MADISON AREA COMMITTEE ON SOUTHERN AFRICA
731 State Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

MACSA CALENDAR

Wednesday, February 4
MPLA Solidarity Day, 15th anniversary of the start of the armed struggle in Angola

MACSA teach-in on Angola, with speakers on women in Angola, U.S. intervention and general background, 12 noon, Reception Room of Memorial Union

Two MACSA members will be on the Papa Hambone call-in talk show, WIBA-AM, 8 - 10 p.m.

Thursday, February 5
Nana Mahomo, South African filmmaker, will show and comment on his film, "Last Grave at Dimbaza," 12 noon, Old Madison Room of Memorial Union

Nana Mahomo will show and comment on "Phela Ndaba: End of a Dialogue." 8 p.m., Tripp Commons of the Memorial Union

Sunday, February 15
MACSA general meeting, 3:30 p.m.
St. Francis House basement, 1001 University Avenue

Wednesday, February 18
Allan Cooper, graduate student in Political Science and MACSA member, will speak on "U.S. Corporate Interests in Namibia (or You Are What You Eat!)", at a Sandwich Seminar, 12 noon, 1418 Van Hise Hall
'WE'RE NO SOVIET SATELLITE' - An Interview with MPLA Leader Neto

(The following interview by Le Monde correspondent Rene Lefort is reprinted in full from the Guardian, January 4, 1976.)

A little more than a month after Angola became independent and the Angola People's Republic was set up by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), I asked Agostinho Neto, the first president of the new state, to make a preliminary evaluation of the situation.

"We are faced with a major problem which stems directly from foreign aggression," he answered. "We have abandoned some positions because of enemy forces, especially those from South Africa, have forced us to retreat, which has meant the loss of ports such as Lobito, Benguela and Novo Redondo, in particular. But we have made the forces from Zaire draw back, and we think we have so weakened them that we don't have to fear a significant offensive from them.

"On top of all this, we are now also subject to economic aggression. The United States and other imperialist countries are beginning to organise a boycott against us. Some of our foreign bank accounts have been frozen. Planes we have paid for haven't been delivered to us. US oil firms, like Gulf Oil, for example, are beginning to sabotage our oil economy.

"We'll have to adopt additional stringent measures whenever we notice the threat of sabotage to any sector of our political or economic life. Our country is still disorganised, and signs of indiscipline are appearing. So measures will have to be taken to make sure that misguided elements can't interfere with our daily lives.

"If I were to sum up my impressions after a month of independence, I could say I am satisfied independence has changed living conditions in our country, and whatever problems we face are precisely those brought on by this transition. We need time to grasp that we are fully independent and wholly responsible for our national life."

Question: The People's Republic has decided to set up a United Anti-Imperialist Front on its territory. But is this front really homogeneous?

Neto: There are always exploiters on one side, and exploited on the other. Peasants and workers have always been the exploited ones and they have the potential to push the revolution to its conclusion, whereas the petit bourgeois and the bourgeoisie, who were relatively well treated by the coloniser, will tend to hold up the revolutionary process. But this initial resistance ought not to make us forget that we are all victims of foreign aggression. So long as South Africans, Zairians, and Portuguese mercenaries are engaged in aggression against us, we should do everything to close ranks and avoid disputes between classes with conflicting interests. This is the right approach to take, for if we emphasise the class struggle we'll quite obviously weaken the anti-imperialist front. And that could mean losing control of the country. Besides, what would be the point of such a class struggle under South Africa's heel? So we must chase the aggressors out before settling our political, economic and cultural problems.

What do you think of your foes' tactics?

Neto: When the spokesmen of the UNITA and FNLA puppet groups talk of a government of national union, they do so for two reasons. First, as a tactical move designed to win the sympathies of countries which are perhaps unaware of their links with racist South Africa and expansionist Zaire. Secondly, because they know that, strategically, the struggle will be won by the people, hence by the MPLA.

