

A Fratricidal Struggle for Power

By Ernest Harsch

[Last of three articles]

The first major clashes in Luanda following the installation of the coalition regime on January 31, 1975, were between the MPLA forces of Agostinho Neto and those of Daniel Chipenda's faction.

The clashes followed the MPLA's refusal to recognize the right of any group other than the MPLA, FNLA, and UNITA to exist and function. On February 14, the MPLA released a statement trying to justify this position. "Our organizations were recognized as the only negotiators with the Portuguese Government, whose cooperation made the decolonization process possible," the MPLA said. "All organizations and military forces not integrated in the liberation movements thus were considered illegal, and therefore subject to disbanding."¹⁵

The official MPLA leadership had already asked Chipenda in January to disband his forces. The January 31 *República* reported that Chipenda had attempted to enter the eastern city of Luso with an armed force, but was halted by Portuguese and MPLA troops.

The clashes in Luanda in mid-February, which left an estimated twenty persons dead, were the result of an MPLA attempt to prevent Chipenda from establishing his group in the city. According to an MPLA communiqué, the MPLA had not intended to engage in an armed conflict, but had tried to give the coalition regime more time in which to neutralize or disperse the Chipenda forces. The National Defense Council, on which the MPLA, FNLA, UNITA, and the Portuguese were represented, condemned the MPLA's attacks against the Chipenda forces. Two months later Chipenda joined the FNLA.

A month after the MPLA-Chipenda clashes, armed units of the MPLA and FNLA fought in various parts of the country, particularly in the muceques of Luanda. According to the MPLA radio program "Fighting Angola," battles also took place in Lubango, Lobito, and Huambo. The FNLA, after claiming that the MPLA was responsible for the initial fighting, admitted attacking MPLA forces in Luanda when it said in a communiqué

15. This is the MPLA's own interpretation of the Alvor accords. While the accords bar any group other than the three main nationalist forces from participating in the regime or running in the elections, they are not specifically made illegal.



COSTA GOMES: MFA's "active neutrality" does not rule out military intervention.

that "the ELNA¹⁶ occupied, on March 24, various military quarters of the MPLA in Luanda." But the FNLA denied any responsibility in the alleged massacres of MPLA recruits that had been reported in the press.

Heavy fighting between the MPLA and FNLA again broke out at the end of April. "Eyewitnesses," according to the May 3 *New York Times*, "said numerous teen-age boys carrying automatic weapons fired at political opponents in buildings in the black slum areas surrounding the capital, but most of the shooting was confined to attacks on the headquarters and political offices of the two parties."

The May 2 *Jornal Novo* reported that the rival nationalist forces used heavy machine guns, mortars, and anti-aircraft weapons fired on the ground. The morgue in Luanda said May 3 that 500 bodies had been brought in, but since many of the dead had not yet been taken to the morgue, the

16. Exército de Libertação Nacional de Angola—National Liberation Army of Angola, the military wing of the FNLA.

estimates of the death toll reached as high as 1,000.

In an apparent show of strength, the MPLA-affiliated trade union, UNTA, called a general strike in Luanda May 22. It had originally been scheduled for May 1, but was then banned by the coalition regime because of the fighting. According to Reuters, the strike was generally successful, with 15,000 persons attending a rally.

From the beginning of May and into June, the fighting spread to most of the important towns in northern Angola; there were reports of clashes in Santo António do Zaire, Uíge, Ambrizete, Malange, Dalatando, and Carmona. Fighting also took place in the oil-rich Cabindan enclave, in the central city of Nova Lisboa, and in Teixeira de Sousa on the Benguela railway in eastern Angola.

According to a report by David B. Ottaway in the June 10 *Washington Post*, much of the fighting in the northern part of the country appeared to be the result of efforts to clear pockets of rival troops out of areas that had been under the influence of either the MPLA or FNLA. He said that the FNLA in the Bakongo area "has now pretty well eliminated the presence of Popular Movement [MPLA] troops throughout this region." The MPLA was likewise moving against FNLA forces in the territory north and east of Luanda.

Although the UNITA throughout the first months of the fighting said it was not involved in the clashes, it was drawn into the fighting in early June. "In an official statement," the June 8 *Washington Post* reported, "Portugal authorities accused the MPLA of attacking UNITA, but added that the MPLA forces were apparently acting without orders from their high command." The UNITA later issued a statement saying that it had "no quarrel" with the MPLA.

On June 9, Portuguese forces actively intervened by attacking troops of both the FNLA and MPLA.

According to some of the reports, many of the hundreds of dead were civilians who had been caught in the middle of the fighting, particularly in the crowded muceques. In addition, the warfare disrupted communications and cut off food and water supplies to some of the embattled towns. The June 12 *Washington Post* reported that hundreds of Africans had demonstrated outside the government building in Luanda, demanding to be transported out of the city.

The fighting also caused panic among the settler population. Thousands of settlers fled the plantations of northern Angola and the suburban areas of Luanda. The June 9 *Los Angeles Times* reported that 50,000 to 100,000 settlers were trying to book passage to Portugal. However, Luanda's port was partly blocked by a dockers' strike.

Some of the foreign interests in Angola have already begun a partial evacuation.

