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Angola and the War For Southern Africa

By Ronald Walters

Someone recently said: "Today Angola is the capital of Africa." It was meant that Angola was a part of the unfolding reality of African independence, whereby African countries had to rid themselves of colonialist masters and then enter into another conflict in an effort to consolidate the gains of the revolution and protect their independence.

As such, the Angolan situation exists within the framework of Pan African nationalism—to organize Black identity in an effort to express and achieve collective goals.

In America, the sense of peoplehood has assisted Blacks in attacking the ancient shackles of mental inferiority and in developing movements aimed at the acquisition of civil and human rights. And in Africa, nationalism has been used to build movements which culminated into new nations, and is the motive force behind the attempt by these nations to indigenize the systems of technology which control their lives.

For many of the roots of the crisis in Angola, one must be familiar with the details of Congolese/Zairian history of the early 1960s, which strikingly parallels much of what is transpiring today. One famous nationalist of the 1960s, attempting, at the time, to draw together forces backed by outside interests into a coalition, said:

In Africa, anybody who is for progress, anyone who is for the people and against the imperialist is a communist —an agent of Moscow! But anyone who approves of the imperialist, who goes out looking for money and pockets it for himself and his family, is an exemplary man; the imperialists will praise him and bless him. That is the truth, my friends.

The members of the government know what I am; I am merely a nationalist, pure and simple, and I know that we are going to accomplish something magnificent. The representatives of the African states who met together at the Leopoldville Conference said that Leopoldville is not only the capital of the Republic of the Congo, but of all of Africa.

According to our African wisdom, our Bantu custom, what do children who have fought with each other do? They get together in the evening, forget what has happened, make their peace with each other, and eat together. Let us not disgrace the Congo. (Lumumba Speaks, Jean Van Lierde, Little, Brown, 1972, Speech to Parliament, September 1960).

Well, the world knows what happened in Lumumba's situation and in many others — enough to know that the processes of nationalism are not pure, and that they can be coopted and turned against the interests of the people in whose name movements are sustained. This, of course, is the central issue: it is the fear that the genuine nationalism of the people of Angola will be coopted by the exploitation of the present internal conflict by the Soviet Union, the United States, South Africa, Cuba, Zaire, or by the greed and corruption of some nationalists (Angolan) themselves.

The struggle for Angola is intimately linked to the struggle for the whole of Southern Africa. And many of the same elements at work attempting to exploit genuine Angolan nationalism are doing the same in other parts of Southern Africa.

Thus, it is no accident that 5,000 South African troops remain 50 miles inside Angola, in a line which stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Zambian border. (*Washington Post*, February 4, 1976) The South African Minister of Defense, Pieter Botha, says clearly, that, it is a "buffer zone" which allows them to control the "Ovambo elements" — South West Africa People's Organization, [SWAPO] which is engaged in resistance against South African control. Also within this buffer, is the Cuene River power project to which South Africa wants continued access.

This futile effort to control SWAPO is in recognition by the South Africans that what is happening in Angola signals the continued southward movement of the African independence revolution, and where once it had buffers in terms of

British-controlled Southern and Northern Rhodesia and Portuguese-controlled Mozambique and Angola, now there is only Southern Rhodesia. Even there, the guerrilla war of the freedom fighters has begun in the countryside. Increasingly, new zones of independent African states are being created, and from these places the revolution to liberate Africa is likely to move southward into Rhodesia, South West Africa, and South Africa itself.

In this regard, Black Americans have a particular responsibility not to fight the African revolution, but to contribute to it, and to be particularly concerned with the behavior of the United States in the Angolan and Southern African situation.

It is a known fact that investments in South Africa by American companies are well over \$1 billion, but that this sum no longer represents the majority of U. S. investments in Africa as it once did. Now three times as much is invested in the rest of Africa, yet this does not diminish South Africa's attractiveness because of the relatively high rate of profits on investments there, compared to other areas. In order to protect the investments of at least 350 major American firms, and keep shipping lanes open, the South Africans have made overtures to become full partners in NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) for protection of shipping routes around the Cape. The value of these shipping lanes, which carry 1.5 million tons of cargo per day, was demonstrated when the Suez Canal was closed, when the Western powers began to feel that the remaining shipping lanes around Africa must be in "friendly" hands.

Together with the economic value of the South African land mass, its geopolitical significance needs to be cited. A few years ago, I wrote:

Since at least 1957 there has been cooperation between the United States and South African governments in developing space tracking facilities. The United States is now utilizing three such stations inside South Africa, the Minitrack Radio Tracking Station located in Esselen Park, the Baker-nin Optical Tracking Station located in Olisfants-fontein, and the Project Syncom Deep Space Probe Tracking Station recently completed at Hartebeesthoek Farm in the Krugersdorp District. ("The Global Context of U. S. Foreign Policy Toward Southern Africa," Africa Today, Summer, 1972.)

