

Angola News Summary

Contact number: 222-2893

April 22, 1976

MAJOR WAR OVER IN ANGOLA -- NOW TO REBUILD

Report from Angola by William and Ruth Minter,
friends of the MPLA Solidarity Committee

Luanda, April 4, 1976 -- The war in Angola is now practically over. With the final withdrawal of South African troops from southern Angola on March 27, only small isolated pockets of resistance face the victorious FAPLA, the national army of the People's Republic of Angola, led by the MPLA. The South African adventure, backed by a motley collection of CIA-financed mercenaries and Angolan organizations, has come to an inglorious end.

There is gratitude here in Angola to the peoples of Cuba, of Guinea Bissau, and of Guinea Conakry, who contributed military forces to match the invading South African tank columns, and to others, such as those of Mozambique and Algeria, who contributed materially and diplomatically. But there is also pride -- in the Angolan people who resisted the occupation and who volunteered for the FAPLA in greater numbers than could be absorbed, and in the FAPLA which dealt a crushing blow to the myth of white South African military invincibility. And there is a sober consciousness that while the war may be over, the destruction was enormous, making the work of rebuilding a huge task. Again and again, as we talked to people here, we heard the comment, "We are starting practically from zero."

Perhaps the most striking destruction was of the country's transport capacity. More than one hundred bridges were destroyed during the war. On a trip north of the capital we noted three such bridges within a space of some thirty miles. In all these cases replacements, more or less temporary, had already been constructed. But there is also a tremendous shortage of vehicles, especially heavy trucks. Many were destroyed, and many others were taken by the withdrawing enemy. In one site in Luanda FNLA troops had dumped vehicles over a cliff into the sea. Other vehicles were taken out of the country by Portuguese settlers who left before independence last November. Currency restrictions limited the cash flow out of the country, but those leaving bought out the stocks of many stores, taking all kinds of goods including vehicles, machinery, and spare parts. The Portuguese colonial government then in control exercised no effective curbs on the export of equipment vital to the future of the country. Moreover, those leaving included a majority of the trained mechanics and other middle-level technical personnel in the country. This exodus, coupled with the war, paralyzed not only much of the transport system, but also the majority of the large agricultural and industrial enterprises in the country.

One of the most urgent needs identified by the Government is to get the transport system working adequately, above all for the

supply of foodstuffs and for other essential internal commerce. Productive enterprises, many of which were abandoned by their owners and face shortages of technical personnel and spare parts, are being put back into operation. All over Angola agricultural cooperatives, worker commissions, consumer cooperatives, state agencies and enterprises, and multi-purpose "emergency commissions" are being formed to get things going again.

It is by dealing with the day-to-day problems of the masses of the people that the MPLA plans to win back those who in some areas of the country had been mobilized against it on tribal grounds. The MPLA position is clearly non-vindictive; those who supported other movements, even as soldiers, are welcome to participate as citizens in national reconstruction. Those responsible for massacres and tortures will have to be judged, but the ordinary man or woman who may have supported FNLA or UNITA has nothing to fear.

In recent days, President Agostinho Neto has visited Uige and Negage, in the heart of so-called "FNLA territory," speaking to and mingling with large crowds. Political Bureau member Lucio Lara spoke to crowds in Lubango (in southern Angola) on the occasion of the final withdrawal of South African forces. From Huambo, former center of Savimbi's UNITA forces, a reporter from the Jornal de Angola described the return to normality. Cooperatives are being organized, and people are getting back to work, he noted. Cattle, which had been running wild and subject to indiscriminate slaughter, are now being gathered together and taken care of by peasant committees. During the UNITA occupation people were told that it wasn't necessary to work because Savimbi would provide food and riches. MPLA, taking a quite different position, has issued a call to work, to mobilize and organize Angola's people and resources. Aid from friendly countries, Government spokespersons emphasize, can only be supplementary, not something to be dependent on.

Luanda is one of the areas where the people had been most strongly mobilized for resistance against the invasion and in support of the MPLA. We visited the bairro Sambizanga, where twelve bases of FNLA troops failed to stifle popular resistance or even stop the "clandestine" construction of a community center. People's Commissions in the "bairros" have been organized openly since the expulsion of FNLA forces from the city last year. They are responsible for a wide variety of programs, from organizing consumer cooperatives to literacy classes and soccer matches. Next month, in the province of Luanda, there will be elections for the members of these Commissions, the first step in the application of the recently formalized "Law of People's Power." MPLA leaders stress that those elected should be MPLA militants, and the majority should be workers or peasants.

Getting production going, organizing people's power, establishing national unity - these are some of the priorities of the People's Republic of Angola. Obstacles are not lacking. South Africa and the CIA may have given up on open intervention, but

their hostility to Angola is likely to continue through sabotage and subversion. And the transformation of minds scarred by colonialism and a divisive war will not be easy. Some examples: Students in Luanda have been mobilized during the last months for work in the surrounding rural areas, in an effort to break down the colonial idea that manual agricultural work is only for the uneducated. Many students report that they have learned a lot from working with the peasants, but some gave up and went back to the city after only a short time. The behavior of the FAPLA soldiers has been exemplary, especially if contrasted with the harassment heaped on the people by the undisciplined enemy forces. But there are some "kazukuteiros" (troublemakers) who abuse their authority, and who are now being weeded out of the armed forces. The organization of food supplies to the cities is already sufficient for basic needs, and is improving. But hoarding, speculation, and general shortages are far from being wiped out.

