through the Katanga province in Zaire to the copper mines in Zambia.

American Interests

Now, after nearly fourteen years of war of independence, there are thus big and powerful interests that want to take over the country after the departure of the Portuguese. According to a secret report by Henry Kissinger in February 1970 "the preponderant American interests are in South Africa and Angola". It is thus principally the U.S. and South Africa that directly, or with decoys, plan a high game about the future of Angola. With methods where apparently everything is allowed. This rough game has mainly been directed against the liberation movement MPLA who initiated the war of independence on February 4, 1961.

MPLA has already since its outset in 1956 been fighting for social and economic justice and for a democratic form of government with general and secret elections. MPLA has all the time considered Portuguese colonialism as direct antagonist whereas world imperialism, mainly U.S. imperialism, is looked upon as the main enemy. MPLA's war strategy was formed in a tough reality. What guaranteed the success of MPLA was its extensive political and social activities in the liberated areas. Enormous work was done to build up schools for all ages. Small hospital clinics were built up in all bigger villages and bases. And cultivation of the soil was organized in collective and cooperative forms with new rational farming methods.

MPLA's military strategy has been organized on the same principles as FNL in South Vietnam. Among others General Giap's strategy is emphasized: "In order to conduct a proper war there must be a strong rearguard". MPLA has had its deployment areas in Congo-Brazzaville, from which place the liberation combat in the Cabinda enclave could be supported, and in Zambia, where the independence battle in eastern Angola gets its support from.

MPLA's Antagonists

FNLA's name was originally UPNA, later UPA and finally FNLA. Originally this movement intended to liberate only northern Angola to re-establish the former republic of Congo. FNLA has during all the independence war been stationed in Zaire. No political or civil build-up work has been done inside Angola. The war strategy of FNLA has only been concentrated on invasion attacks. After the attacks, towards civil objectives, the bases in Zaire have been pulled back.

The president of FNLA, Holden Roberto, is brother-in-law to President Mobutu of Zaire. Mobutu is one of the key persons in the American strategy in Africa. According to CIA's own historian, Andrew Tully, Mobutu is said to be CIA's own "discovery". The political ideology of Mobutu, "Mobutuism", is mainly inspired by the Brazilian military dictatorship and the voodoo-philosophy of the Haitian dictator Duvalier. According to Holden Roberto "the future form of government for Angola must be a one party dictatorship; any democracy cannot be seen for the next 200 years".

The third movement, UNITA, was founded by Jonas Savimbi in 1964, who then broke with the FNLA where he was Secretary General and foreign secretary. Savimbi gathered around himself a handful of men who used to hide in the thick woods south-west of the city Luso in eastern Angola. Information from the Portuguese army says that UNITA at its peak had only 500 men with arms, and badly equipped. The population in UNITA's area was approximately 3,000 persons. For some years UNITA received a limited contribution from China.

Due to its military and political inferiority, Savimbi started to collaborate with the Portuguese army in 1971. According to the treaty between the Portuguese army and UNITA, the latter was ordered to attack MPLA. In January 1974, UNITA re-initiated their hostilities against the Portuguese army.

On April 25, 1974, UNITA was already weakened, which explains Savimbi's speedy willingness to quickly sign a cease-fire agreement on June 17, 1974. Ever since, UNITA has received considerable support from white population groups in Angola. Even South African and Rhodesian press have had a favourable attitude to UNITA and Savimbi.

Portuguese Vietnam-Strategy

Since 1972, MPLA has been exposed to a continuously killing offensive in Angola and abroad. In spite of that there are no signs of resignation. On the contrary, MPLA could strengthen its position in the fall of 1974. Especially in Angola's capital Luanda, with its 500,000 inhabitants.

