

Late last year the second ordinary congress of the MPLA workers party met in Luanda

"WE DON'T WANT our elders just to stay in their offices in Luanda. We want them to get out into the provinces where the people produce," said a message read by an Angolan children's organisation at an MPLA congress late last year.

The Agostinho Neto Pioneers read its message at the second ordinary congress of the MPLA-Workers' Party, held in Luanda in December.

The message reflected the climate of criticism and debate surrounding the congress, which had been canvassed countrywide.

"We held the real congress throughout 1985," said one delegate.

"We only came here to ratify the decisions."

Like other congresses, this one also took place in the midst of war.

But this has been a good training ground for those cadres who have had to struggle to maintain and defend the country's territorial independence, while at the same time providing basic social services and infrastructures in these war zones.

# The war is not going to stop MPLA's progress

This accounts for the respect given to the delegates from the southern regions at the congress.

Over the years the Angolan army has learnt to deal with this situation of indefinite war, and has responded by modernising.

The young army commanders, trained in struggles of 1975 against Unita, against the MPLA's second rival movement, the FNLA, and against the South African invaders, came close to capturing the Unita headquarters at Jamba, in the far south-east near the border with Namibia.

They were only prevented from doing so by the massive South African intervention at Mavinga in September. Despite heavy losses, the Angolan army showed its growing strength and increasing ability to stand up to South Africa's military might.

Thus Angola need not be forced to capitulate to Unita, but can continue to defend itself successfully while at the same time conducting diplomatic initiatives.

The young army leaders made a substantial contribution to the con-

gress debate, especially the decision not to negotiate with Unita.

Because of the important part the army plays in maintaining stability in Angola's everyday life the new Central Committee contains 33 members who are drawn from the army.

The Congress Hall also reverberated to declarations of solidarity most notably from the MPLA's comrades in Mozambique and the Congo, who sent delegations headed by Presidents Samora Machel and Dennis Sassou-Nguessou.

President Machel stressed the close historic ties between MPLA and Frelimo. The two revolutions ran on parallel paths, and shared the common denominator of South African-sponsored destabilisation.

Angolan president Jose' Eduardo dos Santos said imperialism in Southern Africa was attempting to reverse Mozambique and Angola's chosen paths of socialist development.

The Soviet Union and Cuba also sent top-level delegations to the congress to show their continued

support for the Angolan revolution.

The Congress examined problems within the party. It looked at the failure to circulate information within and between party structures, and at the neglect of the rural areas, where the majority of the population still live.

This problem was reflected in the class breakdown of the congress delegates. There were 682 delegates, amongst whom: 1,7 percent were peasants; 24,9 percent industrial workers; and 49,9 percent white-collar workers. The congress stressed the need to establish peasants' associations, and to give assistance to the peasant farming sector.

When discussing the economy delegates attacked those who wanted to 're-establish capitalist relations of production'.

Many technicians complained contracts of work were given to foreign countries when there was no shortage of Angolan technicians with similar qualifications.

The report of the outgoing central committee called for a reduction in the amount of foreigners employed.

The congress also stressed the need for the Angolan economy to break free from its dependence on oil exports. About 90 percent of its export income comes from oil. A call was made to rebuild the coffee, timber and diamond industries.

But the situation cannot change overnight, and for the time being Angolan oil must provide the necessary money for Angola to continue defending itself and to buy the goods it cannot produce itself.

The most emotional moments of the Congress came with the election of the new Central Committee consisting of 90 people. The newly-elected members include young cadres who distinguished themselves in military and economic tasks in the country's most difficult provinces.

The new Party leadership forms a cohesive and disciplined group around the figure of President Jose Eduardo dos Santos. It is this core of people who are now at the helm of the MPLA.

"We held the real congress throughout 1985," said one delegate. "We only came here to ratify the decisions."

Like other congresses this one also took place in the midst of war. It meant that the defence of Angola's independence was one of the most important themes.

Since independence Angola has been under attack and for most of this time substantial tracts of Southern Angola have been under Unita control.

## Unita are the losers in a 20 year war



'Judas' Savimbi, leader of the rebel Angolan movement UNITA.

THE FIRST contact between Jonas Savimbi and the US government was in 1961, while Savimbi was studying in Europe.

After hearing an American spokesperson speaking about US support for self-determination for all peoples of the world, Savimbi arrived at the US Embassy in Bern, Switzerland, and introduced himself as the future president of Angola.

Clearly, the US is now interested in taking Savimbi up on his offer.

Savimbi's politics have swung in many directions since then. It seems Savimbi is a politician whose interest is power, and is not choosy about who or what helps him.

Initially he worked with the Angolan independence movement, FNLA, which the US was backing as an alternative to the Soviet-supported Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA).

But tensions within the FNLA leadership led to a split, and in

1966, Unita the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola was formed, under Savimbi's leadership.

After two decades of nationalist rebellion and guerrilla warfare, Angola won its independence from Portugal in 1975. The Marxist Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, MPLA soon proved it had majority support, and in 1976 established the People's Republic of Angola.

But this did not happen without determined US and South African moves to put Unita in power.