The U.S., British, West German, and South African embassies advised their citizens to leave the country until "the situation stabilizes." As a result of the fighting in Cabinda, Gulf Oil evacuated the dependents of its employees. But a Gulf official noted that production at its Malongo facilities twenty miles north of Cabinda city was "normal." Texaco likewise evacuated all of its personnel from Santo António do Zaire, close to its offshore exploration facilities, after the town was captured by the FNLA.

The April 18 *A Provincia de Angola* reported that the UNITA had begun to set up "peace committees," which the UNITA said were designed to help prevent clashes. The UNITA also claimed that it was the only group capable of establishing a "peaceful society."

The MFA on May 10 called for a meeting with the three main nationalist groups, ostensibly to avert a civil war. The following day, FNLA head Holden Roberto stated: "Given the evident partiality and lack of objectivity shown by certain members of the Government of Lisbon to our movement . . . the FNLA categorically refuses to take part in a meeting of the three Angolan movements with which a member of the Portuguese Government will be associated."

UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi also rejected Portuguese participation in such a meeting.

However, Savimbi managed to organize a summit meeting of the heads of the three rival nationalist groups that began in Kenya June 15, without the participation of the Portuguese.

On June 21 the three groups agreed publicly to halt the fighting, free prisoners held by each group, disarm civilians, and merge their forces into a "single army." But while the number of clashes in Angola declined within a few days, the factional atmosphere remained. A breakdown of the agreement—which is little different from the many other cease-fire agreements reached by the rival organizations in the past—could lead to the resumption of fighting, perhaps on an even bloodier scale than before.

Point Fingers at Each Other

Throughout the fighting, each group has blamed the other for the conflicts.

The April 8 *República* reported that the FNLA had accused the MPLA of seeking a civil war. In January, the FNLA claimed, "Dangerous agitators in the pay of international imperialism" were functioning in Angola under the guise of "international revolutionaries." In May the minister of the interior, an FNLA leader, expelled a Brazilian, a Soviet, a Czechoslovak, a German, a Romanian, a Finn, and a Congolese as "provocateurs."

The MPLA has accused the FNLA of attacking the civilian population in the muceques. The April 2 issue of the Dutch daily *De Volkskrant* reported that Neto said, "UNITA seems to be neutral, but in reality supports the FNLA and is guilty of the same malpractices as the FNLA." In March the MPLA criticized "the passivity of the Portuguese Armed Forces in Angola, which constitutes a clear violation of the Alvor accords and aids the political destabilization fomented by imperialism."

The National Defense Council, headed by the Portuguese high commissioner for Angola, Brig. Gen. Silva Cardoso, has condemned both the MPLA and FNLA for various clashes. The May 18 *New York Times* reported that Cardoso blamed the MPLA for "distributing arms to civilians and children in an indiscriminate manner." The coalition regime, according to a May 2 United Press International dispatch, ordered a Yugoslav ship, reportedly carrying arms for the MPLA, to leave port without unloading.

Adm. Rosa Coutinho, a former Angola high commissioner and an important member of the MFA, said on April 28 that the regime in Zaire was fomenting discord among the three Angolan nationalist groups.

While the three groups, particularly the MPLA and FNLA, are clearly contending for eventual power in Angola, none of the clashes indicate that any of the groups is ready for a full-scale civil war. So far, they seem to be testing each other and consolidating their control over parts of the country, either as a base of support for a future war or for greater political control within the coalition regime or any regime that follows the proclamation of formal independence.

Moreover, it is questionable whether the clashes are fully under the control of the MPLA and FNLA leaderships. Both groups have recently recruited and armed hundreds of young, untrained Angolans, making it difficult for the groups to observe cease-fire orders issued by the nationalist leaders. *Jornal Novo*, in its May 2 issue, noted that the rivalries had increased the "internal breaches of discipline within each of the two groups in conflict. This factor certainly is preoccupying the leaders of the two parties involved."

The FNLA member on the presidential council of the coalition regime, Johnny Eduardo, was quoted in the April 5 *South African Star Weekly* as saying, "We almost came into conflict with the president (of the FNLA [Holden Roberto]) by trying to force him to wage war against the MPLA with all the machinery available.

"The president refused to let us do so, saying that when the time came the war

must be between two armies, without the civilian population in the middle."

While the Eduardo statement may be an indication of differences within the FNLA on its approach toward the MPLA, it could also be interpreted as a warning to the MPLA that the FNLA was considering total war.

Nationalist leaders have also indicated that provocateurs may have been involved in some of the clashes. A communiqué released jointly by the MPLA, FNLA, and UNITA, quoted in the May 3 *Jornal Novo*, stated that "individuals or isolated groups" had fired on units of the liberation movements.

A few days later, Roberto declared that "certain government circles in Lisbon have been pulling strings backstage with the aim of creating confusion." He accused Portuguese elements of having provoked incidents the week before by firing on an MPLA military installation. MPLA forces then attacked the FNLA, he said.

If provocateurs are functioning in Angola, the factional strife between the MPLA and FNLA facilitates their work.

In the feud atmosphere now reigning in the country, with undisciplined troops and possibly provocateurs setting off clashes that lead to ever greater retaliation, it is quite possible that the factional warfare could get completely out of control, as the MPLA, FNLA, and UNITA are forced to commit more and more of their forces to the fratricidal struggle. Even if the leaders of the nationalist groups do not intend to plunge the country into civil war, such a danger is acute.

