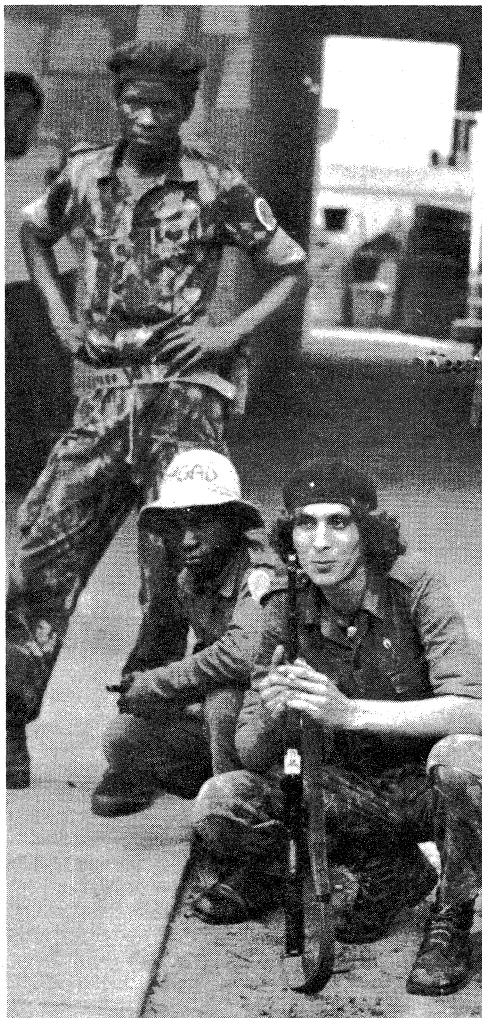


Feature

ANGOLA: MYTHS & REALITIES

by Rick Sterling



Angolans in Luanda's shantytowns.
LSM PHOTOS

Angola has rapidly moved to the center of world attention. After ignoring the anti-colonialist guerrilla struggle there for thirteen years, the capitalist mass media in North America is suddenly focussing on Angola and southern Africa. Myths, misconceptions and outright lies are being put forward to rationalize the present North American and West European intervention and to prepare the public for increased aggression in the near future. Some of the Left in North America and elsewhere are also confused. In this article we will attempt to clarify some of the most widespread distortions and misconceptions, and explain why we support MPLA as the only progressive, revolutionary force in Angola.

BACKGROUND OF THE STRUGGLE

Is the struggle a "tribal conflict," as the North American media portray's it? What is the political character of MPLA? of FNLA and UNITA? What role did each movement play in the anti-colonialist armed struggle? To answer these questions we need to examine, at least briefly, the background of each movement.



Angolan Woman in Luanda. LSM PHOTOS



MPLA, Agostinho Neto:

"Carrying into effect the aspiration of the broad popular masses, the People's Republic of Angola will, under the guidance of MPLA, gradually advance towards a people's democratic state, with the alliance between workers and peasants as its nucleus."

(Independence Day Speech, November 11, 1975)

MPLA

The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) was created in 1956, formed from a number of clandestine movements. Dr. Agostinho Neto, since 1962 the President of MPLA, was one of the founders - along with Amilcar Cabral, later to become leader of the PAIGC (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde). After several years of preparations, the armed struggle was launched on February 4th, 1961. MPLA militants in Luanda attacked the central prison in order to release political prisoners and capture arms and weapons. The Portuguese responded with savage ferocity, killing some 3,000 in Luanda and forcing thousands more to flee the city. In the aftermath of this tragedy, MPLA abandoned urban armed actions, and began to sink deep roots in the countryside amongst the rural masses. MPLA rapidly gathered support to develop guerrilla warfare over much of Angola and over the next 13½ years established semi-liberated regions where MPLA was in full administrative control, extending armed struggle to 12 of 15 districts as well as maintaining underground activity in the cities.

Despite the tremendous logistical problems presented by the reactionary Mobutu regime's closing off Zaire's 1,250 mile border with Angola and over the MPLA and only sporadic support from Zambia, MPLA gained control of a large portion of the east (both north and south), the north (particularly the Dembos region) and most of Cabinda.

