

**BUILDING SOCIALISM IN A WAR-TORN PERIPHERAL ECONOMY:
THE CASE OF ANGOLA (1975-87)**

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation entitled
"BUILDING SOCIALISM IN A WAR-TORN PERIPHERAL ECONOMY:
THE CASE OF ANGOLA (1975-87)" submitted by TIRTHANKAR
DAS in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil)
in Jawaharlal Nehru University, is a product of the
student's own work, carried out by him under my super-
vision and guidance.

This work has not been submitted for any other
degree of this or any other university. We recommend
that this dissertation may be placed before the exa-
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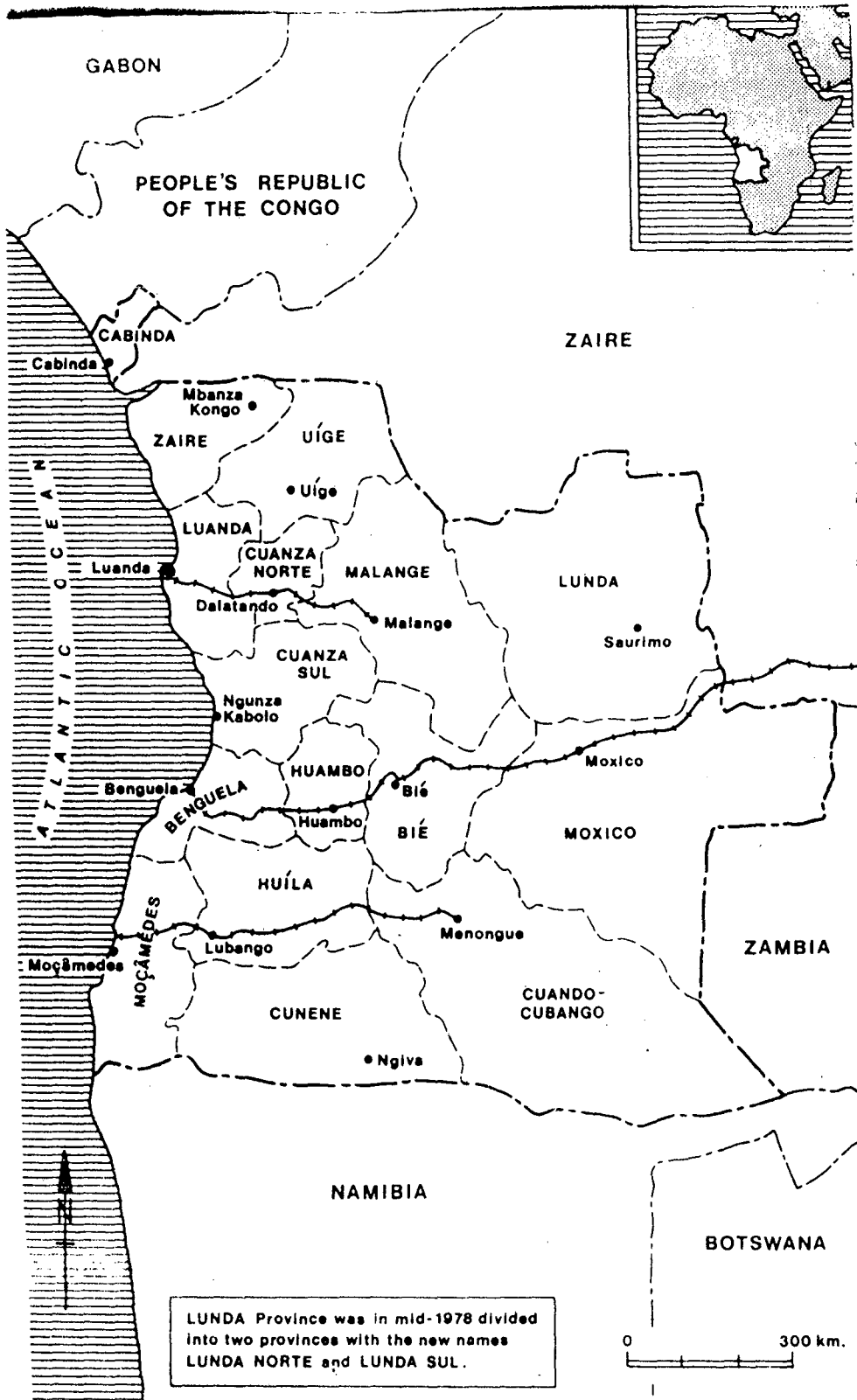


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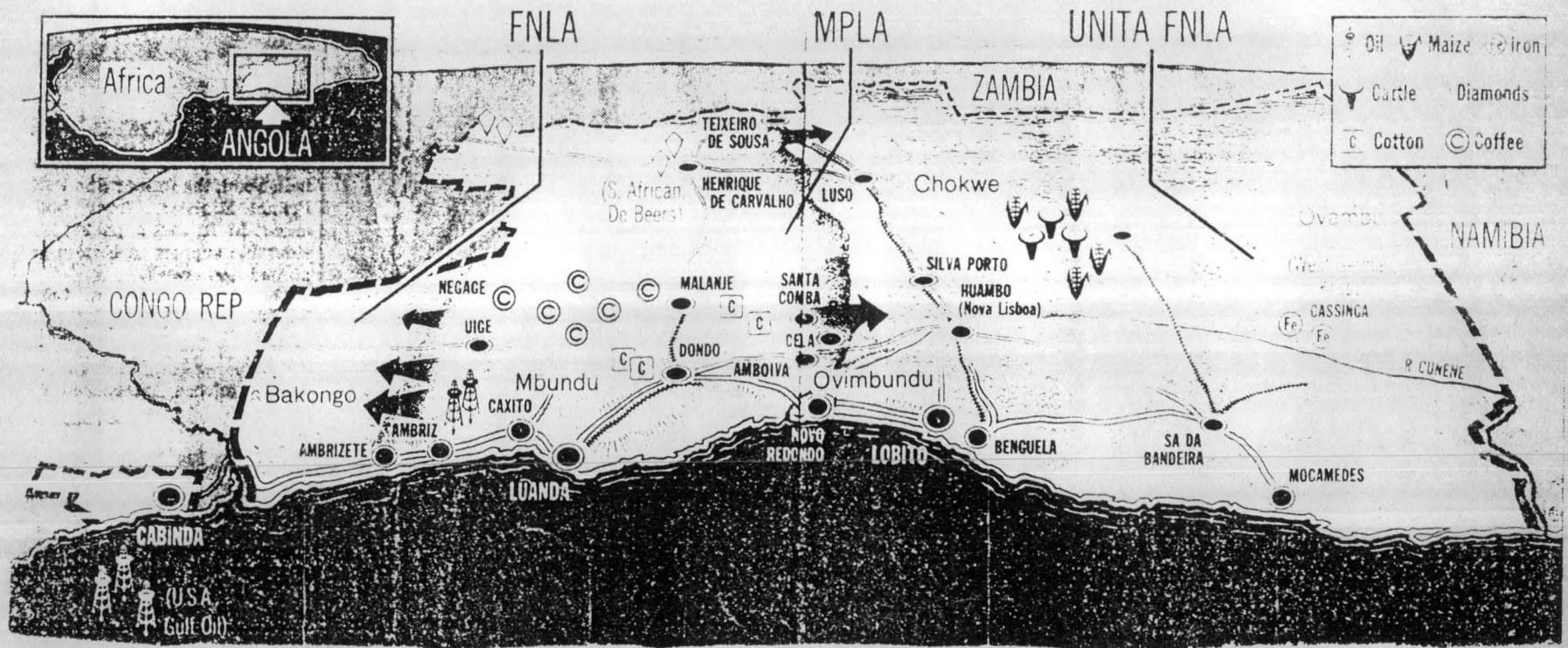
P A R E N T S

ANGOLA : POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY



ANGOLA :

ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ANATOMY OF THE COUNTRY AT INDEPENDENCE



Source: Times (London), January, 25, 1976.

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P R E F A C E

Be it under the compulsion of intractable colonial resistance or the expediency of the prevailing situation or the conscientious persuasion of a young international body to which world seemed to owe allegiance, the Portuguese colonial masters handed over power to the Angolan people on 11th of November, 1975. Whatever be the reason, the path to independence was not an easy one. Moreover, the fighting and the settler exodus left the country bereft of skills, with most commercial firms and small businesses abandoned and communications infrastructure devastated. Distribution networks collapsed and production in almost all sectors in the economy, except petroleum, declined dramatically.

And the MPLA went for socialist transformation in order to revive production and reconstruct the economy. The MPLA was sincerely committed to Marxism-Leninism and its policies have reflected it. But the failure to make any success in implementing socialist policies can be attributed to the policy of destabilisation pursued by the then Botha regime in South Africa both through direct military attacks and through extensive support for UNITA. No doubt UNITA has had some amount of support from sections

of Ovimbundu population of southern and Central Angola; but it would have been merely a non-entity to-day, had it not received consistent South Africa's assistance, particularly in the wake of the MPLA's victory in 1976. Much of MPLA's energy has been diverted away from the task of transforming society into the fight against UNITA and South Africa and into the struggle to rehabilitate the economy. Certainly, in the case of the economy, the government has been more concerned with restoring production to pre-independence levels than with embarking fully on the socialization of production methods. Other socialist objectives have not been pursued as vigorously as they might have been because of the imposed war, the shortage of cadres and the problems of reconstruction.

There are many people whom I would like to thank for their sustained help and encouragement in enabling me to write my dissertation. First, I owe a great debt of gratitude to my supervisor, Professor (Dr.) Santosh Mehrotra. I am extremely fortunate to have benefited from his invaluable suggestions, constructive criticism, friendly hospitality and continuous support and encouragement at all stages of the work. Without his support, it would have been difficult for me to complete this work.

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TIRTHANKAR DAS

Socialism is expected to provide an explanation of the past, a guide to the present and a blueprint for the future. But in the context of the Third World, Socialism represents a search for a development model and a fitting response to anti-imperialist sentiments. Furthermore, it provides a framework for coping with the dualistic mood of transitional peoples and leaders, who both seek and fear industrialisation. In this sense, socialism can be defined as the "natural ideology" of a transitional society.

Socialism, in the orthodox view, is the sole solution to the inevitably emerging contradictions of capitalism. It is a concept of co-operative society in which inequalities are banished by removing the distinction between 'haves' and 'havenots'. This conception has made socialism attractive to the African peoples¹ which endured the brand of capitalism as imposed on them by the colonial powers. Both ideologically and theoretically, socialism has managed to make appeal to these peoples.

Socialist theory, in the post-colonial environment is contrasted with the experiences of the de-humanization process of the pre-independence period under colonial rule.

1 Davidson, B., 'The African Prospect' in R. Milliban and J. Saville (ed.), The Socialist Register (Merlin Press, London, 1970), pp. 66-89.

And it is in this theory that most African leaders believe they can find road to freedom - both economic and social - from the former colonial masters. Freedom is not only sought in the lifting of the yoke of colonialism from the shoulders of the people during the struggle for liberation, but it is also sought after the struggle is completed in the form of trying to restructure the social, political and economic base through socialism.

Our main task in this work would be to examine Angola's effort to restructure its socio-economic base through socialism. In so doing, attempts would be made to examine Angola's economy, the governments policies and the inhuman guerrilla attacks to foil Angola's attempts for a transition to socialism.

1. Extent of Possibility of a Transition to Socialism in a Pheripheral Economy

Before an indepth analysis of socialism in Angola, the question which is ought to be answered is : Can a transition to socialism occur in a peripheral economy? Munslow² pointed out that the answer to this question is provided by two schools of thought:

1. World Systems Approach
2. Trotskyist Tradition

2 Munslow (B), "Is Socialism Possible on the Periphery" Monthly Review, vol. 35, no. 1, May 1983, pp. 25-39.

According to the World Systems Approach which is **expounded** by Immanuel Wallerstein, the prospect for a socialist transition in a backward peripheral country is bleak. He is of the opinion that only with the demise of the dominance of the world-capitalist system, such a transition to socialism can at all be possible. But any attempt by a single state to make the transition is doomed by the compromises it necessarily has to make for its survival and this leads to inevitable incorporation into the world capitalist system. This appears to be very true when we find the same happened with Angola. Our discussions in the subsequent chapters have shown how it became necessary for Socialist Angola to depend heavily on Western Capitalism for its very survival. This is really what Wallerstein means when he says "inevitable incorporation into the World Capitalist System".

