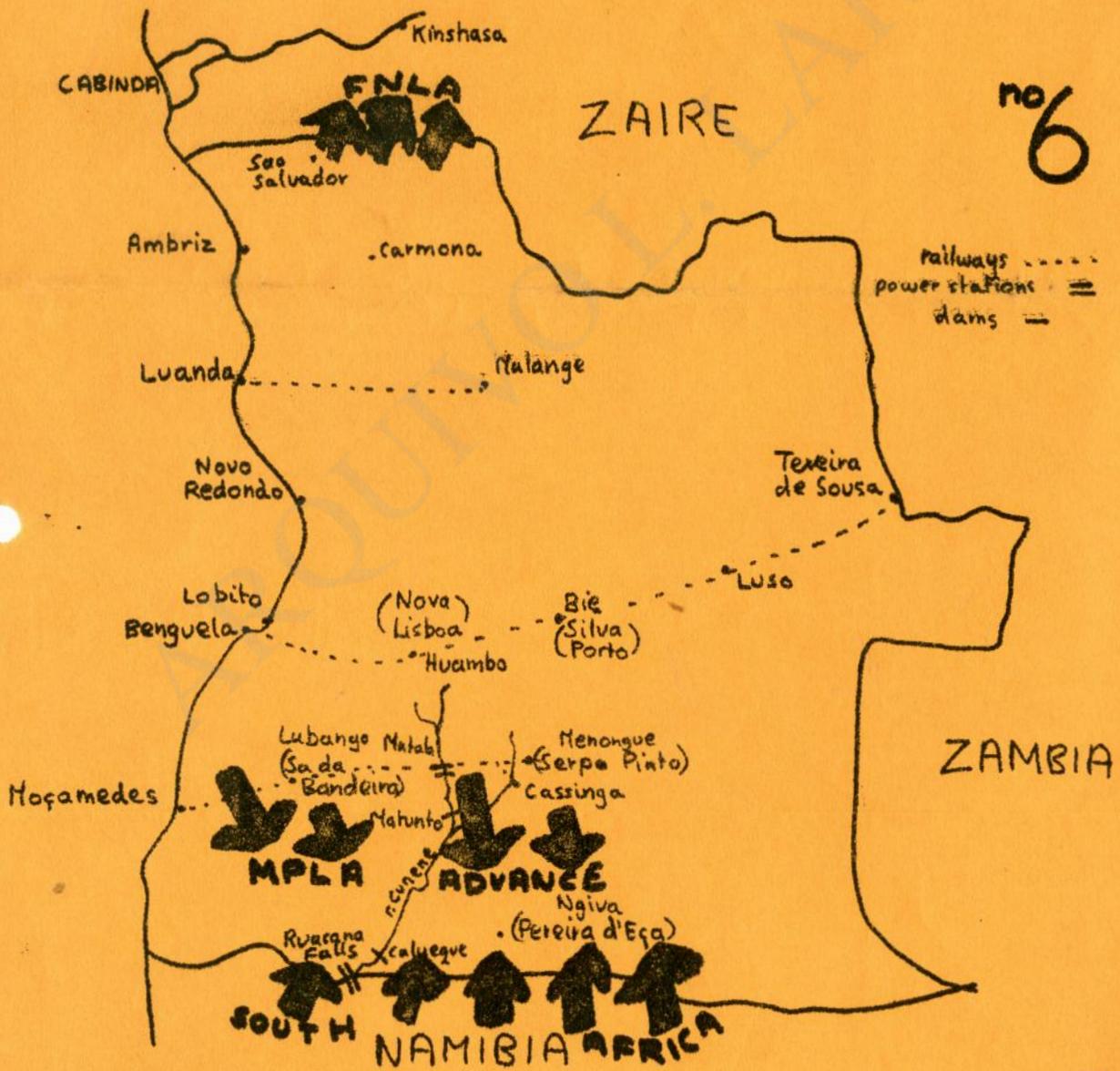


MPLA for ANGOLA



no 6

MPLA DAY - 110,000 leaflets distributed

MPLA supporters around the country who used the special ASC leaflet for leafletting activities on 4 February reported an unusually high level of acceptance for the leaflet and very few discarded. This impression is confirmed by the number of people who have filled in and returned the form requesting further information - they have come in from Edinburgh, Glasgow, Birmingham, Manchester, Coventry, Liverpool, Norwich and many other places including all parts of London.

