

ANGOLA...

LUANDA IS MADRID

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Paris

Angola has become the focal point of world political conflict in the 1970s in exactly the way Vietnam was in the 1960s and Spain in the 1930s. It is the story of a localized war which is nonetheless the meeting point of world forces. It is a long and extended war. Despite all the complexities and confusions, the sides are clear, and those who will not choose have thereby chosen. Its outcome will have a major effect not merely on its immediate neighbors, but on political struggles everywhere in the world.

For all these reasons it is extremely important to get the facts straight, to pull apart the multiple strands which, by now, have a complicated history. I therefore propose to recount in some detail the prehistory of the present struggle, what occurred before the Portuguese coup of 1974. It is only thus that one can appreciate the implications of the present war for southern Africa and the world as a whole.

We start with two particularities that have largely determined the particular evolution of Angola's movement of national liberation: Angola was a colony of Portugal; Angola is located in southern Africa. To have been a colony of Portugal in the 20th century rather than a colony of the other European colonial powers, notably Great Britain or France, meant primarily two things. First, the metropole was itself "underdeveloped," a semi-colony, and the prospective economic losses from decolonization were greater for powerful interests there than they would have been for similar groups in other countries. Hence the resistance to "decolonization" as a political strategy was exceptionally strong. Second, the metropole was, until 1974, a Fascist state in which all opposition (which included all Portuguese even mildly sympathetic to African aspirations) was underground. Hence the possibility for Africa to follow a policy of what might be called "parliamentary anti-colonialism" was nonexistent.

From this pair of pincers many things followed. The freedom movements in the Portuguese colonies were among the last to be formed in the colonial world. The movements were from the beginning clandestine and oriented to armed struggle. Not only did it require a major institutional upheaval in Portugal (how much of a revolution it is seems in doubt) for a policy of decolonization to become legitimate there, but it can truly be said that the struggle of the African movements is what made it possible to overthrow the Fascist regime. Thus the government of

Portugal today, and especially the now-dissolved Armed Forces Movement, owed a particular debt to the African movements. Finally, the fact that movements in Portuguese Africa were among the "last" was not entirely negative. It enabled these movements to profit by the experiences of others, a circumstance that has served the Angolans well today.

The Portuguese component of the background is Portugal's historically structured relative poverty. The southern African component is the opposite. Angola lies astride a mineralogical belt which makes it one of the richest areas in natural resources in the world today—to which was added in the 1960s the fortune of the discovery of oil. Angola is a prize worth seizing, not merely as one more pawn in a world power struggle, but quite literally for itself as an economic entity. And the fate of Angola is intimately tied up with the fates of Zaïre and South Africa, two other economic "prizes." So the world is playing for high economic stakes in the narrow sense, in a way that was never true, for example, in Indochina.

These two components—Portugal's poverty and southern Africa's wealth—account for much of the history of Angolan nationalism, which I shall try to summarize briefly before coming to the present situation. In the 20th century, three social changes of some significance occurred in Angola, each of which evolved slowly but at an accelerated pace after World War II.

(1) Portuguese policy led to the creation of a very thin segment of educated Angolans who were given the legal status of *assimilados*, a status which accorded access to white-collar and professional positions and, for a few, a university education in Portugal. Some, but by no means all, of this group were mulattoes.

(2) The push to escape forced labor in Angola (which was not abolished, even legally, until 1961) and the pull of economic development in Leopoldville (today called Kinshasa), capital of the neighboring Belgian Congo, led to a steady emigration from northern Angola, especially by the Bakongo, since that tribe was also the "host" ethnic group in Leopoldville and its environs. The migrants "assimilated" well, and many came to speak better French than Portuguese.

(3) The push of agricultural poverty in Portugal and the desire of the authorities to encourage small cash-crop plantations in Angola led to a steady migration of Portuguese colonists, who grew in number to a point that Angola could be placed in the category of white settler colony (along with Algeria, Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, for example).

Three emergent social groups, three political thrusts.

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The urban-educated African cadres in Luanda (and in Lisbon) gave birth in the 1950s to the Movimento Popular para a Libertação de Angola (MPLA). The migrant Bakongo living in Leopoldville gave birth in the 1950s to the Uniao das Populações de Angola (UPA). The white settlers in Angola grew restive as settlers tend to do, flirted for a while with Left opposition to the Salazar regime, and finally fell back for the most part into their logical stance as bulwarks of resistance to any form of "decolonization."

Both the MPLA and the UPA followed paths in their early days which resemble those of many other movements. The MPLA was founded by "intellectuals." It had to carve its nationalism out of the larger entity, greater Portugal, and the latter's ideology of "luso-tropicalism." Thus, it was forced to define itself first of all vis-à-vis the Portuguese Left. In the 1950s the African students in Lisbon (who included Amílcar Cabral, Agostinho Neto, Marcellino dos Santos, Mario de Andrade) were engaged in a little-known ideological debate with the Portuguese Left, including the underground Communist Party. Both sides were opposed to the regime, but whereas the Portuguese Left defined the evil it opposed as "fascism," the African students insisted that the evil was "fascism and colonialism." The founding of the MPLA, the first truly "nationalist" movement in Portuguese Africa, meant the rejection of a view that the internal class struggle in Portugal should take priority over the national liberation of Angola.