However, for the supporters of the Trotskyist School, only an internationalised revolution can create the conditions for a socialist transition. All important is the spontaneous upsurge of the masses, in particular, the working class. But in the absence of a 'genuine' vanguard, the dominant 'revolutionary' party quickly acts to control the movement and enforce increased production norms and discipline upon the workers. This rapidly causes a decline into a form of state capitalism or at best a degenerated worker's state characterised by its bureaucratised socialism.

From these above accounts, it can be said that Angola has the necessary capability to make the transition a success. But without a world-wide effort, this singular effort will be doomed by certain compromises it has to make for its own survival.

Although our aim in this work is to analyse Angola's effort in socialist transition, here in this chapter, we will discuss Angola in its historical perspective. The role of the Portuguese will also be examined.

Before proceeding further into the study of the transition to socialism in the context of Angola, we have to first understand what is meant by a 'transition to socialism'? The long-term goals of socialism are the abolition of the private ownership of the means of production and of the extraction of surplus value by the bourgeoisie and the creation of a class-less society where the power of the state is no longer required to enforce class rule.³

Angola became independent on November 11, 1975. Nationalists were subjected to ruthless repression by the Portuguese and had turned to guerilla warfare from 1961. Moreover, rival African movements had erupted with their roots in different parts of the country, among different

3 Gordon White, in Barry Munslow's (ed.) Africa : Problems in the Transition to Socialism (London; 1986), p. 42.

ethnic groups, dragging the country into a fratricidal power struggle after the collapse of the Portuguese dictatorship in April 1974.⁴

With independence in 1975, its 300,000 of the 340,000 white settlers decamped Angola taking with them all what they could take and willfully destroyed what they otherwise could not take.⁵ Those white settlers comprised all the technical and managerial skills of the country. The fighting among rival African movements was still at its height. The fighting and the settlers exodus left the country bereft of skills, with most commercial farms and small businesses abandoned and communication infrastructure **devastated**. It so appeared as if independence was an anathema for the Angolan people.

In the midst of all the problems, the newly elected MPLA government wanted to start its programme of socialist transformation. It had plans for the nationalization of vital industries, state control of foreign trade and greater control over foreign companies operating in Angola. However, before such programmes could be implemented, the priority had to be economic reconstruction.

4 Africa South of Sahara, 16th ed. (Europa, 1987), p. 224.

5 Bhagavan, M.R., Angola's Political Economy (Upsala, 1985), p. 7.

1.1 Physical Geography of Angola

If we look at the physical geography of the country, we could notice that Angola is a country of contrasts. While in the north it is covered by equatorial rain forest, the south is covered by **Namib** and Kalahari deserts. There is a further contrast between the narrow, dry coastal strip and the high, well-watered plateau.⁶

From the standpoint of geo-politics, Angola is bordered by Namibia in the south (which was under South Africa's occupation till very recently), moderate Zambia in the east, conservative and periodically hostile Zaire in the north-east and north, and radical and friendly Congo (Brazaville) on the northern border of the Cabinda enclave. This geo-political position has tremendously influenced Angola's post-independent political and economic development and has been largely responsible for thrusting the country, at times, into the forefront of global rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union.⁷

Besides the country's geographical position and the influences of the neighbouring states, what played equally an important role is the ethnic make-up of the population. Several of the larger ethnic groups were not limited to

6 Wheeler, D.L., & Pelissier, R., Angola, (London, Pall Mall, 1981), p. 35.

7 Abashive, D.M. and Samuola, M.A., Portuguese Africa: A Handbook (London, 1969), pp. 2-4, pp. 35-47.

Angola only, and extended into neighbouring Zaire, Zambia and Namibia. This has led to numerous problems, notably in northern Angola where the large and important Kongo tribe stretches into Zaire, creating the opportunity for conflicts of loyalty. This has led to rival African movements within Angola both before and after the independence.

The majority of the Angolan people lived on the plateaux, where the best agricultural land situated. There were also tendencies towards expansion of urban populations around Luanda, Huambo and Malanje. The largest ethnic group was the Ovimbundu of the central and south-western plateau.⁸

The main economic areas were the Cabinda oilfields in the enclave, coffee-growing around Vige, diamond-mining around Cafunfo in Luanda province, iron-ore mining at Cassinga, maize and other food-crop production in the central plateau area and cattle-raising in the south.

And prior to the arrival of the Portuguese on the scene, the main trading routes were directed inland rather than towards the Atlantic.⁹ This was because the best agricultural and hunting land was in the hinterland and because of the existence of economically strong kingdoms such as Monomotupa further inland and towards the Indian Ocean coast.

8 Duffy, J., 'Portuguese Africa 1930-60' in L.H. Gann and Peter Duignavis (ed). Colonialism in Africa 1970-1960, vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1970).

9 Kaplan, I., Angola : A Country Study, (Washington D.C., 1979), p. 11.

1.2 The Portuguese in Angola

The origin of the Portuguese contact with the people of Angola dates back to 1483 when Diogo Cao, the Portuguese explorer, arrived at the mouth of the Congo river. Trade started between the two countries. Much of the trade was in slaves and this rapidly became a destructive and conflictual factor in bilateral relations.¹⁰ The dynamic factor that precipitated the growing need for slaves was the expansion of Portugal's colony in Brazil and in particular, the establishment of massive sugar-cane plantations that needed huge quantities of cheap labour. Basil Davidson has pointed out that by 1580 the colonial population of the Portuguese-controlled part of Brazil was 57,000, 29% of which was Africans.¹¹ Angola was an important source of slaves for Brazil partly because it was sited conveniently for the transatlantic trade.

The absence of a strong paramount chief like the Kongo king provided the conducive atmosphere to the Portuguese to establish their authority in the Angolan colony. Unlike the trade and diplomatic approach used in Kongo, control was established in Angola through the armed

10 Hamond, R., Portugal and Africa 1915-50 : A Study in Uneconomic Imperialism (California, 1966) pp. 2-30. This topic has also been discussed in detail by Ferreira in his book titled, Portuguese Colonialism in Africa : The End of an Era (Paris, 1970)

11 Davidson, B., In the Eye of the Storm : Angola's People (Harmondsworth, 1975), p. 27.

forces. Throughout the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, small wars were in progress as the Portuguese tried to extend their control over the Kongo, Mbundu and Ovimbundu peoples. Duffy has pointed out that the wars were one factor in increasing the Portuguese population, as soldiers who went out to fight often stayed after their military service.¹²

Slavery was totally abolished in 1878. The total abolition of slavery in its turn had important repercussions for the Angolan economy. The most important one was that some other means had to be found to maintain a supply of cheap labour for the coffee farmers. And the Portuguese answer was forced labour. And this continued till 1961 as a means of ensuring that the colonial authorities and the Portuguese settlers could continue to exploit Angolan labour power at the minimal cost. And the overthrow of the republic in 1926 created the right atmosphere for it. The subsequent rise of the New State under Dr. Salazar led to changes in the economic relationship between Portugal and its colonies. Much of the emphasis during this period was on integrating colonies with Portugal. Foreign investment was no longer encouraged. Salazar wanted to make Angola self-sufficient while at the same time turning it into a market for Portuguese goods. But only the post-

12 Duffy, J., Portuguese Africa (Harvard, 1959), p. 138.

second World War coffee boom lifted Angola's economy from its stagnant position. One reason for the stagnation was the unwillingness of Portuguese settlers to put much effort into development combined with measures that restricted African and mestico advancement.

By 1975, the number of Portuguese settlers in Angola was about 340,000. Most of them had arrived in the 1960s and early 1970s. Most of them came from small holder peasantry, the urban and industrial working class, and the petty bourgeoisie, to escape the crisis ridden and falling economy of Portugal.¹³ Besides, they had come to Angola with the hope of leading "commodins living". And their immigration was actively encouraged by the fascist regime in Lisbon. The fascist dictatorship that ruled Portugal for many decades deliberately held back the economic and social development of Portugal. Hence, Portugal became backward technologically and economically. Being colonized by such an economically and technologically backward country as Portugal, Angola, like other Portuguese colonies, suffered a double doze of underdevelopment.¹⁴ Apart from

13 Bhagavan, M.R., Angola's (Upsala, 1985), p.7. This fact was also highlighted by Newift in his book titled Portugal in Africa : The Last Hundred Years, London, 1981.

14. Bhagavan, M.R. Angola's Political....., (Upsala, 1985) p. 9.

a few urban centres where the more well-to-do Portuguese immigrants congregated, in the rest of the country, there was virtually no economic and social infrastructure that could benefit the majority of the Angolan population.

It was until General Spínola was ousted from office in September 1974 by General Francisco da Costa Gomes, that Portugal had a government which was determined to move rapidly through the process of decolonization and to refuse to make concessions to the white-wing in the African territories.

However, by 1974, parallel and rival African movements in Angola had already emerged. This appeared to be a natural development keeping in view the ethnic make up of the population. The Movimento popular para a Libertacao de Angola (MPLA) was founded in 1956 and established its strongest roots among the Kimbundu speaking people of Luanda, the Kwanza valley and the Malanje. From bases in Congo (Brazzaville) and Zambia, it began guerrilla operations in Cabinda from 1963 and eastern Angola from 1966. The FNLA evolved out of the Uniao das Populacoes do Norte de Angola (UPNA). UPNA was founded in 1957. The FNLA rallied the support of the Bankongo of the north west (Vize and Zaire provinces) and led a major insurrection there in 1961 and later carried out a sporadic guerilla war from bases in Zaire. The Uniao Nacional para a

Independencia Total de Angola (UNITA), founded in 1966, won support almost exclusively from the Ovimbundu of the Central plateau, Benguela and peoples from the south east. Apart from the above three, there was another secessionist group founded in 1963 was known as the Frente para a Libertacao de Enclave de Cabinda (FLEC). The FLEC was inactive until 1974 and was not represented in the transitional government.¹⁵

Within a few months after the transitional government came into shape, the differences in these four movements were transformed into a bloody civil war in which outside forces quickly became engulfed. Zaire gave military support to both the FNLA and FLEC, while South African troops invaded from across the Namibian border in October 1975 to aid UNITA and the FNLA, which formed an uneasy alliance under their respective leaders - Jonas Savimbi and Holden Roberto to fight the Soviet backed MPLA under Agostinho Neto. To meet the South African challenge, Dr. Neto turned to Cuba, which sent 20,000 troops to help the MPLA in its defence. The USA, embarrassed by its de facto alliance with South Africa was unable to respond to this challenge and the South Africans too withdrew in March 1976, allowing the FAPLA (the military arm of MPLA) and their Cuban allies to

15 Molovi (Victor) "Threats from within and without" New African, Jan 1979, pp. 28-29.
The transitional Angolan government was formed involving the three African Movements at a Conference in Alvoz, Portugal in January, 1975.

extend their control to all the provinces of the country. Added to this was settler exodus (300,000 of its 340,000 **white settlers**) that left the country in a devastated condition. Not only the country was devoid of technical and managerial skills, but many sectors in the economy like agriculture, transport and communication and industry were in dying conditions.¹⁶

Thus, a careful look at the socio-politico-economic situation in Angola reveals that the country was subjected to bitter colonial exploitation right from the beginning. But the exploitation of its economy on a massive scale began in 1960s when many of the Portuguese landed in Angola with the hope of a better material living. This was not enough for them. Even while leaving the country on the eve of Angola's independence, they plundered consumer durables, vehicles, machinery and equipment and destroyed bridges, installations and all else what they could not take with them.

Let us now discuss the colonial policies of different colonial powers like the Portuguese, the British and the French. While the basic objective of the various colonial powers was the exploitation of their colonies, there were

16 Davidson, B., Africa in Modern History (London, Allen Lane, 1978). pp. 7-15.
Also see Borrell, J., "White Exodus sets Angola on path to Economic ruins", Standard, September 1975, p. 27.

still differences in their policies towards their respective colonies. Whether it be the Portuguese, the English or the French, whatever good was done to their colonies, it was done in a classical pattern of colonial exploitation - to plunder the wealth of their colonies and to turn them as markets for their finished goods.