These responses show the enthusiasm and the geographical spread of the MPLA Day of Action. Demand for the leaflet was so great that a final reprint of 10,000 had to be ordered on 2 February, and extras were produced locally in both Manchester and Scotland, altogether totalling around 110,000. Titled What's Going On In Angola, the leaflet was considered to be a useful tool in the campaign to win support for the MPLA and recognition for PRA.

£300 theft appeal

The Day was successful in spite of the efforts of thieves or saboteurs, who removed overnight from the building of the Mozambique and Guine Information Centre office ten large boxes containing approximately 40,000 leaflets worth £300. The ASC was able to reprint this quantity thanks to a generous response to our appeal; but the cost of reprinting again to meet the additional demand has by no means been covered and has left the ASC with very scant resources to meet the huge needs of the current situation. Please send your donations as quickly as possible to strengthen the campaign.

Growing support for MPLA

More and more political organisations, trade union branches, trades councils and student unions are declaring support for MPLA and calling for government recognition of the independent government. Recent resolutions of support include those from Cardiff Trades Council, Brent Trades Council, University of East Anglia Students Union, Moray House College of Education SU, Battersea and Wandsworth TC, Woking and District TC, Manchester TC, SOAS SU Southwark TC, Hammersmith and Kensington TC, T & GWU 1/128 branch and Southampton University SU. ASTMS has declared support. The National Committee of the Labour party Young Socialists passed a resolution of support at its January meeting, including the demand for recognition and the Labour Party International Committee meeting on 10 February reaffirmed its view that the MPLA is the 'sole genuine liberation movement in Angola fighting both against colonialism and for a society free from exploitation.' The Anti-Apartheid National Committee has called for recognition of the People's Republic and is spearheading a campaign against the South African invasion of Angola. The British Peace Committee has published a statement of support, linked with extracts from the MPLA programme. In Ireland the Union of Students has adopted a resolution of support for MPLA, as has the Congress of Sinn Fein held in January. A Day of solidarity with MPLA was organised at the New University of Ulster in Coleraine.

ASC speakers have been addressing meetings all over Britain, including a Scottish tour organised by NUS Scotland as part of their International Week. Manchester ASC held a very successful week of action, with meetings throughout the area and local ASCs are also being formed in the Midlands and East Anglia. NUS has produced a special Angola broadsheet, and the National Organisation of International Socialist Societies organised a tour for the Angola in Struggle film, and have also produced a pamphlet. AAM has produced a poster, stickers and car stickers around the theme of South African Invaders out of Angola. (Details of all these materials from the respective organisations).

Build the campaign

The next few weeks will be crucial in determining the future development of Angola. It is essential that the advances of MPLA on all fronts inside the country be matched by an escalation in international solidarity. In Britain this requires an intensified two-pronged campaign: to pressurise the government into recognising the People's Republic, and to win political support for MPLA, UNTA and the government. Material aid is an important way of expressing political support and the needs are huge. Local activity should therefore be focussed around these objectives in the immediate future as well as around the demand for the withdrawal of South African troops.

ASC plans in collaboration with local groups to organise a series of regional one-day 'workshops' on Angola. These will provide a forum for the bringing together of local activists, sympathisers, potential supporters, representatives from local organisations etc for a more extensive discussion, analysis and self-education than is possible at normal public meetings. They will also, hopefully provide a springboard for further and better local action. Please write to us if you are interested in organising a Workshop in your area.

AID FOR ANGOLA

Aid for Angola, a new fund to channel material aid to MPLA and the Angolan trade union movement, UNTA, will be formally established in the next fortnight. With a military victory for the People's Republic, Angola will still face critical problems: underdevelopment; the economic dislocation arising from the war; the heritage of years of backward colonial rule. Over 95% of Angolans are illiterate; health and education provisions are minimal; there is a lack of necessary skills; agricultural methods are inadequate. Already during the war, work had begun in the liberated areas, with medical cadres and literacy teachers and UNTA activists working to stimulate cooperative production and people's shops. In a free Angola this work must go ahead at a greater speed.

ASC is sponsoring Aid for Angola and Basil Davidson will be a Trustee of the fund.

