

# LSM NEWS

QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF LIBERATION SUPPORT MOVEMENT  
Volume 3, Issue 1. Spring 1976

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## PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM: LSM IN AFRICA

INSIDE: Interview with Ole Gjerstad, LSM • MPLA Chronology  
• After Angola: Namibia! • Reply to South African Communist Party

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## CONTENTS

PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM  
Difficult But Possible  
An Interview With Ole Gjerstad ... 1

THE ANGOLAN REVOLUTION  
A Chronology, Compiled by  
Beth Youhn and Steve Goldfield ...10

LSM PHOTOS FROM ANGOLA'S  
2ND WAR .....15

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES  
After Angola: Namibia!  
by Mike Mercer, LSM/BAU .....21

DOGMATISM AND CRITICISM  
A Reply to the SACP, by  
Carroll Ishee and Dennis Mercer ..27

LSM ACTIONS .....31

PRINTED & PUBLISHED BY  
LSM INFORMATION CENTER  
Box 94338, Richmond,  
B.C. CANADA

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ISSN 0315-1840

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P.O. Box 756  
Berkeley, CA., 94701 (415) 465-0909

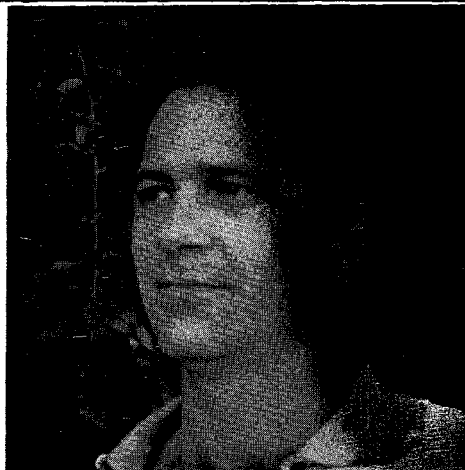
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Don Barnett: founder of LSM.

## ABOUT LSM

Liberation Support Movement is a North American-based political organization whose understanding and practice flow from a Marxist analysis of contemporary capitalist society. It is our view that capitalist development over the past five centuries has culminated in an international socio-economic system comprised of dominant metropolitan nations and subordinate countryside nations. Within this imperialist system, economic surplus generated by the colonized and neocolonized peoples of the countryside is drained off and utilized by the ruling classes of the metropolitan nations of North America, Europe and Japan, thus leaving the countryside in a state of economic stagnation and underdevelopment. Backwardness and impoverishment in Asia, Africa and Latin America are but direct consequences of capitalist development in the metropolises.

*cont. on page 33*

# PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM Difficult But Possible

## An Interview With Ole Gjerstad

*Ole Gjerstad, 28 years old, born and raised in Norway, began working with LSM in 1971 as a liaison person in Europe. In 1972 Ole participated in an LSM mission to Africa to collect interviews, life histories of liberation movement cadres and other documentation of the southern African liberation struggles. At this point Ole became more serious about anti-imperialist politics, left his academic career, and moved to Canada where he became full-time coordinator of the LSM Information Center's film and educational activities. While working with the Information Center, Ole has authored materials on the Zimbabwean liberation struggle, including The Organizer: Story of Temba Moyo about a ZAPU militant and an in-depth Interview with George Silundika, ZAPU's Publicity and Information Secretary. Ole has also edited a selection of PAIGC speeches and documents, Guinea-Bissau: Toward Final Victory. In 1975 Ole was sent to Africa to collect further informational material and to coordinate LSM's relations with PAIGC, MPLA, SWAPO and other African liberation movements. During LSM's 1975 Congress, Ole was elected to serve on the Executive Committee as Countryside Coordinator, a responsibility which involves maintaining LSM's relations with national liberation movements and training LSM members for work in the countryside. The following is a taped interview LSM comrades conducted with Ole upon his return in February 1976, after 10 months in Africa, including 2 months in Angola at the height of the "2nd War of National Liberation."*



Ole Gjerstad with Comandante Mona at Malange airport. LSM PHOTO.

PERHAPS YOU COULD DESCRIBE THE NATURE OF YOUR MISSION TO AFRICA.

Since LSM was formed in 1968, we have developed working relations with several African liberation movements starting with MPLA, then FRELIMO, PAIGC and liberation movements in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia. However in the period between 1973 and my mission in 1975, no LSM cadres were actually in Africa. This led to insufficient communication with the liberation movements, making it increasingly difficult for us to accurately comprehend and thus coordinate our activities with their struggles. We have not been able to relate closely enough to the movements, notably MPLA, and political problems have arisen in the work. Therefore LSM made a decision in 1974 to try to have at least one of our people working in Africa at all times. I was the first to be sent out on such a mission to improve our communications with the liberation movements by relating to them in person, to make LSM less of an abstraction through our physical presence in Africa and hence to strengthen our political relations. This was one very important aspect of my going there.

Another consideration was that we continually need new documentary materials to use in our informational and support programs in North America. For the most part LSM publishes firsthand material on the African struggles, since it is our policy to assist the movements in speaking for themselves through their own cadres and militants. So it was also an important part of my work to go to Africa and work with the various liberation movements in collecting such material.

*GIVEN LSM'S PERSPECTIVE THAT METROPOLITAN COMMUNISTS MUST DEVELOP INTERNATIONALIST LINKS WITH THIRD WORLD REVOLUTIONARIES TO BE EFFECTIVE IN THE INTERNATIONAL STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPERIALISM, DOESN'T THE ISOLATION CAUSED BY GEOGRAPHICAL AND POLITICAL SEPARATION OF THE METROPOLITAN COUNTRIES FROM THE THIRD WORLD CREATE DIFFICULTIES IN ESTABLISHING CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS?*

LSM has certainly experienced these kinds of problems, such as the insufficient communication I just mentioned, and we have commented on them in earlier issues of *LSM NEWS*. In going to Africa myself I faced such barriers. The primary difficulty comes from the difference between our backgrounds and those of the peasants and liberation movement cadres. The essential difference lies in my entire political experience as a progressive person - I have never engaged in real mass work. People of the metropolitan left of necessity work in fairly small organizations without a truly mass base of support.

This situation is very much in contrast to the political environment in the former Portuguese colonies where the progressive movements transcended the small circle of intellectuals and urban petty bourgeois with which they began and for years have been mass movements encompassing the vast majority of workers and peasants of these countries. These distinctions between metropolitan and countryside political work are fundamental. The masses in Guinea-Bissau or Mozambique are struggling to improve their immediate material interests while we are not. In our part of the world, the imperialist metropole, the rewards are substantially different than they are in Africa, Latin America or Asia. Because there are currently no classes or substantial strata within the metropole whose immediate material interests would be served by socialist revolution, metropolitan revolutionaries are not able to mobilize on these grounds. Our rewards, my rewards, which are certainly many in revolutionary work, are primarily subjective. I work for things I believe in. I have a conception, a vision of a future that I would like to see; and I do what I believe is necessary to materialize my vision. Such an approach to politics necessarily entails a certain intellectual level and a fairly long-term view of history. But in a country like Guinea-Bissau, revolution is simply common sense for the peasant masses. It simply made no sense to tolerate the presence of Portuguese colonialists who obstructed the peasants' efforts to enjoy the fruits of their own labor. They told us, "We are not animals. We refuse to be treated as animals. We demand the right to be able to harvest the fruit of our labor as any human being must." So the political context in countries like Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau is a world apart from the one I was used to.

*YOU'VE DESCRIBED IN GENERAL TERMS ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE WAY WE DO POLITICAL WORK, LARGELY ISOLATED FROM MOST PEOPLE IN NORTH AMERICA, AND THE WAY POLITICAL ACTIVITY IS CONDUCTED IN ANGOLA OR GUINEA-BISSAU, WHERE MILITANTS WORK DIRECTLY WITH THE MASSES. CAN YOU GIVE SOME INSTANCES?*

My first reaction came while observing mass meetings where the population would discuss their problems in a forthright manner and where the village committee made recommendations to the regional leadership which would then act on them or generalize similar problems found throughout the region and pass on its own recommendation to the national leadership. My initial reaction was a feeling of awe, almost of envy, toward a revolutionary movement which works in an environment where it is in daily contact with the masses, where there is an actual pressure from the masses on the movement to act. It would be easy for us to underestimate what it really means for a movement to be constantly responsible to huge numbers of people. We in North America, small and fairly isolated from a revolutionary class, are trying to follow principles of democratic-centralism without mass contact which sometimes leads to great problems in our work, in what we feel is a necessary adherence to political principles. But it immediately becomes clear how necessary such principles are when you work on a vast scale with a real mass basis.

To understand the masses and their relationship to leadership we must go back to the guerrilla war and the need of the movements to implant themselves solidly among the masses. Many leaders came from much different backgrounds than the peasantry; many had studied in urban areas or abroad. A great gap had to be bridged. This was accomplished by what Amilcar Cabral called "class suicide," a process in which a person abandons old class values for new and revolutionary ones, in which a petty bourgeois comes to identify so closely with the masses of peasants and workers that he or she comes to act completely in their interests. This is no easy process for many movement leaders who themselves come from a background similar in some ways to our own. We saw many cases where movement cadres had difficulty making this transition. However, the needs of the struggle required the leaders to live for long periods of time among the peasantry. They worked in the same fields, walked the same paths in the forest, ate the same food and slept in the same kind of huts. Thus during the liberation wars a high degree of interaction and a very broad form of political organization developed.

Now our own situation in North America is very different because although we have some contact with people outside of our own political circles, we have never come to rely on them to a great extent. The nature of political conditions in North America does not enable us to engage in forms of struggle which force us to live in this kind of relationship with the metropolitan masses, to make our very survival depend on whether we are able to respond immediately and directly to their desires and demands. This is because the growth of imperialism in the metropole has bourgeoisified and thus derevolutionized metropolitan laboring classes. Struggling for their demands and mass support means abandoning a revolutionary line for the pursuit of short-range economic interests that can be met within the system.

*WHAT WERE SOME SITUATIONS IN WHICH THE CULTURAL GAP EMERGED CONCRETELY TO AFFECT YOUR WORK?*

Well, for example, take Mores, a village in north-central Guinea-Bissau where Chantal and I stayed for about a month. We brought with us only what we felt was essential. For me this included tennis shoes, boots and a couple of shirts and pairs of pants. But this wardrobe was two or three times as much as most villagers had. We also had a bed in our hut provided by the Government along with a blanket. Virtually nobody else had good blankets. People would continually come and ask me for my leather boots which were a treasure in a place like Mores. They couldn't understand why I was so keen to hang on to them since I had another pair of shoes while most of them went bare-foot. They had nothing and I had two pairs. Or why wouldn't I give away my watch since in a few months I would be returning to a place where I could just walk down the street and, within ten minutes, find a place where I could buy another. This was their reasoning.

Of course this situation produced a very subjective reaction in me. I felt sorry

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for such people and wanted to give them something if only to make myself feel better, feel less guilty. But I found I had to combat this reaction because it was incorrect in Mores where most of the population is organized by the village action committee, where virtually all the children of the village are in the Party boarding school, where they get what the Party thinks they should have. For the students there are plastic sandals, a uniform and school materials. This is what the Party is able to give them. So if I were to give one my watch and another my pair of leather boots, my action would engender differences in what the students had which would counter the aims of the school leadership and of the Party about how their students should live. It could also create a parasitic mentality. So I kept telling myself that we don't express solidarity through handouts, we work to support liberation movements and not to provide refugee relief *per se*. After all, our goal is to advance the revolutionary measures which are improving the conditions of the masses of the population, not to satisfy guilty consciences. Nonetheless my spontaneous urge to help on a more individual basis had to be fought again and again.