The offensive against MPLA in the spring of 1972 commenced with the Portuguese army under the leadership of the U.S.-trained General Bettencourt Rodrigues strongly intensifying the combats. It was political as well as military reasons that MPLA was chosen to be the main adversary of the army. All methods of the Vietnam war were used. Napalm bombing and plant intoxicants in a large scale were used against the population in all eastern Angola. So called strategic villages were built where people who did not manage to flee to the neighbour country Zambia were driven to. In that offensive the MPLA guerilla suffered great losses, primarily as a consequence of the intensive fight operations of the Portuguese. The savannahs in the east of Angola with sparse forests is no ideal ground for guerilla wars. It was a hard time for MPLA. In addition to that the Portuguese army had managed to get the small Mao-inspired liberation movement UNITA as allied partner against MPLA. Subsequently, UNITA has frantically denied this cooperation with the Portuguese army. But in this matter the documents are clear, and I have myself had the information confirmed by the highest Army Council in Angola in November 1974. In an interview that I had with Savimbi, the leader of UNITA, in his base south-east of Lusa, on October 29, 1974, he hesitated in his answer and could not definitely deny the documents that reveal UNITAS's collaboration with the Portuguese army from 1972 - 1974. This cooperation was over though and changed into hostilities in January 1974.

Self-Critical Movements Within MPLA

The military difficulties of MPLA since 1972 also had important consequences within the organization itself. In August 1972, a comprehensive self-critical movement was started within MPLA, the so called "reajustamente". Critics of the military strategy primarily indicated that allowances and provisions of weapons, ammunition and other necessities, the so called logistics, were badly organized. Politically the MPLA management was criticized for not being adjusted enough to the reality of the masses. A few leaders were accused of being high and mighty. Thos critics were particularly directed against Chipenda who was chief for the maintenance section - logistics.

During the whole war, Chipenda had marched with the guerilla units in Angola on only two occasions during 14 days in all. And

then, moreover, he had a gigantic military escort. Usually Chipenda was mostly in Zambia's capital Lusaka, where he lived a magnificent life far from the reality of the guerillas. Instead Chipenda's grounds were the international diplomatic corps. Its life style and values far away from the reality of his own people apparently had a great attraction for Chipenda.

The main result of the self-critical movement was a big reshuffling of the political and military organization of MPLA. The password was mass-anchorage and democratic control. This political and organizational renewal also led to that Chipenda's star fell very rapidly. Chipenda, who wanted to stand out as a vice president within MPLA, without either being formally nominated or having broad support for that ambition, now saw his career threatened.

Chipenda Conspires Against Neto's Life

Together with some other declining leaders, Chipenda instead started to conspire against MPLA's newly elected government. Plans were made to murder MPLA's president Augustinho Neto. And on two occasions they tried to strike against Neto on Zambian territory. This happened in November 1972 and January 1973. But they failed. On the first occasion Neto came two days "too late" to the spot where they were lying in ambush. On the second occasion, courage failed in the conspirators. When finally a third attempt was being prepared, the whole conspiracy was discovered. One of the conspirators had had too much to drink the evening before and had talked a little too much

This way everything was involved by MPLA itself. The same murder plan that was used against PAIGC's secretary general, Amilcar Cabral had thereby failed against MPLA's president Augustinho Neto. Immediately four conspiracy leaders were arrested who were from the area of MPLA's frontier bases. After trial they were executed in Angola.

When Chipenda was called to the border for interrogation, in April 1973, he alleged the blame on bad health as an excuse and asked to be taken to hospital in Lusaka. It was granted. When MPLA representatives the following day were to visit Chipenda, the hospital was surrounded by Zambian military forces. They were informed that Chipenda had applied for political asylum in Zambia and had been granted it.

Chipenda Supported by American Interests

But it was not just any political asylum that Chipenda was to enjoy. Chipenda now got political and financial support from the Zambian government. Zambia's President Kaunda would act in close accordance with President Mobutu of Zaire. That way they also became closely connected with the activities of the U.S. government in Southern Africa. Zaire is namely the main base in Africa for American expansion plans. They are trying with all measures to create a new Fascist African Brazil made up of Zaire and Angola in a common federation.

The American government has evidently unlimited confidence in President Mobuto as conductor in this game.

MPLA Blocks the "Brazilian Plan" of the U.S.

The main obstacle against America's African "Brazilian Plan" has been MPLA under the direction of Augustinho Neto, who is known to have very strong popular support in all Angola. With the help of Chipenda an excellent opportunity was given to weaken MPLA. In that way Mobuto could better launch his own Angolan "liberation movement", FNLA, which, in spite of massive economic and military support and access to a more than 2,000 km long border, never managed to secure a footing in Angola.