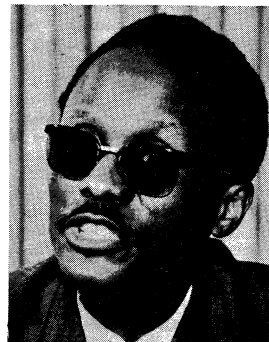
MPLA always emphasized that their enemy was not the Portuguese people, nor was it the white man. In 1970 MPLA President Neto said, "We are not making a racial war. . . . If there still exists in some of our combatants the idea of a war against the white man, it is necessary that it be immediately substituted by the idea of a war against colonialism and against imperialism; a war against oppression, for the liberty and dignity of all men in the world."¹ MPLA always stressed that their struggle was not simply for a token independence. "What use is the struggle if we remain subjected to forced labor, in the companies, in the mines - even if they are all directed by Africans? What use is the sacrifice if we are still obliged to sell the cattle and the cotton in markets which only benefit businessmen, even if these are Africans? What is the use of so much blood, if in the end we remain subjected to a state which, even if ruled by Africans, only serves the rich and powerful?"²

During the anti-colonialist struggle MPLA established schools and medical clinics in the liberated regions. Committees were elected by the people in each village to serve as an effective communication channel between MPLA leaders and the mass peasant and worker base. Village militias and women's organizations were formed. Many foreign journalists and supporters travelled inside Angola with MPLA and witnessed first-hand their new programs and popular support. In 1968, LSM founder, Don Barnett, travelled 200 miles to one of the MPLA base camps in eastern Angola ("Hanoi II"). At that time he wrote, "If the area through which I travelled is representative of the other semi-liberated zones - and I have every reason to believe it is - then MPLA has already achieved that popular base of support which is the *sine qua non* of a successful people's war."³

FNLA, Holden Roberto:

"I am calling on the West to save Africa from Communism...But I can also say, in all sincerity, that I am asking the West to save itself...The United States...is the guardian of world freedom. But it is a historical fact that the U.S. moves slowly in this role. In Vietnam it was always too little, too late. Now in Angola it is happening the same way."

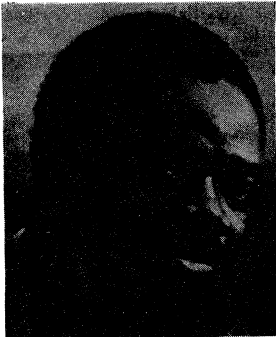
(Newsweek, December 29, 1975)



FNLA

The roots of the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) lie in the UPNA (People's Union of Northern Angola), whose aims were the secession from Angola of the old Kingdom of Congo and the installation of a Bakongo ruler. Under the leadership of Barros Necaca and Holden Roberto (founder of FNLA), UPNA petitioned the United Nations in 1955: "The people of the Kingdom of Congo make an urgent appeal that they may be put under the protection of the UN as a mandate of the U.S. It is unnecessary to emphasize the superior role that the U.S. plays on the international scene. If God has given these people Strength, Prosperity and Intelligence it is for the good of mankind and of those who are suppressed." After the 1958 Pan-African Conference in Accra, Ghana, Roberto, under the urging of Nkrumah and Sekou Toure dropped the "N" from UPNA to project an image of nationalism rather than tribalism. Yet the legacy of tribalism persisted in UPA's propaganda and activities. Inspired by UPA in 1961, Bakongo peasants in northern Angola rioted without organization, killing not only many Whites regardless of political views, but also mestizos, black intellectuals and even peasants of other tribes such as Ovimbundus. In 1962, UPA joined with a tiny tribal grouping to form the FNLA, at the same time beginning the long history of attacks on MPLA forces active in the North. The first publicized case occurred in October 1961, with the murder by UPA of a 21-man MPLA detachment led by Tomas Ferreira which was marching south to the aid of comrades. At first this was denied by the UPA office. But after a former chief of staff to Holden Roberto acknowledged it, even Roberto confirmed that "he had in fact given orders to intercept and annihilate MPLA columns that were trying to infiltrate into Angola."⁴ Despite efforts at conciliation by numerous parties, this situation continued throughout the armed struggle. Although sometimes masked in a reactionary tribalism, the primary cause of FNLA antagonism to MPLA has always been political. The "enlightened" liberal JFK, while quietly funneling aid to Portugal, was also aware of the neo-colonial potential of Roberto. Since 1961 Roberto has been on a \$10,000/yr. CIA retainer, and directives from Kennedy led to covert U.S. aid to FNLA.⁵ Because of MPLA's anti-imperialist stance and popular multi-racial support, Roberto could never accept a genuine coalition and saw his aspirations dependent on MPLA's demise.

But over the long years of struggle, it was rather the FNLA which met its demise. Roberto's base was largely some 350,000 Angolan refugees in southern Zaire. Roberto was permitted by his now brother-in-law, Mobutu, to forcibly tax and recruit these Bakongo refugees. With little political understanding, FNLA soldiers fell into inactivity and indiscipline. Revolts against Roberto by FNLA military chiefs were quashed by Zaire troops. What fighting they did was as often against the MPLA as against the Portuguese. Meanwhile, Holden Roberto consolidated himself as a Kinshasa businessman. According to the monthly *Africa*, he is a major shareholder in a Kinshasa transport company and the National Congolese Bank, owns a hotel, printing house and eight landed estates. FNLA's strategy was to maintain a minimum presence in northern Angola (near the Zaire border) and wait for the time to move inside in full force . . . after the Portuguese had left.