Apart from economic exploitation, the Portuguese wanted to expand christianity and civilization to distant shores. From the beginning, there was present a sense of historic vocation - small portugal spreading the values of Christian Europe in ignorant and hostile lands. From the efforts of the Portuguese missionary and colonist, there evolved a spiritual unity between the African possessions and the mother country, a community of cultural interests to which Portugal's 'New State' was to be given administrative cohesion. Hence, it became very clear that the Portuguese wanted to bring its colonies under its direct rule and desired to take its colonies along the road to economic unity.¹⁷

The British colonial policy, however, differed from one territory of the African continent to another. But a

17 Bender, G.J., Angola Under the Portuguese : The Myth and the Reality (London, 1978), p. 3.
For detail also see Boavida, A., Angola : Five Centuries of Portuguese Exploitation (Britain, Columbia, 1972), pp. 3-70.

common and most important feature of its policy was 'indirect rule'. By this, the Britishers allowed the elected African chiefs to rule over their territory. But the real controlling power vested with the colonial power. This created a false sense of belongingness in the Africans. Thus, the British colonial policy may be characterised as one concerned with behavioural manifestations rather than with structural patterns.¹⁸

And so far as the French colonial policy is concerned, the most important characteristic feature was the policy of assimilation.¹⁹ They wanted the people of African states to be assimilated into their culture.

Besides the differences in the colonial policies of the colonial powers, they all had some sort of modernising and civilizing influences on their colonies. This can be known from the construction of railways, bridges, other installations and development of the structure and system of education. But in case of Portuguese Angola, the fleeing Portuguese people destroyed everything including bridges installations etc. So, it was both due to the Portuguese colonial exploitation and the settler exodus which was responsible for the ill health of Angola's economy.

18 Post, K.W.J., in L.H. Gann and Peter Duignan's (ed) vol. 2, Colonialism in Africa 1570-1960 (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 31-35.

19 Robert L. Delavignette, in Gann and Duignan's (ed), vol. 2, Colonialism....., pp. 252.

This was the reason why Angola after independence was desperate to reconstruct its economy as this was considered to be the first step towards a true socialist transition. But how can it do so without enough resources? That apart, it was facing regular de-stabilization activities and an acute shortage of educated cadres. For its survival, defence was the most urgent need. With other sectors of the economy being crippled, Angola was dependent on oil - i.e. - dependence on western technology.

In the next chapter, we will make a comparative estimate of its economy in the pre-independence era - i.e. 1973 vis-a-vis the post liberation period. By doing so, we can point out the nature of the economy and root cause of its decline in the post-independent era.

CHAPTER - II

PRESENT CRISIS IN THE ECONOMY

On independence, Angola inherited an economy which was devastated and **ruined**. Towards the end of the colonial period, the economy was in a viable position. The country had extensive oil reserves commercially viable diamond and iron-ore deposits, significant hydroelectric power production and potential, a thriving coffee industry, a reasonably large manufacturing sector geared towards internal consumer needs, a stable food-production sector and more or less adequate rail and road systems.¹ The country was generally able to feed itself, supply its basic consumer needs and produce enough oil, diamonds and coffee to bring in hard currency with which to purchase necessary imports. However, since the departure of the Portuguese in 1975, the economy underwent severe shocks. The country which was self-sufficient in food production in 1973 became a chief importer of foods and basic commodities. Import became the dictum of the urban population. Agriculture and Industry, which attained considerable heights in regard to their respective productive capacities, severely declined after independence. We will make a comparative estimate of the economy of Angola on the eve of independence and that of the post-independent one which will help us to find out the dimensions of problems that the economy is facing in independent Angola.

1 Kaplan, I., Angola : A Country Study, p. 208.

The condition of the people in the last 'stable' year before independence, i.e. 1973 as some say it, was not very well. Eighty four per cent of the Angolan population lived in the rural areas and they made up eighty per cent of the total labour force.² They had to survive with poor nutritional food with cassava, beans and dried fish as staple diets in the northern areas and maize, beans and fish in the central provinces. Besides, the average daily wage of the Angolan agricultural worker was 20 escudos.* This was a meagre amount to meet the demands of comparatively larger families. Considering his purchasing capacity, we can say that the agricultural worker and his household was not entirely proletarian but 'semi-proletarian'.³ Not only the agricultural labourers but the unskilled industrial labourers were similar sufferers. More than 80 per cent of the industrial labour force were unskilled workers and they were all African. On the eve of independence, the average daily wage of an unskilled worker in the manufacturing sector was 28 escudos and 16 escudos in the mining sector. But at the same time a mestico** was getting 155 escudos and a Portuguese skilled worker was getting 400 escudos.

2 Bhagavan, Angola's Political Economy, p. 10

3 Ibid., p. 10.

* Colonial currency, which was in use before the Kwana came into existence.

** A person of mixed white and African ancestry.

However, it was thought that the living conditions of the Angolans would be improved after independence. But it so happened that often independence due to the departure of the Portuguese, the farms were abandoned. Most of the agricultural labourers left the farms and returned to the villages. Life became more miserable for them.

1. Agriculture

If we take agricultural output into account, we could find that agricultural production fell drastically after independence. The year 1973 was considered to be the "best year" because of agricultural production. Few claimed that it was not only self-sufficient in food but also exported it. But a careful scrutiny shows that this self-sufficiency was limited to the petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie with their high incomes, who made up a marginal six per cent of the total population. Nineteen out of every twenty Angolans lived on very little of the bare essentials. It was really the linkage between the exploitation of Angolan labourer and the corresponding lack of the purchasing power of the people and the surplus produced by its labour for their European farm-owners that made food exports possible. The main export crops were coffee, sisal, bananas, sugar and tobacco. Again, while the peasantry grew most of the country's food crops including maize, cassava, millet, sorghum, beans, groundnuts,

rice, potatoes and wheat, much of which was usually transferred to meet the needs of the towns.⁴ Hence, two agricultural methods existed side by side before independence -- such as - (i) quasi-subsistence farming and (ii) large-scale commercial farming.

But on the eve of independence, most of the country's commercial farms were abandoned, resulting in a sharp drop in production of export crops. Almost the entire commercial farming sector was brought under state ownership. But with the departure of the Portuguese, the country was completely devoid of managerial and technical skill. This was accompanied by shortage of essential commodities, transport difficulties and growing security problems. This foiled the attempts to revive output.⁵ The workers who were left free were faced with three choices - such as - i) to organise themselves into co-operatives to run the farms; ii) to wait for other private owners or the state to take over the ownership and management; or iii) to abandon the farms and return to their villages to fall back entirely on subsistence cultivation.⁶ The first option was impracticable in the sense that the Angolan people were kept

4 Africa South of Sahara, p. 223.

5 Burges, Julius., "Angola's Economy - Poised before the future", African Development, March 1975, p. 27.

6 Bhagavan's Angola's political Economy, p. 19.

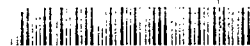
under ignorance, fear and blind obedience by the settler elites. Besides this, no private entrepreneur was allowed to grow during the colonial period which could have taken the charge of management of farms after Portuguese evacuation. And the newly independent state was marked by the conspicuous absence of managerial and technical skills. So, to save the newly independent state from falling a prey to such a dismal socio-economic situation, the state nationalised the abandoned farms and tried to keep production going on. The great majority of 250,000 agricultural workers had to leave the farms and return to their villages.

During the 1973 period, the commercial farms were the sole suppliers of food products to the urban population and of cash crops to the export market. The subsistence peasantry was also contributing a part of its produce for both these purposes. But with the collapse of the cultivation in the commercial farms and the untimely departure of the Portuguese settlers, both sources of supply came to a halt. The towns were subjected to an acute shortage of foods and essential commodities. There was also a dramatic decline in the export of the cash crops. In the Table One, we could see that most of the marketed agricultural produce dropped dramatically after 1973. In the table we have compared the marketed produce

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in the year 1973 (the 'best' year in Angola in terms of Agricultural produce) with that of 1977 onwards, i.e. after independence.

However, the subsistence peasantry which constitute the bulk of the entire population, grew their own staple foods. They had still the capacity to produce food and export crops for the market. They did not want to do so for two main reasons. The first being that there were no traders to purchase their goods and the second, they lacked transport facilities to move their products to cities and towns. Another important fact was that there was the shortage of essential commodities. Against such a background, cash income appeared to be useless. Devastation in transport and communication structure greatly affected agriculture.⁷ During the 1975-76 war, score of bridges were destroyed and most of the country's vehicles were either destroyed, damaged or exported by the fleeing Portuguese. One of the government's priority since then has been to rebuilt the shattered communication infrastructure and import vehicles, but the continuing conflict with Unita and South Africa has resulted in further damage to infrastructure.

7 Klinghoffer, A.J. 1980. The Angolan War, Boulder, Colorado Westview Press, pp. 3-47.

So, compared to the rural centres, the urban centres were severely affected by food shortages. Majority of the urban centres were provided foods by the state-owned shops, known as 'lojas', which sell restricted amounts of basic foodstuffs at low controlled prices. Only the produce from the state farms and goods imported from abroad find their way to the government shops.

Since the government was incapable of organising the buying and transporting of the very little surplus of the subsistence farmers, the farmers found it secured to sell their surplus to private traders. The private traders then, were taking the surplus to the urban markets. The question is why the farmers decided to sell to the private traders and not to the state? Certainly, they do not sell for Kwanzas, the Angolan currency, but for other goods. Because they knew very well that even if they accumulate money, they cannot get goods they want, as there was the shortage of essential commodities. These subsistence peasants were producing staple foods for them. So, for other essential goods, which they do not produce, they get those goods by counter-trade with the private traders. The traders then take this produce to towns and sell it in parallel markets. The private traders has three main sources for the basic commodities which are in high demand - such as salt, sugar, edible oil, matches, foot

wear, cloths, milk powder, etc.⁸ They are as follows:

- (1) the people who purchase from people's shops and resell to traders for a substantial profit;
- (2) the workers who sell part of the commodities they get paid in, where they themselves produce; and
- (3) finally, those workers, supervisors and petty bourgeois elements who simply steal goods from their workplace and sell these goods to the private traders.

These three types of people, when become successful in selling their goods to private traders, also get some money in return. And they come out to spend this money in the parallel open market to buy other essentials at higher prices. And in the ultimate stage, what happens is that a substantial part of the Kwanzas in circulation in the parallel economy never gets back into the official economy, because the money was not kept in any bank accounts.

Since there was a dramatic fall in the production, the urban population were hard hit by the shortage of foods and basic commodities. No doubt the subsistence peasantry were sending their few surpluses to the towns via the private traders. But that seemed to be insufficient for the growing urban population. After independence, much

8 Bhagavan's Angola's political p. 23.

of this increase was because of the return of those Angolans who had left the country to escape the inhuman forced labour mechanism. The question now is why these Angolans who returned after independence, settled in urban centres and did not go back to their rural hinterland? It is because that during their exile years in Zaire, the peasants had become urbanised by having to find a living in or near Kinshasa, the capital city. On their return, they aggregated in urban centres with the hope of continuing a similar living that they had learnt in Zaire. So, import on a large scale was made to provide basic minimum to the urban population.

1.1 Industry

Not only the agriculture sector was affected, the same happened with industrial production also. In 1973, industrial production accounted for 18-20 per cent of GDP. Industrial production was high in Luanda, Huambo and Lubango. Most industries were on a small scale and prior to independence, were owned and operated by Portuguese settlers. But in the post-independent days, manufacturing suffered from the withdrawal of the Portuguese, shortages of raw materials and the harmful effects of civil strife and insurgency. Among these obstacles to development, the most serious was the shortage of trained managers and

skilled workers. But Cuba, the Soviet Union, East Germany and other socialist countries came to Angola's aid at this juncture. Besides, the revenues from oil enabled the government to hire technicians and advisers from the west. Even then, this could not make up for the deficiency of indigenous expertise. Above all, the cost of foreign assistance exhausted the existing resources, which otherwise could have been utilised for developmental purposes.