Government and party officials here make no effort to hide these problems. The years ahead may be more difficult than those of the war, they say. But there is a clear vision of the priorities, a determination to deal with the difficulties, and a pride in the victories already won. These give grounds for optimism for the future of Angola.

NEWS FLASH

Democratic Kampuchea (formerly Cambodia) recognized the People's Republic of Angola on March 10, 1976.

The Republic of Zambia recognized the People's Republic of Angola on April 15, 1976.

RESOURCES

OMA (Organization of Angolan Women) button available from the Chicago Committee for the Liberation of Angola, Mozambique & Guinea-Bissau (CCLAMG). Order from S. Stout c/o New World Resource Center, 1476 W. Irving Park Road, Chicago, Illinois 60613. Price 50¢ each & 40% off on bulk orders of over 10.

Also available from CCLAMG at the same price is a booklet on the Organization of Angolan Women and Liberation in Southern Africa. Please add 50¢ for postage.

EXCERPTS FROM A SPEECH BY COMRADE LUCIO LARA, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE MPLA, IN LUBANGO (FORMERLY SA DA BANDEIRA), HUILA PROVINCE, MARCH 28, 1976. -- Unofficial translation by friends of the MPLA Solidarity Committee.

We are here today among you to celebrate a great victory of our people, a great victory of the FAPLA, a great victory of internationalism: the total expulsion of the "carcamanos" from our national soil. Yesterday, March 27, the South African aggressors, the lackey aggressors of imperialism, forced by the military power of our FAPLA, of our people, helped by our friends, were obliged to withdraw....

Viva the FAPLA!...

Comrades, we have always spoken harshly of the South Africans. But we should remember that those South Africans who came here are those who are oppressing the people of South Africa and that not all South Africans are aggressors. There are South Africans who live under oppression and who also struggle for their liberation. Today we are proud and joyful to have with us the worthy representatives of that people, comrades who struggled together with us for many years, who suffered humiliations as we did, and like us hope that the struggle will sweep away all oppression and exploitation from Africa. I want to present to you the comrade President of the African National Congress and his co-worker....

And in this joy that we share here today we should not refrain from saluting those who came to our aid from far away, at our request, at the request of the sovereign and independent People's Republic of Angola. They came to help us, to oppose the sophisticated weapons of imperialism with the sophisticated weapons of the free peoples of the world. We saw here the internationalism of the people of Cuba, who shed their blood together with ours so that Angola might be free. Viva Cuba! Viva the Cuban people! Viva Fidel Castro!

We should also associate with this victory the progressive African peoples, some of whom did not hesitate to answer our appeal and put at our disposal not only war material but also men. Among these peoples we single out in particular the people of Guinea Bissau who sent us comrades in struggle, the people of Mozambique, who gave us war material, the people of Guinea Conakry, who also sent men to join together with our FAPLA. We remember also other peoples who in the political and diplomatic camp contributed to the defeat of imperialism in Angola....

The insult is over. Now it is the people who really give the orders, and the MPLA who guides the people. The MPLA is engaged in ensuring that the People's Republic of Angola will truly reflect the wishes of a worthy people, a people who refuse ever again to be subjected to humiliation by individuals without morals and without scruples who only come in search of easy profits.

That is finished now. We are simply defending what is ours,

our dignity above all, and saying to those gentlemen who still believe that the old times will come back that they are quite deceived.

MPLA is not now to begin a new process of repression. Not at all. The MPLA is what it always was: a people's movement, a movement of justice, a movement of dignity, and we do not wish evil to anyone.

The MPLA is not a racist movement. ...The Angolan is black, is mulato, is white. But we have to be conscious that to be an Angolan is to identify oneself with the Angolan people. There are no superior Angolans. We have to be Angolans, and that means, today, that we have to build a country in which all those who were exploited until today cease to be exploited and become those who will hold power in this land.

When we say that the struggle continues for People's Power, we are not being demagogues. We feel that it is those who have suffered that exploitation who can best build a country without exploitation. It is for this reason that MPLA entrusts the difficult mission of building the future of this land to the workers of Angola - the workers in the countryside, the workers in the factories in the offices and the schools. It is for this reason that we say that the power must be with the people. The people are those who don't exploit. In the people of the MPLA there are no exploiters. Those who still want to exploit, those who still benefit from the work of others, those must not hold power in Angola.

Our people has already suffered greatly. Not only in the 500 years of colonialism, but also in the short months of the so-called transitional government, during which the puppets invaded this country, our people knew enormous suffering....These puppets killed in cold blood the most worthy sons and daughters of our people... thousands gave their blood so that today we could affirm that we won the first stage of the struggle against imperialism.