At a news conference in Paris, cited in the April 25 *Marchés Tropicaux*, UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi pointed out, "If Angola enters on the road to civil war, it will not be won by any of the Angolan liberation movements, but by outside powers who will intervene in the conflict in our country in order to plunder its wealth."

The Prizes: Oil, Coffee, Diamonds

For the imperialist interests, the stakes in Angola are attractive. Its vast economic potential, probably the greatest of any African country south of the Sahara (with the exception of South Africa), has barely been tapped.

Angola is the second most important coffee grower in Africa and the third largest in the world, producing more than 200,000 tons a year, much of it exported to the United States. Most of the robusta coffee is grown on white-owned plantations in the northern part of the country. Angola also exports raw cotton and sisal. Yet only about 2 percent of the country's vast land area is under active agricultural exploitation.

Angola is a treasure house of oil and minerals. Because of the weakness of

Portuguese imperialism, which lacked the necessary capital to set up adequate mining ventures, much of this sector fell into the hands of other imperialist interests.

The principal diamond fields are exploited by the Companhia de Diamantes de Angola (Diamang), which is controlled by De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd. (a subsidiary of the Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa) together with Belgian and American interests. Before the Lisbon coup in April 1974, the Portuguese administration in Angola required a 50 percent share of the diamond profits. In 1972, Angola produced 2,155,057 carats. Extensive diamond prospecting rights were recently granted for the offshore area between Lobito and the Namibia (South-West Africa) border.

The capital for the exploitation of the iron ore deposits in the Cassinga area, estimated at 1 billion tons, and for the railway from there to Moçamedes port, was invested by the Portuguese government, as well as by the West German Krupp steel empire and the Companhia Mineira do Lobito. Iron ore exports average 7 million tons a year.

Other mineral products from Angola include manganese, phosphate, copper, beryl, kaolin, granite, marble, sea salt, asphalt rock, and gypsum. Since the country has been very little prospected, it is probable that it has significant deposits of other valuable minerals.

From the imperialist viewpoint, Angola's most important asset at this time is its oil. The first oil company to cash in on Angola's petroleum deposits was the Belgian Petrofina (Compagnie Financière Belge des Pétales), which began production in 1955. In 1957 it turned over a third of its shares to the Portuguese administration in Angola, forming Petrangol.

The most important oil fields so far are those under exploitation by Gulf Oil in Cabinda. With a production of about 10 million tons a year, the Cabindan fields now rank Angola as the fourth largest oil producer in Africa, after Libya, Algeria, and Nigeria. It is estimated that the oil deposits in Cabinda could produce between 100 million and 150 million tons by the turn of the century.

A number of other companies are exploring the area off the coast of Angola proper, including the U.S. companies Occidental and Exxon, and the French Total. At Santo António do Zaire in northern Angola, there are thirty-three wells under exploration or in production. In November, it was reported that the U.S.-controlled Texaco Petróleo de Angola had made a major oil discovery near Santo António do Zaire. Although Texaco did not confirm how extensive the find was, the reserves were estimated by other sources to be as high as ten times those of Cabinda.

In May, the coalition regime signed a

contract with Texaco for the production of oil from its concession area.

The regimes in the countries bordering on Angola also have an interest in the outcome of the struggle there.

The Mobutu regime in Zaïre, despite its



MOBUTU: Eyeing Cabindan oil fields?

denials, may very well have an eye on the Cabindan oil fields, as well as the Cabinda port, which could give Zaïre better access to the ocean than it now has. It also uses the Benguela railway through central Angola for the transport of its copper exports from Shaba Province (formerly Katanga). Copper sales account for three-fourths of Zaïre's foreign exchange earnings, and under the Portuguese administration in Angola about 40 percent of its copper exports were shipped along the Benguela.

On the political level, it is important to note that the Mobutu regime favors stability in Angola. It has only been a decade since the many rebellions and secessionist movements in the Congo were suppressed. Civil strife in Angola could lead to a revival of those currents within Zaïre, especially since the Bakongo in northern Angola and the Lundas and Chokwes in the north and east live on both sides of the border.

So far the Mobutu regime has backed the FNLA of Holden Roberto, which has a strong base among the Bakongo, in the hope that if Roberto comes to power his regime would be an ally. But with the entire situation in Angola now so uncertain, and with none of the groups holding a clear

superiority over the others, Kinshasa has gone along with the efforts of the Organization of African Unity to "unify" the three groups. Mobutu has also established contacts with the UNITA by allowing Savimbi to set up offices in Kinshasa, and according to Colin Legum in an article in the January-February 1975 *Problems of Communism*, he has also established contacts with the Pintó de Andrade faction of the MPLA.

Washington may try to use the Mobutu regime to influence the struggle in Angola. Aldus Donald B. Easum, secretary of state for African affairs, said in an interview published in the February 22, 1975, issue of the Tunisian weekly *Jeune Afrique*: "The United States has no plans to invade Angola militarily. We count entirely on the authorities in Zaïre to protect American citizens and interests."

Since 1962, the regime in Kinshasa has received \$376 million in loans and nearly \$50 million in military aid from the United States.