Thus, the decline in manufacturing production was devastating. In 1977, output was down to 40% of the 1973 levels. Problems in the agricultural sector was accompanied by the increasing cost of fighting UNITA and South Africa. So, less money was available to buy spare parts from abroad or to import the raw materials that farmers were failing to produce in sufficient volume. Agreements on technical, managerial and scientific cooperation with the Soviet Union, Cuba, East Germany, Brazil and Italy helped to alleviate some of manufacturing sector's problems, but provided no permanent solution. Between 1970 and 1979, industrial production fell by 3.9 per cent and service industries' output by 10.9 per cent.⁹

However, on the pretext of Portuguese exodus, the government went for extensive nationalisation of manufacturing sector. By the end of 1978, there was a slow-

9 World Bank, 1981, Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa, Washington, D.C., p. 144.

down in the nationalisation policy. And in the same year, following President Neto's announcement that private ownership of small enterprises would be allowed in that sector, greater scope for business activity was given to small private manufacturers. A law was passed in 1979 permitting foreign investment in Angola provided that the country's independence and interests were respected. The law on investment prohibited investment in defence-related industries, banking, insurance, telecommunications and water supplies. But, there were no such restrictions on involvement of experts and enterprises from socialist countries in Angolan industry. Thus, the management system in Angola's manufacturing system has developed along Socialist lines.¹⁰ A small number of cooperatives have been set up in the small-scale manufacturing sector, but co-operatives have not played a major role in the management of major factories.

Although the MPLA has given utmost priority to the industrial sector considering it the decisive one in the building of socialism, since independence, the sector has been prevented from developing significantly as a result of managerial and skilled labour shortages, raw material and

10 Shuster, M., "Planning a Socialist Future (Angola)", Southern Africa, vol. II, no. 2, Nov. 1978, pp. 21-22.

spare parts problems, the effects of South African destabilization and inexperience and inefficiency among government and party officials responsible for planning and management.

1.2. Mining Sector

The mining sector in Angola also suffered a lot. Diamonds were a vital export commodity for Angola. In 1973, diamond production stood at 2.1 million carats. The civil war led to a serious decline in output, which was compounded by the departure of the Portuguese. In 1975, production dropped to just 750,000 carats. And by 1977, output had fallen dramatically to 350,000 carats and illicit mining and smuggling became more serious problem. By the end of 1977, the MPLA government had taken possession of sixty per cent of Diamond's shares, which was till then owned by the Portuguese. In its attempt to lessen smuggling and provide better security for the mines, the government divided Lunda province into Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul. This facilitated the sector to improve its production. Again, the prospects of expanding mining and increasing revenue were hit badly by the expansion of UNITA activity to Lunda Norte in 1983 and 1984.¹¹ Besides diamond,

11 Economist Intelligence Unit, Quarterly Economic Review of Angola, Various issues.

major iron-ore deposits are found in Huambo, Bie and Malanje provinces. But the most important mining centre was Cassinga in Southern Angola. Before independence, the mines were owned by the Portuguese-run Companhia Mineira do Lobito and production of iron ore at Cassinga in 1973 totalled 5.7 million tons. But after independence, output was severely affected by successive South African raids on the Cassinga area and on the railway linking the mining area to the part of Namibe.¹²

1.3. Oil Sector

But it was only the oil sector which enabled the MPLA government to survive South African-Unita destabilization and the slump in diamond and coffee exports. Oil earnings have enabled the MPLA to keep up the fight against sabotage and insurgency without ignoring reconstruction and preparations for socialist transformation. For the exploration of oil, Angolan government co-operated with multinational oil companies. It is really a paradox because the factor which enabled the MPLA to keep its socialist option alive has been the extensive cooperation of American and Western capitalism.

Besides oil outputs what helped the MPLA government in Angola to face the grim economic scenario is the nature

12. *ibid.*,

of Angolan trade and foreign aid.¹³ Since independence, the MPLA has developed close relations with the Soviet Union, Cuba, the German Democratic Republic, Yugoslavia, the Nordic states and Brazil. Economic relations with the United States and EEC countries are important in trade sphere.¹⁴ And its membership of the Lome convention in 1985 earned for it aid from the EEC. In 1976-78 period, when construction works were going on, Soviet Russia delivered an aid package of \$ 17 million and it is estimated that between 1975 and 1982, the Soviet Union offered aid amounting to \$ 40 million, of which only about half was disbursed. However, it was Cuba which provided skilled managers and trained workers to Angola, which it was in need of. Thousands of Cuban teachers, medical staff and technicians have been sent to Angola to help with construction efforts, and hundreds of Soviets, East German and Bulgarian advisers have helped in a broad spectrum of economic activities.

Thus, from the foregoing analysis of the Angolan present economic crisis, two characteristic features stand

13. Ogunbodejo (Oye), "Angola's International Economic Relations", International Studies, 21(3), July-Sept., 1988, pp. 323-36. This fact was also highlighted by Adolman, "Report from Angola", Foreign Affairs (USA), vol. 53, no. 3, April 1975, pp. 558-74.

14 To substantiate this fact, we have provided in Tables '1a' and '1b' both the direction of trade and the main commodities traded.

out - (1) As discussed, 80% of the population who stay in rural areas take care of themselves by growing their own food. They find no reason to produce any surplus amount either because no traders came to purchase their goods or even if some of them came to purchase, the money that the peasantry would earn would be of no use, because of the shortage of essential goods. Education and health services hardly reached all stratas of the population; (2) And the second being the total dependence of the state and urban population on the export income. But export income had a dramatic fall after independence. Hence their requirements were met by imports. About half the total export income from oil and diamonds was going for imports and the other half going for defence.

As discussed in the first chapter, freedom is sought not only to lift the yoke of colonialism but also to reconstruct the economic base of the new society. Angola wanted to do the same through socialism. But reconstruction needs resources. Whatever amount Angola was earning from the export income of oil and diamond was exhausted either for imports or for defence purposes. Economic reconstruction which was the first step towards socialist transition, remained far off from reality.

In the next chapter we will discuss the MPLA policies to examine how far the MPLA party was committed to socialist policies. Efforts would be made to examine the extent of implementation of the MPLA socialist policies in the midst of destabilisation activities.

Table : 1

MARKETED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE

(Units are in metric tons, unless otherwise stated)

Produce	1973	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Wheat	11210	3450	627	1261	524	210
Rice	42820	3410	1438	2075	3205	1242
Maize	333780	36788	2740	19692	30840	23649
Beans	33500	1002	697	868	693	1069
Dried Cassava	61800	1141	6011	7502	8452	19027
Sweet Potatoes	n.a.	n.a.	1246	3282	4611	4497
All vegetables	n.a.	3352	13061	10023	17494	27703
Groundnuts	12970	1171	357	399	282	714
Sunflower seeds	21000	1533	449	747	896	705
Sugar	81900	n.a.	39000	60000	80000	n.a.
Cotton	79280	1423	179	1633	1453	1046
Tobacco	4500	245	926	622	251	1393
Potatoes	68500	1703	2739	3087	8793	9104

contd....

Table 1 continued

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Coffee	210000	68350	25172	18704	36576	23877
Palm Oil	17780	n.a.	n.a.	2259	3406	3613
Citrus fruits	15600	3027	1047	3479	3432	3558
Bananas	95480	2050	2212	2937	10695	10801
Pineapple	34800	386	519	1803	2212	647
Cocoa	440	n.a.	160	50	n.a.	n.a.
Sisal	78900	3070	6987	7043	n.a.	241
Beef	23890	3409	6036	6213	4593	3409
Pork	3560	2486	1071	1004	740	759
Goat and Mutton	6920	135	193	358	241	301
Chicken	n.a.	3550	1317	1223	2226	427
Eggs (in 1000s)	36130	8750	16590	6706	8716	4251
Milk (1000 lts)	554960	n.a.	n.a.	699	n.a.	969
Logs of woods	n.a.	n.a.	41,382	23,569	45,359	31496
Sawn wood	n.a.	n.a.	5962	6668	7133	7399

n.a. not available

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Luanda, cited in M.R. Bhagwan's Angola's.....
pp. 56 and 61.

Table 1a

DIRECTION OF TRADE (% OF TOTAL)

Imports from	1979	1980	Exports to	1979	1980
Western Europe	56.4	51.6	North America	21.4	31.8
Comecon (CMEA)	15.7	16.9	Latin America	35.1	28.9
Latin America	9.8	10.8	Western Europe	28.5	22.2
North America	5.6	7.1	Comecon (CMEA)	6.9	6.3
Africa	3.0	2.2	Africa	3.4	4.1
Others	9.5	11.4	Others	4.7	6.7

Source: Banco Nacional de Angola; Africa Index.

Table 1b

MAIN COMMODITIES TRADED (In million Kwanzas)

Exports	1978	1979	Imports	1978	1979
Crude oil	16507	26746	Foodstuffs & Textiles	5383	7326
Oil by-products	1103	2498	Footwear	1447	2341
Coffee	6732	6700	Machinery	3940	11016
Cement	90	59	Consumer goods	2209	1293
Sisal	82	165	Chemicals	563	801
Fish meal	60	40	Raw materials	4899	3051
			Tools	478	1191
			Medical goods	1040	716

Note: 30 Angolan kwanzas = 1 US \$

Source: Ministry of Foreign Trade, Luanda (cited in M.R. Bhagavan's Angola's... p. 70).

CHAPTER - III

EVOLUTION OF MPLA'S PROGRAMME

Confronted with enormous social difficulties and an almost complete breakdown of the modern sector of the economy, the new regime has tried to adopt a pragmatic approach. The government planned to control its natural resources while leaving room for private enterprise if it is deemed to be in the national interest. Three sectors have been taken for granted - (i) State sector; (ii) co-operative sector; (iii) Private sector. State enterprise will be concentrated in key sectors of the economy and in large scale agriculture which require a higher level of technology. Cooperatives will be established in agriculture and fishing sectors; and Private ownership will be maintained in small-scale activities.¹

The core of the MPLA's socialist policies was the leading role of the working class and the worker-peasant alliance. While the party stressed the importance of peasant participation and the need to work to improve living standards in rural areas, the party had as its political base the urban slum-dwellers, workers and intelligentsia, but not the peasants. However, it was a fact that many of the town-dwellers and workers had peasant origins and retained close links with families

1 Ignatyev, O., "Angola Retrospect", New Times (34), Aug. 1978, pp. 27-30.

in the countryside. Among the rural measures adopted by the MPLA were the establishment of state farms on land abandoned by the Portuguese and the encouragement of co-operatives and producers' associations. The party was very much alert to prevent the growth of a rural bourgeoisie - which grew after the Portuguese left their farms. Because the growth of such a class in the rural areas would be a serious obstacle to the MPLA's socialist agrarian policy, and to the establishment of peasant co-operatives.

1. Policies for Economic and Political Reforms

However, the basic approach of the MPLA to the economy was extremely cautious. The Neto government took an extremely careful line in dealing with the agricultural sector and made no immediate moves to nationalise or collectivize land. Some abandoned farms and large plantations were taken into state hands, but peasant farmers were not rigidly organised. **In October 1976**, while addressing a conference of the trade Union movement, UNTA, Agostinho Neto had stated that collectivization was a long-term goal and it must be achieved gradually. He also warned that 'if now in the name of socialism we were to begin to expropriate the peasants, our people would at once feel they were being sacrificed

to our socialist option.² Emphatically, he also mentioned that it was ideology which was going to give way to production in the short term.

However, the gamut of the MPLA's economic programme was set out in the Resolution on Economic Policy approved by the Central Committee plenum in October 1976. The resolution made it clear that a planned, socialist economy 'with agricultural as its basis, and industry as the decisive factor' was a strategic rather than an immediate goal.³ The resolution outlined fifteen short-term tactical aims which are as follows:

- (1) Restoration of the production levels in the shortest possible time, which had declined by 20% during 1976 as a result of the post-1974 dislocation;
- (2) Continuation along the road of nationalization and confiscation;
- (3) Implementation of a rigorous system of control over the economy through a national plan;
- (4) Control of financial resources and banking;
- (5) Combating corruption and diamond smuggling;
- (6) Preparation of new customs policies;
- (7) Ending Portugal's preferential tariff;

2 Ottaway, D. and Ottaway, M., Afrocommunism, New York, Africana, 1981, p. 121.

3 Somerville's Angola,, p. 133.

- (8) Working towards a state monopoly of foreign trade;
- (9) Establishment of a wage policy;
- (10) Fighting inflation;
- (11) Allowing for readjustments in cases of flagrant injustice;
- (12) Combining moral and material incentives;
- (13) Institution of a universal 44-hour week;
- (14) Defining the oil, construction, fisheries, and mining sectors as the key sectors of the economy in the short and medium term; and lastly,
- (15) giving increasing importance to the roles of the MPLA and UNTA within industrial enterprises to assist in the drive for greater productivity and work discipline.⁴

However, the resolution prescribed for a National Plan to direct economic and social development. It was announced at the plenum that a national Planning Commission would be created as an organ of the Council of Ministers and charged with supervising the implementation of the National Plan. The Commission was given the task of directing activities in the following sectors : agriculture, cattle-breeding and forestry; fisheries, subsoil

4 Davidson, B., 'Angola since Independence', Race and Class, vol. 19, 1977, pp. 167-68.

resources and mining, extraction and processing industries; energy; construction industry; finance and credit; trade and services; transport and communications; education, culture and sport; health and social affairs; and international economic relations.⁵ However, the plenum decided that economic planning should take place on four levels - national, regional, ministerial and production-unit level. And the National Planning Commission was given the role of co-ordinating planning at all levels and supplying statistics and forecasts of production and growth. But prior to the Plenum in February 1976, the MPLA government had promulgated the Law of State intervention, which contained within it the guidelines for nationalization. The law declared the state to acquire a 70% share in the capital of all banks. The law basically legalised the nationalization of enterprises of strategic importance to the economy and of those abandoned by their former owners. The law, however, did not lead to wholesale nationalization and the MPLA made it clear that it would not expropriate the enterprises of foreign companies which were willing to work with the government.

