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13 - 15 JULY 1994

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

HISTORY WORKSHOP

'SCARS OF WAR AND DYING CHILDREN'
CHALLENGES OF TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY IN ANGOLA

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At 7 p.m. on Friday 31 May 1991, thousands of Angolans clustered around their television sets and radios to see and hear the live broadcast from Lisbon of the signing of a peace treaty between the ruling MPLA and UNITA rebels. As Dos Santos and Savimbi sealed the end of the protracted civil with a handshake, impromptu street parties sprang up, motorists begun a city wide procession of flashing lights and blaring horns, Luanda was steeped in a weekend festivities characterised by spontaneous expressions of joy. Anita Coulson witnessing the event put it in this way, "All through the early hours of Saturday, chants of Dos Santos, amigo, o povo esta contigo (Dos Santos, friend, the people are with you) competed with bursts of celebratory gunfire and strains of the all-night 'musical marathon' that attracted tens of thousands to city's central Kinaxixi square".[1] Upon his arrival in Luanda on Saturday, met by the largest turn out seen since the day the nationalist leader Augastino Neto returned from exile in 1975, Dos Santos who was caught in the frenzy of the occasion underscored the greatest challenge that lay ahead in the following words, "For too long we learned to make war, now we have to learn how to make peace".[2]

Although the quest for peace was ushered in amidst daunting challenges, Angolans were determined to give it a chance. Alas, as we all know, the process of learning to make peace turned soar and became yet another sad chapter of human tragedy. Since October 1992 news about Angola has been scanty but horrific, recounting inhuman experiences, starvation on biblical scale and hundreds of corpses rotting in the streets of towns besieged by UNITA. As rightly expressed by Hans-Peter Bakker and Joao Silva on arrival in Menongue after UNITA's self-declared ceasefire of October 1993, "It is at the hospital and the graveyard where the real story of Menongue unfolds. Putrefying smells greet one even before entering the grimy hospital. As usual it is the children who are the first to suffer....In every room and in every passage of the hospital, children with all the symptoms of famine and malnutrition whimper softly or simply stare

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[1]. *Anita Coulson, "Dos Santos popularity may not be enough for MPLA", Weekly Mail, June 7-13, 1991.*

[2] *Anita Coulson, "Dos Santos popularity may not be enough for MPLA", Weekly Mail, June 7-13, 1991.*

blankly".[3] The new UN special representative to Angola, Alioune Blodin Beye, has estimated that 1,000 people were dying a day from the war and related diseases and starvation, and described the conflict as the worst current tragedy surpassing even Somalia, Bosnia and Cambodia.[4]

Menongue is just one of the many towns where reports of human suffering has reached untold proportions. The battle for Huambo, Luena, Malange and many more have left more dead people in two years than in the entire sixteen years of the civil war. The renewed civil war not only engulfed the whole country, it had threatened to spill over in neighbouring countries. The human crisis facing Angola is reported to be far more graver than the situation in Bosnia and yet this is "the war the world forgot".[5] Despite the magnitude of human suffering in Angola the international community has been characterised by a lack of interest, indifference and paralysis. This indifference and paralysis is best captured by Paul Taylor's report of a baffling disclaimer of responsibility from a western diplomat in Luanda;

> *We didn't create Savimbi. We may have rented him for a few years....This is a messy situation but it is not our fault and there are no quick fixes. This is an Angolan problem, and only Angolans are going to be able to solve it.[6]*

It is irrefutable that Angola is a messy situation, however, responsibility for the collapse of the unstable peace can not solely rest with Angolans as if the rest of the world had not played a role in creating the mess. Although it was the opinion of Margaret Anstee, the first UN special representative and head of

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[3]. *Hans-Peter Bakker and Joao Silva, "Scars of War on Dying Children in Hospital", The Mail October 6, 1993*

[4]. *The African News Network, Report by Paul Taylor of the Washington Post Service*

[5]. *The African News network(700:200/0). Report by Paul Taylor of the Washington Post Service 19 September 1993.*

[6]. *The African News Network report by Paul Taylor of the Washington Post Service.*

UNAVEM until May 1993, that UNITA should take the responsibility for the suffering of millions of ordinary Angolans,[7] it does not exculpate the international community. As it will be shown later, the paralysis of the international community in the face of Savimbi's intransigence contributed to setting back the democratic process in that country.