Through America's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), massive funding was being pumped into Unita. With US backing, SA invaded southern Angola in early-1976 in the hopes of leading Unita to victory. This failed, and when the CIA's involvement was exposed, the US government passed the Clarke Amendment law which banned further aid to the rebels.

Shortly after this SA raid, Cuban forces were brought in to help defend Angola against further raids and destabilisation by Unita and the SADF.

A decade later, the Cuban forces are still there. Ironically, one of their tasks is to protect American oil installations in the northern provinces from Unita attack.

American firms drill over 80 percent of Angola's oil, making it Angola's largest training partner. But, Savimbi has vowed to destroy the most important American oil installation a Gulf Chevron plant in

Cabinda. Support for Savimbi has placed Washington in an awkward position of providing military assistance to an organisation planning to sabotage US property.

Savimbi's explanation that "we don't want to kill Americans, but we have to do something to stop those billions going into the coffers of the Russians and Cubans" disqualifies him as a terrorist in the eyes of the Reagan administration.

Unita's aims are clear: to grind the Angolan economy to a halt; to prevent development; and to destroy agriculture.

All this to stir up discontent with the government.

At present, Savimbi is trying to force the MPLA government to share power with Unita.

He claims control of a third of the country.

But his chances of winning greater power are small seizing power from the MPLA would require resources Savimbi doesn't have, and the MPLA is not prepared to negotiate a compromise.

And although the Angolan economy has been severely damaged by the civil war, the MPLA is supported by the majority of the Angolan people.

An MPLA spokesperson, Gaspar Martins, summarised the MPLA's position saying, "The US is backing the loser. Savimbi is a loser. He cannot win."

"To us he is known as 'Judas' Savimbi because of his treason linking himself to SA."

## Welcoming Savimbi with an

JONAS SAVIMBI, leader of the Angolan rebel movement Unita, recently returned from a highly-successful American tour.

He met with US President Ronald Reagan, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defence, and heads of most major American newspapers.

He left with a promise of between \$10 and \$15 million in US military aid, plus further millions for other forms of aid.

The Reagan administration is eager to prove its determination to 'roll back communism' by backing guerillas fighting Soviet-backed states. It depicts Angola as a battleground between the forces of light and darkness, and Savimbi as

the one leader capable of 'restoring democracy'.

One small problem though, is that this support for Unita lands it in an effective military alliance with Pretoria. The SA government has been backing Unita for many years.

But alliances between the Reagan administration and Pretoria are not new.

Previous administrations favoured increasing isolation of the SA regime, but within five months of Reagan's taking office in 1981 Pik Botha had paid an official visit to the US. It was clear that Reagan's constructive engagement policy meant a closer relationship with the SA government, sup-

# Detention is a lasting trauma

**Detention is a harrowing experience. But many people think that once bars have been removed, life resumes normally.**

**DETENTION, INTERROGATION and torture are traumatic.** When a detainee walks out of the prison gates, they often don't feel quite like the same person that went in. What they have lived through behind the closed prison doors leaves wounds in detainees' memories, which can take a while to heal.

Many people in detention allege they have suffered fear, humiliation, degradation and extreme pain. Their sleep, eating and exercise routines are upset. They are denied normal contact with other people. They are kept in a constant state of discomfort. Even their ability to breathe can no longer be taken for granted, for some say they have been suffocated with dampened cloths and bags.

Detainees have no control over the most basic functions and needs in their lives. This loss of control, plus pain, discomfort, and fear often has bad psychological effects on the detainee. These after-effects can last years after the detention if the detainee and his or her friends do not take action to overcome the problems.

Under extreme pressures, people can completely lose touch with reality; other people become withdrawn, depressed, feel hopeless about themselves and may even become suicidal.

The most common problem amongst these detainees once they leave prison is called post-traumatic stress disorder. The most common symptom of this is that people remember the traumatic events which happened during detention over and over again.

The ex-detainee feels again the fear and dread they felt at the time. These feelings are so real that they may suddenly start trembling, crying, or become very anxious.

Normal daily events like hearing a car door slam, someone shouting, or waiting in a queue can jolt these memories back. Some people worry that these vivid memories might make them break down crying in a social situation, and they withdraw from other people.

They may also start to hide their emotions from their family and friends for fear of showing their anxieties to others. They may also get irritable with people they are close to.

Many detainees lose their ability to trust others, especially if they



No medicine or pills can take away post-detention problems. The best is to talk thoroughly about the experience to someone the detainee trusts.

have been deceived into believing that their friends have given information about them, or if they have been betrayed.

Often misinformation given in a sophisticated way can confuse people about what really happened in detention, and who has said what. These issues can be difficult to clarify.

Sometimes, informers are put in the cells with other detainees. Interrogators may play psychological games, and may be very understanding one minute and very aggressive the next.

All of this, coupled with long isolation, can break down a detainee's trust and confidence in building up honest relationships with other people.

Their ability to concentrate on work, reading or specific tasks can also be affected by these fears and by their long isolation. Loud noises, unfamiliar people in familiar places, sudden shadows or bright lights can give them a bad fright.