During the early 1976, there were fundamentally two types of enterprise in Angola⁶ - (i) those abandoned

5 Somerville's Angola, pp 133-34.

6 Davidson, B., "Angola : A Success that changes History", Race and Class, 18(1), Summer, 1976, pp. 23-37.

by their owners but which had been kept in production on the initiative of the workers; (ii) those which were completely idle. A few multinational companies were also operating their factories in Angola. Gulf oil, the major multinational involved in oil production in Cabinda, suspended operations in December 1975 as a result of the escalation of the civil strife. Payments owed to Angola were paid to an escrow account because of the conflicting claims by the MPLA, UNITA and the FNLA to the funds. But once the MPLA had crushed its rivals' conventional military opposition, Gulf resumed payments, and in April 1976 restarted oil production in Cabinda.

It was soon after the MPLA plenum in 1976 that the government nationalised the main bank - the Banco de Angola and confiscated the leading commercial bank - Banco Commercial de Angola. In so doing, the MPLA government assumed control of 85% of the banking operations in the country. And in early February 1978, following the announcement by Premier Lopo do Nascimento, the government promulgated a decree instituting state control over banking. This was followed by the replacement of private insurance companies by the state-run National Insurance and Reinsurance Company in April, 1978.

And in November 1976, the old colonial currency, the escudo, had been replaced by the Kwanza. It was by the mid-1977 that more than 85 per cent of the enterprises in agricultural, industrial, mining and trading sector, which had been abandoned, had been taken under state control. But all non-Portuguese foreign concerns and capital were allowed to stay in Angola. Hence, by the end of 1978, the government owned 51 per cent of the oil industry through the state oil company, Sonangol, 61 per cent of the diamond-mining industry through Diamang, 100 per cent of the sugar-processing sector, 100 per cent of textile-manufacturing, 100 per cent of the bicycle and paper-pulp-and plywood manufacturing, 100 per cent of the production facilities for ironwork for the construction industry, 100 per cent of ship repair and maintenance facilities, 100 per cent of motor-vehicle assembly works, and 85 per cent of the brewing concerns.⁸

Besides the good results it created, nationalization and the restarting of industry created one serious problem for the MPLA. This was put forth by the role of the workers and the trade union body, UNTA in matters of

8 Bhagavan, M.R., Angola : Prospects for Socialist Industrialisation, Uppsala, Sweden Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1980, p. 190.

economic decision-making and the running of enterprises. In the immediate aftermath of the MPLA victory, many workers, with encouragement from neighbourhood commissions and Alves faction in the MPLA, tried to take over control of the day-to-day running of enterprises. This resulted in conflicts between workers and managers and between workers and workers' commission set up by the MPLA. President Neto realised that the assertiveness of some of the workers and the disruptions in production caused by strikes and conflicts with enterprise management were too harmful to the economy. Therefore, at the October 1976 plenum, it was decided to end off the collective management system and to replace it with more conventional forms of management. But the central committee through its decrees laid down that the directors of the enterprise should be picked from party ranks and be approved by the political Bureau. The UNTA workers' commissions were subsequently abolished. And in October 1977, the MPLA wanted to control the working of enterprises and the role of workers in economic decision-making by passing a new regulation. The regulation decreed that workers should discuss and comment on plans for their enterprises and suggest alternatives through the medium of the party or the restructured trade-union centre. This measure has enabled the managers and the government departments to generate greater control

over economic production. And only in a few small or medium-scale enterprises, the workers were permitted to control the day-to-day running of production.

However, it was the first Congress of the MPLA in December 1977 which reviewed economic reconstruction work since independence and set certain new targets. The Central Committee, in its review, stated that the Angolans had an average life expectancy of 35-40 years, more than 90% of the population was illiterate, over 130 road and rail bridges had been destroyed, over 80% of transport vehicles had been taken out of the country by the Portuguese, much of the country's livestock had been abandoned or slaughtered, the iron and diamond mines and oil wells had ceased work, most of the fishing fleet had been destroyed or stolen, the internal trade and distribution system had collapsed and from all account, the country did not have a single expert in foreign trade. This situation was timely responded by the MPLA government within first two years of independence through various measures like nationalization of various sectors in the economy, introduction of new currency, bank nationalisation and certain construction works. However, significant problems still remained and agricultural, mining and industrial production had not made outstanding progress towards the goal of reaching 1973 levels of

production. As per the Committee report, agricultural production had fallen in 1976 and it was vital that attention be given to restoring full food supplies and production of raw materials for industry and export. That apart, much effort had been put into reviving production in the fishing sector with assistance from the Soviet Union. But even then, the total catch remained far behind the 1973 level. The Central Committee stated that the economy 'is serious and is characterised by low production and productivity, a great lack of skilled manpower, a shortage of raw materials and spare parts, the poor management of economic units and the big budget deficit'.⁹

The MPLA Congress of 1977 established the following guidelines:

- (i) Centralized supervision and planning of the economy should be improved by creating and invigorating mechanisms of direction and management,
- (ii) socialist production relations and the socialist sector of the economy should be expanded and the creation of the material base for revolutionary political and economic transformation,

⁹ MPLA First Congress : Central Committee Report and Theses on Education, London, Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Information Centre, 1977, pp. 30-1. (Cited in Soverville's book Angola..... pp. 30-1).

- (iii) the policy of nationalisation and confiscation should be continued,
- (iv) emphasis should be put on agriculture and livestock co-operatives in the countryside,
- (v) attempt should be made to restore production to the 1973 levels,
- (vi) the oil, fisheries and construction sectors should be made priority areas for the short-term take-off of reconstruction,
- (vii) the programme of bridge and road repairs should be continued,
- (viii) effort should be made to improve people's living standards and to redistribute national income, and
- (ix) to pursue the training of capable cadres and to eradicate illiteracy.

Apart from the above guidelines, the Congress laid down specific measures emphasising the need to develop the production of maize, wheat, potatoes, rice, cassava, oil-bearing plants, vegetables, meat for canning and cotton for the textile industry. This called for a diversification of crop production and the creation of agricultural 'belts' around major centres of population. In the distribution sector, the Congress called for maximum exploitation of existing resources. It stated that priority had to be given to improving management and organisation of state-run

enterprises. And for fishery sector, there were good prospects for rapid short-term growth, even though the existing fishing fleet was only 30% of its pre-independence standard. Guidelines for health and education were also laid down.

In 1980, the MPLA held its special Congress. In it, the Congress agreed on the point that some progress had been made through the implementation of the past guidelines and thereby creating grounds for socialist transformation. But the Central Committee report stated continuation of problems in the execution. The most serious problems outlined by the Central Committee in the words as follows:

'The delay in drawing up a single national plan with force of law, ensuring the propositional and balanced development of the economy as a whole and of various sectors, and defining the scale of priorities in carrying out state tasks, was to a great extent the cause of failure to achieve some important objectives, such as establishing the exchange of goods between town and countryside and industry and agriculture, reducing the exodus of the rural population to the towns, ensuring balanced income and expenditure of the state, and enterprises and the population,

introducing the socialist principle of remuneration for work done and for proper correlation between increased productivity and higher wages...'.¹⁰

However, the report said that some progress had been achieved in centralising the direction of economic development. This resulted in the setting up of the Central Planning body. One of the major problems, it stated in the national planning was the failure to implement 'the basic principle of socialist leadership which means unified guidance, execution and supervision'. The report also mentioned, among other achievements, the centralized price control system through the setting-up of a Commission for Fixing and Controlling prices. With regard to prices, the Central Committee noted that there was no direct relationship between wages and the volume of goods in circulation - total wages were far higher than their production equivalent. The most serious problem was the existence of a big parallel market. In order to curb this situation, the government took up some austerity programmes in the early 1980s. These were aimed at bringing wages and production in tune with each other and thereby undercutting the possibility of such a

10 Angola Special Congress : Report of the Central Committee of the MPLA, 1980, p. 65.
(Cited in Szoykowski, B., Marxist Government : A World Survey, vol. 1, London, 1981, p. 121.)

parallel black market. But problems with agriculture and commodity production meant that speculation was still a problem even a decade after independence.

Due to these policies, there was increase in production in many sectors since 1977. Agricultural output increased from 1977 till 1986 with a break of three years from 1980 to 1983. Table - 2 shows that agriculture, industry, and mining - output increased from the year 1977. Significant increases in production were also registered for maize-meal, margarine, dried and semi-cured fish, canned fish, soft drinks, leather shoes, textile and clothing. Diamond production was said to have increased fourfold. Monopoly over foreign trade had been established and that resulted in a sharp increase in foreign trade by 47% between 1977 and 1979.

But this did not prove to be a total success. Agriculture still remained a problem. Although increased areas were cultivated, state farms did not prove a great success. Besides, Soviet-backed state farms on the central plateau around Bie and Huambo turned out to be a failure. Co-operatives were not 100% successful and there was some evidence of peasant opposition to the introduction of co-operatives and state farms. Above all, the destabilisation activities blockaded the execution of some of the policies of the MPLA.

1.1. Reforms in Education and Religion

Apart from the economic and political reforms, the MPLA was also committed to carry out a social revolution, with the avowed purpose of transforming the lives of the vast majority of Angolans, who had undergone massive sufferings, ignorance and poor health under the Portuguese. Thus, two major aims were there before the MPLA -

- (i) building up of a national education system that would provide a uniform standard of basic education; and
 - (ii) creation of an effective health service for Angolans.
- Similar attempts were made in the past. But on independence the government was faced with the task of establishing new and comprehensive services at a time of massive internal dislocation, economic decline and tremendous shortage of skilled personnels.

In the field of education, the MPLA had a great task ahead of it after independence. The post-independence estimate put the level of illiteracy at 90 per cent. There was also severe shortages of teachers and the required facilities. However, it was the Central Committee Plenum of MPLA in 1976 which set the elimination of illiteracy as its immediate goal. And priority was put on the literacy drive in the countryside. This was done with a

view to benefiting the peasant masses who were completely neglected by the colonial masters. The Plenum also set the task of using schools as the strong revolutionary base for the creation of the New Man. However the Plenum laid down the following priorities for education : -

literacy;

primary education;

secondary education; and

intermediary and university education.

The MPLA announced its intention of learning from the experience of the socialist and other friendly countries and of providing free education at all levels.

It was this time that a National Literacy Commission was created under the stewardship of the Minister of Education to keep pace with it. A National Cultural Council and a Higher Council of Physical Education and sports were established to deal with respective areas. In the training of staff, priority was given to primary school teachers. Because primary sector was of vital importance viewing the low level of education of the majority of the population. In 1973, the primary school intake was 5,00,000, one third of whom were Portugal and secondary enrolment was 72,000, four-fifths of whom were again Portugals. But by 1977, the MPLA had increased primary school enrolment to 1,000,000 and secondary

enrolment to 105,000.¹¹ In the first year of the literacy campaign, 102,000 adults learned to read and write.

However, the difficulties in building up of an educational edifice were multiplied by the shortage of qualified teachers. There were, at that point of time, only 25,000 teachers for the million primary school pupils. And only 7 per cent of the primary teachers were considered to have eligibility criteria for teaching. The secondary sector had been similarly affected by the staffing problem - there were only 600 secondary teachers in 1977 and secondary schools were only in the towns.