Recently, it has been learned that new collaboration between West Germany and South Africa has resulted in the establishment of an intelligence and control center, Project Advocaat, in the town of Silvermine near Simonstown, "which can control all ship and air movements in an area reaching from the Cape to North Africa, to the South American Coast, the South Pole and India [. . .]. All spare parts were given NATO code numbers by the Germans." (Peter Enahoro, "South Africa and the Bomb," *Africa*, no 51, November 1975.) Now, NATO apparently has a communications link in that area which supplements the one developed in Ethiopia, Liberia, and eventually on Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.

Most crucial of these relations for the future, however, is the growing nuclear development in South Africa, which the African National Congress (ANC) has attempted to call to the attention of the world. It is a little known fact that South Africa has the second largest supply of uranium in the world, with 23 percent of the total world supply. Nuclear cooperation between the United States and South Africa started in 1947 and continued under the Atoms for Peace Program until 1967 when scientists at Oak Ridge, Tenn., built the first atomic reactor for South Africa.

Now, West Germany, through the state-owned Society for Nuclear Research (STEAG company) is assisting South Africa in the development of uranium enrichment processes. So far, the success of this collaboration has meant that South Africa is building a plant which will be in operation by 1984 and which will have the capability to produce enriched uranium for sale 40 percent cheaper than the present price. No doubt, its largest customer will be the United States. A. J. A. Roux, president of the South African Atomic Energy Board, once said, "naturally South Africa would look at the countries friendly to South Africa in the first place," with respect to uranium sales. (*New York Times*, November 23, 1975.)

This also raises the specter of South African possession of a nuclear bomb. South Africa already has air to air and air to ground missiles, and as such, a delivery system for tactical nuclear weapons arsenal. But there is the real possibility that much of Africa could be put into a situation of nuclear blackmail,

New Directions, Vol. 3 [1976], Iss. 2, Art. 5
table using the methodology of guerrilla warfare.

Does anyone doubt that South Africa would fail to use nuclear weapons in the defense of its continued control?

These are things to consider at a time when most of Africa is only prepared for either conventional or guerrilla warfare. Also, the acquisition of nuclear weapons by South Africa would automatically force it into NATO, since NATO could not tolerate the existence of an ally outside of its control with such destructive capability.

What this does, it would appear, is to force African peoples more and more to conceptualize the struggle for the liberation of Southern Africa in regional terms—rather than a fragmented struggle for each piece of territory. It is well known that in recent months, there have been frequent joint meetings between Rhodesian and South African military commands, and there have been trips by the South African Defense Minister to the United States.

Does anyone doubt that there is not a regional defense system?

It is the entire region that is important, because it is the region that is at stake.

Control of the region by Africans will give them control over off shore oil resources, the internal minerals and other resources, as well as the strategic territory for shipping lanes, and the linking of the Indian Ocean area with Brazil. More fundamentally, it will mean the break up of the oppression of the African masses.

Control of the region will also bring about the break up of the capitalist exploitative system, and perhaps lessen the grip of the multinational corporations upon Africans, and even Black Americans. Therefore, let us forever stop the rhetoric that the United States has no policy toward Africa. As long as it was expedient for the U. S. to obtain its interests through "proxy states" of Portugal, Great Britain, Belgium, and South Africa, it did not have to bare its policy of imperialism and racism. Now that the pace of the revolution for independence covers the nature of the real interest, the *actual* policy is revealed. The real policy is to contain Africa in the orbit of control by NATO powers.

The Angolan War has become an opportunity for the resurrection of the "Vietnam Syndrome" in America. The Secretary of State views it as an oppor-

tunity for the exercise of "Cold War Diplomacy," and the Old Left views it as an opportunity to reorganize its ranks around a "stop the war" program. Blacks must say to the policy planners that they now know that "containment" alone is not the real objective of the "Cold War," it is the struggle for control and dominance of people, territory, and resources by both the Eastern and Western bloc states. Containment is, then, not merely a reaction to the threat of military expansion, but a sincere conflict of interest over material and cultural hegemony. As such, the "Cold War" has never died.

Blacks must say to the Old Left that to struggle to "stop the war" is not sufficient, because Blacks now believe Raymond Aron and Von Clausewitz, who said that war is an extension of national policy (the pursuit of national policy by other means). If one would genuinely struggle against war, then, one must combat *internal* racism and the exploitation of capitalism, because they are the motive force of war. If there were no racism, wars could not be fought which devastate human lives and the territory of Third World countries. If there were no excesses of capitalism, wars would not be fought for strategic access to the resources of these countries.

In a sense, Angola is another Vietnam, but the analysis of it and the strategies to stop it must improve if this situation is to have a productive outcome for the whole of Southern Africa. □

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