UNITA, Jonas Savimbi:

Q: Do you think that the foreign companies exploiting Angolan natural resources should be nationalized?

Savimbi: "Never, I oppose it. Nationalization is a disease, because the foreign companies are manned by experts who know how to develop our petroleum, diamonds and copper."

(African Development, July, 1975)

UNITA

The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) was formed in 1966 by Jonas Savimbi, who had resigned as FNLA Foreign Minister in December 1964. UNITA soon gained notoriety for its fantastic claims. In North America and Europe, UNITA representatives claimed their organization was Marxist-Leninist and "the only movement based inside Angola." In 1968, just two short years after the organization's founding, UNITA was claiming to have operations in one-half of the country and to control 1.5 million people, i.e. over 25% of the total population. This was the same region in which LSM members travelled and attended MPLA's first Eastern Regional Conference of peasant delegates and militants representing thousands of people ... the same area that UNITA was claiming to "control."

MPLA communiques acknowledged some UNITA presence in the south-east, but mainly in the form of attacks on small MPLA detachments. There is also substantial evidence that UNITA collaborated with both the CIA and Portuguese colonialists. In 1970 it was revealed that UNITA members were frequent visitors at the American Embassy in Lusaka, Zambia and their main contact was a Dr. J. S. Cunningham. According to *Who's Who in the CIA*, Dr. Cunningham is a CIA operative who worked in several Latin American countries before going to Zambia.⁶ Captured documents published in 1974 revealed that Savimbi conspired extensively with the Portuguese against MPLA during the armed struggle. A series of correspondence between Savimbi and Portuguese military leaders, written between September 26/72 and November 7/72, evidenced UNITA's main concern and total lack of principles. "We are prepared to furnish guides as soon as we have located an MPLA camp," Savimbi wrote to the Portuguese.⁷ UNITA denied the authenticity of these documents, but a later interview with a former Portuguese officer confirmed UNITA's collaboration with the colonialists, and revealed that Savimbi was even treated medically in a colonialist military hospital.⁸

WHO DEFEATED PORTUGUESE COLONIALISM?

While fighting such treachery, and dealing with the problems posed by unfriendly or unstable neighboring countries, MPLA was still able to strike heavy blows against the Portuguese. Reliable reports consistently confirmed that MPLA was the major fighting guerrilla force inside Angola. The U.N. Committee on Decolonization, which went through Portuguese military communiques for the years 1968-70, found that UNITA was only mentioned once, whereas the name of MPLA occurred again and again.⁹ In 1973, secret Portuguese reports were published, disclosing that, of 2,518 acknowledged actions by guerrillas in Angola in 1970, 59% were ascribed to MPLA, 37% to FNLA (operating from Zaire), and only 4% to UNITA.¹⁰ Another document confirmed that in February 1971, the great majority of clashes and practically all "fire actions" (engagements with Portuguese troops) were with MPLA.¹¹ Portuguese soldiers, who were the ones to really know during the armed struggle, freely acknowledged which of the liberation movements

they had most to fear. A South African journalist described a Portuguese soldier's assessment: "MPLA men are by far the most resilient fighters."¹²

Contrary to the portrayals of the capitalist mass media, it is clear that only one movement consistently confronted and finally defeated Portuguese colonialism in Angola. And only one movement is fighting for genuine independence, in the interests of the mass of Angolan workers and peasants. That movement is MPLA. Unlike FNLA and UNITA, MPLA was always a nationalist movement with a multi-tribal leadership and membership; through the armed struggle it developed broad support throughout the country. Those who pretend that there existed three genuine liberation movements or that the struggle is a "tribal conflict" are simply obscuring the real history behind the present situation in Angola. The essence of the Angola conflict is the struggle between the forces of neo-colonialism seeking to maintain Angola - via tribal-based African elites within the international capitalist system and, on the other hand, the forces of progressive, self-reliant popular democracy.

AFTER THE PORTUGUESE COUP

On January 5th, 1975, MPLA agreed to form a united front with FNLA and UNITA to negotiate with the Portuguese for the independence of Angola.* On January 14th the Alvor Agreement was signed with the Portuguese, establishing a transitional government and plans for elections to be held before independence day, November 11th. The situation has some parallels to the Paris Peace Agreement where the Vietnamese Provisional Revolutionary Government agreed to form a coalition government with the Thieu clique. In both cases, the anti-imperialist front (NLF in Vietnam and MPLA in Angola) was willing to work with the puppet forces - because they knew this would win greater support from the people in the long run, and help expose the reactionary character of the puppets.