The theses on Education were discussed at the MPLA Congress in 1977. One of the most important sections of it dealt with the colonial inheritance in the education system and the need to build a system responsive to the needs of the MPLA's ideology and its plans for socialist transformation. The colonial system had established schools which provided backward education from a backward society imposed on a people living in an entirely different set up. This form of education was limited to providing skilled labourers and trying to form an African petit bourgeoisie receptive to capitalist ideology.¹² But the new educational

11 Wolfers, M. and Bergerol, J., Angola in the Front Line, London, Zed Press, 1983, p. 114.

12 MPLA's first Congress Report, 1977, p. 155. (Cited in Manyonda (K.V.), "Socialism as a developing Strategy in a Post Colonial Society : Constraints and Prospects, the Case of Africa", Socialism in the World, vol. 68, 1988, pp. 64-72.

system should be inextricably linked to the physical and mental task of building socialism and therefore, must be at the service of revolutionary change so that it becomes a system responsive to the needs of the People's Republic of Angola and takes into account the development of productive forces.

In order to do something substantial in this regard, the MPLA resolved to institute an eight-year system of free, basic education. It also wanted to initiate vocational schools. The MPLA also wanted to establish an improved adult education system to older generation who were neglected during the colonial period. But the shortage of teachers, schools and after all resources were stumbling blocks before such intentions. Hence, the MPLA decided to exploit out of its connections with the socialist countries, particularly Cuba. In 1976, Cuba offered 500 secondary school places in Cuba for Angolan students and in 1978, a brigade of teachers was sent to Angola. By 1981, 759,000 of the estimated 1.69 million illiterate adults in Angola were enrolled in 37,000 literacy classes and 70,000 literacy teachers had been trained.¹³

However, the 1980 special Congress of the MPLA noted certain advances made in this regard, but pointed out that

13 Africa Contemporary Record, 1981-82 (Annual)
New York and London, p. B590.

problems like shortage of teachers and schools still exist. It also started to make every effort to maximise the contribution to education by the information media. But the problem was still serious in 1985 when the President dos Santos told the MPLA national conference that more effort needed to be given to the theoretical shortcomings and education of party members. He also put emphasis on the need to raise the political consciousness of the masses through the party's propaganda.

However, for the real progress to be made, time and more resources have to be made available and conditions created in which educational services can be provided in all areas of the country. The South African and the UNITA military activities have remitted in the drain of manpower and fund resources. In addition, schools and teachers have frequently been the targets for the UNITA raids. So unless this be stopped, the problem will continue till very long time.

So far as religion was concerned, MPLA's policy was an ambiguous one. It did not campaign thoroughly against religion. However, the movement's strong commitment to Marxism-Leninism meant that religion was regarded as outdated in the society. But the MPLA and its government were prepared to tolerate religious practices provided

that the churches refrained from political activity and restricted themselves to spiritual matters.

A question very often arises as to why did Angola chose Socialism? Angola, like other third world countries, underwent severe exploitation under western capitalism. The exploitation was so severe that capitalism, for them, became synonymous with exploitation. Hence, many of the third world countries opted for socialism. Angola did the same thing. Besides, when Angola was deeply involved in bloody civil wars, it were the socialist countries which helped Angola.

Thus, it is known that Angola's commitment towards socialism is too sincere. The basic hinge of its socialist policies was that it stressed the importance of peasant participation and improving their lot. But the destabilisation activities and cadre shortage were major obstacles in the implementation of its socialist policies. MPLA's sincerity in its socialist commitment is beyond doubt. But it will certainly take time for MPLA to overcome these difficulties. Unless the defence problems and the shortage of essential commodities are overcome, Angola's dependence on western and American capital will be there. This will make a severe mockery of its socialist commitment.

After examining MPLA's socialist policies, in the next chapter, we will discuss Angola's socialist experiment

Nkrumah in Ghana, Modiba Keita in Mali and Sekou Toure in Guinea paved the way. And Congo declared for the Marxist option as early as 1963. But its assurance to the investors to invest in Congo helped the critics to label the regime as "Champagne Marxism". But hopes were again raised with Tanzania following the important Arusha declaration of 1967. This called for self-reliance and greater democratic participation to build towards an eventual socialism.

However, the unifying trait of this first wave of socialism was the peaceful nature of the transition to the adoption of a socialist strategy. Be it the case of Ghana or Tanzania, the leaders were reformist but had not mobilised the people politically for engagement in a socialist effort. This imposed a limitation not only on the commitment of the political leadership, but on the level of mass commitment which a mobilisational programme could otherwise have achieved.

The major deficiencies in such a transition process are:

- (i) In such a case, the rhetoric of socialism hardly gets transformed to practice.
- (ii) There was an emphasis on African Socialism rather than on scientific socialism. The former differed from the latter by negating the relevance and centrality of

under war conditions. This will help us to find out the cause of the continuing and internationalization of civil war in Angola. Continuing war situation inevitably creates several other problems. However, identification of problems will help us to find out the survival strategies for this socialist economy.

Table - 2

G.D.P. BY KIND OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AT CURRENT FACTOR COST

	(in million Kwanza)									
	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Agriculture	44600	52680	59100	36590	37620	44130	47400	53340	60220	64960
Mining & Industries extractives	15790	16980	21280	20430	22540	21370	19560	20110	22630	16090
Industries manufacturers	2620	2910	3350	2170	2310	2660	2900	3490	3770	3720
Electricity, gas and water	480	530	600	330	440	460	480	560	620	690
Construction	1950	2180	2510	1670	1770	1970	2170	2560	2730	2570
Transport-Communication	5260	5900	6800	4340	4610	5320	5900	6860	7670	8600

Source: Africa Statistical Yearbook, 1986, United Nations, p. 23-3

CHAPTER - IV

SOCIALISM UNDER WAR CONDITIONS

The emergence of socialising in Angola, thus, had become a necessary social condition than an economic compulsion as there was a compelling demand to increase the production, to raise the level of per capita income and to overcome the inequality in the society and to end the exploitation of men by men.

1. Nature of the Transition to Socialism in Angola

But an over-all evaluation of socialism in Angola demands a careful and an indepth scrutiny of its nature - i.e. the nature of the transition to socialism in Angola. In sub-saharan Africa, many countries have tried to adopt this transition to socialism, but they have assumed power through four different ways.¹ If we will analyse these routes to power of the socialist countries including Angola, we can well assess the nature of socialism in Angola.

The first of these is a peaceful transition to socialism associated with the 1st wave of independence.* These represent the earliest attempts to confront the pitfalls of neo-colonialism. The governments of Kwame

1 Munslow, B., Africa : Problems in the Transition to Socialism (ed.,) Introduction, pp. 4-8.

* The process of decolonisation in Africa from 1957 to 1968 is known as the 1st wave of independence.

class-conflict. There was also the relative absence of Marxist theory - a meaningful vanguard party and effective mass mobilisation and organisation to encourage widespread participation. Instead, one finds the emergence of single-person rule and a growth of a bureaucratic petty bourgeoisie.

A second major route to power for socialist regimes has been the radical military coup, which occurred in Somalia in 1969, Benin and Madagascar in 1972 and Burkina Faso in 1983. However, this again marked an attempt to confront the pitfalls of neocolonialism. Here also, the process of winning power did not include mass mobilisation and mass participation.

A third route to power for socialist countries was a kind of social revolution. Ethiopia is Africa's only post-independence example of a social revolution but the military caused a distortion of the process. Though there was a consolidation of the anti-feudal dimensions of the revolution, there was also repression of its popular autonomous dimensions.

And the fourth route to power is the Protracted people's war and is associated with the 2nd wave of independence.² Angola comes within this category. The

2 This second wave began in the mid 1970s with the collapse of the Portuguese empire. For a detailed account of the second war of liberation see M. Wolfson and J. Bergerol, Angola in the Front Line (Zed Press, London, 1983). contd... ..

key priority in this model was political mobilisation amongst the people and within the ranks of the army. However, this route created the possibility of forming a cadre party with a degree of experience necessary to chart a path-way towards socialist transition. That apart, it led these movements to turn increasingly to Marxist theory as a guide to understanding imperialism - the nature of class power and the state had shown the indispensability of Marxist analysis for their own experience of struggle.

Hence, from the foregoing analysis, we know that the process of transition to socialism in Angola is very much in tune with Soviet-type socialism rather than that of a typical African type. Yet this ideological orientation did not mean political subservience to either the Soviet Block or China. Instead, it produced an indigenous application of Marxist theory by the leadership of the national liberation struggles to the realities of their own countries.

F.n. 2 continued...

They present conclusive evidence of the collusion between the U.S.A., South Africa, Zaire and France to destroy the MPLA and install their client groups - FNLA and UNITA, in power in Luanola. The intimate collaboration between Portugal and UNITA is unmasked with the help of official Portuguese documents. The deep involvement of the CIA, as well as that of Zaire, South Africa and France, was first brought to the attention of the world by the disclosures of the ex-CIA agent John Stockwell in his book in **Search of enemies: A thnic and radical ideologies of FNLA and UNITA**, as well as their pro-imperialist stand, are discussed in detail by Wolfer and Bergerol

However, whatever be its form and substance, socialism in Angola has not been a total success. This can be accounted for by the subversive activities by various groups which were defeated in the Civil War. After independence, there was a drive towards the internationalisation of the continuing civil war in Angola and Angola was consequently transferred into a hotbed of cold war politics between the two super powers.

1.1. Why and How the Foreign Powers Got Involved in Angola

Angola became independent on November 11, 1975 under Dr. Neto's leadership. Dr. Neto, with Cuban and Soviet Assistance, overcame the pro-western elements led by Mr. Roberto Holden and Mr. Jonas Savimbi. It was Angola's misfortune that independence did not bring it peace and stability and that it immediately became a victim of cold war between the super powers.³ The western and South African efforts to destabilise the country created difficulties for Dr. Neto. South Africa not only trained and armed the guerrillas owing loyalty to Mr. Savimbi but also occasionally carried raids into Angola. The excuse for this continuous intervention has been that the presence

3 Marcum, J., 1979. 'Angola : Perilous Transition to Independence' in G. Carter and P. C'Meara (eds.) South Africa : The Continuing Crisis, London, Macmillan, pp. 7-27. Also see Bender, G.J., "Continuing Crisis in Angola", Current History, 82(482), Mar, 1983, pp. 123-36.

of Cuban troops posed a threat to South Africa as a whole, but the South African incursions and assistance to the anti-government forces made Angola even more dependent on the Cubans.

The question sometimes arises as to why Soviet Russia intervened in Angola. When the popular Movement approached the United States for arms against the colonial rule, Dr. Kissinger, the then Secretary of State, denied and said, "Africa for the Africans".⁴ But the Soviet Union said 'Yes'. Naturally, the side which fought colonialism has an advantage when the war ends successfully. At that moment, the United States engaged in covert activity to plant 'pro-western' movements in Angola. The war has gone on since Angola won its independence in 1975, devastating the country. UNITA, which is led by Jonas Savimbi, has been supported by South Africa and the United States. Cuban troops fought on the government's side. France and Britain also provided covert aid to the Angolan factions that were defeated in the Angolan Civil War. Like the covert aid provided by the Ford administration, French aid was primarily funnelled through President Mobuto of Zaire.⁵

4 Bender, G.J., "U.S. Policy on Angola", New York Times, 23 Oct., 1975. Also see Karachi Dawn, 30 Dec., 1975.

5 Klimov, A., "Angola : Her Friends and foes", Mainstream, 14(19), Jan. 10, 1976, pp. 19-20.

Apart from all the aspects of the Fierce and bloody struggle for power in Angola, another war, an ideological one, was there simultaneously by the two communist giants - the Soviet Union and the China - openly and by proxy. China always suspected Soviet interventions in Angola. It alleged that the Soviet Union, like the Western colonialists, is exploiting Angola's natural resources.

It is worth examining here the degree to which the Chinese involvement in the Angolan Civil War was actually responsible for the unusual and unprecedented decision of the Soviet Union to intervene on the scale and the manner it did in Angola. Of all the writers on Angolan event, it is Colin Legum, who attributes the maximum weight to the Chinese factor in the Soviet Policy calculations. According to Legum,⁶ by 1973 Moscow had few worthwhile connections in sub-saharan Africa other than tiny Somalia and unstable Congo-Brazaville. On the other hand, the Chinese not only had scored some gains in Tanzania and Zaire, with the solitary exception of the African National Congress of South Africa, all the major liberalisation struggles in Africa had greater rapport with the Chinese than with the Russians. Moscow was determined to outdo

6 Legum, Colin, "The S.U., China and the West in Southern Africa", Foreign Affairs, No. 4, July, 1976, pp. 745-62.

Peking and thus decided by March 1975 - six month before the first US arms shipment to the FNLA and before the South-African armed around intervention in October - to step up armed assistance to the MPLA.