As for us, we don't want to negotiate with UNITA and the FNLA, or with any of the aggressors. Let them allow our country and our people to become organised. There can be no agreement with the representatives of imperialism in our country.
As regards the conference the Organisation of African Unity is planning to hold in Addis Ababa, I think it will be useful for our struggle, for Angola, and for all of Africa if it examines the question of foreign aggression in our country. If it concerns itself with other problems, it will collapse. Besides, we are sure of being recognised by most of the African countries, so we'll have a backing which will enable us to reach our goal.

Q. Mr. Kissinger considers that the presence of the Soviet Union in Angola is upsetting world equilibrium.

Neto: Let's get one basic point clear. All throughout 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 U.S. State Dept. becomes worried by the fact that we have Soviet arms. Just because the Soviet Union supplies us with weapons, it doesn't mean that we have become a satellite. We've never been one. We've never asked Moscow for advice on how to set up our state. All the major decisions in our country are taken by our movement, our government and our people. Once again the U.S. State Department is operating as international imperialism's chief agent.

The South Africans want to control Angola. It's something they've 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 ensure their dominance in all of southern Africa. Zambia, Zimbabwe, and perhaps Mozambique would then come under Pretoria's rule. One cannot therefore put the world's liberating forces, which are engaged in working for the genuine liberation of people -- these forces are represented here by the socialist countries, including the Soviet Union, Cuba and progressive African countries -- on the same footing as forces which want to control our country and take it over.

Q. What do you think of the proposals to "put an end to foreign interference" in Angola?

Neto: 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 more than the expulsion of the socialist forces, precisely those which are helping us to avoid becoming a new American colony.

Q. Aren't you afraid that the people in the area may become casualties of an escalation between great powers as has happened in other parts of the world?

Neto: An escalation of the war in Angola is possible. The interest Americans show in Angola could theoretically lead to an extension of the war beyond the frontiers of our country but I don't think that it is very probable. The balance of forces in the world is such today that we can rule out the thought of a local conflict touching off a larger war. It's true our people may suffer even more. But we are ready for that to win our total liberation and independence. Our allies are ready to back us until we reach this goal. And don't forget there are other instances of the pressure of world opinion forcing the United States to withdraw its forces and leave its proteges in the lurch, as did happen in Saigon, for example. We also hope South Africa's troops will withdraw, and with them its puppets, Holden and Savimbi.

(December 26, 1975)
U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLA

Recent disclosures in Congress and the press of United States secret involvement in Angola have raised the fears of many Americans that another Vietnam is in the making. These fears are heightened by the Administration's determination to press on with its support for one side, the FNLA-UNITA coalition, despite the Senate's 54-22 vote for an aid cutoff. U.S. involvement is massive. Already some $50 million has been expended on military hardware and as The Christian Science Monitor has reported, at least 300 Americans have been secretly recruited as mercenaries to fight in Angola. This recruiting has been done under the auspices of the CIA via private organizations. The Administration has backed away from its earlier strong denials of this activity.

The Ford Administration has justified this covert support on the grounds that it is necessary to counter Soviet and Cuban aid to the other side, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). The implication is that if the MPLA should win, Angola would become a Soviet satellite. What are the facts?

The MPLA was organized in 1956 and is now led by Dr. Agostinho Neto. After pressing unsuccessfully for a peaceful transition to independence from the Portuguese, the armed independence struggle began in 1961. During this time the United States was giving active military support to the Portuguese in their attempts to hold on to their rich West African colony. The United States has large investments in Angolan oil and is a chief importer of its coffee. It did not want to see these jeopardized by a possibly unfriendly Black-majority government.

The MPLA first approached Western sources for aid, particularly the United States. With this it was unsuccessful and had to turn to the only source of support available—the socialist countries. Belatedly, the United States CIA realized that if the West was going to have any influence in an independent Angola it had better get involved with the Angolans. In 1962, the CIA began funding another group, the tribally-based National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA). The FNLA's leader, Holden Roberto, a brother-in-law of the CIA-installed President of Zaire (Congo-Kinshasa), General Mobuto, has been on a $10,000-a-year CIA retainer in some years. A third group, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), was formed when Jonas Savimbi broke with Holden Roberto in 1965. This group, regionally-based like MPLA, was, paradoxically, supported by the Portuguese secret police (PIDE).