The treacherous performance of the Zambian government in the Chipenda matter is by the Portuguese Army Council explained by saying that Mobuto had promised Zambia 15,000 soldiers and aid in aeroplanes to strengthen the weak Zambian army. This military aid would be used at once if the racist regime in Rhodesia as much as dared to attack the vulnerable Kariba dam in the South of Zambia.

Evidently Chipenda's tribal ties have been discussed in the Zambian government as well. Namely, Chipenda comes from the Umbundu people who live along the important Benguela railroad. The idea was that if an Umbundu leader gets Zambian support it would be easier to control the Benguela railroad. Thereby the, for Zambia, so essential copper transports to the Atlantic harbour Lobito in Angola would be secured.

The Swedish Embassy Involved

Since the Zambian government took care of Chipenda the attitude towards MPLA was tightened, and MPLA was forbidden to transport arms through Zambia. Even all embassies whose governments were supporting MPLA were told to discontinue the assistance, among those the Swedish Embassy. As a formal reason they gave the schism within MPLA and that the MPLA leaders were not "authorized" by the Zambian government.

The Swedish Embassy seemed to be alert, to say the least, to the line of the Zambian government vis-à-vis MPLA. At the local initiative of the Swedish Embassy the aid was withdrawn on several occasions. The Swedish assistance to MPLA amounted to 2 million Sw. Crowns in 1973 - 1974, and in 1974 - 1975 to 3.5 million Sw. Crowns. But after every local aid had stopped, the assistance section of the Swedish Foreign Office interferred and ordered the assistance to be continued.

The "Café-Left" Joins the Conspiracy Against MPLA

After the coup in Portugal, on April 25, the so called "carnation revolution", there were many people who saw the chance to lay their hands on a power position in the colonies where they did not have to risk their lives in an armed battle. For instance, a group of Angolan café revolutionaries with their homes in Europe did so. During the past ten years they had neither visited Angola nor risked their lives in a struggle against Portuguese colonialism. But now they saw their chance coming up.

On May 11, the so called "Active Revolt Group" published a manifesto wherein MPLA was criticized from the Left. Augustinho Neto was criticized as well and was accused of having concentrated too much power to his own person.

For Chipenda and his protectors, i.e., Mobuto and the Zambian government, the newly appeared group became another weapon that could be used against MPLA. There were now three groups to deal with in MPLA, the Neto group, the Chipenda group and the Active revolt group. It proved to be an efficient method of propaganda. All the west-dominated press wrote about the "schism" of MPLA and its three "fractions".

Portuguese Blackmail Against MPLA

MPLA was exposed to grave political blackmail. It could choose between arranging a congress in Zambia with Chipenda and the active revolt group or else be totally expelled from Zambia and thereby be cut off from allowance and deployment areas by the Angolan border in the East.

In order to gain time, MPLA agreed to participate in such a "congress" on the condition that no voting would take place. In the agreement it was compulsory to accept a distribution of 165 mandates for MPLA, 165 for Chipenda and 70 for the active revolt group.

"The congress" was held during 14 days (August 12 to 28) in a so called refugee camp outside Lusaka. Guarded by Zambian military forces. No delegate was allowed to leave the camp during the whole congress period. In MPLA the camp site was therefore called Sao Kenneth, referring to Kenneth Kaunda, the president of Zambia, and Sao Nicolau, a concentration camp in the South of Angola. "The congress" started off by the Zambian prime minister Chona having a menacing speech where he addressed Neto and said that "those who refuse to accept unity will be branded as traitors". Thereupon the first scandal broke out when it was discovered that 14 of Chipenda's delegates were active members of FNLA.

During the Lusaka congress the Zambian Foreign Secretary Mwaanga left for Washington to discuss with Kissinger how the U.S. could help the Portuguese territories in Africa to a peaceful transition to self-determination. Mwaanga informed that he was very pleased after the discussion with Kissinger. At the "Congress" the situation was anything but pleasant. All congress work was blocked after Chipenda over and over again insisting on confidential voting contrary to the minimum agreement that preceded the "congress".

Now the Zambian government toughened its attitude. MPLA was threatened to be thrown out of Zambia and to close the border to Angola. And to illustrate the seriousness of the threat, the Zambian army was ordered to confiscate arms in an MPLA base outside Lusaka. They actually got hold of a number of discarded guns and some explosives. But it was enough to increase the rage in the already tense climate.

