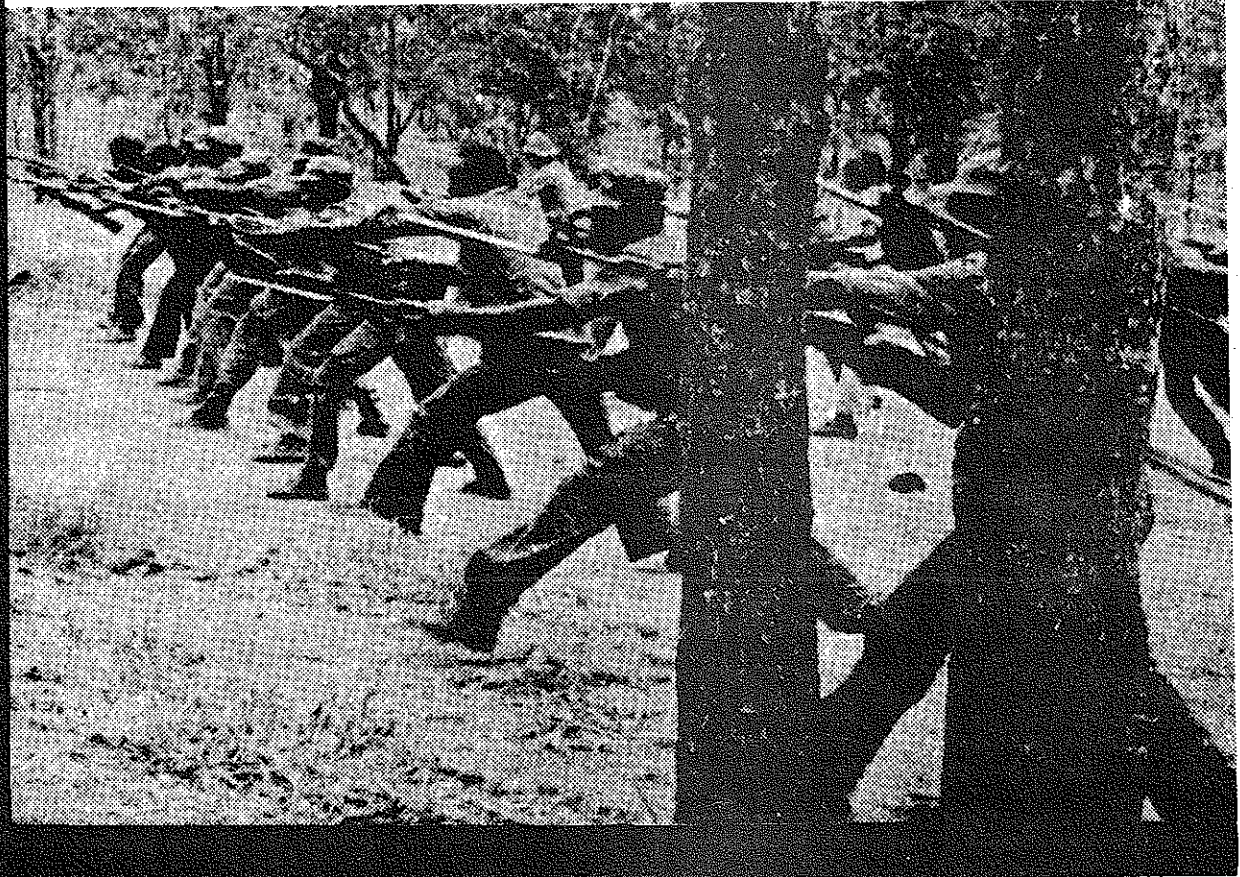


T. Whelan

AFRICA



THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES !



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in struggle

africa in struggle

editorial

Africa in Struggle continues to offer its pages as a platform for discussion amongst all African militants concerned with the Socialist Revolution in Africa. Specifically, the growing crisis in Southern Africa demands the closest attention as the forces of colonial and imperialist reaction are confronted more and more vigorously by those of worker and peasant liberation struggles.

This issue of the journal begins with an outline of the explosive situation in Zimbabwe and our position on the liberation struggle. Of critical concern today for all those in solidarity with that struggle is to build an active opposition to the growing threat of imperialist intervention and in unconditional support for those Zimbabweans fighting racism and imperialism.

As we go to press the second All-Nigeria Socialists' Conference is due to meet in Kano. We feel that, together with the struggle for socialism in South Africa, the growing resistance in Nigeria holds tremendous importance for the future of the socialist revolution in Africa. We send our fraternal greetings to all those fighting for a socialist Nigeria. We publish the Zaria Declaration, adopted by the first conference in 1977, which is the most coherent programme yet elaborated for socialism in Nigeria.

An interview with an anonymous South African comrade provides an interesting view of recent developments in South Africa. We are in sharp disagreement, however, with the comrade on two points — that the Bantustan leaders are of no consequence, and that the ANC is about to undergo a fundamental process of regeneration. Unfortunately, Buthelezi does retain an ability to mobilise reactionary sentiment. And anyone who waits for the

ANC to reform itself will wait for a long time. We feel, further, that the comrade's views on the women question in South Africa warrant substantial and critical comment.

The squatters' movement in South Africa is another aspect of the growing resistance to Apartheid. Although the movement has a long history, the short article argues that its current form has qualitative aspects which situate it clearly within the new wave of resistance and the current political and economic crises facing the Botha regime.

The ethnic question in Africa is one of the unresolved problems of the African revolution. We publish, in this edition of A.I.S., a contribution by C. Gabriel to the debate on that issue. The victory of the Angolan people over imperialism raised hopes that the MPLA would be able to break decisively the grip of imperialism and begin the process of socialist transformation. Now, three years later, these hopes appear illusory. Imperialist economic interests remain intact, indeed strengthened. Whilst Neto embraces Mobutu, socialist opponents of the MPLA leadership populate his jails.

The article by Jose Maia on these years, and focussing on the Nitista faction in the MPLA, illuminates both the MPLA leadership's failings and the inadequacies of the opposition to it.

The article on Kaunda's Zambia looks at the impasse into which neo-colonial politics is leading the country. The lessons learned apply far beyond the borders of Zambia.

The Editors

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ZIMBABWE : CRISIS DEEPENS

The recent series of barbaric raids by Rhodesian forces against Patriotic Front camps in Mozambique and Zambia is threatening to throw imperialist plans for Zimbabwe awry. For although Anglo-US strategy requires a relatively strong, stable Smith regime to hand over state power to an equally strong, stable neo-colonial regime, the optimum route for Owen and Vance is via the controllable "soft" option of diplomacy and constitutional transfer. Smith's crude militarist approach, designed to forestall the guerilla summer offensive and to blast at least the Nkomo leadership into collaborating in the internal settlement, threatens to force on imperialism the much more fraught, less controllable and unpredictable course of military intervention.

Smith's actions strengthen the hands of those ZANU and ZAPU militants opposed to any concessions to white privileges, constitutional sell-outs or imperialist interests. They make it more difficult for the bureaucratic leaderships to hold back or deflect militant demands which pose for the nature and direction of the struggle a very different course from the neo-colonisation of Zimbabwe. Nkomo would now find it rather more difficult to sell to ZAPU militants a repeat of his treacherous secret talks with Smith in August. Further, it makes it that much more difficult for Owen and Vance to sell to the PF an all party conference involving Smith.

The most serious spectre facing imperialism is a generalised Southern African conflict. An involvement by South Africa on the side of Smith, by the Cubans on the side of the PF, by the Mozambicans in self-defence, would see the Anglo-American strategy in ruins. Owen's military option would then present itself, for such a generalised conflict throws imperialist interests open to assault by independent mass actions to end exploitation and oppression.

Owen has already asserted the willingness and preparedness of the British government to provide a large British armed contingent to lead a United Nations "peace-keeping" force to restore and maintain law and order and to adopt a "humanitarian" role in Zimbabwe. The Nigerian government has committed itself to assist in this endeavour. We know only too well what a UN force did in the Congo in the early 1960s or in Lebanon today. We know, too, as in the recent instances of

French military intervention in Zaire, that faced by a critical situation, imperialism is capable of acting unilaterally and circumventing the UN altogether. The imminent collapse of the Smith regime and the threat of a generalised conflict would present such a crisis.

Smith may see some diplomatic or military advantage in these cross-border attacks, but he has found no way to combat the struggle within the country. Virtually the whole country up to the outskirts of the main towns is a "no go" area. And even in the urban areas, guerilla actions, mass unrest and strikes are increasing significantly. Internally, the country is in a political quagmire, the internal settlement is floundering and there have been mass desertions from Muzorewa's political base to the liberation movement. The paper changes of the race laws are seen for the fraud they are.

In Britain, the Rhodesia crisis poses particular problems. Apart from the threat of imperialist military intervention orchestrated from London, it provides fuel for the racist and fascist fires. These racist and fascist forces have deep links with white Southern Africa, and racist media coverage of events there provide easy propaganda advantages for them. Racist films like "The Wild Geese", set in Southern Africa, glorify the hired killers of the international mercenary fraternity, and together with a carefully orchestrated press campaign to legitimise military intervention, manipulate and prepare British public opinion for the physical destruction of the liberation struggle of the Zimbabwean people.

The immigration into Britain by thousands of white Rhodesians (unimpeded by the racial immigration laws) give the fascist organisations a new pool of easy recruits. The examples of the anti-left violence in France and Portugal by returning colonials from Algeria and Angola carry a clear warning.

A vigorous campaign against British and any other foreign military intervention in Zimbabwe, against racist bias in the media coverage of events there and in solidarity with the anti-imperialist struggle are central and immediate necessities for socialist militants in Britain.

A. Dentin



Ian Smith takes target practice at World Pistol Shooting Championships in Salsbury

NIGERIA

is divided into exploiting classes and the exploited people. The exploiting classes are foreign capitalists, Nigerian capitalists, merchants, semi-feudal so-called natural rulers and elites, reactionary elements within the military and the bureaucracy. The exploited people are workers and peasants as well as others who live only by their toil. We, the people, will only liberate ourselves from our class oppressors and exploiters through a revolutionary transformation of our society into a scientific socialist and united country.

Immediate Goal:

In order to march to democracy and terminate exploitation of the people, we have to struggle to defeat imperialism and build a people's democratic state. Imperialism can only be defeated when the workers and peasants are in the vanguard of the national struggle for independence, democracy, progress and justice, and are guided by scientific socialist theory. In this struggle, however, patriotic chiefs, manufacturers, enlightened bureaucrats and members of the intelligentsia are potential allies of the masses to be mobilised.

Whilst imperialism is the principal exploiter and enemy of the people, we cannot ignore its internal collaborators and hired agents who exist in the merchant, capitalist, bureaucratic, feudal, academic, military and other strata. Rather than extend and intensify democracy, these elements are constantly redefining their techniques of terrorising the masses in order to consolidate their class hegemony. The decrees on strikes, prices, rents, students' militancy and indigenisation are examples of repression and exploitation of us.

In our common struggle against our oppressors, the socialists must rally all potential allies that can be united with. The defeat of neo-colonialism and fascism by the people will lead to the establishment of a people's democratic state. In that state:

i) the control of the organs of state power shall be in the hands of workers and peasants in collaboration with all progressive elements.

ii) the major objective of the state shall be to smash monopoly capital and neo-colonialism in all their forms.

iii) the economy shall develop in a non-exploitative, consciously planned direction within which collective and co-operative productive effort will be rewarded by a higher standard of living for all who work.

iv) a programme genuinely to uplift the standard of life of all the people will be launched.

v) all remnants of autocratic or arbitrary rule shall be abolished.

vi) solidarity with anti-apartheid and liberation movements in Southern Africa will be intensified.

General Obasanjo has at last announced the lifting of the 'ban on politics' in Nigeria. At the same time he has dropped many hints that the army will be waiting in the wings to intervene, should developments not please him. It is clear that this new democracy will be hedged around with all sorts of restrictions. Nevertheless, the opportunities for Nigerian socialists to fight for their politics will be greatly increased. What strategy they adopt must be of universal concern to revolutionaries; for Nigeria is, together with South Africa, the most economically and politically significant area of the entire continent.

"Africa in Struggle" offers itself as a platform to all Nigerian socialists in the emerging discussion on the strategy of the Nigerian revolution. As a first step towards that we publish below 'The ZARIA DECLARATION', which was drawn up by the All Nigeria Socialist Conference of 1977. Although we have many differences with the approach of this document, we consider that it is of great importance to study and discuss it, for it represents the most advanced analysis and political strategy yet elaborated by Nigerian Socialists, and has the support of a vast number of socialist, cultural, women's, youth and trade union organisations.

Forward to the Nigerian Socialist Revolution!

A.I.S.

ALL-NIGERIA SOCIALIST CONFERENCE 1977

We have pleasure in forwarding to your press *The Zaria Declaration* adopted by the All-Nigeria Socialists Conference, 1977, which took place at Ahmadu Bello University on July 29, 30 and 31 1977, as a press release. The Declaration constitutes a summary of the Conference's work.

Baba Omojola
(Secretary for the Preparatory Committee)

THE ZARIA DECLARATION

The All-Nigeria Socialists Conference 1977, sponsored by the Nigerian Patriotic Front and hosted by the Movement for Progressive Nigeria, Zaria, convened at Ahmadu Bello University on 29th and 30th July 1977.