Local action

Manchester ASC recently organised a well attended public meeting and social in Manchester's west Indian Centre on 27 January. A film of Independence Day celebrations in Luanda was shown. Also a 30 minute poetry and prose sketch was performed, featuring writings from the liberation struggle in Angola and other parts of southern Africa (copies of the script 10p + postage from Manchester ASC).

For people who could not attend this meeting speakers and a film went to some ten other venues throughout the north-west. Support for and interest in the work of the ASC has come from students, trades unionists Labour and Communist parties and most other political groups. Some 11,000 leaflets were handed out on MPLA day, in Manchester, colleges and local factories.

Future activities are to centre around the sending of speakers and films to local organisations and the winning of support for the ASC

People's Power - an extract from the New York Times 31 January

The place is called Rangel, a sprawl of tin-roofed mud shacks without running water or electricity in which 40,000 people live. It is one of the 15 Luanda slums that ring the modern centre of the city and that together house some 300,000 people.

The dirt roads of Rangel are teeming with life while many of the balconied apartments overlooking the sea are shuttered, abandoned by their Portuguese owners. In Rangel yesterday morning groups of men helped brick over the shacks children sang revolutionary songs in day-care centres and women in a recently improvised market sold merchandise ranging from hurricane lamps to beans and juju herbs.

All of this activity has been spurred on by an unusual unit of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola called the Division for the Organisation of the Masses, commonly referred to here by its acronym DOM. At its regional offices in Rangel several dozen men and women were lined up yesterday with their photographs seeking their Popular Movement membership cards.

Inside the building an official, Constatino dos Santos, who calls himself Tinito, explained that there were three forms of membership. There are the sympathisers, then there are the adherents who have shown a greater commitment and there are the militants who are the soldiers. Tinito, a 29 year old law student who spent seven years inside a Portuguese prison camp for his Popular Movement activities said that 700,000 people had so far been enrolled in the movement in the greater Luanda region, each given the identity cards bearing one of the three designations.

"When the people apply we have them checked by members who are their neighbours and then we assign them to cells or groups of 10 or 12" he said, adding that the form of DOM's organisation follows that of the originally clandestine Popular Movement, the nationalist force that was largely born in these slums.

He said that altogether with the workers councils which have either taken over or joined with management to run industrial plants, the DOM's councils represent 'people's power'. He said that the councils served as both vehicles for political education and something of a social-work agency. Requests for schools, housing materials and transport facilities originate at the cell level and are transmitted through regional centres to the movement's central committee, which then allocates resources to the central DOM agency which in turn funnels them to the local units.

During a three-hour walking tour of Rangel with Tinito as a guide it was impossible to determine how efficiently or widely the resources, sapped by the war effort were being distributed. But it was apparent that a revolutionary enthusiasm and neighbourhood cohesion had taken hold. . .

. . . " We think that this kind of organisation is our own revolutionary adaptation and comes from our special experience. It is an irony that if we were given independence in 1961 like other African countries we would not have had a chance to develop our consciousness and nationalism through struggle. We might have been a neo-colonial country but now we have achieved real unity".

The New School - a report from Michael Wolfers in Luanda

The 'New School' in the People's Republic of Angola is due to begin in April, after the period of heavy rains. This timing marks a restructuring of the national education programme which is planned to run within an educational year from April to December (in contrast with the pre-independence pattern which faithfully copied the Portuguese and European model). The broad lines of the new education policy were mapped out in a national conference held in Luanda from 20 October to 4 November, even before the proclamation of the new People's Republic of Angola on 11 November last year.

Since the initial conference which drew heavily on experience gained in the bush schools of MPLA during the years of guerilla warfare, discussion and consultation has continued at all levels of education - from the demand for adult literacy instruction, through the primary sector to the plans for

higher technological training (most of which in the past was carried out by sending MPLA cadres on courses in friendly countries, mainly socialist states.) The educational programme is led by Camarada Antonio Jacinto, the Minister of Education and Culture, who is a distinguished nationalist and poet (in the colonial era he was imprisoned for 11 years and says that he used the time for reflection on the needs of Angola). Jacinto is a prime mover of the new educational programme but is in nearly constant consultation with teachers, workers and students.

