1. Where is Angola?
Angola is located in the southwestern part of Africa. This mineral-rich nation of six million people was formerly a Portuguese colony. It gained independence on November 11, 1975.

2. Why are the American people concerned about Angola?
Because the Administration has committed itself to oppose the MPLA government in Angola with American money and lives. We do not want to be misled into another Vietnam-type intervention, with all the suffering that would cause, while we also take the burden of a sick economy.

3. What is the MPLA?
The MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) was started in 1956 by workers and intellectuals in Angola's cities and won support from rural laborers and small farmers as well. It fought against Portugal for independence.
4. What kind of government has the MPLA set up?

The Portuguese ruled Angola to benefit a few wealthy people and corporations, Portuguese, American and South African, while the working people suffered. During the struggle for independence, MPLA formed an efficient and representative government in its area. It organized trade unions in the cities, and farming cooperatives to raise rural standards of living.

At independence, the New York Times reported that “the Popular Movement has won a reputation for efficiency and discipline... [it] has organized political units that are running the hospitals, trying to clear the port traffic [in Luanda], and holding consciousness-raising sessions.”

The MPLA is recognized as the government of Angola by at least forty countries, including 22 in Africa.

5. Who is fighting against the MPLA?

The FNLA and UNITA oppose the MPLA. Although they used to fight each other, they have formed a military alliance against the MPLA.

According to Time magazine (January 12, 1976), neither the FNLA nor UNITA has effective, independent leadership. Time reports that
the FNLA "is so oblivious of civilian suffering that starvation has become widespread" in its area. FNLA has killed and tortured freedom fighters from other movement since 1961. The FNLA-UNITA alliance could never form an efficient, stable government, nor could they work with the MPLA.

6. Who supports the different groups?
FNLA is supported by the United States directly and by Zaire, which passes on weapons and money obtained from the United States. Zaire has tried to take over parts of Angola, especially the oil-rich Cabinda area. Zaire's President Mobutu took power after Prime Minister Lumumba was killed by CIA-supported forces. Holden Roberto, head of the FNLA, was himself hired by the CIA in 1962. (New York Times, September 29, 1975)

UNITA's main supporters are the United States and South Africa, whose army units operate deep in Angola. The South African government is hated world-wide because of its apartheid system, in which the black majority (18 million, versus 4 million whites) is forced to work for starvation wages. South Africa wants a government in Angola that will stop operations of freedom fighters in South Africa and in Namibia (South-West Africa), a territory illegally controlled by South Africa.

US direct aid to FNLA and UNITA in 1975 amounted to at least $30 million. There are already American "mercenary" soldiers and pilots in Angola. The total extent of covert and indirect involvement is not known. Up to 4,000 South African troops, with air and tank support, are operating in Angola, as well as about 10,000 Zairean troops and many mercenaries.
The Soviet Union and some West European and African countries aided the MPLA during the struggle for independence from Portugal. At that time the United States gave much larger aid (through NATO) to the fascist Portuguese government. This government was hated not only by the Angolans, but also by the majority of the Portuguese people, who overthrew it in their revolution of April, 1974.

After the United States and South Africa secretly stepped up aid to FNLA and UNITA last spring, the Soviet Union and Cuba also increased their level of aid to the MPLA. The US government has covered up American aid and exaggerated the amount of aid to MPLA. We should not let them deceive us that the MPLA is responsible for the war.

7. Is the war in Angola mainly a war between tribes?

Not at all. It is true that the FNLA is based only on the Bakongo tribe of northern Angola and Zaire. FNLA’s leaders have exploited tribal loyalties to gain power. UNITA is also strong among one tribe, the Ovimbundu.

But the MPLA has much broader support. They originated in the cities where all ethnic groups work together. MPLA’s President, Agostinho Neto, has declared their program must “save us from racialism and tribalism.” Therefore, they can best form a government to unify the country.

8. Would the MPLA destroy American interests in Angola?

Every government has a right to control the resources of a country to benefit their people. Some big companies oppose the MPLA because it would use this right to keep foreign companies from making huge profits from Angola’s resources. However, these profits do not benefit the American people, but only the companies that take them. These are the same companies that in the United States try to lay-off workers, lower wages, and break unions; both Americans and Angolans struggle against their domination.