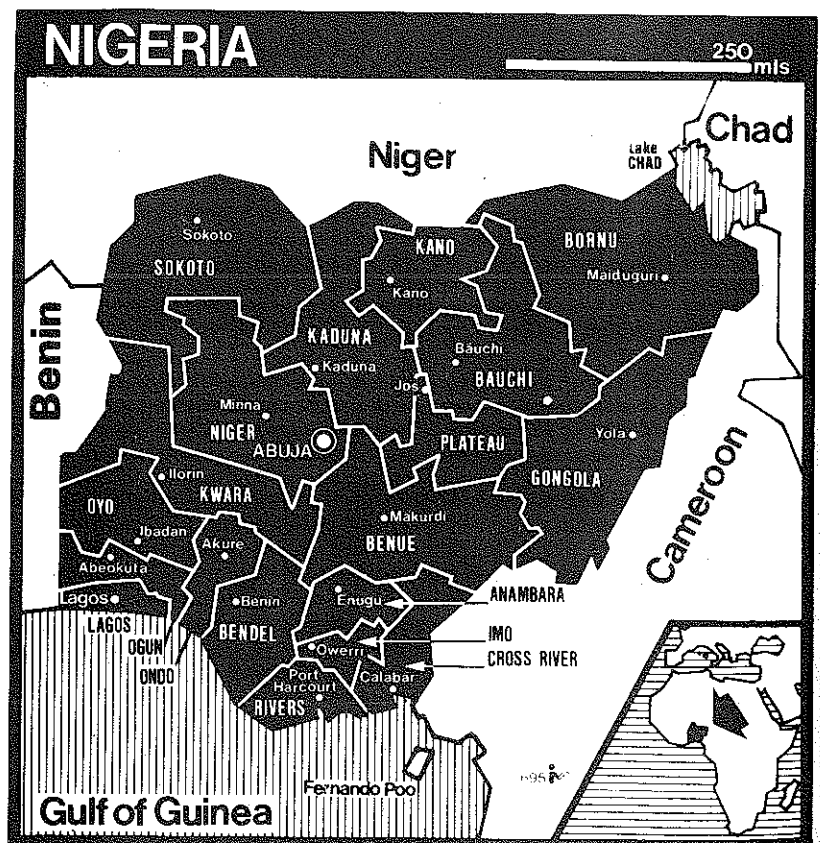
It was attended by socialists from all the states of Nigeria and delegates from several people's, trade union and peasants organisations. The Conference was convened in a situation of great national expectations for a return to civil rule marked by mass aspirations for a democratic, just, progressive and non-exploitative regime. The Conference was held in an atmosphere of conviviality, frank debate and consensus on the major national issues facing the country.

The Conference debated papers on the present political situation in the country and arrived at guidelines for its work and the work of socialist militants and mass leaders in the struggle for a socialist and democratic Nigeria.

The Conference appointed three Commissions to examine political, Economic and Social questions of the Nigerian society and its advance guard movement. The Reports of the commissions were considered and their accepted Resolutions constitute the basis for the *Zaria Declaration*. The following is the declaration:

THE CHARACTER OF THE COUNTRY

The Nigerian society is a neo-colonial, semi-feudal, underdeveloped economy going the capitalist way. The society



POPULATION: 76.6m (1976 estimate)
 RATE OF POPULATION GROWTH: 2.5%
 NUMBER OF STATES: 19
 GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT: N8,000m. (Estimate).
 CURRENCY: Naira (N) divided into 100 kobo.
 \$1 = N0.64
 £1 = N1.20
 PER CAPITA INCOME: N120 (Estimate).

EXTERNAL TRADE (million nairas).

	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976*
Exports	1,280.8	1,399.1	2,278.0	5,762.0	5,246.0	6,510*
Imports	1,078.9	995.0	1,224.0	1,715.0	3,629	5,020*
Trade Balance	+214.5	+417.1	+1,054.0	+4,047.0	+1,617.0	+1,490

PRINCIPAL EXPORTS (million nairas)

	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976*
Crude Petroleum	953.0	1,157.0	1,849.3	5,317.0	3,856.0	5,120*
Cocoa Beans	143.1	101.1	112.0	149.0	230.0	208.8*
Cocoa products	10.4	12.2	16.0	0.8	14.0	—
Groundnuts	25.0	19.1	44.0	6.6	—	—
Groundnut oil and cake	19.6	16.8	23.0	9.8	8.0	4.0*
Palm kernels	25.9	15.7	18.0	42.9	10.8	24.0*
Palm kernel oil	6.2	5.6	10.0	—	—	—
Palm oil	3.4	0.2	—	—	—	—
Rubber	12.4	7.4	20.0	37.6	7.8	13.6*
Cotton	11.1	0.6	5.0	—	—	—
Timber and plywood	7.0	8.0	14.0	11.5	4.8	1.4*
Tin metal	24.8	19.1	15.0	23.1	18.2	12.5*
Total exports	1,078.9	995.0	2,278.0	5,672.0	4,270.0	5,784*

2. THE CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION

Conference acknowledged the extent and intensity of socialist contributions to the political debates raging in Nigeria now, in spite of all obstacles.

Conference reminds the nation that only socialism can solve the contradictions facing our people.

Conference notes with satisfaction the rising level of political consciousness among our people as shown by their support for the Southern Africa Relief Fund and their revolutionary demands seen on the pages of newspapers, etc.

In the current situation we call on the working class to rally and wage a struggle for the emergence of a democratic, united, principled, militant and class-conscious labour movement, able and willing to fulfil its historical mission of self-emancipation. Conference considered the problems of the peasantry, the principal ally of the working class, and most neglected majority, as wanting of urgent and fundamental solution. The overall importance of the peasantry in the economy and society is of such magnitude that the social organisations among them deserve maximum assistance and service by socialist militants and youths.

Conference considered exhaustively the present state of industrial relations in the country, was pained by government proscriptions, restrictions, bans, interventions and controls of the trade unions contrary to the International Labour Code to which this country is a party.

Conference observed that government interference in the trade union movement has not resolved the intractable economic problems faced by the country but has aggravated the economic plight of the workers.

Conference calls on the working class and their allies among the progressive classes and mass organisations to struggle for an abrogation of all the decrees, orders and prohibitions that restrict their trade union rights to organise, form fronts, agitate for wage increases and go on strike.

Conference denounced the present trade union policy of the government as a bankrupt, systematic move to demoralise, coerce, and destabilise the working class, and satisfy the multinationals, a move which we shall defeat. To this effect Conference accepts that this struggle for trade union freedom must be undertaken as an economic, social and political struggle in the interest of the entire working class.

Conference notes with satisfaction that Nigerian patriots have joined in our persistent call on the Federal Military Government to abrogate all decrees aimed at wrecking the trade union movement.

3. THE NEW ECONOMY

Based upon an analysis of the problems faced by the vast majority of the Nigerian people, Conference concluded that:

i) The Present Economic System

In spite of the illusions of oil boom and "mixed economy", Nigeria persists as a basically neo-colonialist, capitalist economy that is dependent on the international capitalist system. This has expanded the intensive exploitation of the masses by both foreign and native capitalists.

The annual transfer of our national economic surplus by the imperialist owners of foreign monopoly capital has generated and sustained the underdevelopment of our country.

The symptoms of this social backwardness include acute mass poverty, open starvation, rising prices, growing inequality, pervasive unemployment, etc. These are the collective tragedies of the centuries of imperialist and capitalist plundering of Nigeria, since the days of the trans-atlantic slave trade.

ii) The Trend

An alarming current trend of our national economy is the acute permanent shortage of essential goods and services which result directly from the basic fact that the distortions of the existing dependent capitalist economy constitutes the most important barriers to production for needs rather than for profits. The federal government plans to go borrowing abroad while at the same time making grants to the British Commonwealth and other imperialist institutions, in addition to allowing transnational companies to transfer super-profits from Nigeria to Europe, Japan, USA, etc. The situation has deteriorated so badly that Nigeria, although a largely agricultural country, is now a net importer of food products, the "Operation Feed the Nation" notwithstanding.

A closely related problem is that the current strategy of industrialisation through import-substitution for technological transfer has only resulted in the mindless accumulation of inappropriate luxuries and domestic gadgets with resultant sabotaging of the development of a technological culture. Indigenisation is basically irrelevant to these manifestations of social stagnation.

iii) Solutions

For the rapid elimination of these serious problems, Nigeria should rapidly disengage from the international capitalist system by diverting its capital import, and aid relations from imperialist countries to socialist and progressive third world countries. This requires the immediate nationalisation with workers' management of all foreign enterprises; drastic co-operativisation of land to arrest agricultural stagnation; termination of over-dependence on foreign technology within a framework of a national technological revolution; a people's struggle to eliminate all forms of exploitation and social injustice; termination of irrational waste and of restoration of economic power to the masses of workers, peasants, youths, petty artisans, progressive professional people, etc., who should dominate the institutions of building a socialist economy as the basic organisational principle of a New People's Economy in Nigeria.

iv) Social Organisation

- The Conference considered in detail the issue of social organisation and mass mobilisation for effecting the successful outcome of the people's struggle for a socialist society and decided that a fighting programme towards the total emancipation of the oppressed classes in Nigeria be evolved, guided by the science of revolutionary struggle, Marxism.
- The Conference accepted that all people's organisations and oppressed strata of the population must be organisationally strengthened in order to advance the struggle.
- In particular the Conference noted with satisfaction the presence of several representatives of women's organisations at our deliberations. Conference supports the just demands of Nigerian women for a representation on such bodies as the Constitution Drafting Committee and the Constituent Assembly. The government should make it its duty to facilitate the democratic election of progressive women into the Constituent Assembly.
- Conference welcomed our women to participate in all socialist educational programmes.
- Conference acknowledged that the people's aims will not be realised unless we possess and control our own social institutions.

Therefore Conference accepted that our struggles cannot be won without a socialist political party of the working class and peasants. The organisation of such a party as soon as the ban on political activities is lifted, is the cardinal task of all Nigerian socialists.

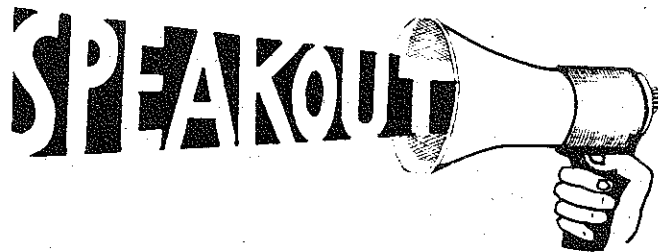
(f) Conference resolved to set up a National Committee for the Propagation of Scientific Socialism among the masses. This Committee along with the Sponsors of All-Nigeria Socialists Conference among others, shall undertake to promote the spread of the socialist movement on all fronts and to expand the growth of militant trade unions, youth bodies and peasant movements throughout Nigeria; through the mass media, in factories, farms and the classrooms, etc.

SUMMARY

IN SUMMARY THIS CONFERENCE OF SOCIALISTS NOTED WITH SATISFACTION THE DIALECTICALLY ADVANCING LEVEL OF OUR PEOPLE'S PROTRACTED STRUGGLES AGAINST IGNORANCE, DEGRADATION, SUPERSTITION, FEUDALISM, WARS, IMPERIALISM; AND FOR TRUE INDEPENDENCE; AGAINST AUTOCRACY AND FASCISM, FOR DEMOCRACY; AGAINST NATIONAL BACKWARDNESS, FOR PROGRESS; AGAINST EXPLOITATION, FOR EMANCIPATION. WE CALL ON THE PEOPLE TO INTENSIFY AND PERSEVERE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR THE OVERTHROW OF CAPITALISM AND FEUDALISM AND FOR THE SETTING UP OF A PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC STATE LEADING TO A SOCIALIST NIGERIA. WE REAFFIRM OUR FAITH IN OUR PEOPLE, AND PLEDGE OUR COMMITMENT TO A UNITED FRONT OF ALL OUR FORCES, IN OUR FORWARD MARCH TO A VICTORIOUS STRUGGLE.
LONG LIVE A UNITED NIGERIA!
LONG LIVE THE AFRICAN PEOPLES REVOLUTION!!
VICTORY IS CERTAIN!!!

MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE

ORGANISATIONS	LOCATION	
Patriotic Youth Movement	Ibadan	Umaru Usman Sola Akinnuli
Movement for Progressive Nigeria	Zaria	M. Kwangwai Moh. Sokoto
New Age Club	Maiduguri	Rayat Bomer Lawal Kibadu
Nigeria Patriotic Front	Benin	J. I. Okenebor Chief Ajise
Nipafro	Lagos	Tunji Osubu Yinka Fayokun
Association of Nigerian Patriotic Writers and Artists	Lagos	Aka Bashorun Abdullahi Aliuu
Nigerian Socialist Movement	Ibadan	Dr. Akin Ojo Laoye Sanda
Nigerian Solidarity Youth Council	Lagos	Armstrong Ogbonna Ayuba Khadzai
Young Toilers Brigades	Lagos	O. E. D. Essien Mamman Yaro
Nigerian Council of National Awareness	Lagos	Niyi Onionoro Dr. Kumolu Johnson
Bill of Rights Movement	Lagos	Jare Isafiade A. Gambo
Abewa Women's Cultural Association	Kano	B. R. Audu B. R. Gabari
Council for Social Justice	Ilorin	M. Akpan T. Adegbohunge
Nigeria Afro-Asian Solidarity Organisation	Lagos	Ranmi Osobu Tanko Yakasai
Cross River Youth Association	Calabar	D. T. Inyang E. E. Ekpo
Nigerian Tenants Association	Lagos	Adenola Ajayi B. S. Akagha
Nigerian Academy of Arts, Sciences and Technology	Ibadan	Comrade Ola Oni Dr. Bade Onimode
Franz Fanon Research Institute	Enugu	Professor I. Nzimio Dr. M. E. Obasi
Society for Progress	Lagos	Olu Adebayo Pius Oleghe
Sa'ad Zungur Memorial Schools	Jos	Lawal Kibadu Dr. I. J. Amony
Nigeria Committee for South Africa	Sokoto	Hilary Arinze Prof. C. Ikoku Alhaji Yarima Bale
JOURNALS		
Militants	Various	Funso Akingbade
African Red Family	London	R. Remy
Mass Line	Kano	J. Alli Danko
Nigerascope	Nsukka	Professor Obiechina " Chinua Achebe
Lagoon Echo	Lagos	Ebenezer Babatope
Nigerian Vanguard	Ibadan	Dr. Eskor Toyo
Theory and Practice	Ibadan	Dr. Omafume Onoge
FRONTS		
Nigerian-Soviet Friendship and Cultural Association	Lagos	Dr. Odugu Egbuna
Nigeria-Cuba Friendship Society	Lagos	Dr. E. I. Obeke
Nigeria-Angola Friendship Association	Lagos	Dr. Sode Okoh
Nigeria-Korea Peoples Friendship Society	Lagos	S. G. Ikoku
Nigeria-GDR Friendship Society	Lagos	Dr. M. E. Kolagbodi
The trade union movement	Lagos	M. A. O. Imoudi (no. 1)
	Woods	Obi Onwuemene
	Air	Hudson Momodu
	Rails	Pascal Beyfu
	Works	Chi Ibegwura
	Docks	Jonas Abam
All-Nigeria Socialists	Zaria	Mahmudukur Sidi A. Sirajo Dr. C. Anozie Dr. E. Ohiaeri T. O. Ananaba E. Madunagu
MPD SECRETARIAT	Kano	Baba Oluwide M. Jibrilla Dr. M. T. Liman Dr. A. Kura M. Abubakar



interview with South African comrade

Below we print extracts from an interview with a South African comrade, K, who has been active for many years in the struggle against Apartheid. For obvious reasons, the comrade's identity has to remain a secret. We disagree with many of the comrade's views, but we publish them as a contribution to the debate on revolutionary strategy in South Africa.