The guideline for school administration calls for democratic direction. When necessary, the entire membership of a school (students and workers) can meet in a decision making assembly. For routine matters it is planned to have a directing committee, formed from all the elements of the institution - students teachers and workers. The guidelines, approved by last year's conference, aim at avoiding artificial social and cultural barriers between teachers and students. A teacher is defined as 'the instructor of the people and of its children, who is the transforming agent of society'. The teacher is expected to be an educator and not merely an instructor, and is expected to avoid presenting himself or herself as an authority before an ignorant and obedient student - instead there should be ; . . ' a relationship of respect, collaboration and cooperation between both'. These ideas, which may sound like truisms, are regarded as crucial to counterbalance the authoritarian structure of colonial education. Similarly it is clear that much traditional teaching material as used by the Portuguese teachers of the colonial regime must be discarded. Some alternative materials were prepared by and for MPLA during the first liberation struggle, but these are insufficient. There are also practical problems about existing school buildings, some of which were used by Portuguese 'ritornados' who left Angola during the last weeks of colonial rule as transit camps and were damaged during this phase.

At the juridical level, the government of Angola has already decided that education should be state controlled (though some temporary dispensation is to be allowed for church schools, which an important task in rural education even in the colonial period, provided that their timetables and syllabuses are adjusted in line with the state system). Education is to be free at all levels and education is to be tied to the national needs for industrial and agricultural production but with special concern for service sectors such as medicine, which were not encouraged in the colonial system. The guidelines for future education require that schooling be extended in the country side and the People's Republic of Angola hopes to avoid the drift to the cities that has created social problems in many African countries.

The 'new school' has openly avowed political aims. The teaching will be linked to the aims of MPLA for People's Power and Solidarity against imperialism, with support for internationalism and the struggle of workers and oppressed peoples. The schools will be 'directed' by organised workers, who will be in contact with the various institutions of people's power at local, regional and national level. The formal school sector will be expected to help in the campaign against adult illiteracy, and the guidelines warn that the illiterate must not be viewed as an ignorant man or woman but as a possessor of a wealth of experience which he can pass on to the literacy teacher and to the community. Jacinto estimated that more than 90 per cent of the Angolan people are illiterate and he sees the projected fight against illiteracy as one of the most crucial tasks.

Decisions whether to work through traditional languages or through the 'lingua franca' of Portuguese have still to be taken, though it is already being closely studied. For adult literacy, there are obvious advantages in using traditional African languages, but preliminary indications are that Portuguese is likely to be the main instrument for formal teaching at most levels. The decision is also to be taken against a general policy of avoiding breaks in the progression of education. . in the past access to university and advanced technical training within the colonial system strongly favoured the

bourgeoisie. Jacinto wants to see an educational system entirely open to all elements in the society and reinforcing the alliance between workers and peasants, which is the fundamental basis of MPLA's appeal. Dr Agostinho Neto, President of MPLA and the People's Republic has frequently pointed out that when one mentions the category of 'workers and peasants' one has already included almost the entire population of the country.

VICTORY IS CERTAIN !

MPLA's military strategy has always been simultaneously a political strategy, the same now in the recent conventional war as it has been consistently throughout fifteen years of guerilla war. The MPLA forces, the FAPLAS bring immediate safety and food improvements to the areas they liberate and begin the enormous task of political education and the setting up of workers councils.

Over the last few weeks MPLA has made tremendous gains but the war still continues. The following is an account of events as they are at the time of writing but the situation is of course changing from day to day.

On the northern front, at the time of the OAU summit in January, the FAPLAS were advancing steadily up the coast beyond Ambriz and further inland were pushing forwards from Uige to Sao Salvador, the heart of FNLA territory. In the south by the middle of January there was a massive build up of South African troops. MPLA estimated that there were 20,000 South Africans dug in along the Benguela railway, but MPLA continued to press on towards Luso.

The arrival of two fishing boats in Luanda on 13 January full of refugees brought news of events in Mocamedes and Lubango (formerly Sa da Bandeira). The 150 refugees, both black and white, said that Mocamedes had been totally evacuated by the civilian population after vicious infighting between FNLA and UNITA. FNLA ransacked all the banks of the town and massacred UNITA prisoners; UNITA were accused of black racism and tribalism, and even the ELP mercenaries had fled southwards when UNITA came out on top.