This, indeed, is what happened. MPLA representatives in the transitional government initiated and encouraged the organization and mobilization of workers and peasants in the urban shantytowns and villages. People's Commissions were established to tackle illiteracy and health problems and to involve the population in the decisions of the transitional government. Early successes of the movement included the raising of black workers' wages to parity with white workers.¹³ This movement, guided by the MPLA, was called *Poder Popular* - People's Power. Both FNLA and UNITA bitterly opposed it, exposing more and more their true character. At the time, Roberto said, "People's power leads to a people's dictatorship and the population of Angola, which is Christian, actively rejects Communism!"¹⁴

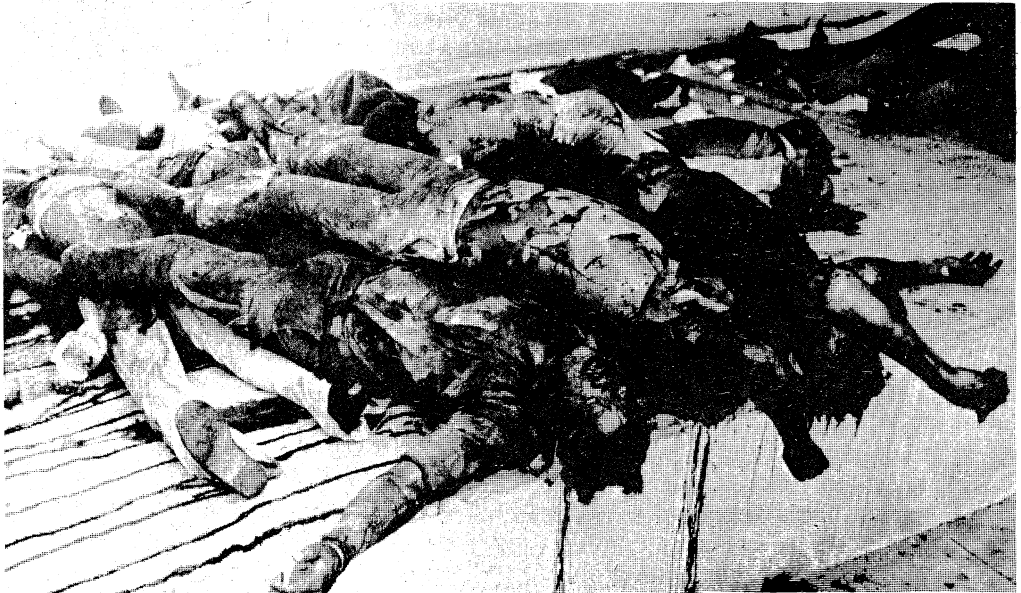
As happened in Vietnam, the puppet forces in Angola soon realized their precarious position. Lacking popular support, they began trying to seize control by force and intimidation. In late March, 51 defenceless youths - MPLA sympathizers - were massacred by FNLA troops.¹⁵ Later in the same week, doctors in Luanda's military hospital gave details of an FNLA roundup and summary execution of nearly 100 people.¹⁶ An assassination attempt was made on the leading MPLA representative in the transitional government.¹⁷ In the north, FNLA was being assisted by Zairean regular troops in trying to crush MPLA supporters. In the south, UNITA was attacking MPLA positions.¹⁸

For many weeks MPLA responded to these attacks only defensively, wishing to avoid increased military conflict. But with the continuation and escalation of these attacks, and increasing pressure from the population, MPLA finally decided that it was necessary to respond to the attacks and stay FNLA's aggressive actions against innocent civilians and MPLA sympathizers.¹⁹

The corruption of FNLA and UNITA representatives in the coalition government was

Contrary to the bourgeois media, it was not the Lisbon coup that led to Portugal granting independence to Angola. Rather, it was the three-front colonial war deploying up to 160,000 Portuguese troops (more than 40,000 in Angola) that drained Portugal and accelerated the demise of the fascist Caetano regime.

increasingly revealed. It was exposed that individuals from both movements had been stealing government revenues. Mateus Neto, an FNLA minister in the government, abruptly defected from Roberto's organization in revulsion at its practices. In a public declaration he acknowledged that "FNLA is a disorganized movement without any support from the population."²⁰ In Luanda, secondary school students and teachers went on strike for two months against the UNITA Education Minister.²¹ Meanwhile, support for MPLA's progressive line consolidated. Workers at the Luanda daily newspaper *Jornal de Angola* seized control of the paper from the pro-FNLA owners and immediately gave it an independent but pro-MPLA political line.²² In the district of Icolo e Bengo, where MPLA President Neto's home village is, peasants set up communes



MPLA sympathizers massacred by FNLA last March in Luanda. AFRIQUE-ASIE

and took over local administration,²³ providing a model for other regions. When MPLA led the take-over of foreign banks in Luanda, over 30,000 people demonstrated their enthusiastic support.