A. i. S.: What have been the major changes in South Africa since the Soweto uprising?

K: That you could say in one word or one phrase. Increased repression from the side of the government. From the side of the people, increased awareness of their own potency. But rather an ambivalent kind of potency. They are aware they had a certain power. But above all, they are reassured that they had within them this ability to respond when attacked in the way they had been attacked.

It had a particularly good effect on the Black Consciousness movement, which was a fragmented movement. It had emerged in different parts of South Africa in different forms. So in 1976 a dozen or so Black Consciousness movements existed. 1976 invoked a sense of urgency. By 1977 we had the emergence of a new united front, far stronger than in the past. The attitude to white South Africa changed. The attitude of 'no whites on Black platforms' was challenged. A far more realistic, less emotional attitude to whites emerged. There was also a new thinking on economic policy. Before 1976, the economic approach was very confused. One wasn't sure what sort of economic orientation Black Consciousness people had in mind. After 1976, people were forced to look at themselves frankly and spell out what kind of orientation they had in mind.

The revulsion toward the government had increased to such proportions as to eliminate all falterings when dealing with government Black organisation (i.e. Bantustans). The line between those inside and outside of the system became absolutely distinct.

Soweto shocked the government because the students were pre-university students. They had learned to control the pre-university group. Now Soweto was far too difficult to control. They realised Black Consciousness was not as isolated in its impact as they had thought it to be. When they saw proof of its proliferation, their attitude became far more repressive.

A. i. S.: Is it true that in Natal, where you were at the time, Buthelezi was able to use Inkatha to prevent the struggle developing?

K: This is quite untrue. The homeland leaders lost all credibility in 1976. Initially, you didn't have a countrywide revolution, but a localised attack — the Soweto schoolchildren having the Afrikaans language imposed on their syllabus. So it was a problem for Transvaal youth. Natal did not face that problem. So Natal was taken unawares.

But, in Durban, a mass meeting was held at Curries fountain, and 40,000 leaflets distributed. In response to what happened in Natal, the government banned all open air meetings. Otherwise there would have been a mass demonstration in Durban. The only body of University students who acted violently were in the University of Zululand. One of the major trials of 1976 was of 22 students in Natal. There were marches in Natal, of High School kids. There was a very remarkable response in Natal.

A. i. S.: What is your assessment of the state of trade union activity in South Africa?

K: There is so-called trade union activity, but it is not very satisfactory. I would be very hesitant to call it trade union activity. This is related to the problem of how do you get an above ground political activity. In South Africa, you don't need to conscientise people. What the people need is an opportunity to react meaningfully against the whole Apartheid system. A question of using a moment to strike effectively. The question of trade unions is not important in itself. If you cannot organise above ground, you cannot have [real] trade unions either.

A. i. S.: What has been the role of the ANC and PAC in the recent period?

K: The average South African knows little of their activities except when cases come up in law courts. People are aware of the leaflettings and bucket bombs. On the whole they are appalled that people are prepared to risk seven to ten years of freedom for that kind of exercise, but also moved that people are prepared to give their lives in that kind of way. They are appalled by organisations which seem to think that that kind of activity is worth that kind of sacrifice. The average South African becomes conscious of the ANC far more in terms of its failures than its successes.

Yet it must be added that the ANC is a very important organisation in the minds of Black South Africans. The ANC will emerge strongest because of its Russian backers.

The long-termers [long term political prisoners] are starting to come off Robben Island. Some of them are very impressive people. They are very committed to the ANC. Unless I have been deluded, I think the ANC is in for change and dramatic reform.

A. i. S.: And the PAC?

K: The PAC has a standing in South Africa. In the Black Consciousness Movement, both Mandela and Sobukwe are respected. The ANC and the PAC are both seen as liberatory movements. There are no hangovers, in the new, liberatory consciousness, about conflicts between the ANC and PAC.

A. i. S.: How do you see the role of Women in the South African struggle?

K: Black women never responded to western feminism. It is difficult for them to find common cause with white women but easy to find common cause with Black men. Take the Black Womens Federation National Conference in 1976. Many resolutions were passed, but not a single one talked specifically about women's rights. They talked about human beings having equal rights. Great concern was shown for the legal disabilities of African women, but it is African women, not all women.

A. i. S.: How does the migratory labour system affect the situation of women workers?

K: It makes women more sensitive to the overall race problem. A woman working in the city has to leave her kids with her mother in the Bantustans. This does create an affinity and interdependence between urban and rural women. But it increases awareness of the racial situation.

South Africa

Crossroads — the elimination of a people

P.W. BOTHA's succession to the South African premiership will mean little to the people of Crossroads, the shanty town outside Cape Town. If anything things will get worse since Botha is known as a hardliner on the squatting issue.



With the growth of secondary industries, especially in the long boom which followed World War II, and the increase in multinational operations in South Africa, the needs of capitalism began to change. Capitalism, traditionally, needs a stable work force with relative freedom of movement. This need — expressed politically through the Progressive Party — came up against the Apartheid superstructure which had become the ruling ideology of the state. Parliament continued to pass legislation to control the influx of blacks into the urban areas; the economics of industrial capital continued to draw tens of thousands of workers into the towns. The specially constructed townships like Soweto in the Rand and Langa in the Cape, where the authorities could exercise social, police and military control, could not contain the new arrivals. Hence the growth of the squatter townships.

These townships constitute a double threat to the apartheid regime. Not only do their very existence manifest an act of defiance against the white-made laws but, as these townships are largely 'auto-administered' they become schools where the workers quickly learn the value of self-organisation and the strength which grows from it. What the government fears above all is a whole series of 'Sowetos' under conditions they cannot so easily control.

Hence the bulldozers.

'Ndabeni

WHY THE BULLDOZERS?

The threatened destruction of Crossroads, the black squatter township in the dreary Cape Flats, is not simply a deliberate sadistic act on the part of the white ruling class. In a way it is symbolic of the contradictions confronting South African capitalism, as we will attempt to outline below.

Crossroads is only the latest of a number of squatter settlements threatened with doom by bulldozer. In the winter of 1977 12,000 black people lost their homes in the squatter townships of Modderdam and Werkgenot (which, ironically, can be translated 'Joy through Labour') near Cape Town. A further 20,000 were rendered homeless by bulldozer in Unibel in January of this year. Similar 'clearance of illegals' took place in the Johannesburg township of Alexandra and in Natal, Zulu squatters in 'white' areas have been given notice to move. The London-based Africa Bureau estimates that between 1960 and 1970 about 1.8 million black people were 'removed' and 'resettled' — the largest enforced population movements ever known in peacetime. Yet, those who rightly condemn the mass deportations of Tartars and other peoples in the Soviet Union are largely silent about these events in the Apartheid Republic.

While it is true that the policy of 'removals' is endemic to Apartheid and has been going on for many years, there is evidence that it is currently being stepped up. This intensified campaign is a specific post-Soweto manifestation and directly linked with that mass upsurge of the black urban workers.

When South African capitalism was mainly mining capitalism, the colour bar and the migrant labour policy were essential to its profitability. It had two basic aims — to provide the mines (and the farms which fed the miners) with abundant cheap labour and to build a wall between the skilled white workers from Europe, who brought with them their traditions of trade unionism and 'socialism', and the migrant black workers. It was a deliberate policy aimed at preventing a black proletariat taking root in the urban areas and combining with the organised white workers to threaten the very existence of capitalism.



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THE ETHNIC QUESTION

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS AND THE ETHNIC QUESTION: A FIRST CONTRIBUTION TO THE DISCUSSION.

For a very long time the national and ethnic question has deeply concerned anti-imperialist Africans. No other issue has so many implications for the internal political life of the African nationalist movement, where conflicts have partially reproduced the contradictions of the ethnic structure. The MPLA's experience with the Chipenda faction (which eventually went over to the FNLA), the Kawandame split from FRELIMO, the battles inside FROLINAT (Chad) and the divisions amongst the Zimbabwe nationalists are all typical examples.

Evidently these are the political consequences of precise historic phenomena: the backwardness of the 'social formation' in Africa and the manipulation of inter-ethnic rivalries by imperialism. Foreign intervention has fossilised the traditional structures and used the most backward of them to stabilise its power. Simultaneously the petty-bourgeois programme of nationalism has made it impossible to transcend this situation. Several generations have been trapped in a dead-end of moralism: it became an issue of principle to avoid 'tribalism' at all costs, without giving any programmatic form for the concrete intervention of militants.

An exhaustive treatment of the 'ethnic question' in Africa cannot be given in the present article. It would, moreover, be presumptuous to claim to have the answer to everything about this matter. A large dose of empiricism must necessarily guide the vanguard here. Many points will only gradually be resolved as the struggle itself develops. Our aim is the more modest one of posing certain methodological guidelines. Later articles should develop more precise examples.

THE STRATEGIC FOUNDATIONS

For revolutionary marxists the revolution which has to be carried out is a *socialist* one. This means that the seizure of power by the masses, led by the urban and rural workers, must move simultaneously towards resolving democratic tasks and creating the dictatorship of the proletariat. This strategic conception implies that the working class takes the leadership without compromise with the indigenous bourgeoisie. For this class is incapable of satisfying the democratic demands of the people, and becomes a counter-revolutionary force from the moment the wind of social change begins to blow. This means that the working class must draw the peasantry and impoverished petty-bourgeoisie into the revolution.

The winning over of these groups does not mean that they will become as conscious as the workers of the social and political implications of the revolutionary crisis. Certainly there will be a peasant vanguard whose members will link up with that of the working class; there will also be genuine revolutionaries emerging from the urban petty-bourgeoisie. The most likely eventuality however is that the workers will put forward demands and forms of organisation whose dynamic is far more subversive of bourgeois order than those of the peasant and petty-bourgeois masses.

This is obvious if we see that the working class alone has the capacity to halt the productive machinery and impose its own control over it, in the course of building its own structures of political power. This gap between the consciousness of urban workers and that of the peasant masses is not necessarily an obstacle to victory. For, by expressing its strength and determination, the working class can pose, in the eyes of the masses, as agent of a possible solution to all the democratic tasks. The worker-peasant alliance is forged under the leadership of the workers and becomes a living force once they impose on the bourgeoisie and imperialism those demands which the peasantry and the impoverished have always sought: democratic freedoms and an end to exploitation and oppression.

Democratic demands are therefore essential for revolutionaries. This has nothing to do with conceptions of 'democratising' society or its institutions. Rather it is a matter of launching the masses on the struggle for democratic rights so that they take the first steps towards being conscious of their own strength. Thus the struggle for democratic demands is the first step in the mobilisation of the masses against the power of the bourgeois state and ruling classes. The ethnic question must be approached in this framework.

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS AND "TRIBALISM"

Many confusions persist in this discussion. The fear of 'balkanisation' — that is, the refusal to accept the divisions nurtured by imperialism — has obscured a great many problems. Rejecting 'tribalism', in the sense of backward-looking divisions, almost always means limiting discussion to questions of form (imperialist manipulations) at the expense of basic questions (historic, social and political causes). The term 'tribalist' is nearly always used to describe a form of peasant discontent. The 'tribe' becomes dissident, it is said, in order to impose certain anachronistic and reactionary traditions. The tribe thus becomes the 'anti-nation', in essence a counter-revolutionary institution.

But the history of contemporary black Africa shows that the question is far more complicated:

1. Apart from imperialism, the African ruling classes have for a long time had no forces apart from their groups of regional followers to keep them in power. Lacking firm economic or ideological foundations, they turned to family, village and ethnic group to provide themselves with a social base. Consequently, divisions amongst politicians invariably follow regional lines. Political instability leads to civil war in which the peasants bear the costs of the struggle.
2. But are the feelings of frustration of a particular ethnic group, objectively founded in oppression, backward? Obviously not. Is it sufficient to proclaim ourselves for the revolution in the abstract to win over this peasantry? Is it enough to put forward certain 'national' demands aimed at the peasantry to unite these different populations in common struggle? No.

The struggle for socialism requires the mobilisation of the great mass of the peasantry. It is therefore necessary to show them that, unlike the petty-bourgeois democrats and phony advocates of local socialism, we stand for their rights. This means that, even when reflected through an 'ethnic' consciousness, peasant demands on questions of democracy, on the right to have a say in determining their own standard of living and daily existence, are just. Struggles around these issues are often the first steps towards peasant revolt. They must not therefore be separated from the other embryonic forms of mass consciousness. They have a frustrated and ambiguous character. But at root they are the first symptoms of the peasants' entry into the era of permanent revolution.

Yes, we are for the right of instruction in the local language in schools. Yes, we are for defence and enriching of different cultures! Yes, we oppose the imposition of particular types of agricultural production on the pretext that they serve the national interest. These are valid grievances. They can, however, be expressed through a frustrated, ethnocentric reaction when the peasantry interprets its exploitation as merely the oppression of its own ethnic group (which certainly exists as well). Closing our eyes to this situation and not responding positively means turning our backs on any revolutionary initiative. The world doesn't provide ideal conditions for carrying out the class struggle. The vanguard has to work with an extremely complex historic legacy. To deny the paradoxes and not to deal with the dialectical play of contradictions, is to abandon marxism. What matters is not Africa as we would like it to be, but as it actually is. Political initiative must start from that.

That is why, faced with a precise demand of a particular ethnic group, including that of self-determination, we give clear support and demonstrate our willingness to struggle with them against their oppression. Simultaneously we strive to detach the poor peasants from the political and ideological hold of their chiefs, local clique bosses and 'tribalist' politicians. To do this we advance general demands directed at the entire peasantry, on the ownership and possession of land and herds, against the dowry system, against speculative trade in fertilisers and other agricultural inputs. We also advance many other demands designed to drive a wedge between the masses and the privileged classes.

WHY 'PLAY WITH FIRE'?

Fear of balkanisation has thus far blocked any initiative of this sort in the African revolutionary movement. Supporting tribal demands would be to 'play with fire'.

What do we want?: to mobilise the peasants alongside the workers; to ensure that in a revolutionary crisis ethnic affiliations do not obstruct the mobilisation of the masses in the cities. But these are burdened down with poverty and prejudices. We want the possibility for them to make a leap forward in political consciousness and ability to challenge the system.

Is it therefore a matter of indifference to us or to them if education can be carried out in the local language, their only means of participating in large numbers in cultural development? Can there be a real mobilisation leading to forms of self-organisation of the peasants if the 'noble' language is still French, English, Portuguese or a dominant African language? Is it possible that the countryside can be mobilised against the established order if we join the urban petty-bourgeois outcry against the particular traditions and demands of ethnic regions?