The UPA was founded by uprooted urban migrants who came together on their ethnic identity. It started life in 1954 as the UPNA, the "N" standing for North. It was at first nothing but an ethnic association, and its leader was a migrant with some education and links to a traditional chief named Holden Roberto. The UPA tried to create its nationalism by attaching other ethnic groups to its Bakongo base. The first step was the initial change of name in 1958 to UPA. The second step was an alliance with some other neighboring ethnic groups in 1962, which produced the Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (FNLA).

The problem of the MPLA was to enlarge its base vertically in terms of popular support. The problem of the FNLA was to widen its base horizontally in terms of ethnic support. In the 1960s the MPLA was to show itself far more successful than the UPA-FNLA in resolving its problem. The key point to remember, however, is that the present split in Angola of two competing forces had already crystallized by 1960.

The split might conceivably have been overcome in the common nationalist struggle against Portuguese colonialism, had it not been reinforced and sharpened in the larger southern African scene. For it must also be noticed that not only Portuguese Africa but southern Africa as a whole was "late" in decolonizing. And the overall explanation can be stated in two phrases: white settlers and mineral wealth. Here enters the United States Government in the role of long-term protector of the interests of the multinational corporations which controlled this mineral wealth.

In West, Central and East Africa, the United States could afford to be relatively relaxed about the fact of decolonization; indeed, even benignly "liberal." Few investments were at stake, and if these states were decolo-

nized "gracefully" one could expect the resulting independent African governments to be "moderate." And that, by and large, has turned out to be the case. But southern Africa was a major resource area and, largely because of the white-settler element, a more politically volatile one.

The so-called Congo crisis or crises of 1960-64 was the opening phase of what promises to be southern Africa's Thirty Years' War. For the province of Katanga in the Congo (since renamed Shaba in Zaïre) was the northern tip of the mineral belt and had a white-settler population. The sudden decolonization of the Belgian Congo in 1960 was, for the multinationals, a risky "gamble," and for the white settlers of southern Africa a disastrous breach in their fortress. When an authentic and irrepressible nationalist like Patrice Lumumba came to power in the Congo, the risk turned sour and the United States decided to intervene. (Those who followed the situation closely knew this in 1960, but for the doubters quite detailed revelations have recently emerged from the U.S. Congress' investigations into the covert operations of the CIA.)

This is not the place to review the enormously intricate ups and downs of the Congolese crisis. For present purposes, three facts must be kept in mind:

(1) The Congolese divided not into two but into three camps: the Lumumbists, incarnating progressive nationalism; the Katangan secessionists, led by Moïse Tshombe; and a politico-military coalition, including Joseph Kasavubu (Bakongo ethnic leader and first President of the Congo); Cyrille Adoula (the United States' favorite son) and Gen. Joseph-Désiré Mobutu (the man on horseback and ultimate military victor).

(2) Faced with this triple split, the independent African states also split into the so-called "revolutionary" Casablanca group backing the Lumumbists, and the so-called "moderate" Monrovia group backing the Kasavubu-Adoula-Mobutu coalition (the Congo-Brazzaville regime of Abbé Youlou was almost alone in supporting Tshombe). Outside Africa, the USSR backed the Lumumbists (but rather feebly); the United States, the multinationals, the United Nations Secretariat and Great Britain backed the Kasavubu-Adoula-Mobutu forces (and rather vigorously); South Africa, Portugal, Rhodesian whites, Belgian white settlers and to some extent France backed Tshombe (while Belgian mining interests were ambivalent).

(3) As the split in the Congo hardened, so did the corresponding split in Angola. Holden Roberto and the UPA-FNLA were linked politically (and personally) to the Kasavubu-Adoula-Mobutu coalition, while the MPLA was linked in spirit to the Lumumbists. Hence the destruction of the Lumumbist forces in 1964 and the installation of a strong regime by Mobutu in 1965 was a major setback for the MPLA. Conversely, after 1965 it was clear to Mobutu and to the United States that any success for the MPLA would threaten the internal order they had imposed in that part of the Congo now called Zaïre.

The military struggle of Angolan nationalists against the Portuguese divides into two phases: 1961-65 and 1965-74. In 1961, spurred on by Congo's independence and the confusion of the Congolese "crisis," both the MPLA and the UPA launched open attacks on the Portu-

guese. That of the MPLA started on February 4, and took the form of an urban uprising in Luanda, the capital. The only "outside" support at that point was the cooperation of a handful of Portuguese Left elements. The uprising was a military failure, and was followed by an internal crisis in the MPLA that almost caused it to disintegrate by 1963.

The attack of the UPA started on March 15, and took the form of a peasant revolt of Bakongo in the two northern provinces adjoining the Congo. This outburst was sudden, ferocious and anti-white, a number of small white coffee proprietors and their families being slaughtered. The UPA received arms from their Congolese friends, as well as from Tunisian forces (who formed part of the United Nations contingent in the Congo). The UPA received some encouragement (via Tunisia, particularly) from certain liberal elements in the Kennedy regime. Because the uprising was located in deep forest areas where roads and communications were difficult for the Portuguese, and because the Congo border served as a backstop, the UPA-FNLA forces could survive in what the Portuguese called the "rotten triangle."