African States Protest Against Zambia

An official delegation of ministers from Guinea visiting Zambia turned back already at the airport of Lusaka and went home as a

protest against the treatment of the Zambian government of MPLA. Joseph Turpin, one of PAIGC's vice presidents, who was observer at the "congress" said to me and an Italian journalist during a conversation:

- I wish Amilcar Cabral had been here. He could have made a contribution of importance. This is indeed a sad situation. But the Angolan people are watching what is happening and, in spite of all difficulties, MPLA is the one to settle the situation. The people know MPLA and will not be cheated by any dissident from abroad who has neither ideology nor programme, but only plain ambitions of power. No serious person can accept Chipenda as leader for MPLA. I do not even think that the Zambians can believe seriously that he will be the president of Angola.

The MPLA leaders observed cool silence. They knew that all important equipment had been transported into Angola. Far more important was that they knew that five MPLA companies were stationed on strategic places along the Benguela railway with fire-arms ready to shoot. Just one signal and the railroad could turn into scrap iron and chips of wood for a long time to come.

The Collapse of the "Congress"

When the Zambian government was informed of this threat to its own copper export and livelihood they lowered their voices. And when MPLA broke up from the "congress", the position was more favourable. The Zambian blackmail policy, on the other hand, failed. In this new position the Zambian government therefore refused to recognize Chipenda as MPLA president, to which post he had nominated himself after everybody except his own group had left the "congress". Instead, Chipenda had to go to his influential protector in Zambia, President Mobutu, with errand unaccomplished.

MPLA's First Congress in Angola

Agostinho Neto and the rest of the MPLA, on the other hand, continued into Angola. In the savannah woods by a little river Lundosi in East Angola MPLA could now have its real congress, on September 11 to 21. The congress was called "MPLA's inter-regional conference for the cadre and militants of MPLA". During ten days of intensive congress work, from 6 a.m. until 8 p.m. and with many night plenaries, the political and military strategy of MPLA was worked out for the national independence. Also a new central committee and a political bureau were elected.

Among the essential decisions that were adopted, one of them concerned citizenship in Angola, where it was established that each person born in Angola should be an Angolan citizen regardless of skin colour. Those who have lived in Angola a long period of time should have the right to apply for citizenship.

It was a laborious time for the 232 congress delegates who came from all Angola. Congress negotiations were held in three languages simultaneously, Portuguese, a language from Cabinda, Fjote, and an East Angolan language like Chokwe or Mbunda. To feed this big crowd

hunting teams were divided who shot about six deers or antelopes a day. It must be considered as a good sign that a big poisonous puff-snake was killed in the congress hut just before the initiation of the congress.

Spinola and Mobutu in Agreement

In the middle of September 1974 Portugal's former President Spinola had a meeting with President Mobuto on the Cap Verde islands. He was accompanied by FNLA's leader Holden Roberto, UNITA's Jonas Savimbi and the MPLA deserter Chipenda, and also a group of well-known white reactionaries from Angola. At this meeting guidelines were drawn up for the new confederation Zaire - Angola, the "new Brazil of Africa". The Brazilian plan implied, of course, also definite liquidation of MPLA.

All participants of the meeting were apparently very much of the same opinion, except possibly Savimbi who by all parties is believed to be a big traitor. Carrying this agreement in his pocket Mobuto then left for Dar-es-Salaam to meet President Nyerere of Tanzania, Zambia's President Kaunda and Frelimo's President Samora Machel.

But just when he was about to push the other African leaders very hard and enjoy a political triumph, the revolution in Portugal took place on September 28. For MPLA this day is just as important as April 25, 1974.

On September 30, Spinola "resigned" as president. The Portuguese Left strengthened its positions. Thereby all neo-colonial solutions in Africa were rejected. And Mobuto's victory in Dar-es-Salaam turned into a severe defeat.

A Rapid Change of Scene

Now also Tanzania could without a risk for major reprisals give MPLA its massive support in the form of arms and other equipment. Like through a miracle the previously hard attitude of Zambia vis-à-vis MPLA was changed. As told by MPLA representatives in Lusaka the difference was like night and day.