We do not, however, overlook the contradictions involved. The various self-help groups are led by the elite and are class collaborationist. Regional traditions are not 'naturally' progressive. But revolutionaries will not gain a mass hearing if they appear to be 'authoritarian centralists' like the bourgeoisie, or as repressive as the leaders of the dominant ethnic group. The basis for opening up class divisions between the demands of the peasant masses and the interests of the elite must be laid in the struggle for the broadest possible democratic demands; but it will be impossible to mobilise around these unless one is already involved in struggles for elementary demands against the state's bureaucratic centralism and the oppression of different ethnic groups.

The fight for democratic rights is distinct from reformist and nationalist incantations about democracy. We never look at it in a parliamentarist framework or as a process of diplomatic pressure. We envisage the mass movement imposing its immediate demands, understandable by all, and thereby strengthening its position against the bourgeoisie and imperialism.

But aren't these ethnic demands backward-looking? Do not only the bourgeoisie, petty-bourgeois politicians and the elite really advocate them, the masses being merely pulled along behind?

This type of argument has a measure of hypocrisy. Every democratic demand can be taken over by a section of the bourgeoisie. That they are also interested is not therefore a special feature of the ethnic question. This has not, however, stopped revolutionaries taking part in struggles for democratic rights. Moreover the ruling classes are not rigidly attached to their regional base and tribal clientele. The development of a genuine African capitalism is leading towards changes in the structure and function of the neo-colonial state. Important changes are taking place within the ruling classes, resulting in a more 'universal' outlook, not only 'national' (concerned with the national market) but even international (having an integrated conception of developments in African capital and imperialist investments).

ONCE AGAIN — THE SOCIAL FORMATION

Regarding balkanisation, it is always argued that our position means an exacerbation of 'separatist' tendencies and that the right to self-determination could, in practice, be carried out under bourgeois leadership and provoke a

reactionary geographic explosion. This assumes, however, that there is a real bourgeoisie based solidly on the ethnic group — one capable of carrying the 'national liberation struggle' to its logical conclusion.

Does this type of bourgeoisie really exist in Africa today? No. Most often, petty-bourgeois politicians, village elites and traditional hierarchies act as the protagonists in tribal struggles. Genuine bourgeoisies, when they exist, don't participate in this kind of adventure: they are too afraid of losing control of the masses and they don't see their interests being served through cutting themselves off from the national market and the neo-colonial state that created and continues to support them.

The Nigerian example clarifies things in several ways. It is perfectly logical that the most aware layers of the bourgeoisie, those with a modern economic base, would remain aloof from clearly separatist demands. Thus the Yoruba bourgeoisie showed great prudence over the pro-imperialist Biafra adventure, while the Ibo petty-bourgeoisie hurled themselves into it.

It is unlikely therefore that the struggle for democratic rights of this or that ethnic group will automatically unleash a reactionary balkanisation. It is not, however, for this reason that we 'dare' put forward such demands. In practice, we favour the independence of Eritrea, where a bourgeoisie exists and where the liberation struggle could possibly be conducted in its interests. Involved here is a clear principle — the right of people to self-determination. But it is important to show that our viewpoint will not lead to a bourgeois Africa with dozens of tiny states. It is possible to foresee the vanguard and working class gaining leadership of these peasant movements once they are no longer up against a strong bourgeois offensive in this area.

It is therefore logical to believe that only the revolutionary crisis will in practice pose the decisive questions concerning these demands. Then the self-determination of these groups will be expressed in a new framework, of the transition to socialism and of proletarian democracy. The centrally planned economy will be able, through popular mass self-organisation, to satisfy the particular demands of various regions. If on the other hand, some maintain the demand for independence, this should not be opposed on principle, still less militarily. The right to self-determination must be upheld. It can be coupled with a federal formula for state organisation.

For Africa this implies two key ideas. First, a revolutionary crisis will speed up the development on the regional level of a very turbulent political situation, and the emergence of a genuine revolutionary party, rooted in the masses. It will, by its example, encourage the vanguard of neighbouring countries. Secondly, we advocate the destruction of the bourgeois neo-colonial states. But we do not say that the socialist revolution means rebuilding, on their ruins, workers' states confined to the same frontiers. That today would be entirely out of date. Equally, however, no-one can foresee what the new geo-political map will look like: marxism is not extra-sensory perception!

This imposes upon revolutionaries a doubly internationalist viewpoint, paralleled by the *building of revolutionary parties as an integral part of an International*. This is the viewpoint of the African militants of the Fourth International. This is the apparent paradox. Revolutionaries struggle for the African revolution in its totality and advance the idea of a United Socialist States of Africa. To reach this point however it is necessary to show the masses that the struggle for democratic freedom can also involve the right to liberation and separation. Lenin said: "the real unity of tomorrow flows from the separation of today".

AN EXAMPLE: THE ANGOLAN FNLA

Those who have a different approach frequently refer to the example of Roberto Holden's FNLA. Those who believe they are faced with 'potential nations' find the basis for their position in the equation 'FNLA = Bakongo'. Those who, in contrast, believe ethnocentric sentiments are basically reactionary, use the example of the reactionary FNLA and amalgamate it with the entire Bakongo population. But the history of the FNLA shows clearly the errors of these positions.

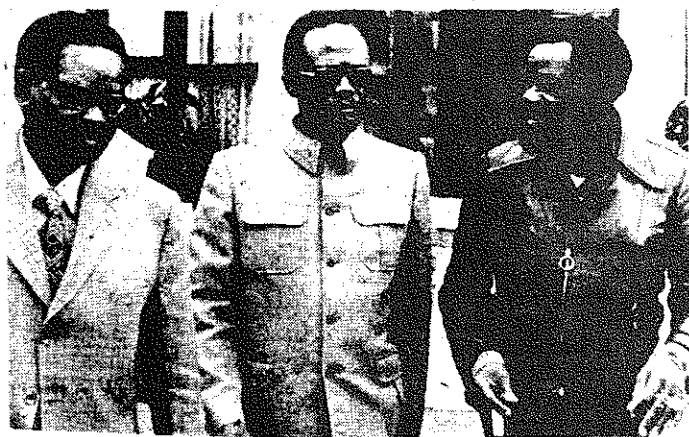
The Angolan petty-bourgeoisie has not formed in an even fashion, either geographically or over time. The urban petty-bourgeoisie of Luanda and the coastal cities was created by the machinery of the colonial administration, and the service and commercial sectors. Many were mestizo (of mixed racial origin) and frequently reached the status of *assimilados* (non-whites having Portuguese language and culture who received significant social and civil benefits). It developed essentially after the Second World War. Finally, because of its position which combined a feeling of frustration with the restrictions of the white dictatorship and the 'extra-ethnic' viewpoint of those who have inhabited a capital city for a long time or are of mixed origins, this bourgeoisie attained, to a degree, a 'universal' viewpoint, nationalist in the sense of the 'Angolan nation'. From this area emerged the leadership of the MPLA.

On the other hand, currents had been developing amongst Angolan emigrants in the Belgian Congo. There had been two great waves of emigration: before the '20s and at the beginning of the '60s. There had always been a permanent population movement leading to the formation of a community of Angolan origin in the Congo. This emigration was primarily Bakongo of peasant origin. Traditional village structures were more or less preserved. The elite remained of noble Bakongo family. Certainly, the sons of chiefs in the colonial Congo became shabby petty-bourgeois, but they kept up their ties with the tribal lineages. The political development of the Angolan population, especially in the Leopoldville basin, was influenced by the development of nationalism in the Congo. Movements like Kasavubu's 'Abako' were first formed around a messianism: 'Kibanguism'. This represented the first elementary and frustrated form of consciousness that rejected white institutions, primarily religious ones.

Sects like the Tocoists gave birth amongst the Angolan emigrants to the political formations which fused to form the FNLA. Among these was the Union of the People of Northern Angola (UPNA), led by the traditional Bakongo chiefs. When Holden became leader he dropped the 'N' and proclaimed it the UPA. But nothing changed in the organisation's objective base. This remained firmly in the Bakongo hierarchy. They were strongly marked by their prophetic origins and first emerged with the development of the Congolese nationalist forces who were extremely regionalist. Therefore this localist petty-bourgeois FNLA leadership didn't acquire the 'nationalist universalist' viewpoint of the MPLA leaders. This seems to explain the different lines each later established with the masses, as well as the FNLA's early alignment with the Kinshasa regime and imperialism. But after these few recollections, what can be concluded about the equation 'FNLA = Bakongo consciousness'?

The FNLA leadership was a sort of transitional grouping between the traditional lineages and the bureaucratic petty-bourgeoisie. Holden's suppression of the reference to *northern* Angola proves he understood that, being based exclusively in the north, it could gain mass appeal only by affirming its *Angolan* character. But this also proves that the Bakongo-centric aspects of FNLA did not miraculously create a 'Bakongo national consciousness'. A society constituted almost solely of peasants, their elite and a petty-bourgeoisie still tied to the village lineages, is incapable of developing national demands. Where is the Bakongo bourgeoisie which will make itself the champion of national liberation? Bakongo nationalism is therefore not the forerunner of a potential 'Bakongo nation'. National consciousness has little chance of developing when it is borne only by a petty-bourgeoisie strongly tied to the fossilised structures of the tribal hierarchies. These have neither the power nor the will to summon up a nation. Who else could do it in the place of a peasantry still subordinated to village structures or of a non-existent proletariat?

For the Neto leadership of MPLA all this was a matter of 'tribalism'. So these reactionary particularisms had to be fought with every energy. Defeating FNLA meant repulsing tribalism. Defeating tribalism meant militarily beating the FNLA. This conception is evidently false. The defeat of



Neto, Roberto and Savimbi in 1975

FNLA might mean defeating part of the forces of reaction, but it would not resolve the Bakongo question. A militarist policy coupled with general propaganda about the 'nation' would not miraculously dissolve Bakongo sentiments, largely explicable by their particular history, their specific sense of frustration under Portuguese colonialism. Defeating FNLA is one thing; winning these people to the revolution by advancing measures to satisfy their particular needs, mainly in the agrarian sphere, but including the language question, the oppression of the young under the lineage system, etc., is quite another. The failure to do this perpetuates the Bakongo's tailing behind a reactionary leadership.

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As a movement with a petty-bourgeois national leadership and programme, MPLA cannot propose any alternative. It clings to the moral idea of the nation and national interests without understanding that cohesion is strengthened far more by the political involvement of the masses in similar social processes. It fails to recognise that nationalism invariably alienates a part of the population. By giving this strictly bourgeois response to the question posed, it necessarily fails in a continent torn apart by foreign domination.

A revolutionary communist leadership in Angola would recognise the right of self-determination, particularly for the peoples of the north. Simultaneously, it would stand clearly for a socialist unification of all regions. It would also explain that people like the Bakongo were divided between Zaire, the Congo and Angola because of colonial balkanisation. To overcome this situation it would give active support to revolutionaries in these countries and clearly show that only the revolutionary unity of peoples can resolve the demands of particular regions. At the same time, such a leadership would not be neutral regarding the FNLA. This organisation represents a counter-revolutionary response to the national question and, crucially, serves the aim of crushing the mass struggle.

REVOLUTIONARIES IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Revolutionary work amongst the peasantry cannot be undertaken without a clear vision of the particular tasks faced in specific regions. But revolutionaries must also do selective work, starting to intervene in those regions that are weak links in the chain of the neo-colonial state's domination.

Forms of peasant organisation will also vary considerably according to region. Prolonged struggles in the countryside will eventually highlight the need for permanent peasant

organisations. Given the 'specialisation' of regions, particularly in different single crops, but also in ethnic differences, there will be an uneven development and regionalisation of peasant movements.

What are the dangers of such a situation?

1. To defuse the situation, the state will propose the formation of a 'broad peasant union' on the national level (under its control).
2. The small local landowners, certain members of the village elite, and certain politicians will fight against the coordination of struggles and the unification of the peasants' fight.

Revolutionaries have to combat these two policies. They must exploit the uneven development of peasant opposition and promote on the one hand the deepening of local experiences and, on the other, the formation of a united peasant movement as an objective ally of the working class. This will only happen through recognising specific demands which emerge out of the fragmented and regionalised way in which the peasantry becomes politically conscious.

The trotskysts will be in the vanguard of such debates to the extent that their strategy of 'permanent revolution' assigns to the working class the role of motive force in the social processes that make up the revolutionary crisis and, at a later stage, in the workers' state. Only an anti-capitalist vanguard, only a genuine revolutionary party, can take a correct approach to all these ethnic and national problems: that is to say, by starting from a class viewpoint, to express the inter-relationship between the democratic and revolutionary tasks. We are not 'democrats' in the bourgeois meaning of the term, but we will always be the best defenders of democratic rights.

C. Gabriel
18 December 1977

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Zambian neo-colonialism

Readers of "Africa in Struggle" will be well aware of the background to recent political developments in Zambia. These can be summarised briefly as follows:

1. The economy is at an all-time post-independence low. The main features of this are:
 - (a) The price of copper, which accounts for more than 90% of exports stands now at approximately the same level as in 1965. Meantime import prices have increased 150%. The price recession has now lasted for four years. All but the most profitable mines are operating at a loss. No dividends have been declared for three years. The government, which is still paying for its 1969 takeover of a 51% stake in the mines, has therefore received no dividends from its investments.
 - (b) Transportation difficulties have compounded the problems. The Benguela railway to the port of Lobito on the Atlantic, which used to carry more than half the country's trade, has been closed since the Angolan Civil War in late 1975. The Tazara railway to Dar es Salaam has had numerous technical problems. The port facilities at Dar are incapable of handling its load. There are now at least 100,000 tons of copper trapped somewhere along this route. The closure of the Rhodesian border since 1973 means the quickest route to the sea, at Beira, is cut off. Attempts to substitute for the railway by a new road through Tete province in Mozambique have foundered.
 - (c) Efforts to stimulate local farming to replace imported foods have generally failed. The country is in most years self-sufficient in the staple food, maize, in sugar, fresh vegetables and pig and poultry products. Milk, wheat, beef, butter, fruit products, cooking oils etc. must still be overwhelmingly imported. As a percentage of food sold, imports increase year by year. The development of even the relatively successful commercial farming sector has of late been hampered by shortages of machinery, fertiliser, stockfeed and other essential inputs.
 - (d) As a result of these problems, Zambia's international debt is now at an all time high. Most of the leading imperialist countries, the World Bank and IMF, have advanced loans in the past two years. Conditions laid down by the last named included devaluation (leading inevitably to higher prices) and a two year wage freeze.
 - (e) Government issues no up to date figures on the key indicators for the standard of living: wages and prices. The latter were, however, rising by at least 25% per annum in the first half of 1976. The former have been legislatively limited to a 5% p.a. rise. Every indication since then suggests that even more rapid inflation has occurred.
 - (f) Social services, transportation etc. are crippled. Frequent reports appear of hospital deaths caused by shortage of drugs, student strikes against lack of adequate diet in schools, chaotic conditions for travellers, etc.