The MPLA has said it would have a moderate policy toward foreign business. For example, the Gulf Oil Company was allowed to continue operations in MPLA territory until stopped by the US State Department.
9. Is the MPLA a Soviet puppet?
In the words of MPLA President Agostinho Neto:

"From the beginning of our movement ... our international policy has been one of non-alignment, because we want to be ourselves, to be independent, to follow a policy which corresponds effectively to the will of the Angolan people without having to 'bow to' this or that country having this or that policy.

"We are accused today of having appealed to the Soviet Union for the arms which we need. We are accused of dependence on a certain bloc. These are lies. We have received since the beginning of our struggle aid from the Soviet Union and other socialist countries without being obliged to follow this or that policy. The fundamental nature of our international policy— which is one of non-alignment—springs simply and only from the real interests of our people. We are not, therefore, as people say, a satellite of the Soviet Union nor are we against any other powers. Quite simply, we are against imperialism and against all those who represent imperialism. On the hand, we are for all those who represent progress. We are non-aligned." ---Afrique-Asie, January 11, 1976.
The MPLA has not allowed the Soviet Union to use Luanda as a naval base, nor to run security for the Luanda airport. FRELIMO in Mozambique and PAIGC in Guinea-Bissau are movements friendly to the MPLA that also received Soviet support; yet they are nonaligned and there are no Soviet bases in those countries.

10. Could Angola become another Vietnam?
Recent statements by Secretary of State Kissinger show that his assumptions have not been changed by Vietnam. The government is again committing itself to opposing a liberation movement by calling it a “Communist front.” As in Vietnam, the size of US involvement is concealed but rapidly growing.

US policy in Africa has been oriented toward South Africa, based on highly profitable $1.5 billion American investments there and South Africa’s extreme anti-Communist stance. (See “Why are We in Johannesburg,” Esquire, October 1974) Our expansionary system seeks high profits and low wages, and naturally leads to alliances with the most hated, repressive forces in the world.

The MPLA, after fighting for 15 years against Portugal, is not going to give up just because of American intervention. American intervention is for the wrong side. And only the vigilance of the American people can keep the intervention from growing.

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11. What can I do?

In the long run, we can free ourselves from fear of war only by making fundamental changes in the American system.

At this time, Congress is considering several different measures to cut off funds for the Angola war. Whatever is passed, Ford and Kissinger will try secretly to divert other money to Angola. Many Congressmen are afraid to come out openly for war in this post-Vietnam era, but are not fully opposed to it either. We must pressure our Senators and Congressmen to close off all loopholes and to investigate any direct or indirect involvement in Angola.

- Write or telegram Senator Kennedy, Senator Brooke, and your Congressman to demand an end to American intervention and a complete cut-off of funds for Angola, in any form.
- Sign the petition now being circulated and ask your friends to sign it.
- There will be a demonstration in support of the MPLA and against US intervention on February 7 in Boston.

For further information, write Angola Solidarity Coalition, 5 Prospect Hill Avenue, Somerville, Mass. 02143 or telephone (daytime) 647-2771

“Our political programme clearly indicates that the MPLA is opening the way to broad and genuine cooperation between men of different races. We are not against the white man simply because he is white. We are against racist and colonialist whites.

“For us independence does not mean eliminating the white man from our country. It does not mean the appropriation of honestly acquired property. What it does mean is that political power must be in the hands of our people. Our country’s economy must be controlled by our people, and made to serve a free and progressive life.

-- Speech by President Neto
Commemorating 15th
Anniversary of MPLA.
"Let's get one basic point clear. All through the struggle against Portuguese colonialism and all the time we were subject to exploitation, oppression and the worst brutalities, Mr Kissinger had absolutely nothing to say. Even at that time, the Soviet Union was helping us by sending supplies of arms for our liberation struggle, and for this we are very grateful.

"It is when we have become independent and free, and beginning to build our state, that the United States State Department becomes worried by the fact that we have Soviet arms ... "The South Africans want to control Angola. It's something they have been wanting for a long time. They have always maintained that their defence perimeter runs from Angola to Mozambique. They want to take over our country entirely so as to be able to insure their dominance in all of southern Africa...

"We are a sovereign state and we seek help from anybody we please to defend our territorial integrity, our economy and the reconstruction of our land. No country has the right to accuse us on that score. When the United States speaks of putting an end to foreign interference, what it wants is nothing less than the expulsion of the socialist forces, precisely those which are helping us to avoid becoming a new American colony. ---New York Times January 9, 1976