

# Angola Weekly News Summary

Contact telephone: (212)222-2893

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## REPORT ON HAVANA MEETING WITH MPLA

Twenty-six North Americans, including a representative from the MPL Solidarity Committee, met last week in Havana, Cuba with representatives of the People's Republic of Angola. We were invited by the Angolan Government to participate in a two day conference hosted by the Cuban Government.

The conference was extremely valuable. It provided representatives of progressive groups in the United States with information to combat the many distortions which appear regularly in the US press concerning the MPLA and the People's Republic of Angola. Equally important, groups working in the United States to build support for the People's Republic of Angola had the opportunity to learn from the Angolan comrades about their country's needs for the immediate future and to develop ways in which North American groups might assist the people of Angola. In addition many of us attending the conference were profoundly inspired by the human warmth and the political clarity and commitment shown by the representatives from Angola and the Cubans who hosted us.

There were seven representatives of the working press and 19 representatives from organizations in the United States. The press representatives were from Black Scholar, Freedomways Magazine, Bilalian News (formerly Muhammad Speaks - two representatives), Sun-Reporter (San Francisco), Afro-American Newspapers (Baltimore), a free-lance labor journalist. The groups represented were MPLA Solidarity Committee, women's International League for Peace & Freedom, American Friend's Service Committee, Black Economic Research Center (New York), National Committee of the Venceremos Brigade, Fur and Leather Makers Joint Board, Youth Against War & Fascism, American Committee on Africa, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (New York city), Washington Office on Africa, Africa Office of the National Council of Churches, North American Anti-Imperialist Movement for Southern African Liberation, National Conference of Black Lawyers, U.S. Cut of Angola Coalition (Chicago) Prairie Fire Organizing Committee, Coalition for a New Foreign Policy, CASA, Third World Coalition/Southwest Workers Federation, Puerto Rican Socialist Party.

The representatives for the MPLA were Commandante Dibala, Member of the Central Committee and Political Commissar of the Eastern Front; Olga Lima, Director of Political Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Relations; and Pedro Zinga Baptista, Foreign Relations. All have participated in the struggle for national independence for more than a decade.

The conference took place at the Havana Libre Hotel (the Havana Hilton before the revolution) where the delegates stayed for almost

a week as guests of the Cuban Government. There was simultaneous translation of all the official proceeding of the conference into English, Spanish and Portuguese.

The Angola delegation opened the gathering saying that this meeting between North American and Angolan delegates marked the beginning of a new era, an era in which for the first time there would be collaboration between the Angolan people and the North American people.

The first day of the conference consisted of reports by North Americans on the work of their organizations especially as it dealt with building support in this country for the People's Republic of Angola. These presentations included questions posed to the Angolan representatives concerning the current situation in their country and what programs or policies their government has established for the near future.

The next day the Angolan delegates responded to these questions. Transcripts of their presentations should be available sometime in the future. What follows are a few important highlights of the Angolans' remarks.

#### Agriculture First Priority:

Agriculture was cited as the first priority of the Government of the People's Republic of Angola. Commandante Dibala told us that the revolution has a moral duty to solve the problems of the man of the countryside. For it was this sector of society which was most exploited under colonialism and carried the greatest burden during the period of the armed struggle. 85% of the Angolan people are peasants.

#### FNLA and UNITA:

The Angolan delegation acknowledged that many peasants were taken in by UNITA and FNLA as they lacked information and were thus deceived by FNLA and UNITA rhetoric. When the armed forces retook a territory they appealed to the soldiers of FNLA and UNITA to turn in their weapons. A majority did so and are now free and contributing to the society the Government wants to build. (This is significant, as it demonstrates the high level of support for the MPLA.) Others will be re-educated to be able to participate in the new society.

#### The Threat of Guerilla Activity

The People's Republic of Angola is not worried about the long term threat of guerrilla warfare. They are confident the people of Angola would not give a guerrilla movement the protection or sustenance it would need to survive. Also, supply lines from the outside, so necessary to a guerrilla, would be almost impossible to maintain. South Africa is the only neighboring country which might support a movement to overthrow the People's Republic, but alliance with South Africa would make popular support inside Angola impossible. The OAU recognition of the PRA and Zaire's and Zambia's economic dependence on the Benguela railroad makes it unlikely that either of these countries would engage in activities which African and world opinion would label as meddling in the internal affairs of an independent nation. However in the near future occasional incidents between forces of the PRA and small guerrilla and mercenary units are likely to occur.