2. Politically, the one party regime of the United National Independence Party, UNIP, presided over by Kaunda, is more potentially unstable than ever:

- (a) The UNIP has never, since independence, been a mass party. Its members are overwhelmingly those dependent for economic and social status on their holding office in party and government. This explains their willingness to accept without question every twist and turn of the leadership upon whom they are dependent for position.
- (b) Economic problems have led to substantial rumblings of discontent amongst the masses. This has in turn found reflection at the highest levels of leadership. Minister of

Finance, Mwanakatwe, was last year chairperson of a parliamentary select committee that concluded its report by advocating, amongst other things, greater assistance to private enterprise and openings for foreign investment, more charges for social services and a relaxation of the "Leadership Code" that supposedly restricts investment by Party leaders and civil servants. All these positions had been specifically rejected by Kaunda during the previous few months.

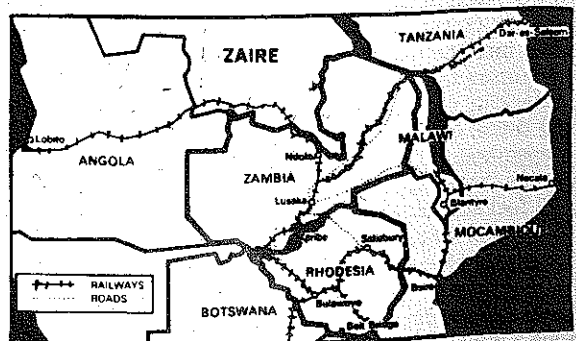
The cry for the measure now taken of reopening the Rhodesian border, had been voiced by numerous MPs and had big popular resonance for several years. It has combined with an extremely reactionary tendency to place all the blame for Zambia's economic ills on the "sacrifices" being made on behalf of the "ungrateful" people of Zimbabwe.

(c) The effect, at top level, of such an upsurge of discontent, has been effectively stifled by Kaunda's control of the bureaucracy. It is in particular clear now that the re-admittance to the party of ex-Vice President Kapwepwe and his associates from the former United Progressive Party (banned in 1972) was done only in order the better to stifle them.

At the UNIP National Conference held at the beginning of September, the threat of Kapwepwe's standing in the forthcoming election against Kaunda was effectively squashed. A motion was forced through "on the nod" that made sure only one candidate would stand and that he/she would be selected by the National Council of the Party, most of whom were appointed by Kaunda. An attempt by Kapwepwe and another potential candidate, Nkumbula, to challenge this in the High Court, is at the time of writing still sub judice.

(d) If Kapwepwe had been able to stand against Kaunda there was a fair chance of his receiving at least a substantial minority of votes — even with the entire party machine, press, TV, radio etc. ranged against him in a charade of democracy. The positions which he was putting forward, especially regarding the reopening of full trading relationships with the white south and an end to support for the Zimbabwean Patriotic Front, had a superficial attraction. It is still likely that a good number of candidates putting similar positions will win seats in Parliament against the long time "loyalists". This will probably happen especially in the more "politicised" areas where the working class element in the population is higher, the Copperbelt, Lusaka and some parts of the Southern Province.

Little comfort will be taken from such a development by those Zambians who understand that the country's fundamental economic problems arise from the monopoly of power and hence of economic position by members of the country's "bureaucratic bourgeoisie". These individuals, led by Kaunda, and including incidentally many of the ex-UPP leaders who were on the same gravy train until 1972, have used their government office to acquire wealth and privilege. In doing this they have worked in close collaboration with the imperialists whose continued exploitation of Zambia's resources and workers they have ensured.





President Kaunda (fifth from left) escorts his hosts – (from left) David Owen, Andrew Young, Presidents Nyerere and Machel – to the State House in Lusaka for talks on the Anglo-American proposals for a Rhodesian settlement.

Kapwepwe's recent evolution bears an uncanny resemblance to that of he and his party in 1972. Then he made a similar "populist" appeal. For his "natural" constituency, the miners of the Copperbelt, who were then suffering the effects of the last economic recessions, attacks on government "fat cats" and insistence on the right of workers to a fair standard of living were the main tune. It was this that won him a by-election at Mufulira just before his detention that year. Simultaneously, again in alliance with Nkumbula, he advocated the same reactionary line of re-opening full economic relationships with the white south.

Now however Kaunda appears to have played his ace card and completely unhinged the opposition's central plank with his announcement on October 6th of the re-opening of the Rhodesian border for Zambian trade. No doubt this move was partly mooted in the talks with Callaghan at Kano, 22 September. Kaunda entered them breathing fire over the revelations of UK oil-firms' sanctions busting activities. He came out apparently entirely reconciled with his "friend Jim". Key to the outcome, for sure, were 90,000 tons of fertiliser (destined for Zambia and essential to begin maize planting in early November) which were stuck at various places en route from Maputo with little hope of arriving in time. Obviously Callaghan, who had it in his power to solve the problem at a stroke by organising an emergency airlift, used the opportunity to force the issue. In doing so he certainly reflected the aims of imperialism generally.

Politically, no doubt, Kaunda would have preferred to delay this decision until after the Anglo-American "settlement" had been forced onto the Zimbabweans, preferably with the "stabilising" influence of Nkomo at the helm in Salisbury. Then an heroic victory could have been claimed. Economically, however, it was impossible to wait.

In taking this step Kaunda has enormously assisted imperialism's strategy in southern Africa. The alliance of the 5 front line states had been rendered shaky by revelations of the Smith/Nkomo/Kaunda meetings. Now an open breach has been created. Reports in the "Guardian", 9 October, suggest that the Mozambicans will not allow the fertiliser still lying at Maputo to pass through into Rhodesia. A much more important development which will be awaited expectantly by the imperialist powers is that a wedge has almost certainly been driven into the Patriotic Front alliance. Nkomo has already admitted that his Zambia-based fighters will be forced to stop attacking communications targets for fear of disrupting trade. More decisive is that Nkomo's ZAPU wing, totally dependent on Kaunda, will be under strong pressure to enter a quick "settlement". For sure, after this, every ZAPU leader will feel at least a little apprehensive of what can occur in the future and a little more willing consequently to make a deal. Since ZAPU has by far the better conventionally trained and equipped armed wing, the majority remaining in reserve, they would be well encouraged to do so without ZANU.

Kaunda's move has more significance for Zambia than as just another episode in his love affair with imperialism or as

part of an internal political battle. The re-opening of the border on a permanent basis makes it certain that the future Zambian economy will be gradually reintegrated into that of Southern Africa, dominated by the Apartheid Republic. For 10 years, the government has tried via nationalisations, initiation of state-controlled industry in collaboration with a variety of imperialist firms, redirection of trade, etc. to build its own independent industrial base and break out of these historic links. At tremendous cost it has at least considerably diversified its trade sources. But the economic recession has broken a strategy that was central if there was to emerge a strong independent bourgeoisie in that country (albeit one totally dependent on the state for its position).

For the workers and small farmers of Zambia the result of this move will not be, as Kapwepwe and others have claimed, a new era of prosperity. On the contrary, the superiority of South African industry will enable it, if allowed, to easily reconquer Zambia. The result of that would be stagnation.

For revolutionaries there is one lesson that can and must be drawn above all others, and which must stand at the centre of their propaganda throughout the neo-colonial states of this area. Against all the populist propagandists of the quick and easy solution it is necessary to insist (and time will quickly show this to be correct): There can be no "settlement" in southern Africa that is not based on the expropriation of the imperialists, of the various local bourgeoisies, black and white, and the formation of a single socialist economy that will ensure a fair distribution of resources throughout this immensely rich and geographically homogeneous region.

John Blair, 9 October 1978.



Kenneth Kaunda

ANGOLA:

An Initial Balance Sheet

Angola Three Years After Independence

By José Maia

[The following article was written in November 1977, before the First Congress of the MPLA (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola—People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola). Some points on the congress were added before it was published in issue No. 4, Second Series, of *Ação Comunista*, the theoretical journal of the Liga Comunista Internacionalista, Portuguese section of the Fourth International. The translation from the Portuguese is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

"1977—Year of the First Congress of the MPLA, of the Founding of the Party, and of Production for Socialism"—that was the endlessly repeated slogan. It became a standard phrase in the radio news broadcasts, in the editorials of the *Jornal de Angola*, in reports, in official letters, and even in the everyday language of the more zealous officials. This pompous slogan of a case-hardened bureaucratic leadership concealed a shameful lie behind two formal truths.

The true statement about the holding of the "First Congress" of the MPLA¹ in fact

1. In 1971, the old Steering Committee called the First Congress of the MPLA. The official reasons given why it was not held were "lack of an opportunity and of financial resources" (see the pamphlet *O que é o Congresso* published by the First National Seminar on Organization, Luanda, July 1977). In reality, what prevented it from being held was the first signs of conflicts with Chipenda. In place of a congress, a "Readjustment Movement" was begun in 1972. Its main result was to put the Steering Committee "on ice" and form another leadership, which was just like the preceding one, except that it did not include Chipenda.

In 1974, after April 25, the First Congress was called again in Lusaka. This occurred under pressure from two sources. *Revolta Activa* [Active Revolt], a faction led by J. Pinto de Andrade and Gentile Viana, which had strong influence in intellectual circles, criticized the lack of internal democracy and the rule of an "all powerful president." The guerrilla faction in the east headed by Chipenda, *Revolta do Leste* [Eastern Revolt], also pressed for the holding of this congress. Although it was present at this assembly, the MPLA leadership (Neto) did not recognize its validity.

Finally, the Third Plenum of the Central Committee held in October 1976 called for holding the congress in 1977. The premier of the

concealed the travesty of democracy that was being rigged up. This ran the gamut from pushing into the background those who belonged to currents opposing the traditional apparatus (whose crimes will be taken up later) to imprisoning and shooting them.

It included the co-opting of functionaries, who had not participated in the rank-and-file bodies (the Grupos de Ação) and were chosen for their docility, to supervise the various organs of the movement. It involved dividing up the places on the incoming Central Committee and the presentation of these worked out in corridor "struggles" among the various factions.

Among the contending groups were the traditional apparatus (Lúcio Lara, Carlos Rocha Dilolwa), the right-wing nationalist old guard (Mendes de Carvalho, Manuel Pacavira), and the petty-bourgeois technocrats (Lopo do Nascimento, the ministers of foreign trade and fisheries). There were also groups with much more well-defined interests, such as that headed by Secretary of State for Communications Bento Ribeiro, the advance scout for Italian capitalism, the most enterprising in Angola.

There were manifold factions with confused political and economic programs, varying from an Argentine-style state capitalism (Lara) to more familiar forms of neocolonialism with less of a progressive façade.

The "First Congress of the MPLA" will give formal expression to the relationship of forces resulting from the backroom alliances and wheeling and dealing among the bureaucrats. *It will not be the fruit of democratic debate nor will it plant the seed of socialism.*

The statement about the "founding of the party" is also formally true. A party will be founded, but it will not be a party of the workers and peasants, as is claimed; nor will it be Marxist-Leninist, despite the invocation of this term. Of the Leninist norms of democratic centralism, the demo-

Angolan People's Republic, Lopo do Nascimento, set the date for the beginning of the congress as December 4, the twenty-first anniversary of the founding of the organization.

The congress was held December 4-10, 1977, and approved the organization's new name—"MPLA, Party of Labor." It also approved the new statutes and theses, as well as confirming the forty-five new members of the Central Committee.

cracy is being swept under the rug and the centralism made authoritarian.²

On this point at least there is total agreement among the various factions and even among the most reactionary chauvinists (Mendes de Carvalho, for example). In this respect, the lessons imparted by East German and Soviet advisers have been accepted without resistance.

The shameful lie is the slogan "production for socialism," because what this would mean, if the term were being used properly, is production for the workers, under their control and with their participation in making the basic economic-policy decisions. I will come back to this question further on. In particular, I will take up the caricature of socialist planning outlined at the Third Plenum of the Central Committee in October 1976.

Along with this, I will show that while the MPLA's "progressive" verbiage may easily turn the heads of centrists, since they are not screwed on very tightly anyway, it does not hold up under Marxist analysis.

So, the year 1977 will not go down in the history of the Angolan workers movement for any of the things touted in the official

2. In the pamphlet *O MPLA e o Partido* [The MPLA and the Party], which was published in October 1977 and contains the Documentos de Estudo para o Partido [DEP—Study Documents on the Party], there is a tendency to dwell on the "subordination of the lower bodies to the higher ones, of the action groups to the Steering Committee," "of the minority to the majority," etc. And the democracy that would make this centralism a conscious instrument is reduced to vague banalities. But it is noted that in no case should "internal democracy endanger the discipline and unity of the party." Democracy is reduced finally to "defending individual points of view" in the rank-and-file bodies.

What sort of guarantee will this be for the right to maintain "individual points of view" in an organization that is going through a terrible witch-hunt, in which "being seen with a factionalist" or "a conversation that he had with 'x' in March of last year" is liable to be punished by imprisonment, expulsion from the party, or loss of your job.

What sort of guarantee is this when you consider the circular issued by the Comissão Política Provisória de Luanda on July 21, 1977, and signed by Mendes de Carvalho. It said: "We recommend the removal from the Action Groups and Action Committees of all the factionalists and those who speak on their behalf, support them, or identify with them."

slogan. What marks the year is the major defeat suffered by the working-class movement as a result of the May 27 events [the attempted coup by the Nito Alves wing of the MPLA].

May 27 was the point at which the revolutionary process began to be reversed. It was the culmination of setbacks that will be reviewed further on. What it represented was the laying of the foundations of the bourgeois state that is now being built. This defeat is all the more grave inasmuch as the revolutionary crisis opened up in Angola by the decolonization seemed likely to offer a better perspective for moving forward to socialism than anywhere else on the continent.

The MPLA in the Anticolonial Struggle

The MPLA was the only liberation movement in Angola that did not let itself get entangled from the start in the web of tribalism. It also benefited in the last analysis from the inability of Portuguese capitalism to shift over to neocolonial solutions. The Portuguese capitalists could not do that without running the risk of losing out in competition with other imperialist forces.

The long and hard struggle that the MPLA waged over a fourteen-year period for the minimum aim of ending colonial rule created the objective conditions for a qualitative break (even if only a pragmatic one) with the process of neocolonialization that developed in the African countries gaining their independence in the 1960s.