The fighting between MPLA and FNLA continued, with UNITA taking a publicly neutral position but in reality collaborating with FNLA.²⁴ Numerous truces and ceasefire agreements were reached, but they were no sooner signed than broken. Both FNLA and UNITA saw that their only chance lay in a military victory. In late July, FNLA formally declared war on MPLA and withdrew from the transitional government.²⁵ UNITA soon followed suit. The FNLA and UNITA armies began engaging in joint military activities; but with little support from the population and demoralized, conscripted armies, they were still very weak. For some time Zaire had been supplying FNLA with not only weapons, but also regular Zairean troops and officers. By early summer up to 60% of the FNLA army was actually Zairean.²⁶ Roberto and Savimbi's need for more and more imperialist support continued. By early August it was acknowledged that FNLA troops were being led by fascist Portuguese ex-commandos and other white mercenaries.²⁷ Soon afterward, South African troops invaded southern Angola under the pretense of "protecting" the hydroelectric project on the Cunene River.²⁸ They began providing

Logistical and aerial support for UNITA; then they began spearheading UNITA attacks on MPLA forces.

Imperialist governments argue that their involvement is simply a "response" to prior Soviet involvement. The reality is the exact reverse. Not only has the U.S. backed anti-MPLA forces for some 14 years (FNLA, UNITA and Portugal), but it was the covert actions of the Ford administration that "upped the ante" in Angola and fueled superpower contention. In January '75, several months before the Soviet Union gave increased support to MPLA, the U.S. began sending massive shipments of aid to FNLA and UNITA through Zaire.²⁹ As for foreign troops, both Zaire and South Africa had thousands of regular troops in Angola many months before the first Cuban or "Mozambican



South African troops training in Namibia near the Angolan border. PHOTO-TRENDS

volunteers arrived to support MPLA.

It is now clear for all but the politically blind who FNLA and UNITA really represent. Captured Portuguese mercenaries recently revealed that out of 2,500 "FNLA" troops north-east of Luanda, 2,300 were Zairean, 100 were mercenaries and just 100 were Angolans.³⁰ American mercenaries are working with FNLA/UNITA forces both in training and "advisory" capacities,³¹ and Israeli officers are now working with the FNLA General Staff.³² From Europe, imperialist support is coming especially from Britain, France, Belgium and West Germany. American C1-30 transport planes have been taking load after load of military hardware to the FNLA/UNITA forces so that even Savimbi has acknowledged that, "If MPLA has 10 bazookas, I have 20."³³

* South Africa's offensive underscores its sub-imperial role in the region and its direct investments in Namibian and Angolan mining interests. Pretoria's offensive is aimed not only at neutralizing SWAPO (by attacking SWAPO bases on both sides of the Angola-Namibia border) and MPLA, but also at isolating through this strategy FRELIMO and Zimbabwe liberation forces.

Now that MPLA has declared the People's Republic of Angola a free and sovereign state and is in firm control of the middle of the country, imperialist forces are trying to economically strangle the new people's state. A secret economic boycott, as happened in Chile before the fascist coup, is being imposed by the West. The U.S., once again, is leading the way in these maneuvers and has blocked the signing of an agreement on a coffee sale and stopped delivery of two Boeing 737's which had already been paid for at \$37 million apiece.³⁴ Moreover, under heavy pressure from the Ford administration, Gulf Oil held up a \$125 million royalties payment to the Luanda treasury due on 31 December.

The struggle in Angola is not a "civil war" any more than the Vietnamese struggle was. Rather, it is a war of liberation against foreign aggression. FNLA and UNITA have definitively exposed themselves as agents of fascism and neo-colonialism. To call for "coalition" or "national unity" with such traitors is tantamount to calling for unity with the CIA and South African fascists.*

ON CHINA, AND LEFT TAILISM

One source of confusion which the bourgeois media has played up to the maximum is China's support for FNLA. Officially, China has taken the position that it supports all three movements equally, without distinctions, and cites the official OAU position calling for a coalition government of national unity. Up until very recently, however, there is evidence that China was in fact providing concrete support to FNLA. Chinese military instructors were training FNLA troops at the Kinkuzu base in Zaire. Chinese armored trucks destined for FNLA were being unloaded at Negage this fall,³⁵ and recently MPLA militants discovered Chinese-made mortars - manufactured in the spring of 1975 - among the war materials captured from FNLA when they won control of Caxito.³⁶