In all this period, attempts to bring the UPA and MPLA together foundered on the mutual ideological suspicions of the two groups. The MPLA leadership, university-educated and politically immersed in European Left traditions, saw the UPA as tribally based, essentially conservative, manipulated by the United States, racist, and incapable of conducting a long war against the Portuguese. The UPA leadership saw the MPLA as urban intellectuals, privileged mulatto *assimilados*, pro-Communist (despite the fact that the honorary president of the MPLA was a Catholic priest), and incapable of rallying peasant support. That such a split was in principle neither inevitable nor irreparable is demonstrated by the ultimately different histories of nationalism in Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, where at the moment of independence in each country there was a clearly dominant, united national liberation movement. The difference lay not in the will of the Angolans but in the crucial interest of the governments of Zaïre and the United States in preventing such a unification in Angola.

In 1963, the MPLA was beset by internal difficulties while the UPA-FNLA seemed to be leading an effective struggle. The latter formed the *Governo Revolucionário da Angola em Exil* (GRAE), and was able to convince the newly formed African Liberation Committee of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to recognize it as both a government and the *sole* legitimate representative of Angolan nationalism. With only a few exceptions, the GRAE was formally recognized by most African states and admitted to meetings of the OAU.

Hence in 1963 the GRAE was not in the least interested in the united action for which the MPLA was crying. It proclaimed itself *the united movement*, recognized by all Africa. The then Adoula regime in the Congo even expelled MPLA from its territory, thus denying it a base for action in Angola. Yet within one year it was to tumble from this height, showing thus that the base of its strength was in fact very fragile.

On the one hand, the MPLA was patiently restructured and rebuilt by Agostinho Neto. And it prospered from two changes in African government. Congo-Brazzaville had a coup in July 1963, which brought to

power a regime sympathetic to MPLA, which thereupon established its headquarters there. This was particularly useful since Congo-Brazzaville bordered on Cabinda, an Angolan enclave separate from the main territory of the country, and thus gave access to a part of Angola. And in 1964 when Zambia became independent, its government, whose country bordered the eastern edge of Angola, was also willing to let MPLA operate from its territory.

Precisely as the basis for a future military revival was opening up for the MPLA, the GRAE suffered a crucial setback. In Congo (Zaïre), there was a short period beginning in 1964 when Tshombe was Prime Minister. And Tshombe, who had received support from the Portuguese in the days of Katangan secession, returned the favor by closing the frontier to the UPA-FNLA-GRAE. At that point, the latter rapidly collapsed militarily, never to revive again significantly in the period before the Portuguese coup.

As if to jump off a sinking ship, the "Foreign Minister" of the GRAE, one Jonas Savimbi, resigned dramatically at an OAU meeting in Cairo in July 1964. Savimbi publicly accused Holden Roberto, president of the GRAE, of acting as an agent of the Americans. Soon thereafter, the OAU withdrew its "exclusive recognition" of the GRAE, and agreed to restore the MPLA to equal status as a legitimate national liberation movement meriting support. Individual governments then began to withdraw recognition of the GRAE until, by 1971, the OAU would no longer even tolerate the label, and Roberto had to return to the earlier "nongovernmental" initials of FNLA.

A word about Savimbi, who now enters the scene as a third actor. Who and what was Savimbi? He had been a student in Switzerland when the wars began in 1961. Holden Roberto, looking for some way to overcome the reputation of UPA-FNLA as tribally based and without intellectual support, discovered Savimbi and his friends and saw in them two advantages. They were Ovimbundu, that is, tribesmen from the south of Angola; and they were "intellectuals," but had not been exposed to the "Marxist"-infested atmosphere of Portuguese universities. Rather, they were mission-trained anti-Communists. Roberto offered Savimbi the post of Foreign Minister and that was one more factor making possible the ephemeral triumph of 1963. And where did Savimbi go once he quit the GRAE? Within a year he had created a third movement, the *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola* (UNITA).

In general, 1965-66 was a bad year for Africa. Nkrumah and Ben Bella were overthrown. So was the Nigerian Government, a coup which led eventually to a civil war and placed Africa's largest country *hors de combat*. Mobutu consolidated the anti-revolutionary regime of Zaïre. Elsewhere in the world, the United States invaded Santo Domingo, the generals took over in Indonesia, and the Americans began their massive participation in Vietnam.

In Africa, as elsewhere, progressive forces seemed very much on the defensive, and the Portuguese looked forward to an end of an unpleasant interlude in their 500 years of imperial luster and thirty-odd years of corporatist tranquillity. In 1965, with three different movements in Angola, none of them engaged in much activity, the Portuguese seemed to be in good shape.

What Lisbon had not counted on was the tenacity of three allied, anti-Portuguese movements: in Portuguese

Africa, the MPLA; in Mozambique, the FRELIMO, and in Guinea-Bissau, the PAIGC. As it turned out, all three movements conducted a steady campaign on three distinct fronts—political, diplomatic and military—that led to control of more and more territory by all three movements, and to more and more support abroad, until their combined strength so strained Portuguese moral and economic resources that the captains revolted in 1974.