### Multinational Corporations:

Multinational monopolies will exist in Angola for some time, the Angola delegates informed us, but their relation with the Government and with the workers will be changed. New agreements are to be negotiated which will have the approval of workers. Some of the new requirements will be minimum salaries, day care facilities, medical care, dining areas, and educational programs to train Angolan workers for all areas of work within the company. A labor code is being developed by the Ministry of Labor which elaborates on these regulations.

### South Africa:

The Angolans expressed confidence that the Government of South Africa would be wise enough to withdraw from all of Angola in order to avoid an open military confrontation with the People's Republic of Angola. They said their government would not hesitate to ask for continued Cuban support to assist in the removal of these hostile foreign troops from their soil, if this became necessary. They stressed that South African presence in their country violated United Nations and OAU declarations.

### WORK FOR THE FUTURE

In response to questions from North American delegates, the Angola representatives outlined various areas of activity North Americans could engage in which would be of benefit to the Angolan people.

After the conference the North American representatives met to discuss these suggested areas of activity and adopted the following goals for future action:

1. A lobbying and informational campaign to press for US diplomatic recognition of Angola.
2. Material support campaigns to raise money for medical services, fertilizers and agricultural equipment, and possibly educational supplies.
3. Intensive efforts to dispel myths about the MPLA and the Angolan situation in the United States.
4. Informational and lobbying campaigns to pressure against a United States economic boycott of Angola.
5. Arranging for a visit by an Angolan delegation to the United States and to pressure the State Department to grant them visas.
6. Informational and Congressional lobbying campaigns to prevent military aid to Zaire and South Africa.
7. Broadening the base of support for Angola by organizing regional meetings leading to a national working conference on Angola to be held in May.
8. The formation of a national co-ordinating committee to begin the process of planning a national conference on Angola and to facilitate co-ordination of the work of the groups represented at the Havana conference on the above agreed goals for future action.

All of us attending the conference felt we were in no way totally representative of groups or organizations which had worked to build support for the People's Republic of Angola in the United States or

or might do so in the future. For this reason we hope to be able to involve as many groups as possible in all of these activities, particularly the planning of the May conference on Angola.

We will continue our report on the Havana conference and follow up planned by our committee and others in future News Summaries.

\* \* \* PLEA FOR MONEY \* \* \*

It cost the MPLA Solidarity Committee close to \$500.00 to send a delegate to the Havana Conference. This included a three day unexpected wait in Mexico City for a plane to Havana. We have been pledged \$250.00 toward the cost of the trip but desperately need to be able to raise the balance from our supporters. In addition we must continue to receive contributions to keep putting out the News Summary.

Please Help!

We also want to thank those who have already given us money.

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GULF OIL AND ANGOLA

Backed by US State Department approval, the Gulf Oil Corporation has reportedly opened negotiations with the government of the People's Republic of Angola aimed at the resumption of the company's operations in the enclave of Cabinda. (Washington Post, 26 Feb.)

Under State Department pressure late last year, Gulf shut down its Angolan wells, which represent from eight to ten per cent of the company's overseas profits. The move was part of a clear attempt at economic sabotage against the MPLA government. Concurrently, the State Department cancelled approval for the sale of two Boeing 737's to the Angolan commercial airline, TAG. The recent State Department move, following on the heels of recognition of the F.R.A. by most western European nations was prompted by fears that the lucrative Cabinda concession would be turned over to another company. The Italian firm ENI (AGIP) had even sent a representative to Luanda to talk with the MPLA. The French were reportedly also very interested in the concession.

The MPLA made it clear that they would only negotiate with Gulf on their own terms. One immediate concession has to be made: Gulf must release the \$125 million quarterly payment that has been held in escrow since the Cabinda operations were shut down. If the MPLA does decide to allow Gulf to resume operations, the contract which Gulf negotiated with the Portuguese colonial regime will have to be re-negotiated to bring the company's operations in line with the current policies of the People's Republic of Angola.

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Two books which provide excellent background information on Angola are available for purchase through the MPLA Solidarity Committee:

- Davidson, Basil, In the Eye of the Storm: Angola's People. \$3.00
- Africa Research Group, Race To Lower: The Struggle for southern Africa. \$3.50. (Proceeds from this book go to liberation movements in southern Africa. Ask you local bookstore to stock this book)

## ANGOLA AND SOUTH AFRICA

The reverses suffered by the South African's in their military invasion of Angola are having significant effects on the South African economy. Although South Africa has a highly developed industrial and mining sector, much of the economy is owned or controlled by foreign multinational corporations. Foreign investors are becoming increasingly worried about the security of their investments, a fact that has been reflected on the stock markets in London and Zurich, the nerve centers of European finance. The London Sunday Times of February 29, 1976, under the headline "Snomes Dump South African Shares," cited a report that the Union Bank of Switzerland, one of Switzerland's three leading banks, had sold all its South African shares during the previous three weeks. The Union Bank, it noted, had in the past "taken a leading role in promoting South African loans on the Swiss market." Other Swiss holders were large sellers of South African gold, financial and industrial stocks. On the international bond market, South African Eurobonds were reported to have "suffered large losses with falls of up to 9%". The London Stock Market had also "joined the run on South African shares."