In November, however, China finally withdrew her military instructors from Zaire and later FNLA statements indicated that there could be a rift. We certainly hope that People's China is reassessing its position on the Angolan struggle, for their past policy has not served the interests of Angola's masses. Recently MPLA President Agostinho Neto said, "China has played an important role in supporting liberation movements in many southern African countries. But China is mistaken in some cases. Maybe because of an incorrect analysis. In Angola we see China supporting the reactionary forces - created, armed, and financed by the Americans. But we don't have a hostile attitude toward China. On the contrary, we are seeking good relations."³⁷ Neto's comment on the Chinese position underscores what appears to be a fundamental mistake in viewing the Angola situation. China appears to have mechanically imposed its anti-Soviet stance onto Angola. While revisionism, both within and without, may be the prime concern for China, by defining Angola simply as a pawn of superpower contention (*Peking Review*, 12 December/75 said the Angolan conflict was, "wholly the making" of the USSR), China fails to comprehend MPLA's position of nonalignment. Like the Vietnamese, Cuban, Palestinian and other national liberation movements, MPLA takes no position on the Sino-Soviet split and has, like its counterparts, PAIGC and FRELIMO, accepted aid on the condition of "no strings attached." In fact, in the past China had supported MPLA (in the early 1960's).

For MPLA, like many underdeveloped nations, the prime enemy is the force of international capital and its local allies. After five centuries of Portuguese domination, Angola has been fully incorporated into the periphery of the international capitalist system and now must break out of this system's exploitative relations and reverse the process of underdevelopment. Regardless of extra-territorial Soviet ambitions, it is the established interests of the U.S., its NATO allies and

* MPLA's position was recently expressed by President Neto: "We don't want to negotiate with UNITA and the FNLA, or with any of the aggressors There can be no agreement with the representatives of imperialism in our country." (*Le Monde*, December 26, 1975)

South Africa that the MPLA socialist project must negate in order to build an independent, self-reliant socialist society.

As Mao Tse-tung has written, "The fundamental cause of the development of a thing is not external but internal; it lies in the contradictoriness within the thing Contradictoriness *within* a thing is the fundamental cause of its development, while its inter-relations and interactions with other things are secondary causes."⁵⁸ In Angola, the prime contradiction is between the Angolan people and their vanguard, MPLA, and the forces of neo-colonialism and global capitalism. President Neto has said, "Liberation is a continuing process, it has no end." Certainly there *are* reformist, revisionist and adventurist elements which also need to be struggled with. But we should not confuse these with the main enemy.

MPLA, Agostinho Neto:

"The People's Republic of Angola sees as a priority and a vital and inalienable task the expulsion from our country of the army made up of South African and Zairese troops, Portuguese fascists, Angolan puppets and mercenaries who represent the combined forces of imperialist aggression against our country."

(Independence Day speech, November 11, 1975)

We have much respect for the People's Republic of China and feel that the ongoing class struggle and Cultural Revolution within China are setting an example for other revolutionaries around the world. However, we do not think that the Chinese position is *the* revolutionary position or that their analysis is always correct. Mao himself has stressed the particularity of contradictions - how contradictions differ according to time and place; how it was correct at one time for the Chinese Communist Party to ally with the Kuomintang, but incorrect at another time. Regarding Angola, we do not see how it is progressive to ally with the forces of extreme reaction against a genuinely progressive liberation movement. We do not think it is weakening social imperialism, and think that in fact China is retarding rather than advancing socialist revolution through its mistaken policy in Angola.

Unfortunately, slavishness to China has prevented some North American left forces from supporting MPLA. Among some individuals and groups this tailism is taken to the extreme of saying, "We don't understand what is going on in Angola, but we accept China's position." If the Chinese are incorrect, as we think they are, then it is the duty of comrades to point this out in a constructively critical manner.

Perhaps the lack of such a critical attitude accounts for the support which UNITA received in North America over the past several years. Verbal support from China for a short period along with boasts of huge liberated zones were accepted uncritically by numerous organizations in North America, thus obscuring and serving UNITA's essential opportunism. UNITA is allied with the South African racists and white supremacists, Savimbi is calling on the West to help him defeat communism, and he doesn't have enough popular support to hold the southern territory without South African assistance.