In this period, 1965-74, the Portuguese spared no effort to wipe out the movements. And they received ample military assistance from both the United States and other Western powers on the one hand and from South Africa on the other. They tried to split movements and assassinate leaders. In the case of Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau, they succeeded in killing the leaders, Eduardo Mondlane and Amilcar Cabral, but despite this, the movements in those two colonies held together. In Angola, as always, the situation was more complex. The FNLA built up its army in Zaïre under the protection of Mobutu, but left the Portuguese in Angola largely untouched. UNITA followed every available wind. For a while, it talked an ultra-Maoist language, then a Black Power line (which seduced a few black Americans), and all the while it "organized" peacefully in its southern ethnic base with the complicity (as we learned after the Portuguese coup) of the Portuguese armed forces.

During this period, the MPLA alone fought a continuous guerrilla action, alone sought to be a national rather than a regional movement, and alone resisted the temptations of anti-white racism, insisting always on *political* criteria for identifying friends and foes. It did not, however, have an easy time.

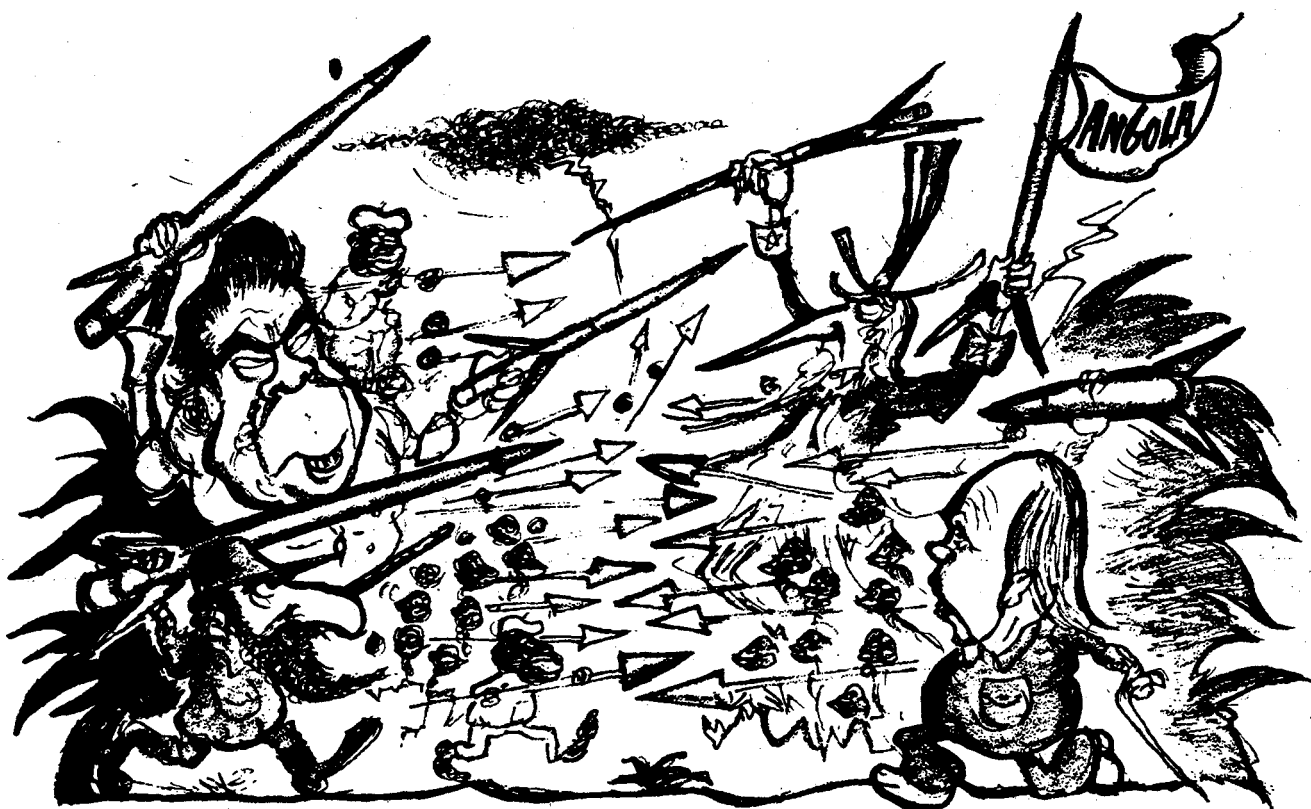
First of all, the fact that the Zaïre border was *always* closed to the MPLA and that the Zambian border lay astride open, semi-arid plains several hundred miles deep

meant that the logistical problems of the MPLA were enormous and hindered the intensification of guerrilla activity. Hence MPLA never achieved the degree of relative military success of FRELIMO or the PAIGC.