During the long war for independence, the activities of FNLA and UNITA were, not surprisingly, not very vigorous or effective. MPLA, on the other hand, not only liberated large areas of the country but set up schools, hospitals, and representative government in the liberated zones. When Independence came on November 11, 1975, MPLA had control and support in 12 of Angola's 16 provinces. Consequently, MPLA set up the People's Republic of Angola with its capital in Luanda. This has been recognized as the only legitimate government of Angola by 22 African nations as well as Scandinavian, East European, and Asian governments. The opposing government in Huambo, set up by FNLA-UNITA, has not been recognized as legitimate by any other nation in the world.

Following the Portuguese coup in April, 1974, MPLA, FNLA, and UNITA set up a coalition government in Luanda as a prelude to Independence. This broke up in early 1975. Following recent revelations by high U. S. State Department officials in the New York Times, we now know the reason why. In January, 1975, the United States greatly stepped up its support for the FNLA-UNITA partners in the coalition, giving them enough strength so that they felt they could go it alone. This makes recent U. S. calls for a coalition government in Angola have a particularly hollow ring.
As was reported in the same New York Times article, this U.S. military increase preceded by three months an increase of Soviet aid to the MPLA in April, 1975. These revelations, coming from high State Department sources, completely contradict the Administration's contention that U.S. aid was a response to a Soviet build-up. The truth of the matter is the exact opposite.

Left to their own resources, the MPLA would quickly triumph. (State Department officials have privately declared that FNLA-UNITA could not fight their way out of a paper bag.) The situation has been greatly complicated, however, by the participation of numerous outside interests. Propelling up the FNLA-UNITA side, besides the United States, are Zaire (the funnel for U.S. supplies), Britain, France, West Germany, South Africa, and numerous white mercenaries. These countries have made it clear that their participation is primarily to protect their sizeable investments in Angola.

In addition, South Africa is involved to protect its northern flank. South Africa illegally occupies the United Nations Trust Territory of Namibia (South West Africa) which borders Angola on the south. The South West Africa Peoples Organization (SWAPO) has been waging a war of national liberation against the South African occupation (and is recognized as the only legitimate government of Namibia by the U.N.) for years, using southern Angola for sanctuary. The MPLA has always expressed its solidarity for SWAPO. South Africa hopes that its support in the form of troops and supplies for FNLA-UNITA will make them so indebted to it that Angolan sanctuary will be denied SWAPO in the future.

South African troops first entered Angola in August, 1975. By mid-October, over 3000 South African combat personnel were fighting 450 miles inside Angola. This contradicts South African statements that its forces are only operating on the border. As the New York Times has reported, the entry of Cuban troops in support of MPLA came only in early November, 1975. This was after the South African invasion and in response to it. Many American officials are privately worried that U.S. support for South Africa, the bastion of apartheid and racial oppression, will harm U.S. standing with the rest of Black Africa. This does not seem to bother Secretary of State Kissinger, who declared on December 23rd: "We are warning now that what is happening in Angola has nothing to do with the local situation in Angola." What is at stake is the security of white-minority-ruled South Africa which the U.S. has continually supported materially while denouncing verbally.

United States Ambassador to the U.N. Daniel Patrick Moynihan has claimed that the Soviet Union is attempting to "colonize" Africa. As we have seen, such a claim is a total disregard for the facts. Might not MPLA be beholden to the Soviets, however, for their aid and become in effect a Soviet satellite as the Ford Administration has charged? In a widely circulated interview in the influential French daily, Le Monde, MPLA President Neto responds with a resounding "NO!" "Just because the Soviet Union supplies us with weapons," he states,"it doesn't mean that we have become a satellite. We've never been one. We've never asked Moscow for advice on how to set up our state. All the major decisions in our country are taken by our movement, our government and our people." Dr. Neto has repeatedly stated that MPLA has sought Soviet and Cuban aid only to counter the prior foreign interference by the United States and South Africa. As we have seen, this is, in fact, true. This is hardly the position of a Soviet puppet.