We believe it is necessary to take a constructively critical attitude toward all

individuals, movements and countries. This is definitely *not* the same as the classical Trotskyite "criticism" - which amounts to arrogant and chauvinistic judgements from "above" the revolution. Nor are we suggesting that "anytime is the right time" for criticisms, or that the positive aspects be obscured by the shortcomings or weaknesses. What we are referring to is an open, critical attitude which understands that there is a negative aspect in all things, and the willingness to question and struggle where it really can advance the struggle.

We think it is the duty of any serious Marxist to look critically at what is happening in the world, and at the statements and activities of comrades as well as the enemy. Otherwise, it is easy to follow a mistaken course. The hallmark of the

MPLA, Agostinho Neto:

"Just because the Soviet Union supplies us with weapons, it doesn't mean we have become a satellite. We've never been one. We've never asked Moscow for advice on how to set up our state. All the major decisions in our country are taken by our movement, our government and our people."

(Le Monde, December 26, 1975)

opportunist is to say what the audience wants to hear - to change principles and policies according to the audience. It is now obvious that one of UNITA's primary characteristics has been opportunism. The same applies to FNLA, for they too have declared their unswerving commitment to "international socialist revolution."* The lesson, we think, is that it is vital for North Americans to develop a comradely but critical view of revolutionary governments, liberation movements and their individual representatives.

From practical experience we know that MPLA, too, has problems and shortcomings. Some of these which directly affected us we have discussed in past issues of *LSM NEWS*. But these weaknesses do not obscure the fact that MPLA is the only progressive movement in Angola today and that we have a duty to actively support them.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ANGOLA

Why are the imperialist forces so intent on maintaining control of Angola? Is it simply to "prevent Soviet influence" in southern Africa? Is MPLA really a "Soviet client," as the bourgeois media tries so hard to stress?

MPLA has received support from the Soviet Union, but it does not logically follow from this that it is a "client of Moscow." Many other liberation movements around the world have received support from the Soviet Union, to mention only a few: NLF of Vietnam, FRELIMO of Mozambique, PFLO of Oman, the Palestine Liberation Organization. Are they also "clients?" On this question MPLA President Neto has said, "I wish to make it clear that we appreciate and recognize the assistance we receive from all our friends, including Russia, but we do not accept any form of foreign political domination."³⁹ "We do not take orders from anyone whatsoever, from any big power in this world. We have

*In 1973 LSM received a letter from FNLA where they avowed such a commitment and asked that we support them rather than MPLA.

always had the pride to determine our political line ourselves, and the ideology which suits our people's interests."⁴⁰ MPLA has always maintained a neutral position on the Sino-Soviet dispute, and in his Independence Day speech on November 11th, President Neto said that the People's Republic of Angola would follow an independent, nonaligned course in its foreign policy.

Nearly all references to MPLA in the bourgeois media are prefaced by the phrase "Soviet backed." Yet MPLA and the People's Republic of Angola has the support of not only the Soviet Union, but of nearly all revolutionary and progressive forces around the world. In Africa, *every* progressive country (e.g. Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Algeria, Somalia, Tanzania, People's Congo, Guinea) has recognized and supports the



People's Republic of Angola. SWAPO, the sole liberation movement in Namibia (which borders Angola on the south), supports MPLA and has repudiated UNITA. Other revolutionary forces supporting MPLA include Vietnam, Cuba, Korea and the Revolutionary Coordinating Council in Latin America (ERP, MIR, ELN, Tupamaros) - to name only a few. By using the term "Soviet-backed" the bourgeois media is trying to distort MPLA's independent socialist character and rouse the opposition of all elements critical of the Soviet Union, both from the right and left. MPLA should correctly be referred to as a progressive and anti-imperialist liberation movement.

The real reasons behind North American and West European involvement in Angola are much more practical than simply "preventing Soviet influence." They are actually Angola's natural wealth and strategic location, both of which are important to corporate and military interests in the West. Last year alone, multinational corporations extracted over \$1 billion in profits from Angola.⁴¹ Angola is the key to the quest for domination of southern Africa, whose mineral wealth is increasingly a vital concern of international capitalist interests. Angola may be potentially the wealthiest nation in Africa. It has vast deposits of copper, iron, diamonds, manganese, titanium, and other strategic minerals, and most of all, oil. After secret offshore finds in November '73, Angola's reserves were dubbed "a new Kuwait." To date, Gulf Oil has pumped over

160,000 barrels per day from offshore Cabinda wells, and foreign oil firms have been prospecting up and down the Angolan coast. Agriculturally, Angola is vitally important. Under a notoriously inefficient Portuguese colonialism (which employed forced labor) Angola was the fourth leading coffee producer in the world and also grew other cash crops such as cotton and maize, and has vast timber resources. A study by a U.S. consulting firm suggests that Angola could become a breadbasket for Africa.