This indeed accounts for the fact that in December 1972 when the FNLA was at a political, diplomatic and military nadir, the MPLA was willing to enter into a never-to-be-implemented unity pact with it. The MPLA hoped, in vain as it turned out, that the pact would open the Zaïre frontiers for its men and arms. The only one who gained from the pact was Holden Roberto, to whom it gave renewed legitimacy. Shortly thereafter, the Portuguese again tried their assassination tactic. This time the leader (Neto) escaped, but they succeeded in splitting the movement, in the form eventually of the break away of a faction headed by Daniel Chipenda, who commanded strength in the southern part of the country. Like Savimbi before him, Chipenda wandered from camp to camp, and ideological position to ideological position, until today he has joined the FNLA as its Secretary-General, although still holding his forces geographically and militarily separate from the rest of the FNLA.

The assassination attempt on Neto and the schism with Chipenda occurred just before the April 1974 Portuguese coup. Once again, at a critical turning point (as in 1963), the MPLA was internally split. Once again it washed dirty linen in public. Once again, by the strength and stubbornness of Agostinho Neto (both his virtue and his weakness), the MPLA regrouped forces and pulled through.

The struggle however was far from over. Indeed, with the Portuguese coup ("Our victory," cried Neto in Montreal where he was on the day it happened), the struggle became more acute, the ideological options became clearer, and the fear of an MPLA victory by the Zaïre, South African and American Governments more intense.



Wetzel

As with the Congo crisis of 1960-64, it is not to the point to review in detail the politico-military maneuvers in Angola since April 25, 1974, but rather to summarize the broad lines up to the present.

(1) The three main Angolan groups (or three and a half, if one adds the Chipenda forces) have distributed themselves *de facto* in different geographical areas: FNLA in their northern Bakongo bastion near the Zaïre border; UNITA, and the Chipenda forces in Ovimbundu areas in the south; and MPLA in the capital, Luanda, as well as a broad central belt running across the country, plus the enclave of Cabinda.

(2) The successive Portuguese Governments have been internally split over Angola. Indeed, Angola has been a key issue of the internal debate. The result has been waffling which, as time went on and the Portuguese Governments slipped to the right, became a neutrality that hurt MPLA more than it did the others.

(3) The South African Government, immediately following the Portuguese coup, played the game of so-called détente in southern Africa with great flexibility, thus preventing any immediate domino effect. As the day of Angolan independence came nearer, they moved more and more openly to the support of the two "southern" anti-MPLA forces, UNITA and the Chipenda forces (technically now FNLA), by sending in arms, mercenaries and even troops.

(4) Zaïre and the United States have been openly supporting FNLA with arms, money and, in the case of Zaïre, probably men. Zaïre has also tried to promote a secessionist movement in Cabinda (called FLEC).

(5) MPLA has received unreserved support from the governments of the four other independent African states that were formerly Portuguese colonies: Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde Islands and Sao Tomé e Príncipe. Mozambique has sent some troops to help. Samora Machel, President of Mozambique, has stated unambiguously:

In Angola, there are two parties in conflict: on the one side, imperialism with its allies and its puppets; on the other side, the progressive, popular forces who support the MPLA. That's the whole story. It is not Spínola, Holden [Roberto], Savimbi or anyone else who matter to us. They are only instruments of imperialism. It is imperialism that is the danger and the true menace. (*Interview in Afrique-Asie, October 20, 1975.*)

MPLA has also had strong support from African progressive states, such as Congo-Brazzaville, Guinea (Conakry), Algeria, Tanzania (after a moment of hesitation), and (a bit unexpectedly) Nigeria.

(6) MPLA has received very strong material assistance from the USSR. It should be noted that this support was not always unreserved, but that it is at present considerable. MPLA also has had strong support in arms and material from Yugoslavia and Cuba, and the latter has also sent men. And from Vietnam: the place of honor at the independence celebrations in Luanda was given to the representative of South Vietnam. Romania has supported MPLA after initial hesitation.

(7) The Chinese seem to have adopted that old slogan of John Foster Dulles: If the USSR supports a movement, it can't be any good. The Chinese ambivalence about MPLA has a long history. In 1963, they welcomed to Peking Viriato da Cruz, leader of a small break-away faction of

MPLA. When da Cruz joined FNLA, at least momentarily, Chou En-lai in 1964 invited Holden Roberto to visit. (Roberto didn't go because Tshombe, then in power in Leopoldville, warned him that if he did he would never be allowed back in the Congo.) The Chinese played footsie with UNITA for several years. In between, from time to time, under the pressure of progressive forces around the world (including of course FRELIMO and PAIGC who had, however, their own difficulties with them), the Chinese acted in a more friendly fashion toward MPLA. Then in 1973 they entered into an agreement with FNLA to train their soldiers. When MPLA protested, the Chinese offered a stance of neutrality vis-à-vis all *three* movements, which MPLA rejected as unacceptable.

On November 11, 1975, the date when the Portuguese had agreed Angola would become independent, the MPLA pronounced the establishment of the People's Republic of Angola. On the same day, FNLA and UNITA agreed on a last-minute coalition counter government with temporary headquarters in Huambo in the south (a region under UNITA control). As of December, some thirty governments had recognized the MPLA government. No one has formally recognized the counter regime. But, *de facto*, it has very active support from the trio that have consistently opposed MPLA: Zaïre, South Africa and the United States. China is in a most uncomfortable position, which it finds difficult to explain to forces sympathetic to it around the world.