Within MPLA there was a feeling of confusion after all this sudden benevolence. Zambia now also urged all embassies whose governments had given assistance to MPLA before to continue and preferably enlarge the aid activities.

MPLA now got more breathing space and could go on organizing its positions in Angola. The 21 of October, MPLA and the Portuguese government arrived at formal agreement on "cessation of all hostilities".

Thereafter the way was open for MPLA's march into Angola's capital Luanda on November 8. MPLA's delegation came to Luanda headed by the second man of the movement, Lucio Lara. That day the people of Luanda stopped their work. A hundred thousand people gathered at the airport. After a three hour delay, in burning sunshine, the DC10 of Zambian airways landed in Luanda with the MPLA delegation. Scarcely had the plane landed when the masses, shouting

for joy, broke through the chains of soldiers and surrounded the plane. Due to the pressure of the masses it took more than an hour for the delegation to get out of the plane. After this the guerilla fighters were carried away in triumph by completely ecstatic masses, through Luanda, on the big avenues, to the headquarters of MPLA. It was a day of victory for these people who, in constant danger for their lives, had been fighting a long war with incredible hardships in jungles and savannahs.

But already that day MPLA saw dangerous signs of threats. CIA's second man, General Vernon Walters, came to Luanda those days and checked into Hotel Tropico. A strange coincidence was also that the U.S. Ambassador to Chile, David Potter, came to visit Zaire's capital Kinshasa at the same time.

A number of provocations now took place. It was obvious that there were active interests that wanted to ferment fascist sentiments, personal insecurity and generally chaotic circumstances in the society. Gngaster activities suddenly had an abnormal increase. People who said they represented MPLA murdered men one after the other. And rumours were spread that MPLA would now confiscate all property.

The methods can be recognized from Chile and other places in the world. It was the so called destabilization strategy that was being used in Angola.

Open War In Luanda

Sunday, November 10, the delegation of UNITA came to Luanda and was met by 15,000 people at the airport, most of them white. Already in the morning the mood was tense in the city. At ten o'clock the delegation of MPLA was to inaugurate a public library. But suddenly, before the ceremonies could start, the MPLA delegation was fired at violently with automatic carbine ammunition. Everybody threw himself to the floor. Three friends were lightly wounded. Before MPLA could return the attack the enemy had fired some hundred bullets. Later it turned out to be two white policemen who were responsible for the attack.

It was now as if a big orchestra had struck up. Principally the poor quarters were exposed to intensive shooting with light machine guns, shell throwers and rocket guns. MPLA returned the fire but was militarily badly prepared. It was instead the Portuguese army who would tear up the barricades and beat off the enemy, who turned out to be white as well as black people.

The Angolan units in the Portuguese army now claimed the creation of special military units in collaboration with MPLA to protect its own people. This demand was granted at once by the Chief of the Military government, Amiral Rosa Coutinho, by everyone considered as very progressive and friendly with MPLA.

Towards the evening the intensive firing stopped. A horror-filled peace spread over the city, that was at times interrupted by scattered shots from guns.

Walking out into the street all people seemed to be afraid of each other. One could never know who was friend or enemy. It was like living in the novel "The Pest" by Camus. That day 50 people were killed and another 200 were seriously wounded.

Destabilization Continues

The same day, November 10, 1974, the truck drivers proclaimed a lockout. Thereby the supplying of provisions to Luanda was stopped. Apparently the plan was to starve the city to death. That same day also the Portuguese frontier outpost in Massabi in Cabinda was attacked by a group of soldiers from the separatist movement FLEC. They were commanded by a French legionary soldier. (FLEC is a separatist movement in Cabinda financed by the oil companies Gulf and Elf.) The attack was repelled, though. The next days' "scenario" went on with various provocations where FNLA played its special role. On many occasions "somebody" shut off water supplies in certain quarters. As it by order FNLA marched out with water-trucks to distribute water to people.

The idea was evidently to represent FNLA as a party of order and MPLA as anarchical and irresponsible. MPLA confiscated also plenty of weapons that had come from Zaire, and had been distributed amongst the population by "unknown" persons.

The situation was thus very serious. The Chief of Government, Rosa Coutinho, however, managed to ease the pressure somewhat by stopping the lockout of the truck drivers. He had to make considerable economic concessions to reach an agreement.