A genuinely independent Angola under MPLA leadership will utilize these resources to serve the Angolan people. "We uphold the principle that our country's wealth must essentially serve the Angolan people. And we do not defend and do not intend to defend the principle that this wealth should be handed over to Angolan capitalists."⁴² A

UNITA, Jonas Savimbi:

"Here I am fighting Communism. Trying to stop the Russians from taking over Angola. And instead you hold me up to ridicule over the Whites! You do this to your own presidents too, don't you? What's the matter, don't you want to live in a democracy?"

(Newsweek, November 24, 1975)

Liberated Angola will be a base of support for the liberation movements fighting in Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa, and an example for progressive forces in Zambia and revolutionaries in Zaire. It is this which worries the imperialists and their agents in Africa.

We can be certain that imperialist forces will do everything in their power to prevent an MPLA victory. With the Zaire economy in ruins and revolutionary consciousness and guerrilla struggle on the rise, Mobutu is desperate to stop MPLA from leading a united, revolutionary Angola. In South Africa war fever is rampant and the fascist government has built a new military base in Namibia from which they will be able to launch continued and perhaps escalating attacks on Angola.⁴³ In the U.S., the Ford administration has overridden a U.S. Senate veto and continued aid to FNLA-UNITA mercenary forces (including dropping supplies directly to a South African column in the south) that amounts to an informal direct intervention. A CIA-engineered mercenary recruiting campaign has gathered perhaps 2000 or more men (some of whom signed letters of resignation from the U.S. armed forces and "volunteered" for Angola). Some have been trained at the huge military facility at Ft. Benning, Georgia.⁴⁴

At the same time, the FNLA/UNITA puppets are calling for more and increased intervention. In a recent interview Holden Roberto said, "I am calling on the West to save Africa from Communism."⁴⁵ In the areas under FNLA or UNITA occupation, identification cards are part of the "security" of the population, just as they were in the areas occupied by Thieu in Vietnam. UNITA's secretary-general has said, "Concerning our membership cards, each Angolan is obliged to have one We will not demand a membership from foreigners and Portuguese who wish to remain in Angola . . . but all Angolans have to have a card. Each must be able to identify himself, whether he is for God or for the devil."⁴⁶

But MPLA's determination and commitment have been steeled through fourteen years of armed struggle already, and it is certain that sooner or later they will achieve victory. The present period is being called "The Second War of National Liberation," and MPLA has said they are prepared to fight on for another fourteen years if

necessary. They are determined to defend the territorial integrity of Angola - from the Cunene River in the South to the Cabinda enclave in the North. While MPLA forces continue to bear down on the enemy's weakest points, popular resistance and civilian guerrilla warfare is increasing behind the FNLA/UNITA lines. Within the liberated territory of the People's Republic of Angola, the new government is trying to re-organize and stabilize the social and economic situation. Production and distribution cooperatives are being established, wage and income disparities have been drastically reduced, and the dynamic link between the leadership and population is being further strengthened through the expansion and development of mass-based action committees concerned with all major national problems.⁴⁷

The solidarity and commitment of other international revolutionary forces has



The youth of Angola support MPLA. LSM PHOTOS

also been great. Acknowledging the importance of the Angolan struggle, Samora Machel, President of the Mozambique Liberation Front, has recently said, "The fate of the revolution in Africa is being played out in Angola."⁴⁸ An initial force of 250 experienced FRELIMO militants are fighting alongside MPLA, and workers throughout Mozambique have contributed a day's wage in support of the Angolan People's Republic.⁴⁹ The Cubans, noted for their strong internationalist spirit and commitment around the world, have sent some of their best sons and daughters to fight alongside and otherwise assist the MPLA.

LSM hopes that North American radicals and progressive people will also see the importance of the Angolan struggle and how it is in our own interests to support the Angolan Revolution led by MPLA. A genuinely independent, socialist Angola will qualitatively advance the struggle for the liberation of all southern Africa, and strike a heavy blow to our common enemy, the international ruling class. We urge progressive and socialist North Americans to carry out as much informational and material support for MPLA and the Angolan Revolution as they can. MPLA's progressive policies and practice need to be more widely and fully understood. Supplies and money are needed by the People's Republic of Angola. We should expose and harrass the ruling class and its collaborators and agents. A Luta Continua - The Struggle Continues! Support the MPLA!

MPLA, Agostinho Neto:
 "On putting an end to colonialism and determinedly barring the way to neo-colonialism, the MPLA declares...its firm resolve to radically change the present economic infrastructures and that...the goal of economic reconstruction is the satisfaction of the people's needs."
 (Independence Day speech, November 11, 1975)



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