YOU'VE BEEN DISCUSSING THE EFFECTS OF THE ISOLATION OF NORTH AMERICANS, PEOPLE FROM IMPERIALIST COUNTRIES IN GENERAL, FROM THE LIVES OF REVOLUTIONARY PEASANTS AND WORKERS. THIS POSES THE QUESTION THAT IF WE ARE ISOLATED FROM THEM, THEN THEY TOO MUST BE ISOLATED FROM US, THAT ISOLATION WORKS BOTH WAYS. OF THE AFRICANS YOU WORKED WITH, PEASANTS, CITY-DWELLERS, MILITANTS OR SYMPATHIZERS, HOW MANY UNDERSTOOD WHY YOU WOULD COME FROM A METROPOLITAN COUNTRY, AN IMPERIALIST COUNTRY, TO RELATE TO AFRICAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS?

Yes, there are of course the same problems in reverse and I saw it as very much a part of my purpose in being in Africa not only to find out what is happening and how the movements are doing but also to exchange ideas and inform the people I came in contact with through my work in Guinea and Angola, in particular, what is going on in North America politically and to explain how Liberation Support Movement works and what is the situation as we see it on our continent. Because, after all, if this is indeed an international struggle, then it is important that they understand what conditions we are working under and why we as metropolitans are relating to their struggles.

This has not been very easy. It has always been a struggle. For one thing, a large part of the foreign support for most of the former Portuguese colonies was provided by socialist countries and many of their guests from abroad come from socialist countries where the situation is very different from ours. They often come as government representatives and tell the Guinean people: "On behalf of my whole people, the whole people of the Soviet Union, of East Germany, of Poland, of China or whatever, I greet your people and your liberation movement and hereby give you this or that support." Now we cannot make such claims because it would distort their conception of the real political situation in North America. Therefore when we were faced with remarks such as: "Please take greetings back to the President of Canada and thank him and the Canadian people for everything they have done for our struggle," we felt we could not let that pass. We felt that for us this was a good opportunity to get into a discussion about how capitalism works in the metropole and what conditions we face, about how we are not mass organizations today, but that we of the left are in a small minority and that the contradictions are such that it will most likely be some time before mass-based revolutionary struggles can be launched in North America. I saw this as a very difficult but necessary part of my work.

It is not easy for people who have not been out of Guinea or who have been trained abroad in eastern Europe, the Soviet Union or China, to get a correct picture of the political situation in western Europe and North America. Their own experience is that they have built the movement and won their independence by mobilizing the masses. "Aren't the workers of the United States and western Europe exploited? Don't they produce surplus value (if you're talking to a student who knows what surplus value is)? This is what *we* did, why can't *you* do it?" This type of question often led us into discussions on imperialism which were very challenging and productive.

Many different elements would ask me questions like these. In Bedanda in southern Guinea-Bissau we visited a Party boarding school. The Principal took us through the class-



rooms like a whirlwind. We just looked into the classrooms, nodded and walked on. When we had passed through the entire school and were out in the yard, a student caught up with us and not so much asked as demanded that we return to the classroom and explain who we were, where we came from and the purpose of our visit. Of course the Principal was a bit embarrassed not to have thought of this, but in any case all four classes came together to hear our explanations. Then we were bombarded with questions. "How is your work going? What problems do you face? How is *the* youth organization of your country doing? and *the* workers' organization? and *the* women's organization?" In these questions were reflected the difficulties which the students, who were in their early teens, had in conceiving of North American reality on the basis of their own experience. They obviously expected that we too had a strong nationwide revolutionary movement containing single mass-based women's, workers' and youth organizations.



Chantal Serrazin with PAIGC militant.  
LSM PHOTO

In the cities, in Maputo (Lourenço Marques, Mozambique) and Luanda (Angola), where the students had lived under colonialism and had been completely denied access to progressive or radical literature, I also found a consuming curiosity about North America. When the coup came in Portugal on the 25th of April 1974 and such books became available, they devoured everything they could find - Marx, Lenin, Mao, Che .... From reading Marx and Lenin they got a picture of the capitalist countries which is no longer accurate today in terms of predicting revolutionary potential. Therefore the question was almost inevitable: "Why has there been no revolution in the United States or western Europe? What is the matter? Why can't the workers, as many as they are, organized in unions, make a revolution? If we here in Mozambique or Guinea had been able to organize like that, we would not have had to wait as long as this to kick out the colonialists."

For these students it does not take much abstraction to understand how imperialism works in its periphery - the Third World, what is super-exploitation, who are the masses of the system and why these masses are making revolution. Though some of these students are from relatively privileged sectors of the population, at least they live close enough to revolutionary classes that every time they walk out of their houses or from their quarter of the city or make trips up-country, they can see what is happening around them. What they have not seen and what they do not know is the political reality, as we know it, of North America and Europe. So I'd like to emphasize that it was almost as important for me to do what I could to increase their comprehension of the actual situation in North America as it was for me to find out what was going on in Guinea, Mozambique, Namibia and Angola.

YOU'VE BEEN EXPLAINING THE DIFFICULTIES IN COMMUNICATING THE WAY PEOPLE LIVE IN NORTH AMERICA AND THE RESULTANT POLITICAL SITUATION TO AFRICANS WHO HAVE NO DIRECT EXPERIENCE IN NORTH AMERICA OR EUROPE. YET YOU'RE TRYING TO EXPLAIN TO THEM WHY YOU, AS A MEMBER OF A POLITICAL ORGANIZATION BASED IN NORTH AMERICA, HAVE COME TO WORK WITH THEM. HOW DID YOU, AS A MEMBER OF LSM, GO ABOUT ESTABLISHING YOURSELF AS A COMRADE IN COMMON STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPERIALISM? HOW DID YOU ESTABLISH RELATIONS WITH THE PEOPLE YOU WORKED WITH IN AFRICA?

PAIGC, FRELIMO and MPLA share a very strong internationalism. A lot of their work in the struggle against the Portuguese, as well as MPLA's recent struggle, depended on

mustering international support. Virtually everywhere I visited, I was presented as a comrade from abroad who had contributed to the struggle and who was here to continue my work. In this way the liberation movements often use visits by foreigners to increase the international consciousness of the masses, of the people.

For example, in Guinea-Bissau, whenever we went to a new village, a meeting was called and the people were told where we came from. The Party people in charge would thus make a political point to the population. They also helped us interact socially with the people. They took us to visit schools and to talk to village committee meetings to emphasize this international perspective of their own struggle.

I found that the places I could best develop fruitful political relationships were those where I stayed for extended periods of time. I am quite convinced that short visits, in which you visit a place for a day and see all the big attractions and then pull out, will not produce much in terms of our own work, what we learn or for the people of the village or town. It takes quite a bit of time to get to know people and become established.

For example, Chantal was working with one of her life history subjects, an old woman whose previous experience with white people had not been very good since it was exclusively with Portuguese colonialists. So naturally, though her level of political consciousness led her to understand intellectually that we were comrades and not enemies, she was initially very hesitant to come to our hut and do the work. She would not come alone. It was only after perhaps a week of work that she came alone and eventually appointed herself Chantal's second "mother" before we left the village.

So I think that the kind of work we do, our seriousness and discipline and our consideration for other comrades are all very important in establishing ourselves as political people, as comrades. We cannot expect to be automatically accepted. Few foreigners come on essentially political missions. Many come as journalists basically interested in gathering information no matter what the cost. Sometimes in their work they become arrogant; they demand and expect red carpet treatment. Such an attitude, needless to say, would be detrimental to the kind of work that I was doing.

As far as most of the individual militants were concerned, they had little reason to accept me as a comrade right from the beginning, unless they knew something about LSM; and of course the great majority of people I met knew little or nothing about myself or our organization. We were judged not only in discussions of what the liberation movement was doing but by how seriously we discussed our own political work and by our behavior toward other comrades.

A case that would illustrate this is my visit in Angola to a FAPLA CIR (Center for Revolutionary Instruction).\* I participated in some of the commando-training activities, not because I needed military training, but because I hoped that if I marched with the militants, participated in their lives and shared some of their hardships, they would come to understand my sincere identification with their revolutionary process, that I wasn't just another bourgeois journalist out to get a story. In fact, they came to accept me more as a comrade who was prepared to face challenges even if I did not have to. I could have photographed the whole maneuver, in this case a grueling march, from a truck that was driving behind us or taken a car and driven to roads they had to cross. That I marched with them in addition to taking pictures increased my ability to function, to relate as a comrade and to engage in discussions with these fighters for the rest of the time I spent in their camp.

But there were also many occasions when I did not succeed in getting that far. When I first met people who didn't know me, they often took me for a journalist. They were very polite, they wanted to treat me well, they wanted to make sure I had everything I needed or might be used to. They didn't want me to have any reason to complain and so they would treat me the best way possible. Several times I was shown to first-class hotels where I could not afford to stay and where I would have been extremely isolated. Or people would insist on receiving me as a journalist, a person who had come merely to collect information as part of a professional, rather than political, interest and who

\*See *LSM NEWS*, Winter 1976.



was not prepared to put up with any inconvenience. To get beyond this stage was sometimes a struggle; it took honest and straightforward explanation in meetings. Sometimes I affronted people. They did not understand or I did not explain well enough. But in cases when I did not struggle and accepted superficial treatment, I was simply not able to do my work properly. This is because without moving beyond normal bourgeois journalistic patterns, without establishing an explicitly political relationship with the cadres and masses, it became impossible for me to get close to the revolutionary process and thus to achieve the quality of documentary work which is required to reflect its true dynamic.

I think one illustration of this problem is a visit I made to a *bairro* in Luanda with a group of journalists. The group received superficial answers which failed to reveal the depth of the *Poder Popular* movement. This was a *bairro* in which I spent a lot of time afterwards and was introduced as a comrade by MPLA cadres. At this point, I got to know several of the militants and found in fact that the situation was quite complex. Now I think it was only because I stayed and got to know them and also because I was able to confront them with some real questions that I was able to get beyond the superficial level and learn about the contradictions they are facing.

ON THE BASIS OF YOUR EXPERIENCE, IS IT REALISTIC FOR METROPOLITAN REVOLUTIONARIES TO TRY TO BUILD INTERNATIONALIST LINKS WITH NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENTS, AND THROUGH THEM, WITH THE MASSES OF PEASANTS AND WORKERS FIGHTING IMPERIALISM?

I think it is definitely realistic and I now see clearly that it is very necessary. Bourgeois internationalism is indeed one of the strongest cards that the ruling class, the international bourgeoisie, has to play. For example in Angola we found the reactionary alliance of Angolan traitors, Zairean and South African invasionary forces, die-hard Portuguese fascists, western mercenaries and CIA advisors, all funded by imperialist interests in western Europe and North America. This bourgeois internationalism must be fought with proletarian internationalism. However, one thing that I cannot stress too much is the different context for national liberation movements, Third World revolutionaries, and for us in the metropole.

For the struggles in the colonies and neocolonies of imperialism such as Namibia, Mozambique and Vietnam, the national dimension is primary. That is why in places like Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau and Angola today forging a real nation is still a very important task in the consolidation of the victories of the PAIGC, FRELIMO and MPLA. In all three countries, for example, the liberation movements take great pains to put people from different parts of the country together within their political and military units. People who come from different tribes, who grew up with different customs, work together to accelerate the process through which they all identify themselves as Angolans, Mozambicans or Guineans first. I found this in Guinea-Bissau where, at the boarding schools we visited, I saw a very conscious selection of students from different parts of the country with different African dialects and customs. We found that these students *could* overcome their inherited regional and tribal affiliations. In Angola this was extended to racial differences. I was very impressed by the conscious mixture of Whites, Mestizos and Blacks in the FAPLA units I visited.

For us, however, here in the metropole, the context is very different. Within the metropole - the oppressor nations of imperialism - nationalism has acquired a reactionary and chauvinist character. It is used to strengthen the bourgeoisie and even to justify imperialist exploitation of other nations. It stands in the way of the practice of international solidarity beyond national borders because of the bourgeois, reactionary character of such nationalism.