However, the subservience of the Mobutu regime to Washington may not be as abject as is assumed by some. After a purported "coup attempt" in Kinshasa, the government-controlled daily *Elima* stated editorially in its June 17 issue that "in the United States there are bandits who are masters of political assassination. . . ." A few days later the U.S. ambassador was expelled from the country. Such an anti-American posture, of course, may be purely for show.

The regime of Marien Ngouabi in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo, despite its "socialist" pronouncements, has also shown an interest in Cabindan oil and has been backing the Cabindan separatists, as well as the MPLA.

The Kaunda regime in Zambia has publicly supported all three Angola nationalist groups. Its main economic interest is in the Benguela railway, which now transports nearly all¹⁷ of Zambia's copper exports (the country's only important export) to the port of Lobito.

Zambian concern over the unrest in Angola was expressed in an article in the December 12, 1974, *Times of Zambia*. It said, "Recent reports from Angola say that since the Lisbon coup in April, workers and dockers at the port [Lobito] have been busy forming trade unions and organizing strikes.

"It is known that the question of disciplining the workers and persuading them once again to work round-the-clock shifts

17. Zambia had previously shipped about half its copper on the Benguela railway, but after the regime in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, increased its port charges, Kaunda began conveying much of the copper formerly transported through Dar es Salaam to Lobito.

will be one of the first tasks facing a black and independent government in Angola.”

Kaunda can thus be expected to back any plans that aim at an orderly transition to formal independence for Angola within the capitalist framework. But since the MPLA and UNITA no longer need Zambian sanctuary for their bases, Kaunda can now do little to directly pressure the nationalist groups.

The Cabindan Separatists

Although the Alvor accords between the nationalists and the Portuguese stress the “territorial integrity” of Angola, continued fratricidal warfare could give the Cabindan separatist forces an opening to press their own aims.

The Portuguese imperialists, at the end of the fifteenth century, claimed most of the coastal area north of Angola, including Cabinda. But they lost almost all of their “possessions” around the Congo River to their French and Belgian competitors in the mid-nineteenth century. At the 1885 Berlin Conference where the European powers carved up the African cake, Lisbon managed to hold on to Cabinda and a portion of the southern bank of the Congo River, which is now part of northern Angola.

For decades, however, Cabinda was administered separately from Angola. It is inhabited by about 80,000 Mayombes, Ngaoyas, Kakongas, Vilis, and Sundis. According to Gilbert Comte in an article in the May 16 *Le Monde*, the Cabindans have closer language and cultural ties with the peoples around Pointe-Noire, Republic of the Congo, and around Matadi, Zaïre, than with those in Angola.

It was not until 1956, shortly after oil exploration began in the area, that the Salazar regime in Lisbon placed Cabinda under the control of the Portuguese administration in Luanda. This was opposed by some Cabindans and led to the formation in 1963 of the Frente de Libertação do Enclave de Cabinda (FLEC—Cabinda Liberation Front), led by Luis Ranque Franque, a Cabindan businessman. Opposed to the FNLA and MPLA, FLEC sought a constitutional conference with Lisbon, an amnesty, and independence for Cabinda alone. It is headquartered in Pointe-Noire and probably has some influence over Cabindan refugees in Brazzaville.

As with the rivalries among the main nationalist forces in Angola, it appears that the imperialist interests may have also sought to influence the direction of the Cabindan separatist movement. In the 1960s, according to Comte, a group of Cabindans, led by Alexandre Taty, a former FNLA leader, defected to the Portuguese and formed a special military force to fight the Angolan rebels, particularly the MPLA,

which carried out a few actions in Cabinda and which openly opposed Cabindan secession.

There have been charges by the Angolan nationalists that FLEC is backed and financed by the oil companies. According to Comte, one of the FLEC leaders, Alexandre Tchoufou, was the vice-president of the French Elf-Congo oil company. But at a FLEC congress in January he was repudiated.

While Spínola was in power, he attempted to get FLEC to participate in his maneuvers against the three main liberation movements. FLEC claims that it has a June 16, 1974, telegram from Spínola inviting FLEC to Lisbon for a meeting. FLEC says it refused.

A month after Spínola's downfall, there were clashes between FLEC supporters and MPLA forces in Cabinda. Portuguese soldiers and a company of MPLA troops then moved into the enclave and occupied key installations.

Following the signing of the “unity” accords between the MPLA, FNLA, and UNITA in January, which stipulated that Cabinda would remain part of Angola, FLEC released a statement declaring that “Cabinda is a territorial entity distinct from Angola,” and that “the Cabindan people will never accept a Transitional Government installed in Luanda.”

FLEC now receives aid from the regimes in Zaïre and the Republic of the Congo, both of which have their own interests in the outcome of the Cabindan conflict. There is one FLEC training camp in the Republic of the Congo and two in Zaïre, as well as a “Voice of Cabinda” radio program broadcast from Kinshasa. FLEC has also been allowed to set up offices in Pointe-Noire and Kinshasa.¹⁸

The Brazzaville and Kinshasa regimes are playing both ends in Cabinda by backing FLEC as well as the MPLA and FNLA. According to Comte, one FNLA leader, who refused to be identified, criticized the Mobutu regime for its proposal that a “referendum” be held in Cabinda.