A number of factors came together that led to a break with the traditional nationalist orientation and brought the MPLA into a complex historical process of radical, revolutionary nationalism. It was obliged by the intransigence of the colonial power to arm the masses. It went through the experience of training cadres and organizing and mobilizing the peasants in the vast areas of Moxico, Kuando-Kubango, Uíge, and Cabinda.

The MPLA was a pole of attraction for the African student youth, some of whom had spent time in Portugal and gotten their first experience in party work in the Portuguese CP. In a number of cases after 1965 these youth went through a political apprenticeship in the semi-Maoist anti-reformist splits that were influential in the Portuguese student milieu at that time.

Another factor was the MPLA's policy of alliances. It was fraught with ambiguities and limitations, to be sure. But in opposing the imperialist bloc allied with Portugal, it moved toward the Soviet bloc. The MPLA also went through an initial experience of organizing a political struggle on a continent-wide basis in the CONCP.³

However, at no point did the MPLA take the basic steps that would have assured a de facto choice of an anticapitalist road. In any case, the whole process during the period of the anticolonial struggle had an empirical character and did not lead to any programmatic conclusions. In fact, the MPLA's program (divided into a maximum and a minimum like all stagist programs) in nowise differed from those of the traditional nationalist forces.

This program stressed the character of the organization as a national front. On that basis, it called for "broad unity of all political parties" and "every stratum of Angolan society, all Angolans without distinction as to political tendencies." This was the minimum part of the program.

The purpose of the front was to accomplish the tasks of "national liberation" and "establishing a republican and democratic system based on total independence." That was the maximum program.

All this was supposed to lead (without any explanation of how) to "the sovereignty of the people over the state" and the transformation "of Angola into an economically independent country."

During the entire period of the anticolonial struggle, the MPLA leaders in their statements never departed from this reformist program, which was reiterated subsequent to April 25. (See, for example, the well-known interview with Lúcio Lara in Brazzaville and published in the colonialist Luanda weekly *Notícia*.) The objective of their opportunist line was to make sure that no social layer got "detached" from the tasks of "national liberation."

The conferences and accords of Nakuru, Alvor, and Mombasa with the proimperialist movements UNITA [National Union for the Total Independence of Angola] and the FNLA [Angolan National Liberation Front] showed that the reference in the MPLA's program to "broad unity of all political parties" was not just rhetoric.

On the other hand, the movement's essentially pragmatic evolution itself set limits on its development. Its activity and experience in struggle were confined to organizing masses of peasants, with whom it maintained a relationship of paternalism and giving orders. This did not equip it to take up on a theoretical and organizational level the problems arising from the complexity of the social formation represented by the urban masses (who came definitively to the forefront of the political and social struggle after April 25). Nor did it prepare the MPLA to deal with the problem of freeing the Angolan economy from the domination of the capitalist world

Colonies) included the PAIGC (African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde), Frelimo [Mozambique Liberation Front], and the MPLA, and was established to develop a common strategy for the struggle against Portuguese colonialism.

market, since this could only be done by anticapitalist means.

Throughout the history of the MPLA, tendencies arose that challenged the limitations of its program and activity, the multiclass character of its political line, and its exclusive concentration on the tactic of guerrilla warfare in the "bush."

Such tendencies wanted to provide an alternative giving a socialist content to the movement's program. They stressed the need for working with the proletarian masses whose strength was steadily growing in the industrial suburbs of Luanda, Nova Lisboa (now Huambo), and Lobito. But these tendencies were viewed with the greatest distrust by the central apparatus.

One example of such a tendency was the few dozen youths who tried in 1968-69, against the directives of the leadership in Brazzaville, to organize nuclei of MPLA sympathizers in Luanda. These groups were broken up by the PIDE [the Portuguese political police] in 1970, and their members were sent to the concentration camps of São Nicolau, in the south of Angola, and Tarrafal. Out of this layer came the "ideological nucleus" of the "Nitistas" [supporters of Nito Alves], that is, Nado, Juca Valentim, and Zé Van Dúnem, who were later shot on the orders of the MPLA leadership.

The organization was already highly centralized. At the top, Agostinho Neto seemed to hold full personal power. But the real leader was Lúcio Lara, the organizer of the movement.

Whenever differences arose, they resulted in expulsions and anathematization of those involved as "counterrevolutionaries" (e.g., Viriato da Cruz, the Active Revolt group, Eastern Revolt). This is the least of what happened. There were also shootings, for example, the execution of Comandante Paganini in the west in 1973. He was accused of being an accomplice of Chipenda.

All of this hardly prepared the MPLA,

4. Costa Andrade, a loyal retainer of Lara, a poet and editor of the only Angolan daily, *Jornal de Angola*, in a slander suited to the hysterical tone of this paper, accused the Luanda group after Nito Alves's putsch of belonging to the PIDE. The only evidence he offered was "the strange coincidence that its appearance coincided with the new Caetano policy of 'using the methods of social psychology and infiltrating the liberation groups,'" which was tried in 1968-9.

I would note that more than half the Angolan government (to speak only of the government) cannot be accused of being linked to this "infiltration" in the 1960s. The present ministers of Finance (Ismael Martins), Fisheries (Vitor de Carvalho), Foreign Trade (Benvindo Pitra), Social Affairs (Conceição Vahekeni), Public Works (Resende de Oliveira), Health (Coelho da Cruz), Justice (Diógenes Boavida), the Deputy Minister of Internal Commerce (Maria Mambu Café) and others waited until 1974 to join the MPLA and become anticolonialists when colonialism was already breathing its last.

3. The Conferência das Organizações Nacionalistas das Colónias Portuguesas (Conference of Nationalist Organizations in the Portuguese



bureaucratized as it was from the outset, to serve as a testing ground in which the unavoidable differences over revolutionary alternatives in the postcolonial period could be discussed out and resolved in democratic debate.

One of the reasons that the apparatus was reticent about extending the struggle beyond those areas close to the command centers in Zambia (the east) and Congo-Brazzaville (Cabinda) was the difficulty of keeping the activity of the local units under the control of the central leadership.

It is no accident that, besides the Luanda group mentioned earlier, virtually all the military chiefs of the only guerrilla pocket not in direct contact with the Steering Committee, that is, the First Military Region (Dembos and Uíge) came historically to form factions.⁵ This includes Van Troi, Sihanouk, Bakaloff, Nito Alves, Monstro Imortal, and Ho Chi-Minh,⁶ along with others. All were arrested and shot following May 27.

Angola—An Economically Deformed and Dependent Country

Such limitations on the internal life of the MPLA blocked a dialectical resolution of the differences that had historically arisen within it. The leadership preferred to settle the differences by expeditious administrative methods. This indicated that the MPLA would not be able to emerge as a coherent revolutionary leading force in solving the coming socialist tasks.

Programmatically disarmed and with its

5. With the exception of Kiluange, a member of the Central Committee and secretary of state for veterans, who is today the only commander from the First Military Region who has not been shot.

6. The last four were members of the Central Committee of the MPLA. Monstro Imortal and Nito Alves were also members of the Political Bureau.

military experience confined to areas of small agricultural production, the MPLA did not seem to be the revolutionary driving force that could give impetus to a process of the struggle growing over into a struggle for socialism. However, *only such a qualitative leap in accomplishing the tasks of the revolution would have made it possible to free Angola from its economic subordination to the capitalist world market.*

Deformed by colonial and imperialist exploitation, the Angolan economic structure before independence was oriented exclusively toward the production of raw materials to meet the needs of the imperialist market and the ruling colonial power. (More than 90% of Angolan exports were unrefined raw materials.)

Angola's oil, diamonds, and iron were controlled by non-Portuguese imperialist capital. Cabinda Gulf Oil, dominated by American capital, pumped the oil from the continental shelf off Cabinda. Diamang, representing English capitalists and South African capitalists such as Oppenheimer, mined the diamonds in Lunda. The iron ore in Cassinga was exploited by the German capitalists of the Krupp combine. The bulk of Angola's foreign currency came from these operations.

Coffee, sisal, cotton, and other export crops were under the control of Portuguese capital, sometimes in association with that of other countries. (Cotonang, a cotton export combine, was owned by Portuguese and Belgian capital; the French bank Mallot et Cie had a share in CADA, which controlled 80% of the coffee crop.)

On the other hand, after the first surge of nationalist guerrilla activity in the mid-1960s, Angola became a field for massive investments of imperialist capital, which came in to establish processing industries (textiles, petroleum refining, fish products, beverages, cement, and so on).⁷ These industries were based on a transfer of

capitalist technology and an unrestrained exploitation of cheap labor.

This push to exploit cheap labor had a crucial political and social impact in that it led to the growth of the rural proletariat on the coffee and cotton plantations (in Uíge, Kwanza Sul, and Malange) and on the sugar plantations (Tentativa-Caxito and Cassequel-Catumbela). Masses of people swarmed into the *muçeques* [shantytowns] of Luanda, Lobito, and Nova Lisboa. They became proletarianized in the emerging industrial belts of these cities.

The transportation network is also an important example of an economy shaped by imperialist domination.

The three main rail lines and the three main ports are essentially conduits for taking out imperialist plunder.

The Benguela railroad carries copper from Zambia and Katanga to be exported out of the port of Lobito. This line is owned by Tanganyika Concessions, in which most of the stock is held by the South African Oppenheimer group.

The Moçamedes railroad carries iron and manganese from Cassinga to be exported out of the port of Saço (Moçamedes).

The Malange railroad carries export crops (cotton, sisal), which are shipped out through the port of Luanda.

In a hot, tropical country, there is virtually no refrigeration network on the national level for distributing and storing perishables (fish, fruit, vegetables). The main center of the fishing industry, Moçamedes, has one of the biggest refrigeration

7. In 1965, the Salazar government adopted a law permitting the formation of companies in which the majority of the stock was held by foreigners (non-Portuguese). The interests, dividends, and profits deriving from such investments were to be freely transferrable outside the country.

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ANGOLA

complexes on the continent (ARAN), but it is exclusively for the export trade.

As a final indication of the nature of this economy, let us look at the Cunene project in the far south of Angola. Work on this hydroelectric complex (twenty-seven dams and electricity generating plants) began in the last years of colonial rule. The total South African and Portuguese investment in this project was 17.5 billion escudos [approximately US\$700 million at the time], higher than the investment in the Cabora-Bassa dam in Mozambique. The electricity to be produced was intended for the industries in South Africa and Namibia.

These structural conditions of a dependent economy are compounded by the objective weight of Angola's underdevelopment. The country has a backward social structure and virtually no professionals or technicians.⁸ Thus, the departure of the Portuguese technicians and the sabotage of the economy by the colonial bourgeoisie beginning in the period immediately prior to independence had catastrophic consequences for the organization of industrial and agricultural production and the flow of supplies of raw materials and consumer goods.

The MPLA's Limited Economic Solutions

In face of this pernicious colonial legacy, the MPLA's economic plan, it soon became clear, was to give priority to building a strong state sector. It did not involve a determined attack on the ties binding the country to the imperialist market.

Law No. 3/76 (March 1976) regulating nationalizations and confiscations specified that, besides "abandoned businesses," the concerns subject to nationalization would be those "whose remaining in the private sector is contrary to the national interest." As the second deputy premier and director of planning, Dilolwa, explained to the weekly *Planificação* in January 1977 in Luanda, the extension of nationalizations of, and state interventions in, agricultural and industrial enterprises was "owing fundamentally to their abandonment by their owners."

Once again, things were decided on an empirical basis.

The sectors of the economy bound up with the colonial bourgeoisie, specifically the export crops (coffee, sisal, and cotton),

8. Taking into consideration the demographic structure of the work force in traditional agriculture and the prevailing wage levels, we can estimate, on the basis of the Gross National Product, which was 32.7 billion escudos in 1972, that 90% of the population (all but a tiny part of the Black population) had a per capita income of 2,200 escudos per year [about US\$81 at the time]. The remaining 10% (including virtually all the white population) had a per capita income of 35,200 escudos [about US\$1,300], or sixteen times what the others had.

were put under state administrative supervision as a result of the plantations being abandoned.⁹

The nationalization of or intervention in the processing industries, most of which were also linked to Portuguese capitalism, took place under a combination of pressures.



9. However, petty-bourgeois hesitation is proverbial. It is symptomatic that in an almost entirely nationalized branch such as fisheries, the major processing company, the Mampeza cannery in Benguela, is American owned and has not been nationalized. This goes for the only company in the second biggest processing industry (after breweries, which are the biggest), the cement company SECIL, which is Danish owned and is still in the private sector, although this factory's operations are certainly important to the "national interest."

10. However, Tanganyika Concessions, the main stockholder in the Benguela railroad, owes the Angolan government 1.5 billion kwanzas [approximately US\$38 million].

One factor was the economic objectives of the government. Control of the sector oriented to the internal market is the key to building state capitalism, through which the MPLA wants to establish its economic credibility. Another factor was the abandonment of these installations by their owners. Finally, the express will of the workers played a role.

Those sectors of the economy linked to non-Portuguese imperialist capital, which, as we have seen, are the main sources of foreign currency, remain in private hands, although the terms of the contracts are subject to revision. This goes for Cabinda Gulf Oil, the Benguela railroad,¹⁰ and the Cassinga mines. The mines are either paralyzed or the state has assumed the predominant voice in supervising them, as it did recently in the case of the Diamang holdings (where it assumed a 61% interest).

The government has decided to nationalize the industrial sector of processing (which although it was expanding in the final years of colonial rule remains tiny in the context of an underdeveloped economy). Also to be nationalized are the export crops.

A project has been undertaken to organize the peasants in cooperatives to produce consumer goods for the internal market (with extremely inadequate results up to now). For example, vegetables and fresh foods continue to be supplied to Luanda, badly, by small private concerns.

Another government aim is to establish control over foreign trade. In this respect, it wants to centralize the export business under state control. A state company, IMPORTANG, is to control imports. "Maximum" levels of imports are to be set for private concerns.

The government also wants to establish control over internal trade. This involves setting up state companies for wholesale trade on the national and provincial levels. A state company, EDINBA, is to handle interprovince distribution of food products. Another state company, EDINBI, is to handle interprovince distribution of industrial products.

Transport is also to come under government control. This involves setting up a national airline, TAAG; a merchant marine fleet; a national rail company, ETP; and a maintenance system, MANAUTOS. State concerns are also to be set up to provide essential services, such as hospitals, general medical care, education, and so on.

These measures are not sufficient to create the objective conditions for a socialist transformation of the society when, as in the case of Angola, the imperialists remain ensconced in the basic sectors of the economy.