What may we expect in the near future? The civil war promises to be long. Zaïrois forces plus South African mercenaries are clearly insufficient to destroy MPLA, given the arms it is now receiving from various friends. The great unknown is whether or not the United States will intervene more directly *à la* Vietnam. It is not impossible, despite the real counter pressure that is coming from within America—after Vietnam, Watergate and CIA revelations.

Mr. Kissinger is saying these days, with shameless hypocrisy, that any intervention would only be a response to Soviet actions. The fact is that the United States has been intervening in Angola and Zaïre *since 1960*—continuously, flagrantly and *never on the side of progressive forces*. Angola might have been independent ten years ago, and under an MPLA government, were it not for U.S. support of the Portuguese, of Holden Roberto, of Mobutu against anyone who threatened the structures of dominance in southern Africa.

Let those who find moral solace in self-deception remain neutral. No doubt Léon Blum still does not confess his sins. But the Basque nationalists who were hanged in Spain in October 1975, over the protests of European social democrats and the pleas of Pope Paul, should be on the consciences of those who preached nonintervention in Spain while Franco's Fascists marched on Madrid and the *Luftwaffe* strafed Guernica. Luanda is Madrid. And the moment to choose is now.

Luanda is Madrid, but 1975 is not 1936. There is a good side to South Africa's invasion, the malice of Mobutu and the machinations of Kissinger. The Angolan war will ignite a hinterland that has been dormant too long. Lumumbism, in far more sophisticated and explicit ideological armor, will now rise from the cinders of Mobutu's scorched earth. The South African revolution will see its long-awaited explosion. South Africa's adventures abroad will turn

against it exactly as did those of Portugal in Angola, the United States in Vietnam, and France in Algeria. The solidarity of the whites will become brittle while the solidarity of the oppressed will become more firm. During 200 years of worldwide revolt against the capitalist world system, the Left has made countless errors and engaged in egregious misadventures. But it has at least learned from them. Whereas the Right declines, it becomes both more brutal and more stupid.

One year ago, I thought to myself that things looked bad, that Vorster might put across his notion of détente, that the West might tame the national liberation movements in Angola and Mozambique, and that an historic moment might pass. But the powers that be were too greedy and too frightened, too greedy because too frightened. And they have roused Africa, as the world will soon see. □

AFRICAN ECONOMIES

BASIL DAVIDSON

London

Signs of political frustration and moral misery lie on every hand in most of Africa today: and yet, what may appear more than usually strange, nowhere are they seen more blatantly than in those countries which have generally received the accolades of Western approval. Thus in Kenya, we read in *The Times* (London) not long ago, that there is now "a growing discontent with the way in which President Kenyatta is consolidating the wealth and power of a small clique composed of his own family and his closest supporters."

The words are bland; the reality is less so. For this opinion came on the morrow of Kenyatta's order to his security police, the "General Service Unit," to arrest and detain two parliamentary critics, one of whom was the parliament's deputy speaker, simply for having criticized. Those two arrests, in turn, were linked to public dismay at the political killing last March of Kenyatta's foremost critic, J.M. Kariuki. In June a fifteen-man parliamentary committee of inquiry into how Kariuki became a mutilated corpse decided that the police "must have known who took J.M. [Kariuki] from Hilton Hotel around 7 P.M. on Sunday, March 2, where he was taken to, and what happened to him there. . . ." What happened to him there was murder most foul. But no legal charges are yet at hand; no policemen are in the dock.

And so it goes. The pleasant country of Uganda is ruled now by a man of whom it will be kind to say that he is apparently afflicted with homicidal paranoia. Blood drips from the hands of other rulers in other pleasant lands. And even in the quite different case of the great federation of Nigeria, ruled by serious, honorable and tolerant men of talent, there is evidence of accumulating disarray. A commission of inquiry into Nigerian wages and related matters, headed by the universally respected Simeon Adebó, explained this disarray as long ago as 1970. "It is clear," observed this commission, "that there is intolerable suffering at the bottom of the income scale because of the rise in

the cost of living, but also"—and the emphasis was Chief Adebó's—"that *the suffering is made even more intolerable by manifestations of affluence and wasteful expenditure which cannot be explained on the basis of visible and legitimate means of income.*"

Nobody in Nigeria will be inclined to argue that this observation of 1970 applies any less emphatically to 1975. And no wonder. Outside the port of Lagos, at the moment, there lies a mighty fleet of tramp ships loaded with some 20 million tons of cement which, it is rumored in marine circles there, could take as long as eight years to be got ashore. Will anyone imagine that this incredible cargo could be linked to anything save the grossest waste, or worse? In the mere matter of demurrage, for example, costs are said to be running currently at rates around \$4,000 a day for each ship. Meanwhile Nigeria's poor get poorer; they also multiply by the tens of thousands.

"So you're disillusioned, are you? After all that stuff about the great need to get rid of the colonial system, and now this mess. . . . And yet you want *more* liberation: isn't that your funny word? It's your head, my friend, you need examined."