I say the first stage because now begins the second stage, a struggle that is going to be even more difficult, comrades. We have to prepare ourselves for it, we have to reinforce our unity, we have to reinforce our vigilance, and above all, we have to be prepared for great sacrifices. I said that the enemy destroyed our country, but that destruction was not only here in the south of Angola. From the north to the south more than one hundred bridges were destroyed, airports destroyed, trucks, cars, tractors destroyed or stolen, even food, such as corn and wheat, was burned. Now we have to rebuild, and we are beginning from almost zero.

Technical personnel have fled; some factories have stopped and workers often feel themselves unable to get them going again. Production in all sectors has dropped extraordinarily, but many sectors of our people have continued to produce. Our people have produced coffee, corn, "massango", rice. But these products are in the "kimbos", in the "sanzalas", because there is no transport, because there are no roads, because there are no bridges. Now we have to organize ourselves. The administration is practically non-existent,

and that's all for the better because it was the colonial administration, but now we have to create our own administration, the administration of the People's Republic of Angola. We can't rest on our laurels now, we cannot simply be content to congratulate ourselves for having expelled the enemy.

No, comrades, the years to come are years of sacrifices: our schools are without teachers, our children are without schools. All the structure that we had that might have benefitted our people has been destroyed. Together, sincerely, courageously, and enthusiastically we have to join our forces and our heads, plan together, take initiatives, help those responsible, criticize them when necessary - and let's not be afraid of criticism, comrades. Criticism is the only weapon the MPLA has and it should come from the people and be sincere....

This visit of ours was extraordinarily positive. In the first place we had the opportunity to be with the combatants of FAPLA on the advanced front where they faced the South African invaders.... We saw also that in this area of Huila the working people stayed at their posts, work continued, production continued, although I saw many things are lacking. We have seen Angolan patriots who have the will to advance the production of riches that will go, in this critical moment of our existence, to benefit our people. That was for us a great joy, to be able to note that corn was still cultivated that wheat was harvested and that already a new crop is to be planted, that the cattle have continued to reproduce themselves (although we know there was a great slaughter of cattle by the puppets and the invaders).

Now it is necessary to do everything again. We have to apply ourselves to the maximum, so that all the riches of the province may become the property of the people, so that it is not lost.

...There are many things that are stopped. There is a lack of orientation, a lack of technical personnel. But let's know how to redouble our efforts, let us have confidence in the workers - because there are many workers who can, effectively and at least for a provisional period, continue to run the machines and to direct the factories, and even the abandoned plantations. Therefore we ask all the people to mobilize themselves for work....

And with this, comrades, I render great homage to the people of Huila and of Lubango for the determined way that they held up under the privations which the enemy imposed on them, for the determined way they continue to support the objectives of our movement,... and for the enthusiastic way in which we all are going to throw ourselves into the second stage of our Revolution: National Reconstruction.

EDUCATION IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA

excerpted from West Africa (Nigeria) Mar.8, '76
by Michael Wolfers, taken from Facts and Report

The "New School" in the People's Republic of Angola is due to begin in April.... The broad lines of the new educational policy were mapped out in a national conference held in Luanda from October 20 to November 4, even before the proclamation of the new state on November 11 last year. Since the initial conference, which drew heavily on experience gained in the...(MPLA schools in the liberated areas of Angola) during the years of guerrilla warfare, discussion and consultation has continued at all levels of education -- from the demand for adult literacy instruction, through the primary sector to the plans for higher technological training....

The educational program is led by Camarada Antonio Jacinto, the Minister of Education and Culture, a nationalist fighter and poet who spent 11 years in prison during the struggle for independence... (He) is in constant consultation with teachers, workers, and students as it is MPLA policy that direction within the educational sector should follow the pattern of poder popular, now being established for public administration and already fairly well entrenched in most places of work. The guidelines for school administration calls for democratic direction. When necessary, the entire membership of a school (students and workers) can meet in a decision-making assembly...

(M)uch traditional teaching material (will) be discarded. Some alternative materials were prepared by and for the MPLA during the first liberation struggle.

At the juridical level, the government of Angola has already decided that education should be state controlled(though some temporary dispensation is to be allowed for church schools,...provided that their timetables and syllabus are adjusted in line with the state system.) The guidelines for future education require that schooling should be extended in the countryside.... Teaching will be linked to the aims of the MPLA for "people's power" and solidarity and will be directed by workers, who will be in contact with the various institutions of people's power at local, regional, and national levels..

More than 90% of the Angolan people are illiterate and the projected fight against illiteracy is one of the most crucial tasks. Decisions whether to work through the traditional languages or through the lingua franca of Portuguese have still to be taken, though it is already being closely studied. For adult literacy there are obvious advantages in using traditional African languages, but Portuguese is likely to be the main instrument for formal teaching.

RESOURCES

New Angolan poster in purple, green, brown and white with educational theme from MPLA Solidarity Committee. Prices: \$1.50 each
\$1 each for 10 or more
75¢ each for 100