Zaire was the first to give open support to the FNLA. This band was headquartered in the Zairean capital of Kinshasa and its leader, Holden Roberto was the brother-in-law of President Mobutu. The connection between Zaire and Angola started in the days of Patrice Lumumba and after his assassination, it degenerated into collision between Angola and Zaire. Zaire was the conduit for American and Chinese assistance to FNLA.⁷ Washington stepped up its arms supplies to Zaire manifold with the clear purpose of aiding FNLA. The Chinese also, intent on stemming the advance of Soviet influence in Southern Africa, deputed military instructors to the forest camps of Holden Roberto's troops inside Zaire and provided some equipments and cash as well .

As it has been discussed earlier, if Soviet Russia's wilfull intervention into independent Angola's internal affairs was logical, what interested America to indulge itself in subversive activities. The reason being one

7 Kamath, M.V., "American Role in Angola : Rhetoric and Reality", Times of India (New Delhi), 31 Dec., 1975.

related to ideology and national interest. The post-World War-II period witnessed a world divided into two power blocks - i.e. - two distinct ideological camps, one headed by the Soviet Union and the other by the United States. The 'power' was determined in terms of one's spheres of influence. Therefore, when the MPLA government was backed by Soviet and Cuban forces, America feared that with this the entire balance of power in Africa might be tilted in favour of Soviet Union. With this in mind, it wanted to make its presence conspicuous in Angola. It wanted to form a pro-west regime there in Angola. Gradually, many western partners like France and Britain supported the United States. And what was more important was that the minority white-ruled South Africa was hell-bent on destabilising the Marxist regime in Angola. It wanted to install a pro-west regime there because it thought that a Marxist regime in Angola might have its repercussions in Namibia and the Republic of South Africa itself.

Hence Angola saw the near death of the great power detente. Alarmed over the Cuban armed intervention in Angola, Dr. Kissinger said in 1975, "it is difficult to reconcile this intervention with the principles of co-existence signed in 1972".⁸ But for the other ally

8 Dasgupta, P., Indian Express (New Delhi), 5 Dec., 1975.

(Soviet Russia), Cuba was perfectly compatible with the 1972 declaration of the great power detente. So, with Angola, the phase of the neo-cold war started. This warrants an indepth analysis of Angola's relations with Southern African states and the west, Soviet Russia and the Socialist blocks and the Republic of China.

1.2. Relations with the Socialist Countries

Angola's MPLA government was committed to Marxism-Leninism. Because of its socialist policies, MPLA wanted to augment its relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Moreover, it was Soviet Union which was one of the movement's consistent supporter during its liberation struggle and had been, along with Cuba, instrumental in the MPLA's victory during the Civil War. This was the reason why in May 1976, the Angolan Premier, Lopo do Nascimento, visited Moscow for talks with the Soviet leadership on political, economic and military co-operation. Among the agreements signed during Nascimento's stay in the Soviet Union was on Soviet Economic aid, which provided for financial assistance and help filling the vacuum left by the Portuguese either by training the Angolans or by sending its own technicians.⁹

9 Wariavwala, (Bharat)., "Superpowers and the Angolan Conflict", IDSA Journal, 9(4), Apr-June, 1977, pp. 404-19. Also see "U.S. Concern at Soviet Role in Angola", Statesman (New Delhi), 17 Dec. 1975.

And in October 1976, President Neto had his first post-independence trip to Moscow and signed a Treaty of Friendship and co-operation and an agreement on inter-party co-operation between the MPLA and the CPSU. The treaty encapsulated a firm Soviet commitment to support the MPLA and a reciprocal commitment by the Angolans to establish close and co-operative ties with the Soviet Union. However, the inter-party agreement did not indicate a Soviet recognition of MPLA as a fully Marxist-Leninist party, but only a party of 'socialist orientation'.¹⁰ Neto's talks with the Soviet leadership also led to the signing of further agreements on economic and military co-operation. The most striking feature of Neto's visit was that he maintained a position of total independence during the visit. This was evident when he did not defer to his hosts while speaking on Soviet television and instead, praised Cuban aid more than Soviet Assistance.¹¹

After all, when the MPLA held its First Congress in December 1977, where Angola's foreign policy guidelines were adopted, the Soviet Union sent a high-ranking

10 This term has been used by Soviet leaders and commentators to describe those states in the Third World, such as Mozambique, Ethiopia, and Angola, that have embarked on the formation of Marxist-Leninist parties and pledged themselves to build socialist systems.

11 Pravda, 6th December 1977. Cited in International Herald Tribune, 20th January 1977 by Anthony Lewis.

politburo member, Andrey Kirilenko to represent it. The Congress pledged the MPLA's adherence to Marxism-Leninism and its transformation into a vanguard party. In his speech to the Congress, Kirilenko said that the country had embarked on the path to "people's democracy and socialism".¹² But before his death in Moscow on 10th September 1979, Neto tried his best to balance the excellent ties with the Soviet Union and the other socialist states - particularly Cuba, which had provided its army to defend the country and thousands of civilian doctors and teachers helping the country - by increasing economic ties with the west. This dualism in its foreign policy was continued by the post-Neto leadership.

Besides this, political, economic and military ties with Cuba and a number of Eastern European states were strengthened by the MPLA under both Neto and dos Santos. Relations were exceptionally close between Angola and Cuba. There were widespread support from the socialist countries to Angola to withstand South African raids and Pretoria's support for the UNITA guerrillas. The support also took the form of diplomatic activity at the United Nations. Apart from publicly condemning the attack and

12 Aba Lkin, 'Creative Approach to Developing the political economy of socialism', Problems of Peace and Socialism, vol. 14, no. 12, Dec. 1986, pp. 80-88.

supporting moves at the UN to penalize South Africa, the Soviet Union dispatched a number of warships to conduct military exercises off the Angolan coast.

South Africa had a major incursion in Angola in 1983. After that, the Soviet Union arranged a meeting in Moscow with Angolan and Cuban representatives to discuss joint action to defend Angola. This resulted in an agreement to provide aid to the People's republic of Angola in the matter of strengthening its defence capacity, independence and territorial integrity'.¹³

However, the talks held in the early and mid-1980s between Angola, the United States and South Africa on possible formulas for Namibian independence were a point of divergence in Soviet-Angolan relations. Soviet comments on South Africa and on the Western Contact Group on Namibia* were strongly critical of the western attitude over southern Africa and clearly opposed to talks with South Africa and any mediatory attempts by the United States. Despite the difference of opinion over Namibia, Angola continued to develop close relations with the Soviet Union

13 Somerville, K., 'Angola : Soviet Client State or State of Socialist Orientation?' Millenium Journal of International Studies, 1984, vol. 13, no. 3, Winter, p. 284.

* The Western Contact Group on Namibia consisted of United States, Britain, France, West Germany and Canada.

and socialist states. Moreover, the December 1985 Congress of the MPLA-PT was attended by a high ranking Soviet delegation led by Politburo member Geydar Aliyev. Two months later, President dos Santos himself led the Angolan delegation to the CPSU Congress in Moscow, where he held talks with General Secretary Gorbachev. Thus, Angola has kept a steady and healthy relationship with Soviet Russia right from the beginning. This can be seen in the light of similar ideologies both were pursuing. And during his stay at Moscow during the Congress, Dos Santos held talks with a number of leaders of East European countries. He met Fidel Castro, the Cuban leader, and reaffirmed the closeness of their ties and their determination not to allow South Africa and the United States to make the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola a precondition for Namibian independence. In 1984, following meetings with the Cuban leadership, President dos Santos had announced in a letter to the Secretary General of the UN, that Angola and Cuba were willing to carry out a phased withdrawal of Cuban troops once South Africa had removed all of its troops from Angola and UN Security Council Resolution 435 on Namibian independence was implemented. The announcement was made to antagonise the position adopted by the United States and South Africa that Cuba had to withdraw all of its troops prior to implementation of Resolution 435.

South Africa was perturbed over the fact that on independence for Namibia might put an end to the South-Africa-Lacked UNITA activities from the southern end of the country. Apart from this, it feared that the spark of the revolution and its success might have its repercussions over its black majority. Hence, it was against Namibia's independence right from the beginning.

However, the overall attitude of the MPLA towards the Soviet Union and other socialist states was encapsulated in a commentary put out in February 1982 by the Angolan news agency, ANGOP, dealing with the country's foreign policy. After reaffirming the Angolan commitment to non-alignment, the commentary said that foreign policy guidelines indicated -

... the objective need to strengthen, in particular, the preferential relations with the parties and states of the socialist community and international workers' movement... The first five years of experience of the friendship and cooperation Treaty signed in Moscow... attest to the major revolutionary achievements of these preferential relations with our natural allies'.¹⁴

14 Somerville, K., 'Angola : Soviet Client State.... ' pp. 275-80.

1.3. Relations with South African States and the West

The geo-political setting of Angola is such that any aspect of its internal and external policies has a major influence on the whole southern African region. The region is dominated militarily and economically by South Africa and Angola has taken a major role in opposing the regional and domestic policies of the apartheid-ruled state both through direct support for SWAPO and the ANC and the activities of the 9-nation South African Development co-ordination Conference.

Perhaps this support for SWAPO and the ANC, combined with the socialist policies and the Cuban presence has brought Angola into perpetual conflict with South Africa and at times with the United States. South Africa has been attacking Angola with a view to bringing the government in Angola under pressure to end its support for the Southern African liberation movements. The internal contradictions in South Africa have led it into a policy of aggression and destabilization in Southern Africa aimed at ending support for SWAPO and the ANC, weakening the independent African states and thereby buying time for the white minority in South Africa.¹⁵

15 Beri, H.M.C., 'Pretoria's new move towards Angola' Strategic Analysis, 7(12), Mar. 1984, pp. 1035-40. South Africa's intervention has also been discussed by Robin Hallet, "South African Intervention in Angola", African Affairs, vol. 77, no. 308, 1978, pp. 26-57.

However, a major concern of Angolan regional policies and policies towards the west was an attempt to put pressure on South Africa to end its aggression against the country. Apart from this, the SADC played a key-role in lessening the effects of South African dominance. SADC was formed in the early 1980s. Its objectives was to end economic dependence of the independent states on South Africa in terms of trade and transport.

Moreover, Angolan policy towards western states, with the exception of the United States, has been to increase trading and economic ties. Angola has also to use cordial relations with western European countries, notably France, as a means of gaining diplomatic support in the conflict with South Africa. Of course, relations with the former colonial power, Portugal, have been variable. At times the MPLA government has been furious over the fact that successive governments in Lisbon have allowed UNITA for political and propaganda activities in the former colonial capital.

But its relations with the United States have never been more than moderate since independence. During the Civil war, the United States actively supported the FNLA and UNITA and after independence referred to the MPLA government as a puppet of the Soviet Union and Cuba.

Both Carter and Reagan made the withdrawal of Cubans the major condition for recognition and an improvement in relations. The Carter administration took a liberal line in relations than its successor, but still failed to open official relations. But the Reagan administration has been generally hostile towards the MPLA and has been firm in its demand that the Cubans withdraw from Angola prior to the independence of Namibia and as a precondition for the opening of diplomatic relations. In his speech to the MPLA Congress in December 1985, President dos Santos was strongly critical of American support for UNITA and South Africa and mentioned that the United States administration had become 'the faithful ally of the racist Pretoria regime'.¹⁶ He also alleged that United States supported South Africa's campaign of destabilization against Angola.

However, in spite of this intransigent relations with the United States, trade between the two flourished a lot.¹⁷ Angola also did not deviate from its policy of either supporting ANC or SWAPO or of keeping its close ties with Soviet Union and Cuba.

16 Wariavwall, B., 'Super powers.....', IDSA Journal, pp..176-77.

17 Mufron, S., 'Marxist Angola Keeps Capitalist Connections', Bangladesh Times (Dacca), 21 Nov., 1981.

1.4. Relations with China

During the liberation struggle, China supported the MPLA. But by the time of the Portuguese revolution, it was concentrating all of its aid on the FNLA and UNIFA. That China had a very close tie with President Mobutu might be a reason for Chinese support for FNLA. But after the MPLA's victory, China became very much critical of Soviet and Cuban intervention. It labelled Angola to be a Soviet puppet. However, in the early 1980s, after the Angolan-Zairean rapprochement, China began to soften its line towards Angola and in January 1983, the two states established diplomatic relations and started talks on initiating trade. In February 1983, the Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang said that China supported Angola's refusal to link the independence of Namibia to the withdrawal of Cuban troops - a complete reversal of China's position during the civil war.