Familiar refrain and understandable, possibly: all the same, it is far off the point. In the circumstances of the 1950s, when *The Nation* took a previous tour around the African scene, there was nothing to be done about anything without getting rid of direct colonial control. "Seek ye first the political kingdom . . ." Nkrumah said then; and not even the toughest of his domestic critics ever disagreed with him on that. Even a limping political independence, in those circumstances, must necessarily be better than a further installment of colonial rule. Then the great question became: What do you do with the political kingdom? And only then did it begin to be seen—no doubt only then *could* it be seen—that the answer lay in another and still more difficult search: this time, for an economic independence sufficient to permit a true development.

A self-respecting historiography will not be satisfied with arranging the facts of the past according to the mythologies of the present. One such mythology is that, fifteen and twenty years ago, the Africans were really given a choice of options, and chose the wrong one. An alternative mythology, dear to the chairmen of multinational corporations and their political champions, is that Africans

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made the right choice—ah, never mind the mess that's come of it—because the only other option would have meant "subservience to Moscow." What was right for "free enterprise" in the United States must obviously have been right for a decolonized Africa. Any African who seriously questioned this must be a dupe or tool of the Russians.

The facts that bear on the truth of any region of Africa—and very directly, in the context of this issue, of southern Africa—will give no nourishment to theseologies, no matter how much helped by the cosmetics of political science. The facts show that the Africans were sold a bill of goods by all those eminently honorable institutions downward from the World Bank and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, not to speak of lesser temples scattered round the Western world. And they further show that the Africans had no effective option but to buy it. Decolonization was conceded on condition that the nation-state, in all its essentials save local political control, should remain the colonial state. The thus "decolonized" had to take the colonial inheritance, lock, stock and barrel, or face condign damnation if they didn't.

Let us be clear about what this has meant. Appearances sometimes aside, it has meant that these countries have remained organic but entirely subordinate fragments of the Western economic system which had enclosed them in the past. What it has further meant is that their societies have become organized in such a way as to promote a replica, however weak and woebegone, of Western society. All this is supposed to produce a capital-owning middle class, an incorporated working class, and so on down the line. But since no capitalist systems and their corresponding stratification already existed in this Africa, a small and highly privileged "elite" has been expected to grab or grovel its way to wealth and thus, according to the book, to hegemonic power. From this standpoint, there is not the least justification for blaming President Kenyatta and his family for "consolidating the wealth and power of a small clique," or for looking askance at those honorable gentlemen with a hand in Nigeria cement imports. They are only following the best advice.

What book, what advice? The bible on how to build capitalism was provided—very conveniently in 1960, the "great year" of political independence—by Prof. Walt Rostow of M.I.T. in the days before he began saving Vietnam from the Vietnamese. He called it *The Stages of Economic Growth*, and it sold like hot cakes. What it preached was the overriding and absolute need, in this case in Africa, for a capitalism mediated through "a new elite," a "new leadership," which was duly imbued with and licensed by "an appropriate value system." With this to hand, the way would be clear for "the age of high mass consumption"; and Africa, blessedly, would become another United States . . . well, in time.

The "new elite" and its "appropriate value system" duly appeared as one colonial state after another became a nation-state. Indeed, these beneficiaries fairly rushed upon the scene. They lost no time in getting all the best seats, and they proceeded to operate from these seats with an enterprise that was nothing if not private. The countries where this happened most—Kenya for one, Nigeria for another—became at once the darlings of the Western world, praised for their parliamentary manners, loved for

their "moderation," and of course wooed for their contracts. And so, as the bible had affirmed, all was set for "takeoff."

Crash came instead. Nigeria was in uproar even by 1962, and thoroughly exploded four years later. Kenya (to stay with the same examples) still has the lid on, just about: but the streets of Nairobi, prophetically enough, have ceased to be safe for strollers after dark. The "appropriate value system" is everywhere seen to include an endemic and even fantastic irresponsibility (think only of that floating mountain of cement aboard ships whose lights, after night-fall, seem like a city out at sea), an amazing corruption, a general sense of frustration or disgust and, flowing in upon a dark tide no less sinister because silent, the anger and avenging spirit of millions who hunger, while all around them in the streets the "manifestations of affluence and wasteful expenditure" are there to mock them.

That building capitalism would mean perpetuating the colonial condition by other means began to be understood by a number of Africans, including some of their best leaders, very soon after the flags of empire had come down. Invariably, these men and women were attacked and bullyragged by Western critics as "agents of communism." It happened to Kwame Nkrumah; it happened to Sékou Touré, to Julius Nyerere, to Siad Barre, to all the leaders of the liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies. Some of the Western critics were as silly as Senator Dodd, but others were men of weight and authority. It was rather more than a pity.

And it remains more than a pity because it continues. Those of weight and authority among Western critics appear perfectly impervious to the most obvious lessons of Vietnam. They now apply the same misjudgments to the African scene. All the revelations of *The New York Times* lately, as to the state of mind of Dr. Kissinger and company, seem to bear this out. As before, they identify the business interests of the West with the persistence of Western capitalist control in Africa; and here their opinion is doubtless well founded. But they go on to charge all those Africans who say that these interests are not the same as the interests of Africa with a necessary self-displacement into the sphere of Soviet control. They prosecute their cold war, new style, for their own expectations of profit; and that is one thing. But they present this war as being waged for democracy, justice, progress and the rest in Africa; and that is another and quite different thing.