Mobutu had declared, according to the May 8 *República*, “Whether Cabinda remains Angolan or becomes independent, it is necessary, in either case, to organize a referendum and listen to the opinions of the Cabindans themselves.”

Mobutu left unclear the question of who would organize the “referendum.” Under the present conditions it would most likely be a farce. What the Cabindans themselves want is still unknown.

One of the reasons why the MPLA,

18. There were two factions within FLEC, one led by Franque and based in Kinshasa and the other led by Tchoufou and based in the Republic of the Congo. But since Tchoufou's repudiation at the FLEC congress, it is unclear what the present internal situation is.

FNLA, and UNITA oppose Cabindan secession is that, as Savimbi has publicly stated, it “would spark separatist movements elsewhere in Angola.” Similar considerations in other African countries led to the Organization of African Unity rejecting FLEC's request for recognition as a liberation movement.¹⁹

'Breakdown in Labor Discipline'

The wave of strikes that followed the April 25, 1974, Lisbon coup has continued.

In December, dock workers in Cabinda walked off their jobs, demanding the same wages the Luanda dockers had won through their strike actions.

The March 1975 issue of the London monthly *Africa*, after describing the Angolan economy's difficulties, noted that the economic situation “has been exacerbated by a breakdown in labour discipline. For instance, it is estimated that in the ports of Luanda, Lobito and Mocamedes there are about 60 ships waiting to be handled; the stevedores have been striking for better wages or, as one labour leader said, ‘to accelerate independence.’ The Benguela Railway . . . has also been similarly affected. The cumulative effect of all these problems has been to threaten the seven per cent real growth target that is envisaged for 1975.”

Gilbert Comte, in the May 14 *Le Monde*, reported, “After a long subservience to their employers, the workers are discovering the right to strike. Twenty-five ships paralyzed in the port of Luanda alone, and the unfinished skeletons of about a hundred buildings on which work has been interrupted since April 25 [1974], testify to the fact that they are making use of it. . . .”

Following the nationalization of all Portuguese-owned banks and insurance companies after the defeat of Spínola's March 11 coup attempt, which also affected the Angolan branches of those banks, the bank workers union in Luanda called an assembly to vote on demands for the transfer of the assets of the nationalized Angolan banks to the Angolan government and for a voice in choosing the new bank administrators.

The fighting in Angola, and more importantly the participation of the liberation organizations in the government, has given the Portuguese the opportunity to crack down on the workers movement.

On February 3, a few days after the installation of the coalition regime, the presidential council, on which all three

19. The OAU's general policy is to maintain the present borders that had been drawn by the imperialist powers and to oppose any secessionist currents in Africa. Consequently, it did not recognize the Biafran secession from Nigeria or the right of the Eritreans to self-determination against Ethiopian claims.

nationalist groups were represented, appealed to "workers and trade union organizations to suspend all their strikes until the necessary regulations and measures safeguarding the rights of the working class are passed and adopted by the Transitional Government."

Shortly after, the coalition regime passed a decree that, the February 28 *Portuguese Africa* reported, "allows the government to mobilize workers and place them under military control, discipline and jurisdiction."

The decree was then used to break the dockers' strikes at Lobito and Luanda.

Connected with the attacks on the right to strike were those on freedom of the press. Angolan newspapers were barred from printing the communiqués of any organizations other than the MPLA, FNLA, and UNITA. In addition, newspapers have been temporarily banned and journalists expelled for reporting the clashes between the nationalists.

All three of the nationalist groups, by their participation in the government, have endorsed these antilabor actions. And at least two of them, the UNITA and the MPLA, have actively sought to implement them.

The June 1975 *Africa* reported, "In January this year, Jonas Savimbi, the UNITA leader, appealed to strikers at the docks [of Lobito port] to return to work. Pointing to a Zambian journalist, he said to the dockers, 'Do you think that the people of his country can do without these goods? They are in the front line of the liberation struggle.' His words settled this dispute and traffic to Zambia flowed once again."

At a news conference in Angola in February, MPLA leader Agostinho Neto appealed to all Angola workers "to apply themselves more to their work, because now, more than ever, it is necessary to work to help the reconstruction of the country." He then added, "Striking is the defense of the worker and the worker has the right to defend himself, to show that he is against exploitation, of which he is, in most cases, a victim."

Neto continued, "It is, however, necessary that strikes are duly organized through the proper organs, in this case the unions, and not by just anybody without qualifications for this."

The Lisbon *Diário de Notícias*, which generally favors the MPLA in its news coverage, reported in the February 28 issue, "The MPLA accused UNITA of being responsible for the strike that paralyzed the harbor of Lobito. In an MPLA declaration issued in Lobito, Savimbi's movement is being accused of provoking tribal and regional disturbances. MPLA troops occupied the harbor and tried to make the workers change their minds. These workers were mostly Bailundos, on whom the MPLA

has little influence. According to press reports UNITA then sent a military unit to the waterfront, whereupon the MPLA forces withdrew."

Despite the repressive measures, Luanda



KAUNDA: Bothered by reports that Angolan workers are "busy forming trade unions."

dock workers again walked off their jobs on May 28. A few days earlier dockers with five and ten years seniority were granted 15 and 30 percent wage increases respectively. Those with less than five years seniority then demanded equal rates of pay. The May 30 *Angola Report*, a Luanda news service, reported, "The dockers union, SINTAPA, said the strike was unofficial and did not have the union's support, and called on the Government to take adequate measures."