What South Africa, for example, is trying to do with its African population is the direct opposite of FRELIMO, MPLA and PAIGC's nation-building. The apartheid *Bantustan* policy aims to divide the black population on a strictly tribal basis, to prevent them from building a broad national consciousness and thus to weaken their ability to resist white domination. Of course this policy is designed to promote the reactionary national interests of the white population and their multinational white partners. And it is

this same nationalism of the white population that led South Africa to invade Angola late last year. It's very much the same kind of nationalism that supports all imperialist wars. It is quite clear that it was for national self-interest that the US fought in Indochina, and for the same national interest that they became involved in Angola. So, the difference between progressive and reactionary forms of nationalism is that the progressive form shapes nations to resist foreign oppression and imperialist exploitation while the reactionary, chauvinist brand of nationalism in oppressor nations helps to preserve that oppression and exploitation by uniting all classes in defense of privilege.

Of course in North America national chauvinism is also directed toward the internal colonies in the southwest, the city ghettos and the far North. In Canada, in particular, Canadian nationalism has largely served to draw attention to the fact that Canada is in many ways dominated by the US. It has therefore served to cover up Canada's colonial relationship to the native population and the fact that Canada is also an imperialist country with extensive operations in Latin America, southern Africa and southeast Asia. This reactionary aspect is clearly dominant in Canadian nationalism today.

A good example of Canadian imperialist activity is the large Bata shoe factory I visited in Zambia. The largest Bata-owned factory in Africa is in Rhodesia where Bata openly defies UN sanctions. Bata also maintains three factories in South Africa which employ mainly underpaid black labor.

If we consider this difference between nationalism in the oppressed and oppressor nations and other differences I have mentioned, such as the wide cultural gap and divergent class backgrounds which made it difficult for me to understand and indeed go below the surface of what was going on around me in Africa, I think there are problems in interacting as revolutionaries on one continent with revolutionaries on another, between people like ourselves in North America on the one hand and people in national liberation movements - revolutionaries in neocolonially dominated countries - on the other. I think that *at this stage no full integration is possible between the different kinds of movements in the metropole and the countryside, the Third World.* The real challenge is to find those areas where fruitful cooperation is possible, to strengthen our common struggle in the areas where this can be concretely done today. I think the example of Cuba is worth mentioning. Cuba, which itself faced imperialist aggression, is prepared to make significant sacrifices to help countries which face similar threats today. Angola is only one such case. Cuba has sent a considerable number of technical and medical cadres, for example, both to Guinea-Bissau and to other African countries.

Our work too must be based on what is within the realm of real possibilities. Where we are and who we are determines, to a great extent, what we can do; and I think LSM's practice has been very much based on this view. We try to use the facilities and skills which imperialism has placed at our disposal to advance the process of national liberation which we see as vital to creating international socialism. We use our own skills to support national liberation movements and, in doing so, we contribute to the development of preconditions for socialist revolution in North America. This applies to our informational work, in terms of advancing political consciousness and support, as well as to our material support work by which we concretely contribute to revolutionary national liberation struggles.

I saw some inspiring examples in Angola where I met several European electrical engineers, radio technicians, doctors and other people who are working with the PRA government at subsistence wages. They are taking the opportunity to use what they had learned, often in universities and hospitals which were built from the super-profits extracted from colonized peoples, to very concretely channel some of their skill back where it comes from and is so greatly needed. By doing this they hope to advance a cause they believe in and to thereby concretely and objectively advance the international revolution.

We in LSM are striving for this kind of proletarian internationalism and not merely for international solidarity in general. International solidarity of course includes proletarian internationalism, but it also includes support and solidarity shown by a wide variety of people and organizations who are not at all concerned with socialism, but who generally work for humanitarian reasons, because they don't like to see their fellow human



Ole Gjerstad with young FAPLA *guerrilheira*. LSM PHOTO.

beings suffer. Now I don't want to denigrate such people at all; their work is very valuable. But there is a distinct difference. Proletarian internationalism has as its basis the common international struggle for socialism, the belief that in the long run socialism is in the interests of those of us who live in North America as well as of struggling peoples on other continents. This concept is shared by many people within the various movements that I have worked with over the past year; certainly not by all because these are not socialist or Marxist-Leninist parties but national liberation movements. But many comrades within the various movements told me that they see their own fight as part of a long-run, world-wide fight which will also bring an end to bourgeois rule in Europe and North America. They said so in no uncertain terms. I asked Sam Nujoma, the President of SWAPO, if a free Namibia would continue relations with progressive forces which support SWAPO. He said, "We will continue to improve these relationships and we will promote the aims of these organizations because they are part and parcel of the international struggle for the progress of mankind to end exploitation of man by man." And when I asked if, when it's our turn to wage armed struggle, we can turn to a liberated Namibia, he replied that we would be welcomed.

1956 to 1976

# THE ANGOLAN REVOLUTION

A Chronology, Compiled by Beth Youhn and Steve Goldfield

1956

*December 10:* The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) forms in Luanda from the fusion of two nationalist organizations. With the creation of MPLA, the struggle in Angola is, for the first time, directed not only against Portuguese colonialism but also against imperialism. For the first time an Angolan nationalist organization argues that the Angolan struggle is a class struggle and not a racial conflict. MPLA begins the protracted task of increasing the political consciousness of the masses in and around Luanda, Angola's capital.

1957

FNLA's forerunner, UPNA (Union of the Peoples of Northern Angola) forms in Kinshasa. Its base will remain largely among Bakongo refugees from Angola in southern Zaire.

1958

When UPNA finds little support for its stated aim of secession of the old Kongo Kingdom, it becomes UPA, dropping the "Northern" from its name to project a nationalist rather than tribalist image.

Gulf Oil receives exclusive exploration rights in Cabinda Province and begins paying the Portuguese government millions of dollars in annual royalties.

1959

*March:* PIDE (Portuguese secret police) launches its first of many repressive campaigns against MPLA in response to growing popular support for programs such as clandestine literacy classes in Luanda's *museques* (shantytowns) and leafletting urging Angolans to prepare themselves for an open independence struggle. Several dozen MPLA patriots and scores of sympathizers are arrested, tortured and murdered. Meanwhile, Portuguese air force, paratroop and infantry units pour into Luanda.

1960

*May:* MPLA issues its first call to all Angolan organizations to create a single united front against Portuguese colonialism.

*June 8:* Dr. Agostinho Neto, MPLA leader, is arrested for the third time by the PIDE in his medical offices in Luanda. Villages from Bengo, Neto's birthplace, and neighboring Icolo, stage a massive peaceful protest against his arrest; the Portuguese respond by killing thirty patriots, wounding two hundred, and burning both villages to the ground.

*June 13:* MPLA sends to the Portuguese government a declaration demanding the right of independence. Portuguese dictator Salazar responds with silence, a massive number of Portuguese troops, and new waves of arrest and repression in Luanda, Lobito, Malange and Dalatondo.

*November:* Twenty-eight nationalists from Cabinda are shot to death in Luanda Prison.

1961

*January:* The people of Baixa de Kassenje, exploited by the Belgian company COTONANG, go on strike against forced cotton cultivation. The Portuguese napalm the Malanje region and massacre more than 20,000 agricultural workers.

*February 4:* MPLA militants, armed only with clubs and knives, lead the people of Luanda's shantytowns in a heroic assault on the main Portuguese prison to free political prisoners. Beaten back by police with guns, forty Africans die along with seven Portuguese. Luanda's

white settlers go on a rampage, killing Africans indiscriminately. February 4th marks the beginning of the armed phase of the Angolan national liberation struggle.

*March 15:* UPA, now under the leadership of Holden Roberto, initiates and directs an uprising in the North in which Bakongo peasants attack white and *mestizo* civilians, as well as black intellectuals, Catholics and peasants of other tribes. This poorly planned and racist rebellion has no clear objectives and is crushingly defeated by the reinforced Portuguese army, equipped with fragmentation and napalm bombs supplied through NATO. The Portuguese army and settlers then begin a ruthless massacre of many thousands of Angolans, which amounts to genocide. By summer it is estimated that 30,000 Angolans have been slaughtered and tens of thousands of refugees have fled into the Congo. Meanwhile, MPLA-led resistance in the northwest area of Dembos and Nambuagongo (MPLA's First Region of politico-military action) continues despite isolation from other MPLA forces and heavy attacks by both the Portuguese and UPA.

*October:* UPA hostility toward MPLA leads to UPA's capture and murder of an MPLA detachment of 21 fighters attempting to enter Angola from the northern Zaire border. This is the first of many such attacks by UPA/FNLA which, closely allied with the reactionary Mobutu regime of Zaire, will spend most of its military energies attacking, murdering and jailing MPLA militants.

1962

*March:* UPA and the PDA (Democratic Party of Angola, formerly Aliazo) form the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA). Soon after, they proclaim the "Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile" (GRAE), with headquarters in Kinshasa, Zaire.

US President Kennedy secretly chooses Holden Roberto as the man to back for future Angolan leader when Portugal can no longer hold Angola. Roberto then receives a \$10,000 secret CIA annual retainer plus arms through 1969. Much of these funds, and those from other sources such as the OAU, are used to consolidate Roberto's position as a prominent Kinshasa businessman.

*November:* Agostinho Neto, with the aid of anti-fascist Portuguese, escapes detention in Lisbon and arrives in Kinshasa.

*December:* First MPLA National Conference is held in Kinshasa. Neto is elected President. The decision is made to concentrate on organizing the peasants inside Angola, and the necessity for armed struggle is affirmed.

1963

*January 9:* MPLA opens its Second Region of politico-military activity in the Cabinda enclave, north of the Congo River.

*Summer and Fall:* The reactionary Zaire government, in league with FNLA, harrasses MPLA in Kinshasa, arresting top leaders and closing down MPLA's medical clinic for refugees.

*November:* MPLA is expelled from Zaire altogether and sets up headquarters in neighboring Congo-Brazzaville.

1964

The Portuguese continue their terrorist repression in the North, forcing thousands more to flee. By 1969, there are an estimated 400,000 Angolan refugees in Zaire.

*January:* At the MPLA Conference of Cadres in Brazzaville, the movement leadership criticizes itself for problems of poor coordination and planning - in particular, they point to the lack of a strategy to provide the population adequate military protection from Portuguese assault. Growing privilege and opportunism are also criticized among some in the movement. Defining new structures and modes of operation, the conference maps out MPLA's future strategy of protracted people's war.

*July:* Jonas Savimbi, foreign minister of FNLA, resigns, denouncing FNLA's "flagrant tribalism," indiscipline and US backing.

*July:* Second OAU meeting of chiefs of state recognizes FNLA/GRAE but also decides to recognize MPLA.

1965

MPLA opens an office in Lusaka, capital of newly-independent Zambia and begins sending

political cadres into eastern Angola to prepare the population for the launching of armed struggle there.

The Portuguese send a new force of 45,000 soldiers to Angola, and government military expenditures increase to about \$900 million.

1966

*March 18:* MPLA opens its Third Region of politico-military activity in eastern Angola. Prevented from securing access through Zaire to northern and central Angola by FNLA/Zairean sabotage, MPLA turns to the vast, sparsely populated Eastern Region, which affords a long and difficult supply line from the Indian Ocean through Tanzania and Zambia. *March:* Savimbi forms UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola). UNITA, tribally based among the Ovimbundus and working solely in a limited area of northern Moxico, will claim at times to be Marxist-Leninist and will enjoy Chinese support for several years, but is later exposed as having collaborated extensively with both the CIA and the Portuguese against MPLA.

1967

MPLA launches the slogan, "Generalization of the armed struggle over the entire national territory," in order to mobilize increasing numbers of the people into the struggle and to weaken Portuguese resistance by forcing a greater dispersal of enemy troops.

1968

The Portuguese launch a major offensive against MPLA in the First and Third Regions. In the East, the Portuguese strategy is to contain and try to destroy MPLA through scorched-earth bombings and helicopter attacks.

*January 3:* MPLA's leadership announces the decision to move its headquarters from Brazzaville to an MPLA-controlled region inside Angola thus enabling the movement leadership to work permanently and closely among the people.