Consider these two different things in the context of southern Africa. For example, capital investment in South Africa is profitable. But just as surely such investment reinforces a system of "internal colonialism" that is hateful to the Africans of South Africa; and these outnumber the whites there by at least four to one. No amelioration of African wages will dent this system. All that happens, with higher wages, is that the fixed bars of discrimination are raised a little up the income scale: those bars remain exactly what they were before, and are indeed stronger than before because the controllers of the system gain more wealth by foreign investment, and so they gain more power. Meanwhile all Africans who seriously resist the system are written off as "Communists," tracked, tortured and packed away in jails. On the one hand, then, the certainty that investment in South Africa today is investment in moral crime and social outrage: on the other, the claim

that this investment is doing good. Who really needs his head examined?

Or consider the situation in Angola now. All through the wars of liberation in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, the Western system stood foursquare with Portugal's dictatorship and its colonial empire. For those of us elsewhere who looked to America with hope and pride through the bitter years of World War II and who still, come what may, cling to our belief in America's creative genius, nothing outside Vietnam has appeared so great a desecration of the founding spirit of the United States as the gruesome record of the Johnson-Nixon era in relation to Portugal and its empire. So it was that the Africans of the liberation movements had to rely almost entirely (Sweden helped a little) on help from the East. They received it chiefly from the Russians; as it happens, with an open-handed generosity. Automatically, they were written off as agents of Moscow. The syllogism was as simple as it was stupid: all revolutionaries are agents of Moscow, these Africans are revolutionaries, therefore. . . .

It is true that these Africans are revolutionaries. It is also true that they can be nothing else if they are to justify their struggle and the sufferings it has entailed. In Angola, as in Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, nothing less than profound structural change can promote inter-ethnic unity and any general progress; and if I seem to be saying this *ex cathedra*, the fact remains that all the effective evidence supports me.

That is why Angola's only movement of national unification, the MPLA (which stands to Angola in the same relationship as the PAIGC to Guinea-Bissau and FRELIMO to Mozambique) has stood from the first for Socialist-oriented policies. Its veteran leader, the medical doctor Agostinho Neto, has defined their essence. "We are trying to make a dual revolution," he said in 1970, "against all those aspects of our traditional life which cannot serve our people; and against the colonial system." Against witchcraft belief or the subjection of women, for example, on one side; against foreign economic control or social servitude, for example, on the other. A dual revolution, in brief, against existing structures and institutions, or against their extension into a stooge independence.

This same basic analysis applies equally, if with many variables, to the rest of southern Africa: in this context to Zimbabwe, to Namibia, eventually to South Africa itself. Like Angola and Mozambique, none of these countries will be able to solve the problems of unity and progress so long as they remain within the structures of

white-settler capitalism fueled by foreign investment. Within those structures, these peoples can at best find only a strap-hanging place for a small elite of beneficiaries, while the masses stay in the same plight as now. Either they too make their "dual revolution," as Neto defined it when speaking of Angola, or their servitude sticks fast.

I need hardly emphasize, I hope, that none of this is to suggest that such structural revolutions, opening the way for the active participation and thus for the self-transformation of the masses in their cultural and political liberation, as well as in their modes of work, can be quick or easy. Only death, in this drama, can be quick or easy. What is new in this tumultuous Africa of the middle 1970s, what is really significant, is that the challenge of unity and progress is now being taken up at a second stage along the road of decolonization. Beyond the parameters of a merely political independence, an attempt to secure an all-around socio-cultural and economic development is firmly on the scene. Half a dozen countries demonstrate this; others soon may.

Throwing their weight around, the multinationals and their spokesmen can still believe they know a trick worth two of that. Perhaps they will be able to prove that they do; but also, perhaps not. Nearly half the population of Africa today is under the age of 15. To the vast majority of these teeming millions of children, the future can offer no least hope of climbing into any kind of elite, of joining any clique of beneficiaries: unless, of course, of gangsters in the streets. Even if the elites of the 1960s hadn't taken care to kick away the ladders up which they themselves have mounted, there would still be no room even on the lowest rungs of privilege. So what happens to Rostow's "appropriate value system"? The late J.M. Kariuki offered an answer three months before they killed him. It was that of no firebrand but of a shrewd observer of a scene he intimately knew, and it claims attention. He opined that Kenya's "capitalist structure" was "like a tree growing very tall very quickly." It was "going to fall because it does not have deep roots, it is not firmly rooted in the people and in society."

For us, maybe, it comes down to this: the Western capitalist system has had it good for a long time in Africa. What we in the West have now to accept, whether we like it or not, is that an Africa is on the way that sees this capitalist good as being hostile to the good of Africa. We may dismiss these African revolutionaries as Soviet stooges if we want; it will not, in my opinion, make the least damn bit of difference. Except that it will confirm them in the view that we, at any rate, are no true friends of theirs. □

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