The strikers, however, were steadfast. "The strike in the port of Luanda continues," said the June 6 *Angola Report*, "despite appeals by the dockers union, SINTAPA, for the men to go back to work and despite personal visits by ministers and senior officials who talked to the strikers. The authorities say they have paid the men everything that had been agreed on; no new claims have been presented."

On March 8, according to a Reuters dispatch, a demonstration organized by "people's committees" was held in front of the government building in Luanda to protest the law placing workers at ports and in other key industries under military discipline. Although the MPLA reportedly had considerable political influence on these "people's committees," the demonstration was not linked to the MPLA. In fact, Lopo do Nascimento, the MPLA member on

the presidential council, declared after the protest that the law was "not against the interests of the people."

Toward What Independence?

None of the major Angolan nationalist organizations, despite the "socialist" rhetoric of the MPLA and UNITA, have given any indications that they will carry out sweeping nationalizations or land reform measures or mobilize the Angolan peasants and workers to rid the country of imperialist control.

MPLA leader Agostinho Neto has often been termed a "Marxist" by bourgeois commentators as well as by the Stalinists. Replying to such a description, he said, "I dislike these classifications. I am not a Communist, I am not a Socialist, I am first of all a patriot."

Less than two weeks after the April 25, 1974, Lisbon coup, Neto provided assurances to the Portuguese settlers in Angola. On May 3 he told *Le Monde* that "after independence, the Portuguese living in Africa can remain. . . . They will not lose their economic interests and there will be no violence. If the Portuguese are afraid, it is because of the tendentious propaganda against us and perhaps also because we have not sufficiently defined our objectives for after the war."

In an interview in the April 6 *Tanzanian Sunday News*, Lopo do Nascimento of the MPLA was asked: "Is it the intention of your Movement to nationalise these [foreign economic] interests, or to hand them over to individual Angolans?"

Nascimento replied, "We call for state participation in companies which are exploiting our country's resources. We uphold the principle of development which makes it possible to transform our country's resources in such a way that there really is economic development which benefits Angolans. . . ."

"The nationalisation of enterprises is a fairly complex problem which implies having national cadres and sound knowledge of new techniques, so as to ensure that such enterprises will continue to operate properly after nationalisation. So we have set aside this possibility for now."

In discussions with a reporter for the American Maoist weekly *Guardian*, FNLA representative Mangali Tula indicated that the FNLA would carry out some kind of land reform. "How did they get the land, these people [the white plantation owners]?" Tula asked rhetorically. "They stole it. They came, they took the good lands, and sent the Africans to the bad lands. Now we are going to send the Africans back to the good land. Without necessarily throwing these big farmers and coffee plantation owners out of Angola. But we just will have

to find something else for them to do."

On the question of the imperialist interests in Angola, according to the *Guardian*, Tula was more vague. "Tula said FNLA had not yet definitely finalized its specific policies for how to deal with the foreign companies in Angola," the *Guardian* said. "This would be settled after independence."

In response to the MPLA's slogan of "people's power," Holden Roberto, according to a February 18 Agence France-Presse dispatch, said that "people's power leads to a people's dictatorship and the population of Angola, which is Christian, actively rejects Communism."

According to Tanzanian *Daily News* correspondent Iain Christie, writing in the March 27 issue, Roberto said in a radio broadcast that "within the context of our country, as you know, direct democracy is not possible."

At a news conference in southern Angola in April, FNLA Interior Minister N'gola Kabanku pledged future aid to the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO), which is fighting for independence for Namibia. However, he noted that SWAPO was functioning "illegally" in Angolan territory and should contact the authorities in Luanda to establish ties.

In an interview published in the February 22 *To The Point International*, UNITA head Jonas Savimbi explained that "we want good relations with the West and particularly with the EEC [European Economic Community]. We already have contact with some EEC countries and want to deepen these relations because we think Europe will play a moderating role in the international situation. . . . We must have free enterprise. If we took away the stimulus of profit then we would have stagnation . . . I think we should follow the example of that great African statesman, President Houphouët Boigny of the Ivory Coast."

The South African *Star Weekly*, in its May 3 issue, noted that at a news conference in Luanda Savimbi said, "Economic co-operation with South Africa is only realism, however much we may be opposed to the inhumanity and injustice of apartheid."

However, in February, Savimbi said the UNITA would be willing to aid guerrilla movements in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), South Africa, and Namibia, but would not help them open offices abroad. "If the movements want our help they must return to their own countries and fight alongside their own people."

Although all three groups at this stage appear committed to an "independent" Angola within the capitalist framework, it is still too early to make definitive predictions on the courses they will follow.

In a tumultuous situation marked by the sudden collapse of a centuries-old empire

and a steady rise of the colonial revolution, the nationalist forces may yet be pushed further than they are now willing to go. It is also possible that other, revolutionary currents can develop, either within the present organizations or outside of them.

'Active Neutrality' of the MFA

The Movimento das Forças Armadas in Lisbon has been watching the Angolan events carefully. Lt. Col. Pezazar Correia, a member of the High Council of the Revolution and a key MFA leader in Angola, has stated that Angola is discussed at all sessions of the council.