*August 22-25:* The First Eastern Regional Conference is held by MPLA inside liberated eastern Angola. Decisions include expanding political education to work toward long-range transformation of MPLA into a political party, working to immediately expand the anti-colonial nationalist front, working toward forming a regular army, immediately uniting political and military functions in the Steering Committee to combat militarist tendencies and affirming the acceptance of patriotic Whites into MPLA.

1969

Following initial losses from last year's Portuguese offensive, MPLA regains the initiative in the Eastern Region and resumes westward penetration by first sending political cadres to form action committees and prepare the population, then following with military units and arms. (This contrasts with UNITA, which promised the people arms that never came and then fled after attacking the Portuguese, leaving villagers defenseless against brutal Portuguese reprisals.)

*June 6:* First battle in Bié extends armed struggle to 10 of Angola's 15 districts. MPLA's semi-liberated and operational zones cover about 2.5 million people, or roughly half Angola's population.

Official Portuguese figures show there are now about one million rural Angolans forced into barbed-wire concentration camps designed to "protect" them from the liberation movement.

1970

The Portuguese launch an offensive to halt MPLA's advance into central Angola. Using sophisticated weapons and methods - defoliants, helicopters, armored cars, "assassination squads" of conscripted Africans, and South African advisors - they construct an "invulnerable" defense line at the Kuanza River in Bié and systematically attack MPLA's supply lines. Nonetheless, MPLA advances as militants initiate twice as many combat actions as the previous year. MPLA, however, faces a chronic shortage of good weapons (perhaps half of the 5000 fighters in the East are without modern weapons) and a three-



month roundtrip footmarch to the Zambian border for supplies for the central districts. Meanwhile, MPLA's control over the liberated areas is consolidated, as democratic and social service institutions are extended to more areas. There are now over 150 village action committees in the Eastern Region, and MPLA's Medical Assistance Services and Centers of Revolutionary Instruction continue bringing the population their first taste of the rewards of independence.

1971

*September-October:* MPLA's Steering Committee meets in the Eastern Region. The main slogan is "Intensify the mobilization of the people! Reinforce People's Power!" The task of mobilization is given to the mass organizations: Youth of MPLA (JMPLA), Organization of Angolan Women (OMA), National Union of Angolan Workers (UNTA), and Organization of Angolan Pioneers (OPA). The MPLA leadership reaffirms its militant solidarity with the oppressed peoples of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East who are struggling against international imperialism.

*December:* US and Portugal sign a new Azores Agreement which gives Portugal a \$435 million aid package in exchange for continued use of the US base in the Azores Islands.

1972

*January 12:* MPLA launches armed struggle in the region of Cunene, the extreme southern province of Angola adjacent to Namibia where thousands of Angolans travel to work in the mines. The uprising is coordinated with Namibian liberation forces.

*March:* Portugal and South Africa announce launching of the Cunene hydroelectric dam project, intended to provide electricity for South Africa and Angolan white settlers.

*August:* MPLA launches the "Movement of Readjustment," a vast campaign of criticism and self-criticism aimed at raising ideological, political, military and organizational levels. The campaign includes the formation of Groups of Active Militants which are to debate pressing organizational problems and thus strengthen the link between leadership and the people.

*December 13:* MPLA signs a unity agreement with FNLA as a necessary tactical step to open the frontier between Angola and Zaire to its forces, thus allowing enlargement of the military front and better logistical support. FNLA, however, soon breaks it, jailing and torturing MPLA militants in Kinshasa.

1973

*September:* MPLA's Steering Committee announces the discovery of a counterrevolutionary conspiracy within MPLA, called the "eastern revolt" led by Daniel Chipenda, and declares that Chipenda abused his authority to attain personal objectives in the following manner: while responsible for MPLA logistics, he organized a subversive tribal network to divert arms to UNITA which was collaborating with the Portuguese army against MPLA; using divisive tribalist tactics, Chipenda's subversive group organized two assassination attempts aimed at President Neto and other MPLA leaders; finally, Chipenda created difficulties between MPLA and the government of Zambia.

1974

A second faction within MPLA, calling itself the "active revolt" and led by Mario and Pinto de Andrade, emerges in Brazzaville. MPLA leadership charges that the "active revolt" faction is comprised of militants who have long since removed themselves from the struggle among the masses and so have no base of popular support. Eventually most elements of this faction reintegrate with MPLA.

*April 25:* Anti-fascist coup by the Armed Forces Movement overthrows Portuguese dictator Marcello Caetano, ending 50 years of fascism in Portugal. The crisis resulting from over a decade of three-front colonial war in Africa, deploying up to 160,000 Portuguese troops, brought about the coup.

*June:* General Spínola, who took over command in Portugal after the coup, and President Nixon meet in the Azores to agree on a plan of decolonization with "safeguards." Spínola wants to impose a neocolonial "Lusitanian Federation" on the people of the

Portuguese colonies. MPLA armed resistance continues in response to this stance.

*July:* Widespread racial violence develops as settler vigilantes attack Luanda *mugeques*. MPLA calls a general strike to protest these attacks and accuses former PIDE agents (later found to be working with FNLA) of provoking disorders. White Angolan and South African press begin a propaganda campaign to promote Savimbi.

*August 1:* MPLA proclaims the formation of a regular army, the FAPLA (Popular Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola).

*August:* The First Congress of MPLA, planned in 1971 but delayed by the demands of the armed struggle, is held in Zambia under strong foreign pressure to unite the Neto-led MPLA with the two "revolt" factions. However, the opportunistic conduct of the factions, including their refusal to hold the Congress inside Angola and the fact that members of the FNLA are revealed to be integrated into the delegation of the "eastern revolt" (Chipenda) faction, oblige the MPLA leadership to invalidate the "Congress" and announce that the First Congress would be held at a later date inside Angola.

*September:* The heads of state of Zambia, Zaire, Congo and Tanzania meet with Neto and "revolt" factions in Brazzaville. Neto is reconfirmed as MPLA President and a fragile agreement for unity is reached, which Chipenda later denounces.

*September 12:* Inter-Regional Conference of MPLA Militants is held in Angola to review MPLA's policies and conditions for negotiations with the Portuguese and to elect a 36-member Central Committee and a 10-member Political Bureau, both led by Agostinho Neto.

*September 15:* Spínola meets in the Cape Verde Islands with President Mobutu of Zaire, Holden Roberto and a delegation from the Chipenda faction. They plan a provisional coalition government for Angola to include FNLA, UNITA and Chipenda but not MPLA. Spínola's plot fails when he is ousted from power in Portugal at the end of the month.

*October:* Right-wing coup attempt in Angola by white settlers and conservative Portuguese officers fails.

*October 21:* Cease-fire agreement is signed between MPLA and Portuguese armed forces.

*October-November:* Series of violent incidents in Luanda between Whites and Africans is linked to FNLA/UNITA attempts to destroy MPLA power in the city.

*November 8:* MPLA official delegation arrives in Luanda to set up its office.

*November:* Separatist forces under the long dormant FLEC (Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda Enclave) attempt to take over Cabinda with heavy Zaire backing.

*December 16:* Daniel Chipenda is formally expelled by MPLA for treason.

## 1975

*January 3:* MPLA, FNLA and UNITA conclude the Mombasa Agreement which makes possible negotiations with the Portuguese government.

*January 10:* Alvor Agreement is signed which determines the form of the new transitional government of Angola with responsibility divided among Portugal, UNITA, FNLA and MPLA, each of which has three representatives on a 12-member cabinet headed by the Portuguese Governor-General. Integration of the three movements administratively and militarily is to lead to an election of a constituent assembly in November which is to elect a president to accept transfer of power from Portugal on Independence Day, set for 11 November 1975.

*January:* The "40 Committee" (top-secret US government body overseeing all CIA activities) agrees to the CIA's request to grant increased covert aid of \$300,000 to FNLA following the Alvor Agreement.

*February 23:* Chipenda announces his "faction of MPLA" will be integrated into FNLA.

*March 22-26:* Over 1000 people are killed in a week of unprovoked FNLA attacks on MPLA troops and civilians, as FNLA attempts to curb the growth of people's militias and neighborhood committees under the MPLA-supported People's Power movement.

*March-May:* FNLA receives unrestricted amounts of arms, mostly of US origin via Zaire, and uses them to launch attacks on MPLA, driving them out of the North with massive assistance from Zaire troops.

*April:* Significant Soviet military supplies for MPLA start to arrive.

*June:* 230 Cuban advisors arrive in Angola to assist in training MPLA troops.

*Chronology cont. on page 19*

# LSM PHOTOS FROM ANGOLA'S 2ND WAR



A pioneiro.



Relaxing after action near Caxito.



FAPLA recruits in training at CIR "Resistencia Popular."



Heavy load at Malange market.



In the worker-run Textang clothing factory, Luanda.



The young generation of Bairro Operario.



# STOP PRESS!!!

As we were going to press we received the latest news on the case of an imprisoned comrade. LSM Associate Frank Giese, former Portland State University Professor, surrendered to US Marshalls after the 9th District of the US Court of Appeals ruled that his bond be revoked and that he be jailed. Since March 12, Giese has been incarcerated in the Vancouver, Washington city jail.

Frank was indicted two years ago by the Federal Government for allegedly "masterminding" a bombing of a Portland recruiting center (see *LSM NEWS*, Vol. I, No. 3). Despite the fact that he was acquitted of all specific charges, Frank was found guilty of a vague "conspiracy to harm the Federal Government," and sentenced to the maximum allowable sentence of five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine! The Government case against Giese relied primarily on the perjured testimonies of Lynn Meyer and Robert McSherry. McSherry's bail was reduced from \$100,000 to \$100 after he agreed to implicate Giese in the recruitment center bombing! Since that time Meyer has retracted his testimony, declaring that the FBI requested that he perjure himself against Giese. Nevertheless, without a new trial this revealing piece of evidence will not be introduced into the case.

Giese is now being denied this possibility since he has been deprived of his right to an appeal. This decision of the court is based on the fact that his lawyer, H. Peter Young, now known to be an alcoholic, was eleven months late in filing Giese's appeal, and once filed it was 150 pages too long. Young has subsequently been disbarred for this gross negligence. Thus, as a consequence of the incompetence and total irresponsibility of his lawyer, Giese, now 65 years of age, may spend the next five years in prison!

A motion was filed on March 22 by Giese's new lawyer, Doren Weinburg, asking the court to reconsider its decision. The motion was supported by statements from many lawyers testifying to Giese's good faith in this matter.

Government repression of the left is of fundamental importance for all progressive and revolutionary people in North America. Frank needs your support in his fight against the Government frame-up.

## FREE FRANK GIESE!!!!

Send your inquiries and donations to either the Giese Defense Committee, 2616 NW Northrup, Portland, OR 97210, (223-7460) or Doren Weinburg, 1714 Stockton Street, San Francisco, CA.



*Chronology cont. from page 14*

June 21: Nakuru Agreement is signed as the last of several attempts to establish a fragile cease-fire between Angolan movements. When it is violated by FNLA and UNITA, MPLA prepares to expel all imperialist agents of FNLA and UNITA from Luanda and to take the struggle to the entire country.

July 17: The "40 Committee" approves CIA request for \$30 million aid for Roberto and Savimbi in cash and arms to be sent via Zaire and Zambia.

FNLA declares war on MPLA.

July 26: MPLA's Political Bureau proclaims the Popular Generalized Resistance in response to FNLA attacks including massacres of the Angolan population. National reconstruction is begun or continued in all liberated areas, where democratic forms of People's Power are constructed.

July 27: CIA is authorized by President Ford to begin large-scale covert aid, mostly arms, to UNITA.

August: UNITA and FNLA are expelled from Luanda by MPLA. US covert military aid to FNLA/UNITA greatly increases through stepped-up airlift via Kinshasa; NATO and US weapons from arms depots in the US and West Germany, routed through the Azores, are flown to Kinshasa in US C-141 transports.