De Beers Ltd., the diamonds group, for example, suffered a fall in the value of its shares of 43 pence, ending at 227 pence. The London Financial Times of March 2, 1976, under the heading "De Beers Falls Again" reported the further nervous selling engendered by the political situation in Southern Africa and the reported comment by President Neto of Angola that his people would liberate countries like South-West Africa (Namibia) and Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). De Beers, which derives over a third of its profits from Consolidated Diamond Mines in South West Africa dropped another 10 pence to 217 pence - the shares have now lost ground for six consecutive trading days and have fallen well over 110 pence since January 16. Also, South African Gold shares dropped to a fresh 1975-76 low, the Financial Times reported.

The grim financial picture is mirrored in other news from South Africa. Prime Minister Vorster is piloting legislation to set up a permanent "Internal Security Commission." This body will have wide powers to question in secret any "witness" on whom the Bureau of State Security (BOSS), the political police have "information." Such "witnesses" will not be permitted legal counsel and will be liable to indefinite imprisonment for failure to testify. The Commission is to be composed of ten members of the all white Parliament and is evidently designed to intimidate and harass whites who do not support the regime or question its policies. The need for such legislation is underscored by reports of fear and confusion among South Africa's whites and support by blacks for the liberation movements on South Africa's borders. In a revealing account of a South African government organized visit of forty foreign and South African journalists to a "refugee staging port at the South African military base" at Pereira D'Eca in Angola, to watch the evaluation of white Portuguese and Meztizo refugees, the Sunday Times of London (Feb. 29, 1976) notes that: "For the first time, two black South African journalists are included in an official visit to the area. It is reasonable to assume that their presence is due to doubts being cast on the "patriotism" of South Africa's black troops."

## SHOWDOWN AT CUNENE RIVER DAMS

Under construction for roughly the past twenty years, the Cunene River project consists of some twenty seven dams and power installations, extending along the river from near Nova Lisboa in central Angola to the Ruacana Falls at the Namibian border. Built at an estimated cost of \$600 million, there are five principal dam installations at Gove, Matala, Matunto, Calueque and Ruacana Falls. The first three are now controlled by the MPLA. Of particular interest among these three is the hydroelectric installation at Matala which straddles the Mocamedes railroad and supplies power to the Krupp owned iron mines at Cassinga. (White Paper, Committee for Freedom in Mozambique, Angola & Guinea, The Russell Press, Ltd., Nottingham, England) Before The MPLA victory, this dam had been scheduled for considerable expansion. The Calueque and Ruacana Falls installations, both near the Namibian border, are held by an estimated 5,000 to 20,000 South African troops who are reported to be dug deeply into the natural fortifications of the rough terrain surrounding these sites. These troops are supported from the massive base at Grootfontein, about 100 miles across the border inside Namibia.

The heavy South African military presence is easily understood in light of the investors and intended beneficiaries of the project. The construction of the project was financed by a consortium of West German British, French and Dutch banks and the South African government. Most of the construction was carried out by agencies of the South African government and three British subcontractors. When completed, the dam at Ruacana will provide at full capacity 120 megawatts of power to Namibia and South Africa. No power grid from Ruacana has been extended into Angola, but the complex at Calueque was designed to provide irrigation for some 1170 sq. miles where the Portuguese had been planning a new settler colony of about 6,250 family farms. In Namibia, a number of mining interests also stand to benefit from Cunene electricity, including Tsumeb corporation, jointly owned by American Metal Climax and Newmonth Mining, both U.S. companies. Tsumeb is Namibia's largest single employer. The South West Africa Company, owned by a consortium comprised of Anglo-American Corp., British South Africa Co. and Consolidated Gold Fields, will also stand to benefit, as will the South African Iron and Steel Industrial Corporation (Isacor), Rossing Uranium, Ltd, and the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, (which has a contract for \$60 million worth of uranium.) (White Paper) Part of the South African strategy for winning support from western capital interests has been the promise of cheap and secure water and electrical power. The status of the Cunene dams could be critical to the South Africans ability to maintain a secure and attractive business climate.