The MFA's response to the possibility of a breakdown of the Angola coalition regime was in the imperialist tradition.

"Faced with the growing danger of civil war in Angola," according to an account published in the June 9 *Los Angeles Times*, "Portugal's Supreme Revolutionary Council reportedly has taken a decision to reinforce its 24,000-strong army in the African colony."

Explaining the MFA's policy of "active neutrality" in Angola, Portuguese President Costa Gomes said, according to the June 6 *Jornal Novo*, that the Portuguese armed forces "would not hesitate to intervene" in the colony to prevent a "deterioration of the situation."

Other MFA leaders have made similar threats. "Portuguese Foreign Minister Major Ernesto Antunes," reported the April 4 *Times of Zambia*, "warned in Lusaka yesterday that Portugal would use force in Angola if the present political confrontation between MPLA and FNLA escalated." Following a visit to Angola in May, Antunes said, "To think that the pacification in the Angola case can be secured without the intervention of Portuguese troops is a Utopian scheme."

In February, Prime Minister Vasco Gonçalves said during a television broadcast that the "colonial problem" had not been resolved and that "Portuguese soldiers may have to continue dying."

In Luanda, the MFA ordered its troops to shoot any member of the nationalist groups seen fighting. A spokesman for the Portuguese high command in Luanda said June 9 that Portuguese paratroopers had stormed the strongholds of the MPLA and FNLA and seized their arms stocks. A few weeks before, according to the May 17 *South African Star Weekly*, Portuguese troops intervened against the MPLA and FNLA in Nova Lisboa.

On the question of the role of the Portuguese troops in Angola, the MPLA has made a grave error.

The May 2 *Jornal Novo* reported that Neto released a statement in which he said that the Angolan "people continue to wait for the high commissioner and the Portu-

guese troops to assume their responsibilities."

The MPLA even gave the MFA a political rationale for its armed intervention. Referring to those forces in favor of establishing a "neocolonialist regime" in Angola (i.e., those groups opposed to the MPLA), the MPLA declared in a March statement: "A victory for the imperialist forces in Angola would represent a mortal threat to the future of democracy in Portugal and will imperil peace in all of Africa. The MPLA is the only progressive movement in Angola, the only movement that will support and loyally cooperate with the progressive Portuguese forces."

The MPLA's implicit invitation to the Portuguese troops to intervene on its side in the factional struggle is a very dangerous step. It gives the imperialist troops of the MFA a "progressive" cover to move in and reverse the gains made by the Angolan liberation struggle. It politically disorients those forces in Angola and Portugal, including the Portuguese troops themselves, that are capable of countering Lisbon's policy of seeking to retain its most important interests in Angola.

Even from the MPLA's own limited factional viewpoint, the call for Portuguese intervention was very risky, as the June 9 Portuguese assault against both the FNLA and MPLA strongholds showed.

The neighboring African regimes, which have "supported" the Angolan nationalists over the years, have also shown their willingness to betray the Angolan independence struggle in exchange for a "solution" that could avert a dangerous civil war. "Portugal's decision to reinforce its army," the June 9 *Los Angeles Times* reported, "has the backing of the African leaders most directly concerned with the Angolan situation, including President Mobutu of Zaïre, President Kaunda of Zambia and President Nyerere of Tanzania."

Following a visit by Maj. Vitor Alves to Kinshasa, a joint Portuguese-Zaïre communiqué was released. The June 6 *Angola Report* stated that according to the communiqué "the Zaïre government will support all the efforts made by the Portuguese government to restore peace in Angola."

Holden Roberto said in an interview published in the June 6 *Le Monde*, "We consider the intervention of the Portuguese army as an interference in the internal affairs of Angola."

The MFA's military options in the colony are limited. Even if the MFA used the subterfuge of intervening in Angola against "neocolonialism," it is highly unlikely that Lisbon could move thousands of reinforcements back into the colony or use the army there in a massive way. If it tried, the results could be politically explosive.

On June 8 about sixty Portuguese troops in Lisbon refused to board a plane sche-

duled to transport them to Angola. A spokesman for the MFA claimed that the demonstration had been the result of drinking by the soldiers. But a few days before, three Portuguese soldiers were buried in Angola, the first to be killed there since the end of the war.

"The prospect of civil war in Angola and the political uncertainty in Portugal has created a strong impetus among the remaining Portuguese troops in the West African territory for their withdrawal to be speeded up," reported the April 26 *Manchester Guardian*.

The MFA, however, is still capable of limited intervention under the guise of "maintaining order." It is quite probable that the MFA would like the nationalist organizations to weaken each other and sow confusion, as the Portuguese troops occasionally moved in to push things in a direction most favorable to maintaining imperialist influence.

The MFA has also shown its desire to amend the Alvor accords to fit Lisbon's needs still more favorably. In an interview published in the April 24 issue of *Jornal Novo*, Minister for Interterritorial Coordination Almeida Santos noted that "an accord can always be modified by another."

During a visit to Angola, Portuguese Foreign Minister Antunes said May 13 that he was there to find "forms more adjusted to the Angolan reality, so that this period of transition should be really as we always imagined it should be—a period of transition in peace and harmony."