FNLA now controls the North, pushes toward Luanda with heavy Zaire assistance and US arms supplies and takes Caxito, 50 kilometers north of Luanda. UNITA declares war on MPLA. MPLA moves south and takes Lobito and other southern towns from UNITA. South African force, including 800 Portuguese mercenaries, enters southern Angola on the pretext of "protecting" the Cunene Dam from SWAPO and MPLA attacks.

September: MPLA captures all major southern towns except Huambo from UNITA. MPLA now controls 12 out of 16 provinces. Savimbi calls on South Africa for assistance. France gives a \$3 million interest-free loan to UNITA. First Cuban troops begin to arrive in Congo-Brazzaville, ready to aid MPLA.

October: Ford Administration seeks \$81 million aid to Zaire, including \$19 million in direct military assistance, in an attempt to indirectly increase aid to FNLA/UNITA.

October 23: Large-scale South African invasion of Angola from Namibia begins. The force includes at least 500 white mercenaries. In early February, Defense Minister Botha, reversing previous denials, admits that 6000 South African troops had penetrated "a very long way" into Angola.

October 30: OAU nine-nation conciliation commission recommends government of national unity and non-recognition of any one movement. MPLA refuses to negotiate with FNLA and UNITA because they represent foreign interests.

November 11: ANGOLAN INDEPENDENCE DAY - MPLA proclaims the establishment of the People's Republic of Angola (PRA), immediately recognized by over 30 countries. The Portuguese withdraw, recognizing Angolan independence but refusing to acknowledge any Angolan movement as the legitimate government.

November 14: The heavily armored South African forces, joined with UNITA/FNLA troops led by Chipenda, advance up the coast, covering 500 miles in nine days and inflicting serious losses on MPLA. Many major towns are captured, including the ports of Lobito, Benguela and Novo Redondo. Cuban troops are airlifted to help MPLA meet the emergency. Renewed FNLA/FLEC attack on Cabinda is repulsed by MPLA. The FNLA drive southward is stopped 15 miles north of Luanda.

November 17: Nigeria becomes the 21st African country to recognize the PRA.

November 23: FNLA and UNITA proclaim a joint government named the Democratic People's Republic of Angola with capital at Huambo (Nova Lisboa). This government is never officially recognized by any foreign government.

November 27: China announces withdrawal of support for FNLA alone and calls for a government of national unity.

December 11: CORE's (Congress of Racial Equality - US civil rights organization) Roy Innis is revealed to be recruiting black US mercenaries to fight with FNLA/UNITA.

December 15: MPLA, assisted by Cuban troops and Soviet rockets, begins to retake its positions. The South African advance is turned back in the South; MPLA begins advance

against FNLA in the North, moving toward Ambriz. There is now mounting public evidence of extensive US involvement: US Navy task force is reportedly placed on alert; US spotter planes are flying missions over Angola from Zaire; US cargo planes are air-dropping supplies to the South African column.

*December 19:* US Senate votes 54-22 to cut off all aid to FNLA/UNITA.

*December 20:* Savimbi meets with South Africans "at the highest level" in Pretoria to urge them to remain in Angola.

*December 22:* Fidel Castro, in a speech at Cuba's First Party Congress in Havana, states that Cuba is carrying out its proletarian internationalist duty by supporting the Angolan people and its vanguard, MPLA.

1976

*January 2:* Three hundred US mercenaries recruited by CIA-financed front groups are discovered to be fighting in Angola with FNLA/UNITA. These include US Special Forces personnel put on "indefinite leave" or recently discharged to enable them to fight in Angola. 150 took courses in weapons and Portuguese at Fort Benning, Georgia.

*January:* In New Year offensive, MPLA, reinforced by Soviet supplies and Cuban troops, moves against FNLA/Zaire forces in the North and captures key towns such as Uige (Carmona, FNLA headquarters), Ngage (FNLA airbase) and the port of Ambriz (FNLA's northern airbase for CIA supplies) in the first half of the month. By the end of the month, FNLA/Zaire troops are driven back almost to the northern border, and widespread looting and murders are reported as their forces retreat.

*January 12:* OAU meeting deadlocks on Angola - 22 nations out of 46 recognize MPLA Government, 22 support a reconciliation position, none recognize the FNLA/UNITA "government."

*January 27:* US House of Representatives approves Senate vote to cut off all covert US aid to FNLA and UNITA. Kissinger announces that Ford Administration will try to secure overt aid for them.

*January 31:* PRA Prime Minister Lopo do Nascimento states that the US is waging economic warfare against MPLA-led Angola, citing Gulf's refusal to pay oil royalties and the State Department's cancellation of delivery of two Boeing 737's already paid for by Angola's privately-owned airline.

*February 3:* Retreating in the South, 6000 South African troops dig in along a defense line 50 miles inside Angola stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Zambian border; another 20,000 South African troops are stationed just over the border in Namibia.

*February 5:* São Antonio do Zaire, FNLA's last stronghold near the Zaire border, falls to MPLA. FNLA/Zaire forces have now been virtually driven out of Angola and MPLA controls the North.

*February 7-10:* MPLA takes Huambo, Angola's second largest city and UNITA's abandoned capital. Then, in rapid succession, the ports of Lobito and Benguela, the towns of Silva Porto and Luso in the East, and finally Moçamedes and Sa da Bandeira in the South are liberated. MPLA now directly controls virtually all areas of the country except the South African-held strip adjacent to the Namibian border. Throughout the war, MPLA's administration functions effectively despite many problems. Now, with Angola's "2nd War of National Liberation" nearing complete victory, MPLA moves to establish People's Power throughout the whole of Angola.

*February 12:* 28 African states now recognize the People's Republic of Angola, which is accepted as the OAU's 47th member.

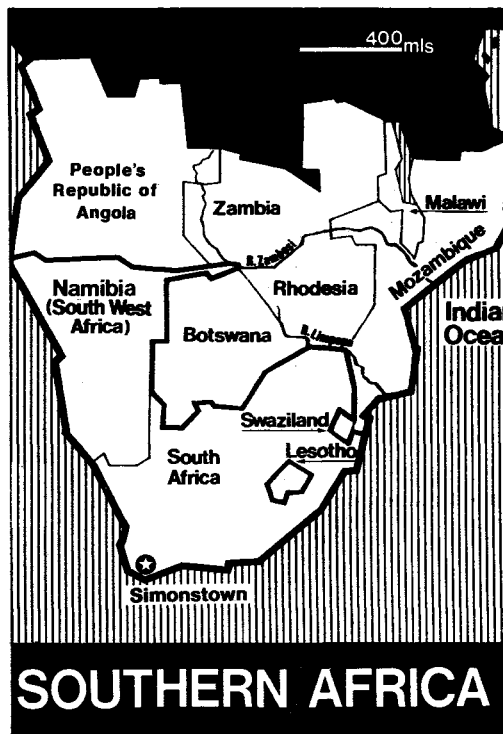
*February 17:* France recognizes the PRA as the other EEC countries, including Britain, and Canada follow suit. More than 75 nations now recognize the PRA.

*March 27:* South Africa withdraws from southern Angola. Angola is free all the way from Cabinda to Cunene.

# THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

After Angola: Namibia! by Mike Mercer, LSM Bay Area Unit

*The struggle of the Angolan people under the leadership of MPLA against neo-colonialism and foreign intervention recently captured the attention of the entire world. The consequences of this successful war of national liberation are serious indeed for global imperialist interests, particularly the remaining racist regimes of southern Africa. The establishment of Peoples' Republics in Mozambique and Angola has significantly altered the balance of forces throughout the entire region. FRELIMO and MPLA are not only taking decisive steps toward the elimination of imperialist exploitation within their own countries, they are also providing solid support for the national liberation movements of Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Thus, anti-imperialists can expect southern Africa to become an increasingly important focal point in the international struggle against imperialism. Unfortunately however, little is known of the liberation movements which are leading this next stage of the armed struggle in Africa, just as MPLA was virtually unheard of before the "2nd War of National Liberation." With this in mind we offer the following brief description of Namibia's liberation struggle led by SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organization).*



Roughly twice the size of California, Namibia has a semi-desert terrain which belies its incredible natural wealth. With a little over a million inhabitants, Namibia's per capita gross domestic product is the second largest in Africa. The Namibian people, however, are among the most emiserated in Africa. This contradiction lies in the system of apartheid, which is at the heart of the South West African economy. Blacks, constituting 85% of the population, are confined by law to the 40% of the land which makes up the reserves. These Bantustans are carved out along tribal lines, thus separating the Ovambos, Hereros, Namas, etc. They exist primarily in northern Namibia where the climate is arid and the land is mostly infertile. Inside the white "Police Zone," where no black man may venture without a pass, cultivable land, offshore fishing and most of all vast mineral deposits are exploited by white settlers, South Africa and multinational corporations.

But Namibians are not only excluded from this great natural wealth; it is their labor which realizes it. Because subsistence in the reserves is impossible, black men are forced to work as contract laborers in the mines, in the canneries and on the white farms.

Their wages amount to a few dollars per month; for the multinationals this means profit rates upwards of 25%. The intense contradiction, as much as the intense poverty, produced by this system of neo-slavery necessarily gave rise to an organization such as SWAPO, and furthermore explains SWAPO's broad base of support among the Namibian people.

The origins of the present situation go back to 1920 when the League of Nations, upon the demise of German colonial rule, granted South Africa a mandate to govern Namibia: "to promote to the utmost the material and moral well-being and the social progress of the inhabitants of the Territory." South Africa duly proceeded to ignore the high-sounding terms of this "sacred trust" and develop the country according to the interests of the Whites. The new South West African administration completed the "pacification" of the natives, only begun by the Germans, by methodically alienating land for white settlement and pushing Blacks onto the reserves. The League of Nations managed to look the other way, and while the UN terminated the mandate and subsequently passed resolutions condemning South African occupation, it has been impotent as far as enforcement of the measures is concerned.\*

With World War II came an increased need of the industrialized nations for raw materials; thus, with an influx of foreign investment, the South West African economy shifted its focus from settler agriculture to mining and other extractive industry. In 1947 the long-dormant Tsumeb mine was reopened by American Metal Climax (AMAX) and Newmont Mining Co., two American corporations, and several South African firms. The corporations have, since that time, extracted over one billion dollars in lead, copper, zinc and other minerals. With this increase in industry, the need for cheap labor also increased. It was no longer a matter of acquiring a farmhand, herder or other "boy"; contract workers in large supply were necessary for the "development" of the economy, i.e. for the enrichment of the privileged white minority.

Possibly the best account of the contract labor system is that told by a Namibian who has been through it; *Breaking Contract: the Story of Vinnia Ndadi*<sup>1</sup> is a revealing document. Vinnia describes the conditions under which he grew up in the Ovambo reserve: subsistence farming with primitive tools, walking seven miles every day for water, frequent sickness and no hospitals, and 90% illiteracy. "At school I couldn't concentrate on my lessons very well - mostly because I was always hungry and tired." Unable to finance further education and often having to support families, men frequently go on contract at an early age. Vinnia tells of being shipped with hundreds of others in cattle cars and given no food and of spending nights in a laborers' compound under a thin, lice-infested blanket; finally he reaches his workplace, a large white farm: "After three years at the Jooste farm I was weak and tired. Three years of nothing but maize-meal porridge, a little salt, and occasional meat when a diseased sheep died . . . . We seldom had breakfast and were so exhausted from the work we just slept like dead men . . . . I left Jooste's farm with less than [five dollars] . . . after three whole years!"

In simple terms of wages, a high rate of exploitation is evident. Vinnia later made roughly four dollars a month as a servant. In mining, the highest-paying sector, average pay in 1971 was reported to be about \$30 a month. It is difficult to relate this to the American minimum wage of over two dollars *an hour*, but possibly more foreign is the idea of absolutely no working rights. Namibians, once contracted, have no say over where they will work, for how much, under what conditions, for how long, etc. Breaking contract is illegal, as are strikes. In this sense the contract labor system is a form of slavery. But inasmuch as slavery presupposes reasonable upkeep of the slave, conditions in Namibia are worse than slavery for the worker. The vast reserve labor force means that every contract worker is expendable, as Vinnia soon discovered: "White farmers could get away with anything . . . treat their workers just as they pleased. Many times we heard about men being shot dead by their *Baas* just for talking back. The law did nothing, of course -

\*The UN recognizes SWAPO as the "sole legitimate representative of the Namibian people," and has ruled both South African administration and expatriation of Namibian resources by anyone illegal.