Furthermore, similar, and in some instances more drastic, measures have already been carried out in other countries, such as Algeria and Libya. And they have not freed those countries from imperialist economic domination.

However, the fundamental reason that these nationalization measures amounted to no more than "quantitative advances" was that the working masses played no role in controlling the productive process. The role of the masses has to be analyzed in its development subsequent to April 25.

The Angolan Masses in the Anticapitalist Struggle

The analysis of the MPLA in the period of the anticolonial struggle that has been made above essentially also fits Frelimo and the PAIGC.

However, the development of the situation in Angola after April 25 was markedly different than in the other main Portuguese colonies. This meant that the pragmatic petty-bourgeois leaderships had to strive in different ways to achieve the same objective, one that was accomplished belatedly in Angola—the building of a bourgeois state.

After April 25, the PAIGC and Frelimo geared themselves up to take over the state apparatus they inherited from the colonial regime. They took advantage of the centralized system and accentuated it by establishing a one-party state. Since they monopolized the nationalist field (their only competitors being discredited elements such as Joanna Simeão or FLING [Struggle Front for the National Independence of Guinea-Bissau]) and the imperialists were relatively resigned to their taking power,¹¹ they did not need to resort to

11. The September 7, 1974, putsch, with the occupation of Rádio Clube de Moçambique, was a last desperate act by the ultracolonialists and could only be abortive.

It should be noted that Frelimo appealed not to the African masses to crush the colonialist putsch but to the Portuguese armed forces, based on the Portuguese-Mozambican accords signed in Lusaka.

12. They did more than make appeals. The first armed units of Frelimo that entered Maputo went in expressly to control any outbreaks by the African masses as the colonialist repressive mechanisms were breaking down. This was before the first transitional government headed by Chissano.

13. Held in September 1974 at the call of the leading apparatus. It coordinated MPLA activists coming from the "underground" inside the country and outside (mainly Portugal). It was held in Lundoje (Moxico) on the western front.

14. Pepetela, deputy minister of education and a member of the Lara faction, wrote in his short story "A vibora de cabeça ao contrário," written in the form of a fable, that Nito's "confused and ultraleftist" speech made him a dangerous alternative to the leadership. But he adds cynically that Nito was a necessary evil at that time and for a while longer. Nito was to be gotten rid of as soon as possible.

mobilizing the masses. They were able from the start to adopt the language of "statesmen," calling for "order and productivity."¹²

The MPLA was in a different situation. April 25 found it in a full-blown internal crisis that affected both its political and military structures. Two dissident groups, Active Revolt and Eastern Revolt, were challenging Neto and Lara for power. They had paralyzed an apparatus that was used to functioning in monolithic way.

Only the support of the numerous Luanda group at the Interregional Conference¹³ enabled the Neto leadership to survive. It had already been prepared to accept a triumvirate with Chipenda and J. Pinto de Andrade.

The decisive speech was given by the leader of the Luanda group, Nito Alves, a guerrilla fighter in the First Military-Political Region, an unknown figure to the apparatus.¹⁴ His followers represented a capital city convulsed by agitation and mobilizations unequalled anywhere else in the country.

In return for this support, the Neto-Lara group was obliged to accept seven members on the Central Committee from the First Region and Luanda. At the same time, it had to bring Monstro Imortal and Nito Alves (who was co-opted shortly after the conference) into the Political Bureau.

But it was only because of these internal difficulties that the MPLA leadership made such concessions to a faction that, according to the "Report of the Political Committee on the May 27 Attempted Coup d'Etat," had already shown signs of "strange affinities . . . which were characterized by factional political activity that



Presidents Neto and Mobutu embrace

was in fact outside the structure of the MPLA, although they maintained the cover of the organization."

The first signs of crisis in the colonial repressive apparatus (appearing most not-

ably in the DGS [the military political police] and the Portuguese armed forces) following the fall of Caetano were to lead to a breakdown of the status quo that had been maintained by terror in the cities. We saw this process in particular in Luanda. A breach was opened up through which the masses could emerge forcefully on the political scene.

The first mobilizations were for self-defense, and were carried out in the muçeques in response to the attacks of racist settlers and ultrarightists. The massacres conducted by these elements, especially in July and August 1974, led in Luanda to the appearance of embryonic forms of self-organization in the hardest-hit muçeques (Cazenga, Prenda, Golfe). This process later spread to the entire belt around the white city.

With the encouragement of an active semiclandestine press—*Revolução Popular*, organ of the Comitês Amílcar Cabral (CACs);¹⁵ and *Luta do Povo*, organ of the Comitês Henda¹⁶—the first Neighborhood

15. These were formed by Angolan students with experience in the "Marxist-Leninist" groups that gave origin to the Portuguese UDP [União Democrático do Povo—People's Democratic Union, an eclectic Maoist organization]. In the beginning, they claimed to adhere to the MPLA, but in 1975 they followed the official Chinese line closely, demanding that the accords between the "three liberation movements, the FNLA, MPLA, and UNITA" be respected.

Very influential in the Neighborhood People's Committees in Luanda, the CACs argued that these bodies should be "nonparty," a line that came into conflict with the MPLA's policy of controlling these mass organizations. They published *Revolução Popular* and a supplement for workers called *Libertação Nacional* (which was a factory paper). They had an influence over the Coordinating Committee of the Neighborhood People's Committees and its paper *Popper Popular*.

The CACs were suppressed by the MPLA shortly before independence. The MPLA took advantage of their criminal campaign against "social imperialist" military aid to Angola, at a time when the county was being invaded by South Africa and regular troops of the Mobutu regime. Their leading activists were jailed in São Paulo prison in Luanda and their organization was broken up. Some of their activists formed the Organização Comunista Angolana (OCA—Angolan Communist Organization) in Portugal, where they have the backing of the UDP.

16. The Comitês Henda are semi-Maoist in origin. Some of their leaders were activists in the MRPP [Movimento Reorganizativo do Partido do Proletariado—Movement to Reorganize the Proletarian Party, an ultraleft sectarian Maoist group in Portugal]. They were so-called "passives" because being foreigners in Portugal supposedly prevented them from interfering in the "internal life of another country." This group always claimed adherence to the MPLA, and its tactic for intervening was based on attempts to influence factions in the apparatus of the movement. Initially, they gained influence over Nitista leaders (Bakaloff, Nito Alves, Zé Van Dú-nem, Nado). But they lost all this influence to the

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People's Commissions began to form. Beginning in late 1974, they started pushing the theme of "people's power." They called for the following:

Formation of armed militias to resist the racist violence, supervision of the prices of merchants, organization of consumer cooperatives and teams to take care of sanitation, hygiene, and health. [Interview with the Prenda Neighborhood People's Commission, in the January 1, 1975, issue of the magazine *Angola*, published by the Liga Nacional Africana.¹⁷]

On October 16, 1974, the city hall of Luanda was occupied by demonstrators from the muçeques led by the Golfe neighborhood militia. On February 1, 1975, the First People's Assembly of Luanda met. This was the culmination of the "week of people's power," which was denounced by UNITA and the FNLA and supported, after some hesitation, by the MPLA leadership. The following motion was adopted:

The People's Assembly of Luanda is the highest decision-making body of the Angolan people. The coordinating body of the Neighborhood Commissions is entrusted with implementing the decisions of the assembly and the representatives of the people of Luanda. The members of the coordinating body of the Neighborhood People's Commissions will be elected by the people in Neighborhood People's Assemblies, and only the people can remove them from office.

Along with this, hundreds of strikes developed in the two most important industrial areas (Cacuaco-Luanda-Viana and Lobito-Benguela). There were strikes by the dock workers in Luanda and Lobito, by the railway workers in Benguela, by the steelworkers in Luanda, by the Shell Oil workers, in the sugar mills in Tentativa and Cassequel, by the Textang (textiles) workers, by the fishermen in Luanda and Benguela, and by other groups of workers.

The first attempts were made to get work going again in the factories that had been abandoned by their owners.

The colonial structure, ridden with sharp contradictions, could not hold up under the pressure exerted by a working class that was learning that it could make demands.

Portuguese Communist Party group (Cita Vales, Rui Coelho).

The "Hendas" (as they are known) have gained positions on the intermediary rungs of the state apparatus and are today close to the Lopo do Nascimento faction, for which they provide an "anti-Cuban" ideological cover.

17. This is an Angolan cultural association, a traditional meeting ground for nationalist intellectuals. Among those who were active in it were the intellectuals of the "Vamos Conhecer Angola" [Let's Learn to Know Angola] movement (1949), which was a school for national leaders such as Viriato da Cruz, Mário de Andrade, Agostinho Neto, and others. During the last colonial war (1961-74), its activities were kept under strict surveillance by the PIDE. After April 25, its leaders were pro-MPLA.

Against the background of this social agitation, the political situation was sharpening.

In the initial period after April 25, the Portuguese followed an openly neocolonialist policy. This phase was marked by the meetings between Spínola and Mobutu on the island of Sal in September 1974 and between Mário Soares, Mobutu, Chipenda, and [FNLA leader] Holden Roberto in Kinshasa. At the time, Soares, then Portuguese minister for foreign affairs, declared: "We all speak the same language."

This phase was followed by the slippery policy of the Vasco Gonçalves government, which said that it regarded the decolonization process in Angola as "special and different," different that is from what was planned for Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde. It stated its position in a communiqué dated August 8, 1974, and this position was reiterated by the Portuguese government after the ouster of General Spínola. The communiqué said:

Once a cease-fire agreement is achieved, the Portuguese government will immediately establish a provisional government in which representatives of all the liberation groups will be included, along with representatives of the most important ethnic groups in the Angolan state, which will obviously include the white ethnic group.

Parallel to these last maneuvers by the Portuguese neocolonialists, the American imperialists reactivated the FNLA and UNITA puppet groups. Thus, in the post-April 25 period, the MPLA, unlike the PAIGC and Frelimo, would have to fight in the arena of mass struggle in order to win political power.

At this time, any observer following the Angolan situation with any degree of attentiveness would have noticed that the axis of the struggle was in Luanda.

The decision by Neto and Lara to allow the group led by Nito Alves and Zé Van Dúnem to participate in the leadership was an attempt to reestablish ties between the MPLA and the urban masses, links that had been neglected for many years as a result of a shortsighted policy.

In fact, the first MPLA activists to enter the capital came from the First Political-Military Region (Nito Alves began working clandestinely there in January 1974) and from among the Luandan political prisoners released from the São Nicolau prison camp (the Zé Van Dúnem group).¹⁸

It was these elements, along with the semi-Maoist Comitês Amílcar Cabral and the Comitês Henda (with which they worked closely), that led the mobilizations

of the Luandan workers in the factories, in the muçeques, and even in the colonial army. In July they directed an uprising of Angolan soldiers in the Portuguese armed forces, who demanded the right to defend the muçeques from the racist attacks.

One of the factors that helped to radicalize the process was the presence in Luanda of armed delegations from the UNITA and FNLA, and their collusion respectively with the most reactionary colonial forces and with Mobutu. This provided a clear example of neocolonialism for the Angolan masses.

Unfortunately, in the name of "national unity," the CACs and the Comitês Henda held back from attacking the neocolonialist organizations. This kept the MPLA from being pressed to give a political character to its differences with the puppet organizations. It made it possible for the MPLA to become entangled in a policy of maneuvering to achieve a favorable balance of forces.

Beginning in January 1975, the MPLA sat in the Provisional Government alongside the puppets, *without anyone demanding an accounting*. At the same time, through the Nitista faction, it was able if not to control the mass movement, at least to exercise an influence in it.

While the MPLA was officially signing joint communiqués with the FNLA and UNITA, its governmental partners, it was obliged in its press to adapt to the mass radicalization.

Thus, in August 1975, the magazine *Angola*, published by the pro-MPLA Liga Nacional Africana, could run long articles opposing the "national reconstruction" policy of the "reactionary majority" government (in which the MPLA participated).

UNTA,¹⁹ the pro-MPLA union confederation, waged a campaign against the "placing of the dock workers under military discipline," a measure decreed by the Provisional Government in which the MPLA sat. It demanded "the immediate recognition of the Neighborhood Committees and all the organs of People's Power."

It called on the people to demonstrate outside the government palace to demand "recognition of the resolutions of the First People's Assembly of Luanda." Its Executive Committee raised "a strong protest against the transitional government's call for a suspension of strikes" (*A Voz dos Trabalhadores*, central organ of the UNTA, March 1975).

The very official organ of the MPLA, *Vitória é Certa*, ran a big headline in its May 24, 1975, issue proclaiming an "ultra-left" nostrum: "Production Cannot Be Increased Until Exploitation Is Ended." The article supported the strike at Textang.

18. The first official delegation of the MPLA, led by Political Bureau members Lúcio Lara and Onambwe, reached Luanda only on November 8, 1974.

19. União Nacional dos Trabalhadores de Angola (National Union of Angolan Workers).

The positions expressed by the MPLA press were symptomatic of two important factors operating in the Angolan situation at the time—the radicalization of the workers and the sensitivity of the apparatus to its pressures.

It was this sensitivity, reinforced by the organic link it had with the masses through the Nitistas, that made it possible for the MPLA to achieve its objective of controlling the mass movement.

Moreover, the concessions made at the Interregional Conference, the sharing of the leadership with the Nitista group, began to bear fruit. The "Political Bureau Report on the May 27 Attempted Coup d'Etat" explains explicitly:

At first the Nito Alves and Zé Van Dúnem group mingled in with other factionalist groups (such as the Comitês Amílcar Cabral, the Comitês Henda, and others), using these groups as a springboard. Then, after they had helped the MPLA leadership to neutralize their rival factionalists, the Nito Alves and Zé Van Dúnem

pressed the "ultraleftist" organizations in an attempt to gain complete control of the mass movement.

The main target of this repression was the Comitês Amílcar Cabral. This was for two reasons. One was the problem represented by their strength in the Neighborhood People's Commissions. The other was that their own irresponsible policy gave their repressors a pretext for going after them.

Since the Comitês Amílcar Cabral were more right-wing than the MPLA leadership as regards the concessions they wanted to make to the puppet groups, it was easy to slander them as allies of the FNLA and UNITA.

Moreover, the hue and cry these groups raised about "social imperialist" arms being sent to the MPLA could scarcely be understood by a population that recognized the need to drive out the heavily armed forces of the ELNA, the FNLA's army; and the FALA, the UNITA's army; as well as their Zaïrian and South African allies.