A question sometimes arises as to what extent Angola was benefitted out of its ties with foreign powers. Certainly, it was because of the assistance of Soviet Union and Cuba that Angola could be able to withstand the challenge of civil war and also the devastation in the economy. This help also enabled Angola to move forward with its socialist transformation.

Now the question is : Is the case in Angola an uncommon one? The answer comes in the negative. Because like Angola, things of similar nature happened in other socialist states in Africa - like Ethiopia and Mozambique.¹⁸ In Ethiopia, after the social revolution, the new government had to fight not only against secessionism but also to fight against forces from abroad. Added to it is the case Mozambique. It got independence on 25th of June 1975. And Fretimo's leader Mr. Samora Machel became the President. But soon after independence, it had to face de-stabilisation activities put forth by South Africa. So, on this account, Angola's case can never be unique. However, Angola was unique in that almost from the outset and throughout the entire period of struggle for independence, no one nationalist group was able to achieve an unchallengeable position as the sole protagonist confronting the Portuguese.

Thus, the destabilisation activities have held up the process of national reconstruction and social development. This was accompanied by the tremendous void of skilled personnel. However, Angola responded to it either by encouraging investment of foreign capital or to create rapidly indigenous skilled cadre by sending them abroad

¹⁸ Young, T., "Politics of Development in Angola and Mozambique", Africa Affairs, 87(247), Apr. 1988, pp. 165-84.

for higher education and also to retain them within the country.

1.5. Survival Strategies

The question now is if there are dangers for socialist states, what then are the survival strategies. Bhagavan has pointed out three survival strategies for Angola *¹⁹

- (i) Radical change in the relations of production;
- (ii) diversification of dependence relations; and
- (iii) halting skills-drain.

To some extent or other, these have happened in Angola. Let us consider these three in a bit detail.

1.5.a Changes in the relations of Production

In February 1976, the law of state intervention was enacted in Angola. Again in 1979, it passed a new mining law whereby it stated that the minerals in Angola belong only to the Angolan people. Consequently, the mining of minerals can be undertaken only by state-owned companies or by joint-ventures between state and foreign firms. Moreover, the law of state intervention has been

19 Bhagavan, "Angola : Survival Strategies for a Socialist State", Economic and Political Weekly, 23(32), Aug. 6, 1988, pp. 1630-36.

applied to achieve two objectives:-

1. to vest the overall guidance and general control of the monetised and organised modern sectors of the economy in the hands of the state,
2. to get production back to 1973 levels.

However, owing to this rule, more than 85% of the enterprises were brought under state control by the mid-1977. But as we have pointed out earlier, non-Portuguese foreign capital was not touched by these nationalisation measures. President Neto, in 1978, announced a major change in the policy by stating that private ownership of small enterprises would be allowed.

1.5b. Diversification of Dependence Relations

Before independence, the settler capitalists, mostly Portuguese, monopolised small and middle enterprises in the manufacturing sector. But after independence, these were brought under state control. But so far as the large enterprises were concerned, a majority of their shares were held by about half-a-dozen big Portuguese conglomerates and other foreign companies. Although this contradicted its very policy of socialism, still then Angola justified it on the following grounds -

1. to accelerate the pace of industrialisation,
 2. rapid promotion of exports of manufactured goods,
- and

3. the acquisition of the kind of modern technology which the advanced capitalist countries possess.

However, in July 1979, the Angolan state promulgated a law on foreign investment in Angola, which put the general terms and conditions on such investment. Very attractive terms were offered to the foreign investors like -

- (1) it was stated clearly that there would not be nationalisation for the next ten to fifteen years. And if any such things would be done, then handsome compensation would be paid, including the interest in the currency in which the original investment was made;
- (2) transfer of profit abroad upto 25% of the capital invested;
- (3) access to internal (Angolan) credit;
- (4) exemption for, or reduction in, customs duties on imports of capital goods, accessories and intermediate goods;
- (5) exemption in taxes during the 1st few years of production, and
- (6) reduction in customs duties on the export of manufactured goods.

Evidently, oil exploration and production companies from the west, particularly the United States, have reacted favourably to the positive climate created by

the Angolans for foreign investment. There are indications that the EEC as a whole, and some individual countries within western Europe are actively looking into the possibility of investing more than they have already done in the manufacturing, construction, transport and communication sectors.

1.5.c Halting of Skills-drain

President Santos paid abundant emphasis on improving the living and working conditions of the middle and high level Angolan cadres in the higher echelons of the socio-political set up of the country. But the elite in Angola was gradually becoming disgruntled. They even left the state jobs either to take up jobs in foreign private companies operating in Angola or migrating abroad. It is estimated that in recent years between 5000 and 10,000 skilled Angolans have left the country either for Portugal or Brazil. Their dissatisfaction erupted from perennial shortages in essential foodstuffs and consumer goods, lack of adequate and decent accommodation and private transport. However, the president openly admitted that the party had made a mistake by appointing party political cadres to top positions with no suitable qualifications. This led to both-wrong decisions in the state organs and enterprises, and involved the hostility and alienation

of honest and committed technical cadres. Moreover, he promised to correct this error and appoint qualified technical cadres to managerial positions.

Thus, the continuing war situations acted as a major obstacle in the MPLA's effort towards socialist transformation. The internationalisation of civil war was an impact either of ideology or of national interest on the part of Angola and that of the other foreign powers. If South Africa has been attacking Angola, it is doing so with a view to bringing the government in Angola under pressure to end its support for the South-African liberation movements. That apart, the internal contradictions in South Africa have compelled it to indulge in destabilisation with the purpose of stopping Angola's support for the SWAPO and the ANC. Angola wants to establish good relations with the west in order to put pressure on South Africa to end its destabilization bids. Although it is unlikely on the part of Socialist Angola to establish relations with and depend on western capitalist countries, still then it is unavoidable.

It is expected from many quarters that an independence declaration of Namibia might put an end to UNITA insurgency from the southern end of Angola. But to be more realistic, South Africa will continue the insurgency just to assert

the existence of the white minority regime in South Africa. Because South Africa knows that with an independence to SWAPO, the ANC will inspired to follow the foot-steps. So long as there remains a minority white regime in South Africa, it will hardly stop the insurgency activities.

Of course, the release of Nelson Mandela shows some softness in the attitude of Mr. De Klark's regime. But it has yet done anything substantial on power sharing. Unless there be total transfer of power into the hands of the Blacks in South Africa, hardly any change in South Africa's policy would occur.

And as long as this war situations will prevail, Angola has to divert much of its resources to fight UNITA insurgency activities. Hence, it fails to look after developmental works - i.e. the reconstruction of the various sectors of the economy, which is considered to be the first step towards socialist transition.

CHAPTER - V

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing account of post-independence developments in Angola, it can be said that the MPLA leadership has implemented policies intended to reconstitute the broad-based national liberation movement into a disciplined and united vanguard party guided by Marxism-Leninism, to develop state control of the most vital areas of the economy; and where possible, to set up state farms and agricultural co-operatives. It also launched mass health and educational campaign and with the avowed purpose of stamping out illiteracy and providing educated cadres for the party, state and economic bodies. The commitment to Marxism-Leninism of the MPLA leadership under both Agostinho Neto and President Eduardo dos Santos is undeniable and it is evident that it intends to continue implementing policies, where the political, economic and military circumstances allow, aimed at creating the political, social and economic bases from which to embark on the formation of a new society.

But a number of massive obstacles remain in the path of the MPLA and its socialist policies. So far, relatively little progress has been made in making socialist aims reality as a result of devastation caused by the liberation and civil wars, the continuing military actions and sabotage by UNITA and its South Africa backers, and the

crippling shortage of educated and politically conscious cadres to fill both party and state positions. And until at least the first two of these obstacles are removed, progress in reconstruction and towards socialist transformation is likely to be painfully slow.

If the living conditions of the people in the pre-independent Angola was grim, that of the post-independent one was dismal, with no Angolans in any way, improved their lot. Being colonised by a poor country like Portugal, Angola suffered a double dose of underdevelopment. And at independence, the fleeing Portuguese took away with them all the consumer durables and willfully destroyed all what they could not take. It so happened that in most of the sectors in the economy except oil sector, production fell dramatically. This left the country in a dim distance between 'high expectations' of the liberated people and the meagre resources at its disposal.

The MPLA government tried its best to meet such expectations of the people through its socialist policies. This was the reason why the MPLA went for nationalisation, state control of most vital areas of the economy and to set up state and agricultural co-operatives. The core of the MPLA's socialist policies, as we have discussed in Chapter III, was the leading role of the working class

and the workers-peasant alliance. While the party stressed the importance of peasant participation and the need to work to improve living standards in rural areas, the party had as its political base the urban slum-dwellers workers and intelligentsia, but not peasants. This was the initial contradiction in MPLA's socialist commitment. But later on, careful steps were taken to avoid this through rectification campaigns inside the party itself. However, MPLA's socialist commitment has always been sincere. But because of the shortage of the educated and skilled cadres in the party, state and economic bodies, it became very difficult for the MPLA to implement its policies at all levels.

Moreover, Angola was busy in building socialism at a time when civil war in Angola took an international shape and Angola became a hot bed of cold war politics. 'Why' and 'How' foreign powers became enmeshed in such a struggle has been discussed in Chapter IV. It was either because of ideology, national interest or geo-politik, that alien powers became interested and engulfed in such an internecine civil war.

South Africa has been assisting UNITA activists to continue insurgency activities. In so doing, it wants to pressurise Angola not to support the liberation movements in Southern Africa. And because of the insurgency activities

MPLA is unable to properly undertake construction works. Communication infrastructure which was destroyed during the liberation cannot be restructured if this war will continue. But the question is : How can MPLA stop this war? It has two alternative -

- (1) to persuade South Africa through constructive negotiations, or
- (2) to pressurise South Africa through U.S.A. through the weapon of 'oil diplomacy'.

Moreover, it was hoped from many quarters that an independence declaration of Namibia will be a stepping stone towards ending South Africa's undeclared war. That SWAPO was getting consistent support from the MPLA signifies a victory of MPLA over South Africa. Of course, it is certain that Namibia's independence will put an end to UNITA insurgency from the southern end of Angola. South Africa might start insurgency from within Angola. As long as there will be a white minority government in South Africa, it will be in the interest of the minority government to continue its undeclared war in order to pressurise Angola not to provide support for the ANC.

However, the recent changes have provided food for further speculation. No doubt, the release of Nelson Mandela signifies some softness in South African government's attitude towards the ANC. But the DeKlark's regime

is silent on the issue of 'transfer of power'. But as long as there will be a white minority regime, the insurgency activities will continue in some form or the other.

The ending of South African and UNITA destabilization is, thus, a precondition for real economic construction and the establishment of an economy capable of supporting the MPLA's plans for socialization of industrial and agricultural production. Until the 1973 levels of production have been reached, something that requires the drastic cutting of military expenditure, it will be impossible for the MPLA to go ahead with plans to expand production in agricultural, fisheries and industrial sectors and increase production of consumer and other goods necessary to improve living standards.

The cadre shortage, something which has been a serious hindrance to the attempts made so far to introduce party control over government activities and to mobilize the population and educate it politically, is a major problem that again cannot be tackled by the MPLA while it is preoccupied with fighting UNITA. Therefore, at present more effort has to be put into the political training of reliable officers and commissars for FAPLA than into politicizing Angolans at the urban and grass-root level because of the overriding need to ensure basic security and to defeat the government's internal and external opponents.

However, the military conflict in Angola has made it difficult for observers of developments there to gauge the real level of support for MPLA policies - meaning thereby -

- (i) the attitude of the mass of peasantry, which constitutes the bulk of the population, towards co-operativisation,* and
- (ii) the likelihood of the MPLA being able to win over the peasants politically.

These are the major question marks hanging over the future of socialist transformation in Angola. But the questions cannot be answered because of the state of war in much of Angola and the embryonic nature of the measures taken so far to effect a transformation of society.

* Co-operativisation is a necessity for the socialisation of the rural economy.

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