The U.S. House of Representatives will be considering in the next two weeks the Tunney amendment cutting off all covert aid to Angola and thus limiting the possibility that the American people will be dragged unknowingly into a new Vietnam. It is important that Americans throw their support behind this amendment by writing their Congressmen and demanding that they vote for it. In this 200th anniversary of American Independence, Americans should be sympathetic to the independence struggles of others. In Angola the only group fighting for true independence, uncompromised by foreign concessions, is the MPLA. Americans can celebrate their bicentennial by supporting the independence struggle in Angola.
A war is being fought in Angola. But it is not a war for, or against, communism. It is a continuation of the war for Angolan freedom which has been going on since 1961.

Until 1974 the Angolans were fighting against Portuguese colonialism. In this struggle the nationalist movements received military and other material aid from the Soviet Union and other Communist countries. The United States of America gave no support to the independence movements. On the contrary, it supported the Salazar and Caetano governments in their attempts to suppress the liberation struggle.

Portugal lost its colonial wars. On November 11, 1975, the last Portuguese troops were withdrawn from Angola, the independence of the new Angolan state was declared and has been internationally recognised.

The Angolan war continues because those who supported Portugal have sought out and found others to act in their interests. Some of these others are Angolans who are traitors to the reality of independence, and some are Angolan supporters of racialism—both black and white.

The MPLA was the movement which bore the brunt of the anticolonial struggle. UNITA did a little fighting sometimes, although at others it fought against MPLA. The FNLA existed in exile, it did little more. The MPLA could not fight against the Portuguese with bows and arrows. Western countries refused to give them arms. The Russians and their allies did give them arms.

Why countries gave arms to the MPLA is a matter which they know, and others can only conjecture. What is certain is that the arms were obtained, and used, for the independence of Angola. They were used by nationalists, for nationalist purposes, and now, in spite of the Portuguese withdrawal, arms are still needed for the purpose. For independent Angola has been invaded by South Africa, and its government is also now being attacked with American money, American arms, and by Americans and other Western mercenaries.

It is easy to see why the apartheid regime of South Africa has intervened militarily in Angola. Nor is there any doubt about the fact—South Africa has admitted "defending its interests" in Angola, and its troops have been captured by MPLA forces—sometimes hundreds of miles from the Namibian border. South Africa wants a client State in Angola now that it has no Portuguese ally in that country. It wants it so as to strengthen its hold on Namibia—for South Africa itself has no border with Angola—and it wants it so as to weaken Africa's united opposition to its internal racialism and exploitation.

What is not so understandable is why America should want to intervene on the side of South Africa, against free Africa and the mass of the Angolan people. If the Americans are intervening to prevent the Soviet Union from getting military bases on the South Atlantic, and to prevent an African country from becoming a colony or puppet of the USSR, then they are not thinking—just being arrogant. For that policy is self-defeating, as well as being dangerous for America and the world.

The MPLA took arms from the Soviet Union and the other Communist countries in order to get Angolan independence. Angola is now independent and the MPLA government is already recognised by some 20 African States. It is fighting South African aggression. It therefore needs military support from its friends, to consolidate the formal independence. To the extent that it also has to fight against American aggression it will need very much more support. The MPLA has a debt of friendship to the USSR, and others, just as Frelimo has one to China and other countries. No one would suggest that independent Mozambique is a puppet of China: indeed, on the Angolan question, China and Mozambique do not hold identical views. Under the Constitution recently adopted by the MPLA that government is committed to the policy of nonalignment in the super-power competition—which means no foreign bases. But if the MPLA government is forced to rely upon one of the super-powers for its very
existence it will be forced, willy-nilly, into its embrace. If that is what the Russians' move meant, they will be succeeding thanks to the United States of America.

Was Vietnam not enough for America to learn from? How many more people have to die before reason can prevail? Suppose America were to say to Angola—"If you want to be colonised by Russia, that is your business." Everyone knows how resounding would be the Angolan No and Africa's No. Further, the Angolans have shown that they are willing to fight for their independence if they have to, and will find allies from where they can in order to do so.