From other points in the south-west there were reports of South African shelling of civilian targets around Cela and Novo Redondo, causing evacuation of villages. Novo Redondo was liberated on 20 January and Cela on 21 January. Cela was a major South African supply base and therefore an important victory. Heavy fighting then occurred around Santa Combo on the approach road to Huambo. The areas had been densely mined by the South Africans, and in spite of Vorster's declaration on 23 January that South African forces had withdrawn, their army put up fierce resistance with artillery and were not defeated until a few days later. After that followed an extensive clearance operation to allow civilians to return.

By mid February the FNLA-Zaire army was virtually expelled from northern Angola. In the south once past the Benguela defence lines the FAPLA advance has been rapid, liberating the UNITA capital of Huambo, Lobito, Benguela, Mocamedes, Lubango, Silva Porto and now Luso giving them the entire stretch of the railway. The South African army established new defensive positions along a 50-mile deep strip from the Namibian border and the South African government proclaimed its intention to stand firm in defence of its interests. UNITA was driving the population out of the towns in a last ditch effort to obstruct the MPLA.

SOLDIERS OF MISFORTUNE

The recent excitement about mercenaries from Britain in Angola and the news that feeds it hide more than they reveal: serious international involvement, payed for with CIA money and fairly calmly tolerated by the

British government as long as no Briton was shot by another Briton, is played down to personal tragedy. In the familiar picture of mothers worrying about their sons and recruitment that does not respect boys under age any more, political considerations seem to be out of place. The fact for instance, that the SAS doing service in Northern Ireland and the one sending mercenaries to Angola have more in common than just the name is indicative of the role Britain objectively plays in the maintenance of the imperialist system - be it through regular soldiers in Oman and Dhofar or mercenaries in Angola.

Recruitment in Britain started as early as the middle of last year and, as the USA admitted itself, was made possible by American money. This means that for six months and probably longer nothing was done by the government to stop 'executions' of Angolans by British mercenaries. The existence of the operations run from the launderette in Camberley and the council house in Leeds obviously did not contradict British policy on Angola, that of backing the anti-MPLA forces along with the USA. As long recruitment goes smoothly nobody says anything against it; it is only when money creates rivalries and the mercenaries come back with tales to tell that people get excited. It is then that the government is forced to set up their commission of enquiry although no action is taken against Banks, Aspin and Co, those 'small-time crooks'.

* * *

SOLIDARITY WITH MPLA

Jill Sheppard represented the Angola Solidarity Committee at a conference held in Luanda from 2 to 4 February. The conference was organised by the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation and was attended by delegates from over 60 countries. On her return Jill submitted the following report:

The ostensible purpose of the visit was the two-day conference, opened by Comrade President Neto and consisting of contributions from all the delegates, announcing the position of their respective governments and organisations. Robert Hughes MP representing the British Anti-Apartheid Movement made a speech on behalf of AAM, ASC and Liberation, represented by Tony Gilbert. Tony spent most of the first two days in the drafting committee for the final resolution (which he ended up chairing, earning himself the nick-name of 'le president !).

This left me relatively free to concentrate on the daunting task of trying to find and have discussions with MPLA comrades about the current situation and the priorities for our solidarity work in Britain. It was no easy task competing with over 100 other delegates all bent on the same objective, and at a time when MPLA was not only running a war but also making final arrangements for the 4 February celebrations of the 15th anniversary of armed struggle.

By the end of the first day I had achieved little. To get away from the crowds I wandered for a couple of hours around 'colonial' Luanda's wide tree-lined avenues going down to the bay. The benches lining the bay were like everything else in sight adorned with graffiti. I sat down for a while on 'abaixo imperialismo' and looked back on the chaotic skyline of colonial residences and multi-storey blocks. I was in Luanda! It was very quiet with the occasional passer-by and a few dogs and no indication of the street battles that preceded the expulsion of FNLA and UNITA. The odd FNLA slogan had long been painted out and the UNITA ones changed to UNTA (Angolan Trades Union Organisation). A few Portuguese statues remain but have been draped in MPLA colours and the inscriptions altered or crossed out.