They often sleep badly because of nightmares. The sleep problem can be very serious, and can make it more difficult to concentrate because of tiredness.

Sometimes the fear and worry may be so bad that people feel unreal, as if they have lost direct touch with their bodies and their surroundings, and feel cut off from the world, as if in a bubble.

These symptoms make it difficult to function normally and efficiently in jobs, or with family and friends.

The severity of these problems depends mostly on the severity of the interrogation or torture.

When people do develop these symptoms, it means that they were subjected to cruel and vicious pressures. It has been reported that wherever oppressive governments detain and torture people, in Latin America, Indo-China, Asia, Europe as well as South Africa, these problems are common. Sometimes as many as 70 percent of all detainees show these symptoms.

No medicine or pills can take away these problems. The best treatment is talking thoroughly about the experience, about the fears and the memories. This is best done with a trained psychotherapist, either alone or with others who are suffering from similar problems.

The psychotherapist has been trained through studying the effects of detention in many societies to understand how best to end the problems.

But for people who will not have access to these therapists, talking to trusted friends or family members, or talking to other ex-detainees about the experience is important.

The reason the fears return is that the experience can leave such a huge and horrifying impact on people's minds. One of the most important things for ex-detainees to realise is that their symptoms are a completely normal response to barbaric and inhuman cruelties.

The most important way for family and friends to give support to an ex-detainee is to encourage them to talk about their experiences and their symptoms, and to listen.

The breakdown of trust that happens in detention has to be slowly rebuilt, even with people who are close, and so it is important that they can talk about their experiences, feelings and fears without fearing that this might be repeated to other people.

Detention can be humiliating and degrading, and detainees might have lost a lot of confidence, and fear being made fun of or thought to be weak for their fears by their friends.

But the symptoms of post-traumatic stress are usually worst for those who have had the worst experiences, and it is no sign of weakness when these symptoms emerge afterwards. These symptoms are often the way in which people come to terms with their experience once the pressure is off, after showing great strength when the pressure was on.

So ex-detainees need to know that their friends and family understand this, and do not lose respect for them. The community must recognise that these are normal responses to a high level of stress.

Ex-detainees often feel very tense. To learn to relax, it can help to tighten all your muscles, and then relax them, and to do deep breathing slowly in and out. It can also help to do regular exercise, and this can help with problems sleeping too, if it is done in the mornings rather than at night.

Cutting down on coffee, tea and smoking in the evening also helps people to sleep better.

The Organisation for Appropriate Social Services in SA (OASSSA) consisting of progressive psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers and the Detainees Counselling Service (DSC) can be contacted for help. Phone Descom in Johannesburg at 011-23 6664.

## open purse- Angolan rebel movement leader returns from US tour.

posedly to encourage reform.

The US opposed calls for sanctions against SA. It was the only major Western power which did not condemn SA's raid into southern Angola in August 1981. And all along, the US worked hard to secure loans for the SA government.

But, constructive engagement is not directed only at SA, but at the entire subcontinent: the US is lining up with Botha to impose a 'more stable order' in Southern Africa.

Two months ago, the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Chester Crocker, toured the subcontinent in a last-ditch attempt to break the deadlock over the issue of Cuban withdrawal from

Angola, which could set the stage for the implementation of UN Resolution 435, which provides for free-and-fair elections in Namibia.

Now, with the massive injection of new foreign funding into Unita, the 30 000 Cuban troops are unlikely to withdraw.

It is against this background that PW Botha is offering to consider moving towards Namibian independence from August 1.

For some time now there has been a stalemate in Angola, and linked to this, Namibia's independence.

SA's linkage of a Cuban withdrawal from Angola has nothing to do with SA ending its illegitimate hold over Namibia.

Pretoria insists it does so long as there are 'communist forces' operating just across Namibia's border, Pretoria says it does, so long as there are 'communist forces' operating just across Namibia's border, Pretoria says it can't withdraw from Namibia.

The irony is that the Cubans are in Angola to defend the government from attacks and destabilisation from Unita, which SA is backing.

So why then has PW Botha announced that independence moves in Namibia will finally begin in August?

One reason is that it looks good. Foreign attention will be diverted from the crises within SA, and it

will appear as if Botha is taking seriously international demands for SA to end its illegal occupation.

Another reason is that SA cannot afford to hold onto Namibia indefinitely. At present, running the puppet government in Windhoek and maintaining SADF troops in the territory is costing SA more than a million rand a day, and in the present economic crises, more useful political gains can be made by spending that money elsewhere.

But it's more probable that it's a shrewd tactical move by Botha the new injection of foreign finance into Unita will strengthen the rebel movement, and make it more difficult for MPLA to withdraw the

Cuban forces safely.

The MPLA has said in the past the Cubans can't be removed until Unita stops destabilising the country, which makes it even less likely that it will happen now.

So Botha will score a tactical victory his offer to grant Namibian independence will be seen as a generous and reasonable gesture.

But, because it will remain linked to the question of a Cuban withdrawal, and because the MPLA will be even more reluctant to ask the Cubans to leave now that Unita has been injected with new American finance, Botha will be able to shrug his shoulders smugly and say, 'But we tried...'