But it was also during this week that MPLA and the Portuguese officers' movement, MFA, tied real firm and more organized bonds. They had practically discovered that they were in the same boat, and that they had the same enemy, the American imperialism and its different helpers.

Unsuccessful Attempted Coup

On November 14, the American families in Angola were ordered to leave the country. On November 15, the last stage of the "scenario" commenced. FNLA had prepared itself to make a coup d'etat. 1,000 heavily armed men came into town.

Four big transport machines with military reinforcements were on their way from Kinshasa. The attack against all strategic buildings was planned to occur on the evening of November 15, 1974.

Rosa Coutinho and MPLA then made an energetic counter-move. Armoured cars were pulled into the city and air service from Kinshasa was stopped. The power demonstration had produced a good effect. FNLA withdrew. They dared not attack such a determined enemy.

But at the FNLA radio in Kinshasa work went on as if nothing had interrupted the attempted coup. A long declaration was made as if they had taken over the power already. The Portuguese military government in Luanda was pointed at as a bunch of thieves, rabble, adventurers and communists. MPLA was referred to as anarchists under the domination of social imperialism.

That evening, November 15, 1974, the BBC announced that civil war had broken out in Angola, and that 20,000 people were killed. The same "news" could be read in Rand Daily Mail in Johannesburg on November 16. But then everything calmed down, and General Walters from CIA left town.

The Situation Clears Up

On November 23, I met Rosa Coutinho, who said:

We won a battle but not the war. This time human and political intuition won over CIA's computers. But in the future we must also have computers. We have now gained a clearer situation. The enemy therefore has to invent new methods to attack us. It is now also evident that the ideological picture is a lot more manifest than before. FNLA is purely conservative party with "law and order" as passwords.

As told by FNLA's President Holden Roberto it is also impossible to build up a democracy in Angola for the next 200 years. UNITA is a strange "Mao-inspired" party of the Center, and MPLA represents a broad popular Left.

To avoid the risk of military adventures and a Vietnamization of Angola we will now exchange a couple of thousand men in the army for less tired soldiers. Furthermore, we will get here troupes with special political training. Compared with before, the military power positions are now definitely to the advantage of a progressive political development in Angola.

It was on the basis of those new and, for progressive forces, more positive political and military power positions that Portugal's deputy Prime Minister, Melo Antunes and Agostinho Neto could meet in Alger in December 1974 and draw up the guidelines of self-determination discussion in Lisbon. As a result of those discussions the development in the field MPLA also agreed on a tactical treaty of cooperation with UNITA. In case of military confrontation they wanted to concentrate on the main opponent FNLA. This line has the full support of the Portuguese government.

Mario Soares said in a discussion with me on December 1:

We naturally support MPLA and in case of a military encounter we take the responsibility and offer all possible support to MPLA against the forces that represent neo-colonial interests.

MPLA Without Great Power Support

Now that the declaration of independence has been signed in Algarve in Portugal on January 1, 1975, and the transitory government has taken over on January 31, 1975, in Luanda, an intensive campaign has broken out until election day this fall before November 11.

An important factor in this settlement in the economy of the organizations, FNLA has access to U.S. dollars on a large scale. MPLA, who has no great power support since January 1974, when the Soviet Union withdrew its aid, has to count on its own popular strength and support from various progressive movements and benevolent states. Sweden has decided to contribute 6.18 m. Crowns this year. The Soviet support to MPLA ceased since Breznev came to an agreement with Nixon in 1973, on dividing up Africa into spheres of interest. According to that agreement, Mozambique is a Soviet and Angola an American sphere of interest. The existence of that agreement was

confirmed to me at a meeting with Augustinho Neto, Mario Soares and Rosa Coutinho.

MPLA will need all possible support from its friends to fight the tremendous neo-colonial interests that now circle above Angola like big vultures.

AHS

TOO EARLY FOR ANGOLA TO EXULT?

On November 8, 1974 the delegation of the liberation movement MPLA came to Angola's capital Luanda for the first time after the liberation. 100,000 people greeted the victors at the airport; that day everybody stopped working in Luanda.