If the situation in Angola threatens to deteriorate beyond the MFA's ability to contain it, there is still one more option left. The June 14 London *Economist* reported that the MFA "has now warned the leaders of the three rival liberation movements that if the fighting between them does not stop it will ask the United Nations to send in peacekeeping forces."

Such a UN "peacekeeping force" would constitute nothing more than a plausible way for Lisbon's imperialist allies to move in and cripple the Angolan independence struggle in a fashion similar to that used by the imperialists in the Congo tragedy of the early 1960s. □

200 Killed in New Angola Clashes

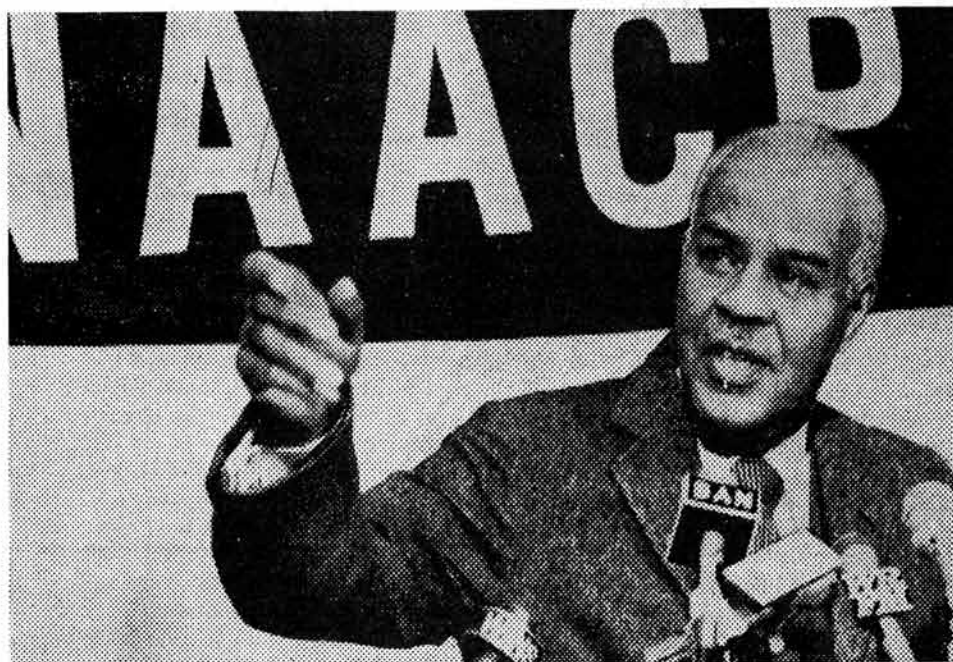
Heavy fighting between forces of the MPLA and FNLA resumed in Angola July 10, leaving an estimated 200 persons dead in the first two days of clashes. The battles were the first major armed conflicts since a cease-fire agreement was reached between the MPLA, FNLA, and UNITA in Kenya in June.

Portuguese troops and forces from the liberation movements "sought to quell the fighting," according to a July 12 Reuters dispatch. Seven Portuguese soldiers were reported wounded.

July 21, 1975

Layoffs Called 'Cutting Edge of Racism'

NAACP Vows Fight to Defend Black Job Gains



NAACP LEADER WILKINS: No "preferential firing."

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the largest and oldest civil-rights organization in the United States, met an important challenge at its national convention in Washington, D.C., June 30-July 4.

The 3,558 delegates, nearly all Blacks, voted to reaffirm the organization's stand against the discriminatory layoffs that are hitting Blacks and other minority workers in the current depression. This stand was adopted despite a concerted effort by officials of the AFL-CIO, the American trade-union federation, to force a reversal.

The question of layoffs is one of the most crucial issues facing the Black community today. As NAACP Labor Director Herbert Hill put it, "For Black workers, and indeed for the entire Black community, the civil-rights issue now is the job issue." He noted that discriminatory layoffs "are the cutting edge of the new racism."

The background of the dispute between the NAACP and the AFL-CIO officials goes back to the Black struggle of the 1960s. This movement won passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawing job discrimination on the basis of race or sex. Using this law, Black workers in many industries were able, with the help of the NAACP, to win preferential hiring and job advancement programs, generally called "affirmative action" plans.

Today employers are firing many workers hired under the affirmative-action plans, thus wiping out gains made by the Black struggle. The employers have been aided in this by the position of most unions, which has been to uphold strict seniority in the face of the layoffs—that is, "last hired, first fired," which means Blacks and women get fired.

NAACP Executive Director Roy Wilkins and other leaders of the organization have fought for the position that union seniority provisions should be modified in the case of large-scale layoffs so that the percentage of Black and women workers hired under affirmative-action plans remains the same after the layoffs.

The other major issue discussed at the convention was school desegregation. The NAACP has just launched the most sweeping school desegregation suit ever filed, challenging racial segregation in thirty-three Northern and Western states.

Maceo Dixon of the National Student Coalition Against Racism addressed a workshop of 300 young people at the convention; and NAACP youth from seven cities decided to form new chapters of NSCAR. The student group worked with the NAACP to build the May 17 march of 15,000 in answer to the racist forces in Boston that have been trying to prevent school desegregation there. □