It was by taking advantage of such errors that the Nitista group was able, following the Second Week of Propaganda for People's Power in Luanda in August 1975, to win the predominant influence in

the Neighborhood People's Commissions away from the CACs. And as a result it was able to use these commissions as transmission belts for the slogans and directives of the MPLA.

The transformation of the civil war into a war of resistance to the invasion by the regular troops of the Mobutu regime and of South Africa enabled the MPLA to speed up the process of converting the Neighborhood People's Commissions into its instruments.

In October 1975, the delegates to the First Conference of UNTA learned to their indignation, from an addendum printed by mistake, that the statutes they had just adopted and the National Secretariat they had just put in office had been decided on previously by the Political Bureau of the

group emerged with a greater predominance.

Thus, using the Nitista faction, which at this point was already under the influence of the Cita Vales-Rui Coelho group linked to the Portuguese CP,²⁰ the MPLA sup-

FAPLA troops in action in Luanda during the civil war.



nections.

Covering up its relationship with a person who was the best-known leader of the Union of Communist Students, Cita Vales, was more difficult for the CP, but a lack of persistence is not a fault that we can attribute to the leadership of this party. This persistence, along with a lack of any shame, was shown in the circulating of a version that Cita had left the CP earlier. If she had left, it would have involved a split (although no one has heard of any such thing), since she had dozens of associates who were known to be CP members and were expelled, imprisoned, or shot after May 27 (e.g., Rui Coelho, Nuno Simões, Edgar Vales, Manuel Vidigal, to mention just a few). If Cita Vales had left, it would not have been because of any grave fault or betrayal on her part (because if that were so, the CP should have denounced her then). This means that whatever the relationship is between the CP and Cita Vales, the party should not have abandoned her to a repression that accorded her no legal or human rights.

20. After May 27, the Portuguese CP made various attempts to wriggle out of such compromising ties.

Rui Coelho, a member of Nito Alves's staff when Alves was minister of the interior, said in the "public confession" he was forced to make over Angolan TV that when he was in Portugal he was a member of the CP. In its transcription of this confession, *O Diário* [an unofficial CP paper] made a typographical error. It wrote that he said he was a member of the Portuguese CP

(M-L). Obviously this "typo" fooled neither the Angolans who read *O Diário* (the only Portuguese paper sold in Angola) nor the students at the law school of the University of Lisbon, who remember him as one of the most active members of the Union of Communist Students [the CP student organization].

The book *A crise do apartheid em Africa* by Edgar Vales, which was published by Seara Nova before May 27 was taken off the market after May 27 because the author made the "grave political error" of being Cita Vales's brother. Our local Stalinist censors thus went back to the old tradition of their current, directing repression against people just because of their family con-

MPLA. Later the bureaucratic hacks explained that this had been done because of the "imperative national needs" created by the South African invasion.

Following independence (which came on November 11), the MPLA leadership and the government of the new People's Republic raised the slogan: "The Way to Fight Back Is to Produce." And they tried to put this slogan across in the factories and in all places of production.

On December 15, Law No. 11/75 on "Discipline in the Productive Process" was approved. Taking the pretext of "the war that has been forced on us by the enemies of the Angolan people," this act established penalties for a series of "crimes against production." These included "lack of punctuality and diligence," "strikes unauthorized by the unions," and so forth.

Article No. 18 (Part III) of the new law made the union shop committees into repressive instruments:

Members of union committees and union locals that fail to report to the Ministry of Labor such crimes against production will be tried and sentenced as accomplices.

In the same way, the MPLA sought to take control of the Neighborhood People's Commissions. On February 5, 1976, the government adopted the ironically named "People's Power Law." In Section 3, Article 44, this act states:

Nominations for membership in the grassroots people's commissions can be made only by (a) the MPLA Action Committees, (b) UNTA, (c) the MPLA Youth, (d) the Angolan Women's Organization.

Its prestige shored up by the expulsion of the South Africans and the Zairians from the country, the MPLA leadership moved to channel all the administrative life of the country through its structures. The main role was played specifically by the following institutions:

1. The steering committees and political commissariats, which are the highest party and state bodies on the provincial level.

2. The FAPLA. The armed forces went through a long process of reorganization in which a hierarchy was built up. This was not easy, since there was resistance from the young political-military commissars in particular.

3. The DISA, the political police.

Arming of the masses was dropped. The distribution of arms outside the regular armed forces was turned over to paramilitary structures of the party, the Organização da Defesa Popular (ODP—People's Defense Organization). These units play an important role only in those rural areas not yet under government control. For example, it is the ODP that organizes the *quimbos*, or villages, in Bié and Huambo where UNITA has lost its influence or not yet gained any.

In addition to launching the campaign around the slogan "The Way to Fight Back

Is to Produce" and adopting the law on "Discipline in the Productive Process," the government has appointed state/party administrative commissions with full executive powers to run the state enterprises and those companies that have been put under state supervision.

It is the central bodies that set the short-term norms of emulation and annual production quotas. This is done through the ministry planning boards, under the coordination of the National Planning Commission. They are assisted by the section leaderships and the UNTA, which plays a role in emulation plans. All of this is done in a bureaucratic way. Those who actually do the work of production, the workers, are not called upon to participate in deciding what is to be done or in supervising the execution of the tasks.

The final thing that the MPLA had to do to accomplish its "normalization" operation was to "clean out its own house."

A number of factors had prepared the way for the Neto-Lara leadership to undertake this job. Its prestige had been given a boost by the expulsion of the invaders. It had already taken the basic steps to take control of the mass movement, which was now channelled through its transmission-belt structures—the UNTA, ODP, MPLA Youth, the Angolan Women's Organization, and others. Moreover, it had the political, military, and ideological support of the Cubans. The Neto-Lara leadership knew that they had to get rid of the "thorn in their flesh" represented by the Nitistas.

In the first place, the Nitistas had political ambitions of their own. They were trying to become an alternative to the leading faction, and to this end they had occupied powerful positions in the party and state apparatus (especially in the FAPLA and DISA).

Secondly, the Nitistas' strategy involved mobilization and opposition, and it was attracting the more radical elements. These included the Luanda dock workers; the people in certain *mucques* with a tradition of struggle, such as Sambizanga and Rangel; and in particular the most combative elements in the FAPLA, specifically the political commissars.

These more radical elements were struck by the contrast between the beginning signs of corruption and careerism among the "political personal" and the day-to-day difficulties in the neighborhoods and on the battlefronts.

While the news media that the Nitistas controlled—the daily *Diário de Luanda* and the radio programs "Kudibanguela" and "People in Arms"—hailed Nito Alves as an "outstanding political figure, philo-

sopher, fighter, and poet," they also made just criticisms of the social situation. At this time, people could see disorganization, scarcity, and hunger (no mere literary expression in 1976 and 1977) going hand in hand with the appearance of a succession of Alfa Romeos, Volvos, and Mercedes at the homes of the new ministers and their respective consorts.

Following the Third Plenum of the Central Committee in October 1976, the Nitistas began to be removed officially from their ministerial and party posts.²¹ This culminated on May 20, 1977, with the expulsion of Nito Alves and Zé Van Dú-nem from the Central Committee in a maneuver whose most immediate aim was to prevent them from taking part in the congress.

The Nitistas were forced into clandestine activity. And they proved unable to respond to these conditions in any other way than by adopting a putschist course. This is despite the fact that throughout May they were gaining support in a number of neighborhoods (Sambizanga, Rangel, Prenda, Nelito Soares) and in units of the FAPLA (the Ninth Armored Brigade, the Military Police, and the Women's Detachment).

Although it originated in an intra-bureaucratic faction fight, May 27 had tragic consequences in that it provided a pretext for unleashing repression against the most radical sections of the working people and the activists in the neighborhoods, the factories, and in the FAPLA. A particularly disastrous consequence of the May 27 events was that an atmosphere of terror²² was created that discouraged the masses from trying to engage in any activity outside the channels established by the MPLA.

The MPLA did not miss its chance to inflict a defeat on the workers that could serve as an effective warning. As a result, strike attempts since May 27 have been easily demobilized. An example of this is what happened at the Sigá bag factory in Luanda. Third Deputy Premier Loy intervened right in the middle of a workers assembly. All he had to do was allude to connections between the strike and "factional activities." An implicit threat was left hanging.

want to speculate about conspiracies, but this omission in the purge was a boon to the campaign against "Nitista sabotage" that aided in the repressive crackdown after May 27.

22. These are just a few cases of the hundreds of assassinations carried out by the MPLA leadership.

In Ngunza, the capital of Kwanza Sul, where the provincial commissar was a Nitista, on the night of August 6 some 204 alleged "factionalists" were shot down.

In Luena, the capital of Moxico, in the days immediately following the putsch in Luanda, all the political commissars of the FAPLA were assassinated on the orders of Central Committee member Sapilinia.

21. David Aires Machado, who used the pseudonym Minerva, minister of internal commerce, and therefore responsible for organizing the supply of consumer goods, is the only well-known Nitista in a high governmental position who escaped the October 1976 purge. I do not



The wave of repression also struck the UNTA. Its former general secretary, Aristides Van Dúnem, was reportedly likely to be condemned to death. On the pretext that they had been "infiltrated by the Nitistas," all the union commissions were suspended, awaiting the outcome of an inquiry.

Only by relearning clandestine methods of organization, opposition, and struggle; only by regaining their confidence through small victories; only if the coming vanguards learn the political lessons of this setback, will the Angolan working masses be able to shake off the feeling of defeat.

The Role of the Cubans

In the construction of a state apparatus and in "normalizing" administrative life and the functioning of various social and economic structures, the support of the Cubans has played an essential role throughout the Angolan process.

The Cuban intervention on the side of the MPLA after the South African and Zaïrian invasions was ambiguous and contradictory.

We should consider important by itself such a decision by a deformed workers state, by its voluntary and conscious disruption of the international status quo, without its borders or national interest being in danger. We know that this could only be done by a leadership such as the Castroist one.

In the most important stages of its historical development, the Castro leadership was built despite the Soviet aims or even in direct contradiction to them. Its links with the masses, like those of the Vietnamese, cannot be compared to the situation in other workers states.

However, we think that the well-known analysis, which was made explicitly by the Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez in his article "Operation Carlota" (published in the *Jornal do Angola*) is not correct in stating that the Cuban decision was made in a sovereign way and that the Soviets were presented with an accomplished fact.²³

The Cuban intervention did break the limiting and ideologically dangerous framework of "African solidarity" and "pan-Africanism" so much in vogue in the MPLA's propaganda. It forced the MPLA to recognize a higher and clearer form of anti-imperialism. However, the role that the Cubans played subsequently demonstrated that their involvement was essentially within the context of the general

Soviet strategy.

The Cubans were more perceptive and subtle in their understanding of the geopolitical phenomena of the so-called Third World. Thus, they could provide effective logistic support and political counseling. The Soviets (and other East European countries) have already demonstrated on several occasions (as in Egypt and Somalia) that they cannot do this.

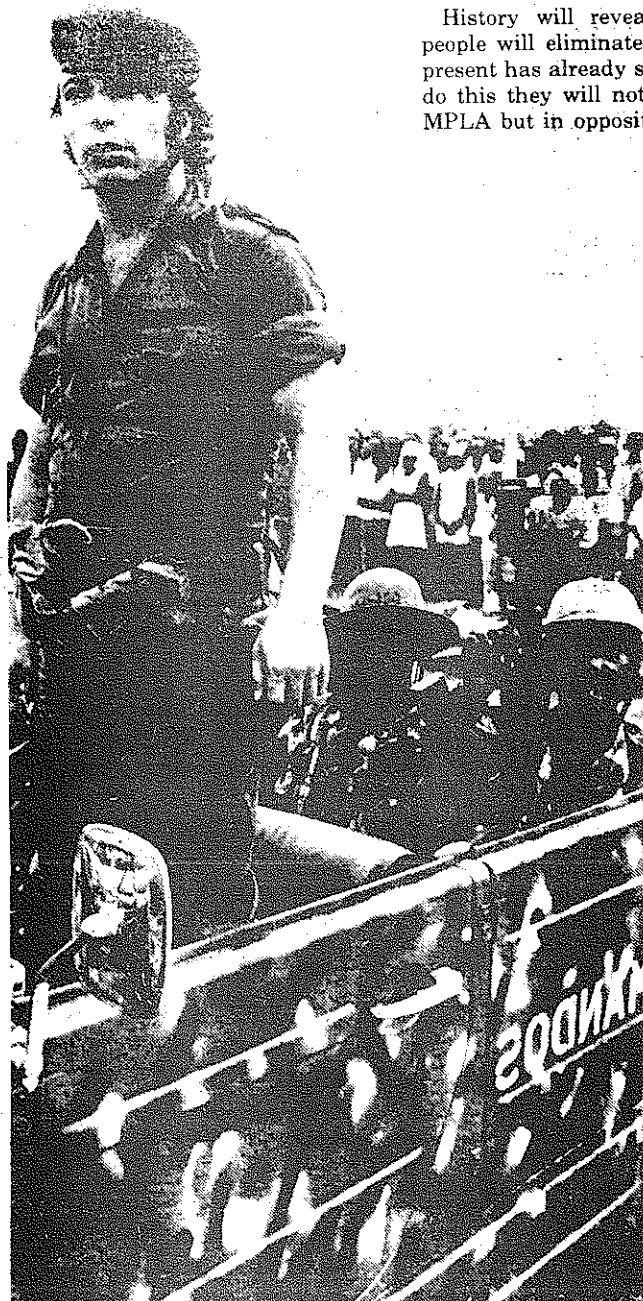
The Soviets are hindered by their great-power attitudes, their commercial ambi-

tions, and their political and economic arrogance (e.g., the shameful plundering of Angolan territorial waters between Porto Alexandre and Benguela by Soviet trawlers). Thus, the Soviets cannot have the flexibility that the Cubans do, a flexibility that in the last analysis is necessary to carry out the Soviet strategy—to build a "progressive" state.

Whatever tactical differences the Soviets and Cubans may have, their actions do not serve the interests of the workers.

As a result of the actions of the Cubans and the Soviets, the essential foundations have been laid for the emergence of a bureaucratic bourgeoisie based on the state capitalist sector. There are no organs of mass control. The state enterprises function in a bureaucratic way. There is a strong economic sector linked to imperialism.

History will reveal how the Angolan people will eliminate these obstacles. The present has already shown that when they do this they will not be organized in the MPLA but in opposition to it. □



23. García Márquez wrote: "The Cuban CP leadership had only twenty-four hours to decide. It did so unhesitatingly in a long and calm meeting on November 5. Contrary to what has been said on several occasions, this was an independent and sovereign decision by Cuba. Only after the decision was made, and not before, was the Soviet Union informed."

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