That was evidence of the massive support that MPLA enjoys in all Angola. During the 13 year long war against the Portuguese, MPLA also was active politically. In the liberated areas, schools, cottage hospitals and farming cooperatives were built. Great efforts were made to make the Angolan people conscious of their own value.

Today the Portuguese antagonist is defeated. The fighting was over by June 1974. January 31 this year a transitory government was established with representatives of MPLA, the new Portuguese government and two other political organizations in Angola, FNLA and UNITA. This government is entrusted to prepare Angola for the ultimate day of independence on November 11, 1975.

But for MPLA the struggle is not over. Tensions are great within the transitory government, mainly between MPLA and the Portuguese government on the one hand, and FNLA, backed up by the U.S. and the neighbour country Zaire, on the other. Powerful neo-colonial interests in the U.S. and South Africa, among others, are trying, either directly or through decoys, to gain control over this country so abounding in raw materials. Civil wars and foreign interference might throw the people back into oppression.

MPLA and the Portuguese government are now jointly working against that. MPLA wants to build up an independent Angola with democracy and social justice. Therefore MPLA is also supported by the Swedish government for 1975 with slightly more than 6 m Crowns in contributions.

Leif Biureborgh spent last year, five months with MPLA and the Portuguese army. In the following he describes the development in Angola.

Location - The Pattern from Chile is Familiar

Late in the evening of September 8, 1974, I was ordered by the president of MPLA, Augustinho Neto to get myself ready to march, to go to the first congress of MPLA inside Angola. My friend Rui Maio - commandant of a squadron in MPLA - picked me up at the hotel at one o'clock in the morning. We then drove with Rui's landrover to MPLA's base outside Zambia's capital Lusaka. Later in the night we headed for Angola.

In spite of short, interrupted sleep, the mood was good amongst the MPLA companions. Recent times had been hard. The antagonists of MPLA had made their best to destroy MPLA from inside with the help of dissidents. In diplomatic circles and world press, rumours had been spread that MPLA was broken up. But that manoeuvre had now failed totally. MPLA could now have a feeling of looking at the future with more hope.

The decision to have a congress in the middle of Angola and to move MPLA headquarters into the own country was a vital step. Well, in some ways a historic turning point for MPLA and the whole future development in Angola. After the murderous offensive of the past months from international enemies, particularly President Mobutu of Zaire, one of the leading "drabants" of the U.S. and the CIA in Africa, and the Portuguese army in Angola, it was like coming out of a long dark tunnel.

We drove the 1,000 km long distance from Lusaka to the East of Angola without stopping. Augustinho Neto was in good shape and kept up the spirits of the other friends all the time. Normally Neto is not particularly jolly, but more contemplative and modestly unobtrusive. But on this trip he relaxed and told small anecdotes from Angola for the co-travellers. By his opponents Neto is characterized as "impossible to negotiate with" and "personally inaccessible". He has namely proven to be un-bribeable and anxious to conduct a consistent political line. Neto was also subject to several attempted murders. Those were arranged by a dissident from MPLA by the name of Chipenda, backed up by American interests via President Mobutu in Zaire.

Hunting for Congress Food

In the morning of the 10 September, we arrived at the congress site in Cazombo district in east Angola. In a little glade in the svannah woods by the little river Lundosi a rectangular hut had been built with open walls as congress hall.

Congress work and discussions were organized like a normal political congress in Sweden. A bit more unusual was the fact that before the congress could start a poisonous puff-snake had to be killed in the congress hut. It was probably also unusual that the participant of the congress, for the main part, had to be fed through hunting. Every day hunting teams had to be made who shot 6 - 8 deers or antelopes per commission.

During the ten days that the congress lasted we worked from six o'clock in the morning until eight in the evening. Besides, the three last days, we were forced to have night plenaries. Only a short pause was made for a simple congress party the day that Neto had his fifty-second birthday.

The 232 members of the congress came from all parts of Angola. They were people with the most varying experiences and different cultural backgrounds. Some were experienced guerilla fighters from different front divisions, together with friends who had recently been set free after ten year long prison terms for resistance activities. Young students, men and women, from the big cities in West Angola worked together with village people, men and women, from East Angola where the economy is based on self-households and where illiteracy is more the rule than the exception.