The Cunene project has great potential for agricultural and mining development in Angola and Namibia, but the clear aim of the South African government in the project is to reinforce the system of apartheid. It will enable the South African government to further its control over the Namibian people through contract labor farms and expanded exploitation in the mines, as these operations will be extended with the increased availability of power. These intentions were outlined as long ago as 1957, "to stabilise Africans in agricultural production and so prevent them from emigrating to adjoining territories." (Hailey, An African Survey, 1957) "Stabilisation" becomes a euphemism for

the reinforcement of political and economic control over the Namibians.

More important to the South African government however, is their worry about the support that a revolutionary government would give to SWAPO in their armed struggle for independence. The continued "protection" of the dam by South African troops may largely be a cover for their real motives of suppressing heightened guerrilla warfare by SWAPO against South African domination and repression.

The MPLA's position on the Cunene dams is clear, as set forth in their 1971 statement:

The Cunene and Cabora Bassa projects constitute the execution of a plan of economic seizure of Angola and Mozambique, part of the global strategy of strengthening white power in southern Africa. . . . The achievements of the Cunene project while Angola is occupied will have grave consequences for the MPLA. It is in no way aimed at the economic promotion of the people of Angola, but at the buttressing of white power, and consequently, of imperialism in Africa.

This project must be fought by every means. All participants will be held as enemies of the Angolan people, and MPLA will know how to fight them with arms.

Once independence is achieved, the Angolan people will be able to undertake, alone or with non-exploiting partners, the organization and valorisation of the Cunene River.

Perhaps the key phrases in this statement are "while Angola is occupied" and "Once independence is achieved." According to our delegate who just returned from meeting with representatives of the MPLA in Havana, the present MPLA position with regard to the dam can be summarized: "We will get the dams. We may get them by negotiations or we may get them by force of arms. But we will get them."

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#### Zaire Recognizes the People's Republic of Angola

Zaire has recognized the MPLA led People's Republic of Angola and agreed to expel FNLA and UNITA from its territory. In exchange Angolan President Agostinho Neto said his country would not allow military activity directed against the Zaire government to operate from inside Angola.

This abrupt policy switch by the Mobutu regime occurred in the face of the complete disintegration of FNLA and UNITA forces, growing world wide recognition of the People's Republic of Angola, and the Zaire government's increasing economic and political difficulties.

Throughout the period of the armed struggle against Portuguese colonialism, Zaire had given active support to the FNLA, and refused to allow the MPLA to operate from its soil during most of that period and acted jointly with FNLA in efforts to destroy the MPLA.

The Zaire government's recognition of the People's Republic of Angola is a clear indication of the power and prestige the P.R.A. now holds in the eyes of Africa and the world.

## MOZAMBIQUE CLOSES BORDER WITH ZIMBABWE

The victory of the Angolan people in their struggle for national independence has helped to sharpen the crisis in Zimbabwe, resulting March 3 in the closing by Mozambique of its border with Zimbabwe (Rhodesia). The Mozambican government also seized all Rhodesian assets inside Mozambique, thus making total its enforcement of economic sanctions against the white minority government of Ian Smith.

The immediate cause of the Mozambican action was in response to an attack inside Mozambique by Rhodesian forces. Rhodesian forces have violated Mozambican territory on several occasions recently as they have engaged in a policy of 'hot pursuit' of Zimbabwe guerrillas operating out of Mozambique.

In recent weeks the Smith regime has been put in an increasingly defensive and weakened position. The British government has made clear its intentions to push vehemently and quickly for a political settlement leading to majority rule. Recently they sent a delegation to Rhodesia to participate in talks now taking place between the Smith government and Joshua Nkomo. (Nkomo split from others in the Zimbabwe African National Congress to singularly participate in negotiations with the racist Smith government.)

South African pressure on the Smith regime to reach a political settlement has also been considerable. Last year they informed the Smith government that it would not be able to handle additional Rhodesian export cargo should the border with Mozambique be closed. The majority of Rhodesian exports pass through Mozambique. The white Rhodesian government's recent military thrusts into Mozambique appear to be a desperate response to a feeling that momentum is gathering for a major armed assault on them, one which they may have to fight alone.

Recent statements by Presidents Augustinho Neto and Samora Machel of Angola and Mozambique have made clear their support for armed struggle to liberate Zimbabwe from racist rule. Zambia and Tanzania have also pledged to support a Zimbabwean armed struggle. This solidarity among politically independent African countries to support the Zimbabwe liberation effort, coupled with the recent defeat of western backed forces in Angola, have increased pressure from the West on the Smith regime to accept a majority rule government for Rhodesia. The alternative, they fear, is an armed struggle in Zimbabwe which would be likely to lead to a more politically conscious and independent African government.