The European sector is now inhabited by Angolan families but it was impossible for me in the time to see much of the life of ordinary people. On the second day I drove out to the Vila Alice district where MPLA has its

offices and where many MPLA comrades live. Nearly all the buildings displayed MPLA posters and slogans. At the Department of External Relations I was fortunate to meet the head of the department and discuss the problems I was having in finding people and he promised to help. I went to the Department of Information after this and joined the queue of people from local committees who were collecting pamphlets and badges etc. Finally laden with supplies I returned to the hotel ready for the evening session and voting on resolutions which went on until 2.30am.

The last day was 4 February - the day of the parade. Thousands gathered to watch the march past, all cheering and joining in the slogans. The parade consisted of all those groups who wished to participate (it had not been centrally planned) so there were the local committees, the FAPLAS, OMA (organisation of Angolan women), the pioneers from 6 years upwards and there were veterans from the first Luanda rising in 1961. After the parade President Neto addressed the crowd and was given a tremendous ovation. I managed to have a talk with two more MPLA comrades concerning our political work here and the material aid we could supply. The main priorities are food for the areas newly liberated from UNITA and FNLA control. Here production has been disrupted and no efforts made to supply the population. The main victims are mothers and small children. Medical supplies are also needed and I agreed that we would hold blood-donor sessions and try to raise money for medicines.

* * *

OAU RECOGNITION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC

On 11 February it was announced that the People's Republic of Angola had been admitted to membership of the Organisation of African Unity, following the establishment of diplomatic relations by more than half the OAU member states. This was welcome progress from the deadlocked position of the special OAU special summit meeting in January and has come about in spite of pressures from USA, Britain and West Germany. The USA stated that in future American aid priorities would be determined by the attitital attitudes of Third World countries towards American policies.

11/2
Adm. OUA

By 12 February the following countries had given recognition (by now at least 36 member states of the OAU have recognised and this number is increasing every day):

Algeria, Benin, Burundi, Cape Verde Islands, Camerouns, Chad, Comoro Islands, Congo, Equatorial Guiea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea Republic, Libya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome e Principe, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Ivory Coast, Egypt and Morocco. North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Yemen, Syria, Iraq, North Korea, India, Laos, Brazil, Cuba, Guyana, Jamaica, Soviet Union, Poland, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Mongolia, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Hungary, GDR.

n/p

Pressures have been building up in the countries that have not yet recognised. In Zambia, following a student pro-MPLA demonstration, the University has been closed down and a number of students arrested. In an apparent attempt to find scapegoats the Zambiqn government has also detained several expatriate lecturers who had made no secret of their support for MPLA, including Lionel Cliffe, a longstanding supporter of the former Committee for Freedom in Mozambique angola and Guine and of the ASC. The ASC demands the release of all those currently detained for this reason in Zambia and asks British supporters to make their views known to the Foreign Office and the Zambian High Commission and call for Lionel's release.

Publicity material

Ris2

10

New film ANGOLA IN STRUGGLE, 16mm, colour, 45 minutes, English language commentary. This film was shot in Angola in early October 1975. It can be hired for £15 from The Other Cinema, 12 Little Newport St, London WC2 (01-734 8508)

Also available A 15-minute newsreel of 11 November Independence celebrations in Luanda, made by the Angolan Ministry of Information. The film is in black and white, with a Portuguese language commentary, but is very effective in conveying the lively and joyful atmosphere, so that a commentary is hardly necessary.

New poster Main slogan Victory to MPLA, with picture and quote 25p

Angola pamphlet Fourth reprint, updated to beginning of November 10p

MPLA for Angola badge two colour badge 10p

Discount and sale or return terms are available for bulk orders, but where possible money should accompany order.

SUBSCRIBE NOW TO THE ANGOLA SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE

Annual fees: individuals £2; trade union branches, trades councils, local political organisations £5; district and regional organisations and student unions £10; national organisations £25

You will receive a copy of the pamphlet Angola and be entitled to receive the regular news bulletins as well as any other material that is published.

Write with your subscription and literature orders to:

ASC, c/o 30 Romilly Road, London N4 phone 01-359 4545

WHAT IS MPLA A new pamphlet is due to come out shortly which contains, programme and statutes of MPLA and information about current policies.

Price: 10p

To: Angola Solidarity Committee, c/o 30 Romilly Road, London N4

Please send me . . . copies of the new pamphlet What is MPLA

Please send me suggestions for activity in my area

I enclose my affiliation fee of £ . . .

I enclose a donation of £ . . .

Name

Address
.
.
.
.
.