Secret Agreement USA - Soviet Union

In the discussions on international connections, Sweden was often mentioned. The members were disappointed on the great power policy. Soviet Union had discontinued its aid, January 1974, leaving the MPLA in a very critical situation. The reason for Soviet Union's new policy is, as told by Augustinho Neto, the Portuguese High Commissioner Rosa Coutinho and the Portuguese Socialist leader, Mario Soares, a secret agreement between Nixon and Bresjnev concerning spheres of interest in Africa. According to that Angola is American and Mozambique a Soviet sphere of interest.

For the future, MPLA now instead wants closer cooperation, economically and politically, with countries that conduct a policy that among others Sweden was believed to represent. That is a more independent policy outside the bloc formations.

The last point for the congress was to have elections of a new central committee. But before that there was a special point of criticism and self-criticism for the resigning leaders. That discussion lasted for nine hours. There were many of the leaders who got a real "grilling".

By the election of the central committee a list was used where thirty names had to be checked off. For the people from the savannahs this was an unknown system. From the villages they were used to that each one gave his opinion without any mystery-making. However, they let themselves be convinced that this was the only method at the elections to come in Angola.

Practical problems arose, anyhow. Some women who were illiterate from the villages in eastern Angola had marked off more than thirty names on their voting papers. After a consultation, congress leaders decided to approve those votes anyway. The episode proves what practical difficulties there are when it comes to building up a democracy.

After the MPLA congress the political development went more and more in favour of MPLA. On September 30, Spínola "resigned" from presidency in Portugal. Among other things he failed as a result of coming to an agreement with President Mobutu of Zaire, with U.S. support about establishing a federation between Zaire and Angola. In that intended federation of states, FNLA's president Holden Roberto would have the same duties as president Thieu in South Vietnam. The intention was to create an "African Brazil" to the benefit of mainly American neo-colonial interests.

As co-signatories of this document are the "liberation movements" FNLA and UNITA with their presidents Holden Roberto and Jonas Savimbi and the MPLA dissident Chipenda as well as a group of white reactionaries from Angola. It was a plan that must have pleased FNLA's Holden Roberto, who besides happens to be President Mobutu's brother-in-law. According to Roberto "the future form of government must be a one party dictatorship; any democracy can not be seen in the next two hundred years".

UNITA, the third organization, has stayed in the background in the conflict between MPLA and FNLA. UNITA was founded in 1964

by Jonas Savimbi who then broke out from FNLA. The movement has always been weak militarily and 1971 started to cooperate with the Portuguese colonial army and fought MPLA.

Today, UNITA has considerable support from white groups of people and some black. It is backed up by South Africa and favours among other things free enterprise in Angola.

Like in Chile

On October 21, MPLA and the Portuguese government came to a formal agreement on cessation of all hostilities.

But soon the deadly game was back again. On November 10, FNLA sympathizers fired at head-quarters in Luanda with machine-guns, shell throwers and rocket guns. 50 persons were killed, 200 seriously wounded. At the same time a truck drivers' lockout broke out. A number of small provocations were a part of the picture. It was the same pattern as in Chile before the murder of Allende.

That week the second man of CIA, General Vernon Walters, came to Luanda too. On November 15, FNLA attempted to make a coup d'etat. But the whole operation failed. The opponent was much too strong and determined. The Portuguese High Commissioner and MPLA friend, Rosa Coutinho gave me this comment on November 23:

We have won a battle but not the war. This time human and political intuition won over CIA's computers.

It was this more progressive power situation politically and militarily in favour of MPLA that enabled the agreement on self-determination in Algarve in Portugal on January 15 this year. But this agreement is, from time to time, threatened by military provocations from FNLA. On March 26, FNLA made an attack on a large military scale against MPLA just like in November. But the attack was again repelled. On April 7 a South African plan was shot with a machine-gun at Luanda's airport. According to Prime Minister Vorster of South Africa, that was an attempted assassination of Augustinho Neto. But the wrong plane was hit. Neto's plane was delayed.

It is obvious that the American foreign policy leaders hope to gain control over Angola with the same methods that were successful in Belgian Congo, presently Zaire. Chaos, anarchy and civil wars is the password in that case. With a new word it is called destabilization. But they tend to forget that history seldom repeats itself. One can only learn from history, as for instance, in Indo-china.