(The Guardian, January 18, 1976)

THE ECONOMIC QUESTION: WHAT ARE THE AMERICAN INTERESTS IN ANGOLA?

In addition to Angola's enormous potential hydro-electric power, she has the second largest oil reserves in Africa (after Nigeria), is the world's fourth largest producer of coffee and fifth in diamonds. Iron, manganese, bauxite, copper, potash, platinum, sugar, tobacco, cotton and sisal are other resources, but 70% of American investment (about $150 million in 1970) is through Gulf Oil. Gulf has cordial relations with the MPLA, although before November 1975 the company's payments to Portugal amounted to 70% of the colonial military budget. As of 1971, American aid to Portugal was about four times our present investments in Angola. Since the U.S. has more than $800 million invested in Zaire and over $1.25 billion in South Africa (which doesn't include yearly reinvestment) and millions more in other southern African nations, it appears that America's major economic interests in Angola are: 1) to keep our investments in southern Africa under the control of our allies whoever they are and whatever their politics, and 2) to prevent Russia and her allies from access to the real and potential wealth of the area.

MACSA DOINGS

MACSA was not idle during the month of January though the university was in recess. Activities of MACSA members on the Angolan issue included the following:

January 11- Clarence Kailin and Dave Wiley appeared on Back Porch Radio (WORT) call-in program on Angola, 4-5 p.m. MACSA members who had attended a specially-called meeting that afternoon were among those who called.


January 17- A MACSA background sheet on U.S. involvement in Angola (included in this month's newsletter) prepared by John Hunter was included in a mailing sent by Elaine Eming and Jeanette Harries to the Wisconsin Congressional delegation, to five WILPF chapter chairpeople in Wisconsin, 16 Church Women United members in selected congressional districts, and 39 AAUW legislative workshop attendees throughout the state.

January 29- MACSA co-sponsored, with the UW African Studies Program, the talk by political scientist Dr. Gerald Hender on "The Angolan Civil War and the U.S."
ANGOLA'S WAR FOR NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE

Angola war reporting in the daily press has become so distorted that one would never realize that Angola is fighting a war of National Liberation—a war that has been in process for more than a decade. The war began against Portugal—a country backed by the United States and NATO and Zaire. Contrary to news reports, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) headed by Dr. Agostinho Neto, has now control of the majority of the country, is now a sovereign state properly called the People's Republic of Angola, and is now recognized by 40 countries.

The United States press, by and large, does not recognize the above facts, acts as if Angola were a nation of children being run by the big powers. This is wishful thinking. The U.S. would like nothing better than to maintain neo-colonial control so that Gulf Oil and the other trans-nationals could bleed Angola of its resources and leave them a helpless puppet. This attitude reflects also the deep-seated racism that afflicts our nation, a racism that is reflected in our close ties with South Africa, a white-dominated nation that is also seeking to crush the People’s Republic of Angola.

The daily press is crying crocodile tears about “civil war” and how we must intervene to end the slaughter. This is the same gimmick they used 15 years ago when the big powers used Mobutu (present head of Zaire) to arrest and murder Patrice Lumumba—the Congo’s real liberation leader. And Mobutu is still being used to assist those groups attempting to re-establish the old colonial order in Angola (In past years the U.S. has given more than $350 million assistance to Mobutu!).

There are repeated press reports about a “coalition government” in Angola made up of MPLA and the puppet groups UNITA and FNLA. This coalition proposal is supposed to have a democratic ring to it—you know, everyone gets represented. What Dr. Agostinho Neto said about this in a LE MONDE interview of December 26, says it all: "As for us, we don’t want to negotiate with UNITA and FNLA, or with any of the aggressors... There can be no agreement with the representatives of imperialism in our country." Dr. Neto added this also: "On top of all this, we are now also subject to economic aggression. The United States and other imperialist countries are beginning to organize a boycott against us. Some of our foreign bank accounts have been frozen... U.S. oil firms, like Gulf Oil, for example, are beginning to sabotage our economy." (Does this not sound like Chile???)

The battle lines are clear: This is MPLA’s struggle for National Liberation against imperialist aggression.

-- C.K.

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