

## Armed Clashes Continue in Angola

By Ernest Harsch

The continuing armed clashes between two of the Angolan nationalist organizations, the Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (FNLA—Angolan National Liberation Front) and the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA—People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola), are verging toward civil war. The military junta in Lisbon is considering sending in more troops in hope of "pacifying" Portugal's last—and wealthiest—African colony.

At a news conference in Rome July 19, Portuguese Foreign Minister Maj. Ernesto Melo Antunes threatened to take military action against the FNLA. The July 21 issue of the Lisbon daily *O Século* said: "Minister Melo Antunes asserted that in order to prevent a massacre of the civilian population, the Portuguese government has decided to block the military reconquest of Luanda by the Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola." The FNLA's headquarters in Luanda were destroyed and most of its troops pushed out of the city by the MPLA the week before.

The July 22 Lisbon *Diário de Notícias*, in a dispatch from Luanda, said that "a Portuguese military spokesman declared in this city yesterday that troops belonging to one of the African nationalist movements involved in the fighting in the Angolan capital had begun to infiltrate along the coast yesterday in the direction of Luanda.

"However, he added that Portuguese forces would intervene to intercept these troops, belonging to the Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (F.N.L.A.), and prevent them from entering the city."

Whether the Movimento das Forças Armadas (MFA—Armed Forces Movement) will actually carry out its threat remains to be seen. *New York Times* correspondent Charles Mohr reported in a July 26 dispatch from Luanda that the decision to halt an FNLA advance had been rescinded "to avert a bloodbath."

However, *Washington Post* reporter Miguel Acoca said in a dispatch filed from Lisbon the same day that the newly formed Portuguese military triumvirate had ordered its army in Angola to fight the FNLA. He reported that the decision had been discussed by the MFA assembly July 25. He quoted military sources in Lisbon as saying that Portuguese troops now in Angola would fight the FNLA "because their morale is good and we just can't let the Front violate cease-fire agreements and



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take advantage of our desire to free the colony."

The FNLA has vowed to regain its positions in the capital, stating that "the battle for Luanda is not over." Luanda Radio reported a statement of the Political Bureau of the FNLA affirming: "If Portugal continues to obstruct the FNLA's advance, the FNLA will respond with force."

On July 20, the day after Major Antunes made his declaration, the FNLA announced that "the Lisbon government has declared war on the FNLA." The FNLA called for "a general offensive against the Portuguese neocolonialists and the agents of social-imperialism." The latter term is apparently a reference to the MPLA, which gets political and material support from the Soviet Union and East European governments. The FNLA, which gets some aid from Peking, occasionally uses Maoist terminology.

N'gola Kabangu, the FNLA minister of the interior and an acting co-premier in the coalition regime, repeated the FNLA appeal when he called on the Exército de Libertação Nacional de Angola (ENLA, the FNLA military wing) and the Brigades da Juventude Revolucionária (BJR—Revolutionary Youth Brigades) to mobilize against "Portuguese neocolonialism."

Holden Roberto, the principal leader of the FNLA, said in a July 25 radio broadcast

that he was declaring war on the MPLA "as an organ of Soviet imperialism."

Speaking in Kinshasa, the capital of neighboring Zaïre, July 15, FNLA leader Johnny Eduardo invited the third Angolan nationalist group, the União Nacional para Independência Total de Angola (UNITA—National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), to join forces with the FNLA. So far, the UNITA, which reportedly is not as well armed as the two other groups, has attempted to stay out of the factional warfare. In fact, the UNITA began to evacuate 5,000 of its troops from Luanda to southern Angola July 20.

Despite the many cease-fire agreements reached by the MPLA and FNLA, the fratricidal war continues. Fighting has been reported in the cities of Henrique de Carvalho, Vila Luso, Dalatando, Dondo, Lucala, and Malange.

Although most of the FNLA forces have been pushed out of Luanda for the time being, the FNLA still has troops in the Cazenga slum area and in the São Pedro da Barra fort overlooking Luanda harbor. Moreover, the FNLA controls the industrial area north of Luanda, from which the capital gets its electricity and water. Portuguese officials claim that Luanda would be vulnerable to an FNLA offensive. The FNLA reportedly captured Caxito, just thirty-five miles northeast of Luanda, July 24.

The Portuguese high commissioner in Angola, Gen. Silva Cardoso, announced July 21 that a Portuguese air force plane had been shot at and one crew member killed. Although the announcement did not say where the incident took place or who fired the shots, Cardoso declared that the air force would retaliate if attacked.

A correspondent of the Stalinist-controlled *Diário de Lisboa*, which supports the MPLA, claimed that the FNLA had fired on the plane. The same reporter said that FNLA troops had opened fire on a Portuguese escort ship on the Dande River north of Luanda.

In its July 20 issue *Pravda*, the newspaper of the Soviet Communist party, added a new twist to such reports, stating that it was "notable that the armed detachments of the FNLA are trained by Chinese instructors sent by Peking. From China come also the supplies of arms, with which Angola's patriots are killed."

In the July 15 issue of the Stalinist-controlled Lisbon daily *O Século*, columnist U. Tavares Rodrigues said: "It is known—and we were frozen with horror—that in the FNLA bases now occupied by MPLA troops, there were found refrigerators containing hearts, livers, and other human remains, as well as bottles full of blood and ditches full of mutilated corpses. This means there are cannibals among the ranks of the FNLA."