People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) guerrillas. SWAPO PHOTO

it was made for the Whites.

Conditions such as these obviously leave Namibians with little to lose and few options for dealing with their situation. Some, such as Vinnia, "break contract" and run away, but soon find themselves confronted with the repressive state apparatus, to be beaten, interrogated and often imprisoned indefinitely. Thus when the Ovamboland People's Congress, a forerunner of SWAPO, was founded in 1957 to deal directly with the contradictions of the contract labor system, many Namibians responded. Although limited to the contract system and based among the Ovambo people (who make up the bulk of the contract laborers), the OPC (later the Ovamboland People's Organization) was successful in organizing strikes, rallies and other forms of popular resistance. The OPO soon found, however, that it would be necessary to do more than abolish the contract labor system; all forms of oppression had to be destroyed, and this effort would have to unite all Namibians if it was to succeed. In 1959 SWAPO was formed, as a national organization cutting across tribal divisions, with national aims and objectives. This development was largely a result of the system itself; contract workers, usually spending no more than 18 months at any one job and working at various locations, get a sense of the whole country and meet Namibians of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Early actions were of an

open, above-ground variety: rallies, open protests, petitions to the UN. The South West African police answered a peaceful protest in December 1959 by shooting down unarmed civilians, while the UN could offer only verbal support for SWAPO. Militant Andreas Shipanga tells how SWAPO learned from this experience:

Representatives of our people had gone to New York to petition the UN and we continued clinging to the illusion that the United Nations could really do something to get South Africa out of Namibia. But now we looked back on that day in December when our people were shot down in cold blood and saw what the UN did with the information and petitions it got from SWAPO . . . the action it took. We came to full agreement: it was nothing but fine-sounding resolutions piling up in the UN archives. This recognition led us to the decision at the Congress of 1961 to prepare for the eventual armed struggle in Namibia. Soon we began recruiting volunteers for training in guerrilla warfare . . . .<sup>2</sup>

In 1966 SWAPO launched the armed struggle soon after it was banned by the South African regime. Since then it has carried out many small-scale operations - sabotage, ambush, harassment - to incessantly engage and wear down the larger and more powerful enemy. But the success of PLAN (People's Liberation Army of Namibia) over the last decade must be viewed as part of the development of SWAPO as a national organization. SWAPO is first of all a political organization, and the consistent military struggle has done much to show Namibians that the fight is possible as well as necessary. While SWAPO openly leads public protest and mass opposition, some SWAPO cadres operate to organize and conduct political education throughout the country. The 1972 strikes against the contract labor system, which all but shut down the country for six months, are an indication of the militancy of Namibians inside the Police Zone. SWAPO also fights on a diplomatic front, seeking and gaining recognition and support from the UN and among many progressive countries. While they have no illusions about the efficacy of diplomacy, according to SWAPO UN representative Ben Gurirab, they are trying to bring all possible forces to bear upon South Africa.

The combined impact of SWAPO's many-sided struggle for national liberation is for South Africa a force to be reckoned with. The possibility of Angola serving as a base area for increased guerrilla fighting only heightens Pretoria's apprehension and reaction.

South Africa's strategy for dealing with the Namibian situation is one of detente, of attempting to mollify the critics of colonialism and apartheid while at the same time making no substantive changes. Generally, Prime Minister Vorster has applied this strategy to all of southern Africa and not without success. While South African schemes to create an orbit of client states have been dampened by the tide of black liberation, Vorster is trying to minimize losses and adapt gracefully by initiating "dialog" with African leaders. Recognizing in Namibia that colonialism is in its last days, the Prime Minister is attempting to make a smooth transition to neocolonialism and thus to continue to exploit Namibians through indirect (i.e. puppet) administration. Conceding the "territorial sovereignty" of Namibia, Vorster in early September of last year began "constitutional talks" with Namibian Whites and tribal chiefs. Here the age-old policy of "divide and rule" came into play: while South Africa entertained Bantustan leaders, SWAPO was excluded from the talks. These talks gained little credibility with Namibians, as SWAPO representative Ben Gurirab explained: "The so-called constitutional talks have created an atmosphere in which the overwhelming majority of the people of Namibia are looking at those who are supporting these talks as traitors."<sup>3</sup>

While this move toward "independence" was designed to alleviate pressure both from within and without, it has so far fooled very few. Still, key figures have been swept up in detente's deceptive air of reform, and for SWAPO the strategy presents a marked danger. Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda, who has housed SWAPO guerrillas inside his country, has picked up the drumbeat of detente and encouraged SWAPO to stop the fighting and negotiate with South Africa to elicit peaceful concessions. This encouragement has turned to pressure to the point that recently Zambia shut down a SWAPO training base in Lusaka. SWAPO has made it clear, however, that it will fight until Namibia is free. South Africa



will never negotiate itself out of the country; it is far too valuable to let go.

From a purely economic standpoint, Namibia is extremely valuable, both to South Africa and to international imperialism. These two interests are largely intertwined - Namibian operations are jointly owned and moreover South African corporations are children of international capital. If "foreign" investment appears limited to a handful of multinationals, South Africa's administrative expatriation of wealth is the reason why. (After 1967 South Africa no longer published separate figures for Namibia; it was considered a "fifth province.") Actually, the exploitation of Namibia has not yet realized its full potential: because Namibia's future has been a question mark, corporations have yet to make long-range commitments. Several oil companies, including Texaco and Getty, are paying thousands just to prospect but are waiting for political stability before investing. AMAX was recently reported to be *pulling out* of Namibia, probably hoping to re-enter when it is a neocolony.

On the other hand, South African plans to "develop" Namibia are going ahead full steam in an attempt to cement economic control. The Cunene Dam Scheme, upon completion in the mid-1980's, would supply mining industry with hydroelectric power and provide irrigation for white farming. It consists of a series of dams and power stations along the Angolan Cunene River, which approaches and then runs along the northern Namibian border into the Atlantic. When originally contracted with the Portuguese in 1966, the scheme presupposed long-range control over both Namibia and Angola. Despite the fall of Portuguese colonialism, neither South Africa nor the British, German and US corporations have surrendered: construction continues, and South African troops have invaded Angola to allegedly protect dam sites. Adherence to the long-range scheme for increased exploitation of Namibia seems an indication of South Africa's true intentions for the country.

More important perhaps is the strategic aspect of Namibia's value to imperialism. Lying to the north of South Africa, it serves as a buffer zone against guerrilla activity; SWAPO, conversely, represents the ruin of this *cordon sanitaire*. A truly independent Namibia would provide South African ANC (African National Congress) guerrillas with a friendly border, thus accelerating the demise of the South African white-minority regime.



PLAN militant. PHOTO: PER SANDEN, RUDI SPEE

Here the anti-imperialist role of SWAPO becomes particularly clear. The "fall" of South Africa, that is, the rise of black South Africans to non-exploitative majority rule, will be a crushing blow for the western imperialist nations. Western investment in South Africa exceeds eight billion dollars and involves almost every major US multinational. South Africa has three-quarters of the imperialist world's gold and chromium reserves, 40% of the world's manganese, and, combined with Namibia, over a third of the world's uranium as well as a host of other minerals. Hundreds of ships round the Cape daily, and South Africa has the radar equipment to monitor the area from South America to the Indian Ocean. While collaboration with apartheid is a source of embarrassment, the NATO countries cannot afford to do otherwise. With the decline of South Africa, US and NATO intervention in Angola, Namibia and elsewhere in southern Africa can only increase. Henry Kissinger's deceptive calls for Namibian "independence," designed to harmlessly disassociate the US image from South Africa, will likewise be contradicted when the crunch comes.

The anti-imperialist nature of Namibian independence hinges on SWAPO itself: is this an organization which will reorganize the country in favor of Namibians, which will disdain the penetration of foreign capital for the enrichment of a few? Ben Gurirab foresees a future along these lines:

It will be the responsibility of SWAPO when victory comes to establish a society different from the one that we are fighting against at the moment . . . to eliminate exploitation of one person by another . . . to insure that *all* the Namibians, regardless of whatever superficial differentiations, will enjoy the wealth of the country . . . There will be no privileges enjoyed by one group of Namibians as opposed to the majority.<sup>4</sup>

SWAPO's practice reflects this political line. Through the ten years of armed struggle guerrilla fighters have continued to strengthen their ties with the Namibian people. While often willingly supplied by rural communities, SWAPO militants distribute clothing, give medical care, and conduct literacy and political education classes. Racism and tribalism, characteristic of imperialist puppet groups such as the FNLA and UNITA in Angola, are not tolerated by SWAPO: while Whites in Namibia have not given much support, progressive Whites are nonetheless welcomed, and SWAPO members come from all ethnic groups. Women take part at all levels in the organization, and a Women's League educates against traditional attitudes of female subservience. Thus, a new society is being outlined even as the national liberation struggle continues.

The process is long and difficult, but it is certain that SWAPO, bolstered by an MPLA-led Angola, will defeat South African colonialism and subsequently shut the door to neocolonial, imperialist interests. This victory of the Namibian people will be both the harbinger for the liberation of South Africa and one more step toward the eventual liberation of humanity.

1. LSM Press, 1974.

2. *Interview with Andreas Shipanga*, LSM Press, 1973, p.5.

3. Taped interview with Ben Gurirab, Pacifica Radio, 1975.

4. *Ibid.*

# DOGMATISM AND CRITICISM

A Reply to the SACP, by Carroll Ishee and Dennis Mercer

In its journal, *African Communist* (No. 61, 1975), the South African Communist Party bitterly attacks LSM as an organization "serving the interests of imperialism." By distortion and some outright fabrication the SACP attempts to discredit LSM and damage our relations with national liberation movements. Our response is not primarily concerned with exposing the verbal manipulations of their attack. (We urge *LSM NEWS* readers to compare their conclusions with the full substance of our writings.<sup>1</sup>) Instead we take this opportunity to clarify some of our major differences with the SACP and, in dealing with the essence of their attack, to discuss why and how LSM strives to develop principled, mutually critical relations with other revolutionary organizations.

The SACP describes LSM as "an enemy of the international communist movement, and especially hostile to the Soviet Union." To demonstrate this assertion they quote LSM - e.g. "The principal contradiction of our time is that between the imperialist bourgeoisie of the metropole and the super-exploited peoples of the 'Third World.'" - exclaim that such views have "nothing in common with Marxism-Leninism," and then trumpet forth the declarations of a 1969 Moscow conference. "The international conference of 75 Communist and Workers Parties held in Moscow in 1969 declared that the main contradiction in the world today was that between 'the forces of reaction and progress, between socialism and reaction,' adding that 'three mighty forces of our time - the world socialist system, the international working class movement and the national liberation movement - are coming together in the struggle against imperialism.'" Unfortunately, the SACP considers this reference sufficient "proof" of their assertions. Calling forth the weighty moral authority of the Moscow Conference, however, constitutes a rather puerile dismissal of LSM's theory, not a constructive criticism. Does *this* "logic" have anything in common with Marxism-Leninism? We detect dogmatism in such methods, an unconvincing straight-jacketing of dialectical materialism into ultimate truths whose confirmation resides not in social practice but by reference to their authors and spokesmen. That in itself does no service to the international communist movement.

Furthermore, the SACP proclaims, LSM is "serving the interests of imperialism" by "seeking to drive a wedge between the liberation movements of the entire Third World and the international communist movement." How exactly LSM undertakes this task remains unclear. LSM has in no way attempted to dissuade national liberation movements from accepting support from or otherwise maintaining relations with the USSR and the "international communist movement" generally. We fully respect the movements' demonstrated ability to accept support without subordination - i.e. to put into practice the position perhaps best expressed by MPLA's President, Dr. Agostinho Neto, "We do not take orders from anyone whatsoever, from any big power in this world. We have always had the pride to determine our political line ourselves, and the ideology which suits our people." It appears the real basis for the accusation of LSM "driving a wedge" etc. is simply LSM's critical attitude, especially toward revisionism in the USSR and Eastern Europe. Frankly, we do not view the USSR as the "model" of socialist development for emerging Third World nations. We urge revolutionaries to learn from the negative as well as the positive aspects of Soviet experiences. Our views on and understanding of that experience are open to criticism and correction. However, the vehemence of the SACP's attack and their paucity of informed analysis suggest to us that the SACP objects not only to our particular criticisms but also, and more importantly, to our being critical at all. In the first instance we receive dogmatic criticism - dogmatism in practice; following that we confront

dogmatism raised to a theoretical level. We'll examine this latter more fully in the following section.

The SACP warns that "they [national liberation movements] should know the motives of those they accept, albeit unknowingly, as their disinterested allies, but who in fact are vigorously pursuing aims of their own which often conflict with those of the liberation movements themselves." Our motives are no secret to the movements we work with; from the beginning we make our aims and objectives explicit and straightforward. Where our aims "often conflict with those of the liberation movements," however, the SACP doesn't say. Perhaps it's to be assumed as we read "The Liberation Support Movement is not a plain and simple all-party support movement like the British Anti-Apartheid Movement or the Committee for Freedom in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau, which backs the aims of the liberation movements without advancing an independent political platform of their own." The implication is that LSM in fact shouldn't have an independent position - which raises the question of central concern to us here: how can and should metropolitan organizations relate to the revolutionary movements of imperialism's colonies and neocolonies?\*

Certainly we recognize many progressive aspects of "all-party support" for national liberation movements. By organizing around broad platforms of "plain and simple" support, religious and liberal institutions such as the World Council of Churches and Oxfam, as well as numerous support groups, can appeal to wide strata of the metropolitan population - including, e.g., clergy motivated by pan-humanist sentiments and academics with particular interests in third world countries, people who might be alienated by militant socialist propaganda. Therefore, these groups and institutions are often capable of generating substantial funds and other material support needed by liberation movements and sometimes are able to apply enough pressure on metropolitan governments to prompt official policy changes. For example, the Angola Comité of the Netherlands mounted a successful campaign to pressure their government into banning the importation of Angolan coffee - a direct, material blow to Portugal's colonial economy. Far from condemning this work (as the SACP implies), LSM has on many occasions participated in coalitions or campaigns of this nature.

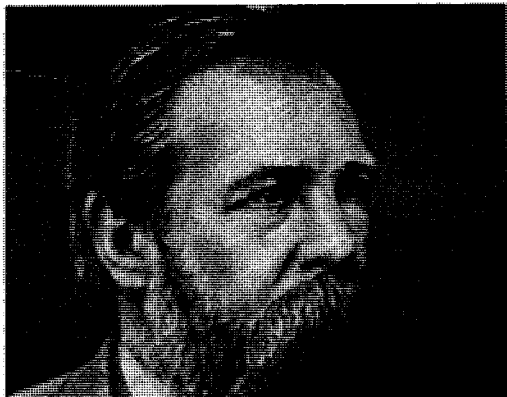
However, we do perceive weaknesses in this approach to anti-imperialism. For example, often this work is grounded in liberal guilt, which is evident in much of the propaganda work in support of national liberation struggles. How is that a bad thing? A campaign in France against Outspan Oranges of South Africa depicts the oppression of African people (literally being squeezed like oranges) but not their resistance; the Dutch campaign mentioned above graphically focused on the brutality of Portuguese colonialism, rather than the solid achievements of MPLA's national reconstruction programs in the liberated areas.\* Thus imperialism's masses are portrayed as *victims*, not as their own liberators. (The equally uncritical reverse of this is the romantic and de-humanizing hero-worship of the movements, with a view that criticism necessarily weakens support for any movement.) Our view is that such liberal images present a distorted view of liberation struggles (and human beings generally) and create false expectations. Liberal guilt is in the long run an unreliable basis for revolutionary internationalism.

In LSM we are interested in a different type of relation to national liberation struggles. LSM views the revolutionary movements of the colonies and neocolonies as the decisive force creating conditions for the collapse of the imperialist system and the subsequent emergence of an international socialist system. In short, we view the various revolutions of the Third World as integral components of a *single* revolutionary process which is spreading from the Third World to the metropolitan centers as well. In a very real sense, then, we view the struggles of the Third World as "our" struggle. Thus our relations with national liberation movements are based on a long-term strategy for the realization of socialism on a world scale. This strategy in turn rests upon the assumption that revolutionaries from the metropolitan centers can fashion productive working relationships with third world revolutionaries in a common struggle against

\*This is not to deny or ignore the Angola Comité's documentation of the Angolan revolution. Rather it is a criticism of this particular campaign's general graphic content.

imperialism. To proceed with this task we strive to establish fraternal relations with national liberation movements based on proletarian internationalism. To be sure, we recognize the rearguard/vanguard nature of our relationship to the movements, just as we respect their greater revolutionary experience and sacrifice. Nonetheless, we maintain that relations between metropolitan and third world revolutionary organizations must be founded on mutual respect and reinforced by comradely criticism/self-criticism if they are to lead to lasting and fruitful internationalist collaboration.

This the SACP regards as "presumptuous." The point of their attack is not that LSM has made criticisms which are incorrect (their examples of LSM/movement criticism are very gross distortions anyway), but that we dared make criticisms at all. The corollary is



Frederick Engels

that metropolitan support for liberation struggles must be *uncritical* support. In response, we'll draw on an example from our practice to show that critical relations do advance our common struggle.

One main form of collaboration between LSM and liberation movements is our publication of Interviews-in-Depth with movement leaders. In such interviews we attempt to go beyond the superficial and transitory features of "diplomatic" interviews and to discuss the deeper contradictions of making revolution. For example, in 1970 LSM interviewed MPLA cadre Seta Likambuila, who discussed quite frankly the problems of building the revolutionary movement in Angola's Eastern Region. The interview documents not only the development of people's stores and

cooperative farming, but also the struggles which make such advances possible, for example struggle against such regressive aspects of traditional African societies as sex discrimination.<sup>2</sup> Such a discussion calls for a critical attitude, a willingness to recognize weaknesses as well as strengths, to bring out a more human and dialectical view of revolutions. Critical relations in the interview engender both deeper insights and comradely struggle to achieve them. The result is documentation of wider and more lasting value than uncritical work. In 1972 MPLA considered these interviews valuable enough for Portuguese translation and internal use. In 1976 we continue to distribute them in large quantities - in some cases eight years after recording. Hopefully, they will prove of value to revolutionaries in the future, on other continents. The point is that only by critical practice can we fully advance and improve our contribution to the world revolution.

Our common practice - predominantly information and propaganda work such as these interviews - is the most important aspect of our relations with liberation movements. In our relations we regard the conveyance of comradely criticism as a serious revolutionary responsibility, just as we encourage our comrades to offer criticism of our praxis in the same spirit. Failure to engage in this process only hinders and limits our mutual efforts.

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#### **What is the decisive force in the anti-imperialist struggle? A Further Note.**

We would like to discuss briefly a further theoretical difference between the SACP and LSM. That is the contention, articulated at the '69 Moscow Conference, that "the world socialist system is the decisive force in the anti-imperialist struggle. Every liberation movement receives indispensable aid from the Soviet Union." Although we are definitely in an era characterized by the contradiction between socialism and imperialism, it does not necessarily follow that the world's socialist states are the decisive force at all stages of the anti-imperialist struggle. Certainly the birth of the socialist epoch with the October Revolution has been a decisive force in awakening the oppressed of the world to

revolutionary struggle against imperialism. No less important was the Soviet Union's role in the defeat of German fascism, a task which created favorable conditions for the progressive forces of the entire world. History, however, moves forward and the leading revolutionary force of one period may occupy an altogether different position in the next. For Marxists the point is not whether a specific nation or set of nations acts as the vanguard but that the proletarian struggle as a whole is advancing. Engels, after discussing why the German working class was the most politically advanced in Europe toward the end of the 19th Century, went on:

The main point, however, is to safeguard the true internationalist spirit, which allows no patriotic chauvinism to arise and which readily welcomes every new advance of the proletarian movement, no matter from which nation it comes. If the Germans progress in this way they will not be marching exactly at the head of the movement - *it is not at all in the interest of this movement that the workers of any particular country should march at its head* - but will occupy an honorable place in the battle line.<sup>3</sup>

Since the Second World War all major revolutionary struggles have occurred within the super-exploited continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The liberation of China, Cuba, Vietnam and Angola among others, not to mention the developing revolutions - the Philippines, Oman, Namibia, to name a few - offer clear testimony to this fact. By extracting vital markets, labor and raw materials from the orbit of imperialist control, these revolutionary movements are forcing the contraction of the entire system. This leads to a sharpening of contradictions within the imperialist metropolises, thereby generating material and subjective conditions for proletarian revolutions in the advanced capitalist countries themselves. This is precisely what leads us to regard the super-exploited and oppressed peasant-worker classes of the colonized and neocolonized countries, united by their vanguards, as the decisive anti-imperialist force of our day. To be sure, the support of the socialist countries for national liberation struggles is an important factor in the struggle for liberation. But to describe such support as decisive is another question. Many liberation movements have not received substantial support in the early stages of armed struggle. And even in cases of movements which have benefited from such support it is erroneous to regard this as the primary factor. Let us take the example of Angola.

Through our collaboration with MPLA over the past eight years we are fully aware that aid from outside Angola was for many years insubstantial, irregular, unreliable - and never the decisive factor. When LSM's late chairman, Don Barnett, traveled through MPLA semi-liberated regions in 1968, he found militias armed with mere spears, axes, bows and arrows. Furthermore, he reported on MPLA's dire medical shortages: "A small girl about six or seven . . . had grenade fragments in her head, arms and legs . . . . A young guerrilla whose arm had been blown off at the shoulder. *Neither had received any medication.* Pain and suffering were not unusual."<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, MPLA was able to continue the struggle in the face of such material hardship. Through demonstrating its willingness to struggle and ability to defeat Portuguese colonialism, while at the same time improving the conditions of the peasantry, MPLA earned the deep respect and support of the Angolan people. Conversely, FNLA had relatively minor logistical problems and received a large volume of aid from the US, Mobutu and other reactionary interests. But regardless of these advantages FNLA failed to win any popular support. This demonstrates to us that however important support from the socialist countries may be, the decisive force in the Angolan Revolution and other anti-imperialist revolutions of the Third World was and continues to be the masses of peasants and workers.

1. *LSM NEWS*, Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 15-26.

2. *Interview with Seta Likambuila*, LSM Press, 1974.

3. F. Engels, *The Peasant War in Germany*, Progress Publishers, 1969, pp. 23-24.

4. D. Barnett, *With the Guerrillas in Angola*, LSM Press, 1970.



# **LSM ACTIONS**

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## **VANCOUVER ACTIONS**

This year has brought wide interest and support to the MPLA-led popular struggle of the Angolan people against imperialism. The Vancouver Unit sent a speaker to the Seattle Angola Solidarity Committee's February 7th Celebration commemorating the beginning of the armed struggle in Angola. LSM spoke to an enthusiastic audience of more than 150 people.

In mid-February LSM member Ole Gjerstad returned to Vancouver from ten months of work in Africa including two months in Angola. He began preparations for our 1976 Spring US Tour by organizing hundreds of exciting slides from Luanda and the Angolan countryside that illustrate popular mobilization for national reconstruction and resistance against imperialist forces. In addition Ole has written a pamphlet, "People's Power in Angola," and met with many media representatives for interviews on his work in Africa. Less than two weeks after his return he began speaking at programs on Angola in the Vancouver area and explored such questions as the future of socialist development in Angola, the roles played by the US, USSR, Cuba and China in the liberation struggle and ways in which North Americans can best contribute to the advancement of international socialism. In mid-March Ole left, bound for the US East & West Coasts to bring his firsthand experiences to thousands of interested Americans.

Chantal Sarrazin, another LSM member who recently worked in Africa, spoke and showed slides on "Women in the Revolution in Guinea-Bissau." She went on to Montreal to participate as a main speaker at a Conference in Solidarity with Third World Women in early March. She then went to New York and later California for further programs in LSM's Spring Tour.

LSM also participated in a local Angola Support Committee, a coalition of socialists, progressives and third world groups endeavouring to raise support for MPLA through informational and fund-raising work. It sponsored a Victory Celebration on 6 March. Funds collected were sent to the PRA for use in national reconstruction efforts.

## **BAY AREA UNIT ACTIONS**

With the defeat of the Portuguese colonialists, international imperialism escalated the war for neocolonial control. The struggle of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) for self-determination and true independence then entered a new state - a "2nd War of Liberation." The BAU has actively engaged in political and material support for this struggle and continued LSM's support of MPLA since 1968. In the months following the formation of the People's Republic by MPLA, the BAU joined with other anti-imperialist groups in the San Francisco Bay Area to expose US involvement in Angola and mobilize support for the new Angolan government.

In mid-December the Bay Area Unit participated with the Coalition in Solidarity with the Portuguese Revolution in a demonstration to demand the end of US and CIA intervention in Angola and Portugal. An LSM member addressed the rally on the history and development of MPLA as an anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist movement. Other speakers talked about the CIA's illegal recruitment of mercenaries in the US and around the world. Nearly 300 people in the Bay Area came out to express their solidarity with the Angolan masses led by the MPLA. A collection was taken and sent to the MPLA as a concrete gesture of North American solidarity.

February 1st, the Communist Labor Party sponsored a forum in solidarity with MPLA. The BAU was invited to speak on the history and importance of supporting MPLA. The forum was attended by 150 people. All funds raised at the event are being sent to the People's Republic of Angola.

On the eve of MPLA's 15th anniversary of armed struggle, February 4, 800 people

turned out in San Francisco to show their support for the new People's Republic. The successful weekday demonstration rallied in downtown Union Square and marched to the Fairmont Hotel where Kissinger was delivering a "major foreign policy address" to the World Affairs Council and the Commonwealth Club. The demonstrators chanted for the recognition of MPLA backed by lively BAPMA (Bay Area Progressive Musicians Association) guerrilla-band music. There were many PRA flags and placards including: "CIA mercenaries out of Angola!" "Cuba Si! Yanqui No!" and "US and South Africa out of Angola!" Elaine Brown of the Black Panther Party told the gathering that "Color should not confuse us: Angola has its Holden Robertos and Jonas Savimbis, but we also have our Roy Innis! FNLA and UNITA in Angola and CORE in the US do not represent the true aspirations of the people but are collaborators with imperialism." A representative of Winter Soldier Organization (WSO) pointed out parallels between US involvement in Vietnam and Angola. He linked current economic problems (stagnation, inflation and unemployment) to the military economy. The oppressed nationalities, he emphasized, are receiving the brunt of the current ruling class economic and racist attacks. The West Coast North American Representative of ZANU, T. Kangai, ended the rally with a message of solidarity to the PRA.

The demonstration was co-sponsored by the Angola Solidarity Coalition (WSO, Prairie Fire, Non-intervention in Chile (NICH), Communist Labor Party, LSM/BAU, Portugal Solidarity Coalition, Communist Party, CASA and others) and the Black Coalition Against US Intervention in Angola (Black Panther Party, Zimbabwe Support Committee, independent Ethiopian students and many others). Many progressive and anti-imperialist groups came together around the demands: 1. End US Government Intervention in Angola! No More Vietnams! 2. Recognize the People's Republic of Angola! 3. Money for Productive Jobs and People's Needs, Not Imperialist Wars!

In the Angola Solidarity Coalition, the BAU found a high level of unity and a refreshing lack of sectarian divisiveness. Groups with differing political views were able to work together and resolve differences in a principled way.

In sharp contrast to the above demonstration were the separate October League and Revolutionary Communist Party demonstrations, each drawing about 40 persons. Their demands for "Superpowers Out of Angola" and "Cuban Mercenaries Out of Angola" were a curious echo of the views espoused inside by Kissinger.

#### **LSM/ECU ACTIONS (Winter 1975-76)**

Imperialist aggression against the People's Republic of Angola intensified over the winter and the struggle passed through a critical stage. Support for MPLA became particularly important - especially educating people about the Angolan situation and building opposition to imperialist aggression there.

On January 17 LSM's East Coast Unit participated in a demonstration organized by Youth Against War and Fascism, in which more than 1000 people marched through midtown New York City to support MPLA/PRA and later congregated for a lively rally. The demonstration attracted much attention and interest, with many onlookers spontaneously voicing their agreement with the demands and joining in the march. Three weeks later, a Cultural Solidarity Evening was given by the February 4th Coalition, a broad-based anti-imperialist coalition formed around support for MPLA. LSM/ECU played a prominent role in the coalition as well as in the Solidarity Evening, at which songs, poems and speeches were presented. A keynote speech on the importance of international solidarity with the Angolan people's struggle was given by an ECU member. Other ECU contributions included the reading of a poem by Agostinho Neto and ending the evening with a rousing group rendition of MPLA's national anthem. The following day another demonstration was held, sponsored by the February 4th Coalition. The march went past the South African Airlines office and Gulf Oil Building, where the 500 demonstrators vigorously denounced the forces of imperialism and fascism and ended with a rally in Times Square.

During this period it has been especially important to counter the distortions about Angola and defamations of MPLA by the bourgeois media. At political events, on the street and in the subway the ECU distributed literature documenting the just struggle of MPLA, their history and leading role in defeating Portuguese colonialism, their progressive ideology, etc. We were able to distribute hundreds of pamphlets and books specifically dealing with MPLA - thereby developing understanding and support for this important

liberation struggle. We are now pleased to confirm that MPLA, aided by the support of progressive forces around the world and primarily because of the decisive support of the Angolan masses, has won major victories over the puppet groups FNLA and UNITA, foreign mercenaries and the invading armies of Zaire and South Africa. We will be doing further support for MPLA when LSM member Ole Gjerstad, just returned from two months in the People's Republic of Angola, travels on the east coast - showing slides and speaking on People's Power and the building of socialism in Angola.

While our energies were focused on Angola, we were able to continue our work in support of the Palestinian struggle. On January 12 four members of the PLO National Executive spoke and answered questions on the Palestinian people's struggle before an audience of 500, giving much interesting information and analysis - particularly on Lebanon. We contributed to this event, organized by the Palestine Solidarity Committee, by joining the security force. In light of recent bombing attacks against UN buildings by ultra-right Zionist organizations, it was especially necessary that security be very strict. The program proceeded without any hitches; the ultra-reactionaries were either ignorant of the event or scared off by the tight security and immense support for the PLO among the invited audience.

*ABOUT LSM cont. from inside cover.*

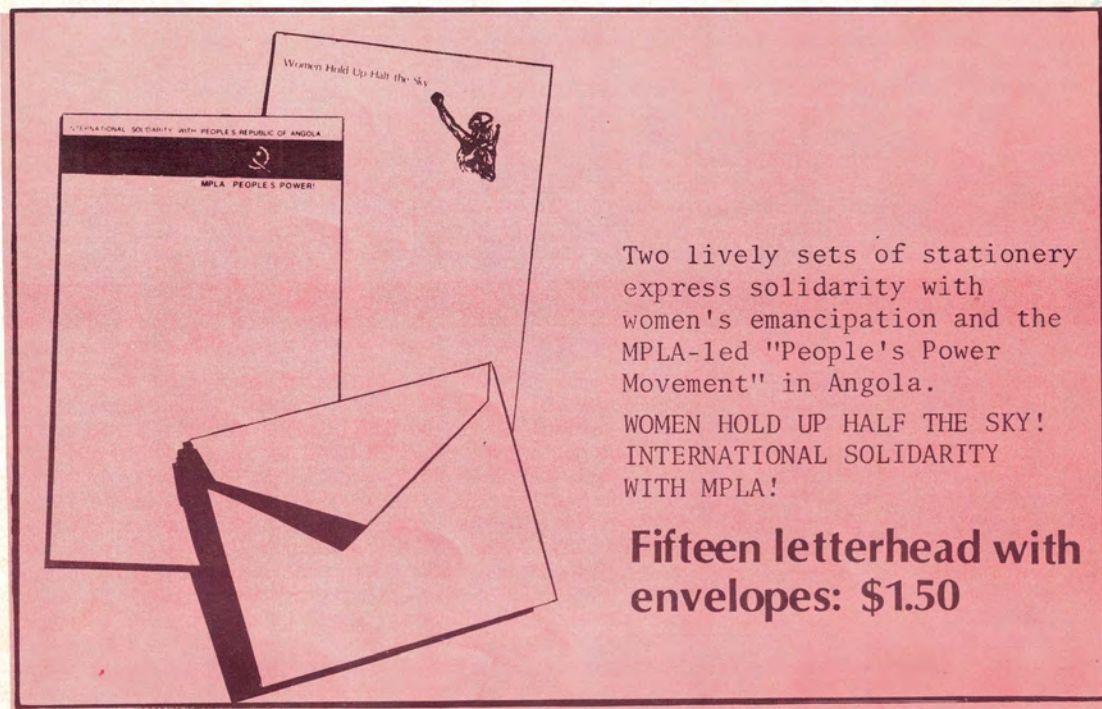
Since World War I, and especially World War II, the super-exploited peoples of the countryside have been waging revolutionary struggles to liberate their nations and create peasant-worker states which will serve their real interests. By removing vital markets, labor and raw materials from imperialist control, these struggles are gradually reducing the flow of surplus to the metropole, making it increasingly difficult for the metropolitan bourgeoisie to sustain high wage levels for metropolitan workers as well as welfare and unemployment benefits. Thus the revolutionary struggles of the countryside are creating conditions for intensified class struggle and proletarian revolution within the metropolitan nations as well. This is precisely why we in LSM view the revolutions of the countryside as the *vanguard* forces of a *single* revolutionary process which is eliminating the entire capitalist system and ushering in an epoch of international socialism.

In light of this analysis, LSM has put into practice a strategy designed to maximize our contribution to anti-imperialist revolution. The central component of our strategy has been the development of proletarian internationalist links with national liberation movements. Beginning with MPLA in 1968, LSM has been working with several liberation movements, providing concrete support in the form of funds, essential supplies, technical assistance and informational activity. This has ranged from shipping clothing, medicines and concentrated foods to contributing research on means to counter chemical defoliants; from organizing MPLA's first tour of North America in 1970 to supplying MPLA with a printing press and technical cadre in 1972. Additionally, we have published a wide range of materials by and about liberation movements, including numerous movement bulletins and documents which we have translated and/or reprinted for North American distribution, interviews with movement leadership and autobiographies of cadres and guerrilla fighters. This literature is geared toward raising North American consciousness of and solidarity with national liberation struggles. To this end we have also engaged in many agitational and educational actions, often in conjunction with other anti-imperialist organizations. For example, LSM periodically tours North America with film, slide and discussion programs on the revolutionary struggles in southern Africa. Through such direct and indirect participation in the revolution of the countryside, LSM hopes to accelerate the process of imperialist dismemberment, thus hastening the development of a mass-based revolutionary movement in the metropolitan nations. For LSM, Che's call to "develop a true proletarian internationalism" is no mere platitude to be pulled from the shelf and echoed on "appropriate" occasions, but a call to revolutionary action.

For those interested in learning more about LSM's strategy and practice see *Notes on a Strategy for North American Revolutionaries*, *Toward an International Strategy* and *Principles of LSM's Anti-Imperialist Work*, all obtainable from LSM Information Center. And, if you have further enquiries, please direct them to: LSM, P.O. Box 94338, Richmond, B.C., CANADA V6Y 2A8.

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