This paper focuses on three themes, the quest for freedom and peace, the ravages of war and the prospects for a democratic state in Angola. The discussion in this paper is premised on a view that the democracy debate can only be understood in historical terms. The historical trajectory that reappraises the intra-African interactions and the Portuguese-African relations from their advent at shores of the Congo river provides a background for understanding the plurality and diversity of the past African experience. The identification of various types of authoritarianism under formal Portuguese colonial rule in the twentieth century facilitates an understanding of the character of African resistance, the quest for peace and democracy in the country.

To appreciate the enormous challenges facing Angolans in their attempted transition to democracy, historical antecedents that threaten the process are traced from the outbreak of the liberation wars. Issues such as the failure of liberation movements to forge broad national coalitions for the purpose of dislodging colonialism, ethnic rivalries, intra-party enmities, susceptibility to external influences, foreign entanglement in Angolan issues,predisposition towards the use of military over political means in solving political differences are assessed for their probable impact on the transition to democracy.

The historical process culminating in the Bicess Accord of May 1991 that ushered in the ceasefire and heralded the transition to a democratic dispensation for Angola is briefly examined. The impact of the renewed conflict in Angola has been assessed. In the last section of the paper prospects for a durable democratic state are mirrored against the West's thrust for political reform and

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[7]. R. Dowden, Facts and Reports, vol. 23 No F 93/03/19

their reluctance to liberalise the international economic system. The paper stresses the point that an economy capable of satisfying and assuring the basic needs and rights of ordinary Angolans is a conditio sine qua non for a democratic Angola. The role of international financial institutions and development aid agencies is appraised for its impact on realising a democratic and secure Angola.

Contesting Definitions of Democracy

The concern of the paper is to discuss the challenges facing Angola in its transition to democracy. However, what this paper does not attempt is a general theorising of democracy as it applies to the African context. It is important though to note that the representation of the challenges to democratic change in Angola is based on a particular framework. This particalur interpretation does not claim to be the correct or the final one. It is open to challenges and hence it is hoped that it would provoke further discussions so as to illuminate our understanding. The paper posits that an examination of the performance of Angola's transition to democracy should be anchored within the boundaries they had set for themselves according to their understanding of their circumstance in the country. It rejects the use of western models as mirrors of Angolan performance. However, what the paper accepts is the concept of democracy as an idea which could be shaped or moulded in many forms.

Definitions of democracy have usually been described according to its practice in the West rather than as a concept, an idea that can be shaped by differing influences obtaining in varying circumstances. A fixation with the practice of democracy, and hence the models of democracy, has given rise to a diregard of the the links between economic and political emancipation. An overly concern with the examination of arrangements of state-centric institutions in definitions of democracy, has limited discussions of democracy to the political arena with a collary argument that sees capitalism as the harbinger of democracy.

This paper is concerned with democracy as an idea which Angolans have chosen

to explore as a basis for their political life. To borrow from David Held, the idea of democracy would include the following fundamental values, equality, liberty, moral development, the common interest, private interests, social utility, the satisfaction of wants, and efficient decisions.[8] *A quest for these values is a quest for human emancipation. However, not all struggles for human emancipation can be reduced to some stereotypes called democracy. National liberation struggles waged for the emancipation of the people were not necessarily all democratic though they may have been popular. This paper then attempts a preliminary discussion of the democratic ideas aspired to by Angolans as expressed in their constitution. In this regard the paper attempts to come to terms with attempts to develop these ideas through an examination of the practices and institutions meant for their implementation and further development.*

As will be demonstrated in this paper, for a society whose experience of political relations has been characterised by ripples of Portuguese feudal and corporatist authoritarianism and followed by a rigid one party socialst rule that was steeped in civil war from the time of its inplanting, the journey towards democracy will be long and tortuous. The inplanting of a democracy in any country is not an overnight thing just because it is embedded in the constitution, it is a long process which requires time. It has taken western societies may years of struggle between diferent centres of power to get to where they are today. It is inappropriate to use western models as standards of perfomance of incipient democracies in Africa. To beg for time in which Africa should experiment with democracy before it is judged by those standards is not to apologise for its shortcomings, but rather to take cognisance that the process is dynamic, developmental, multifaced and complex and should not merely be judged by how close they approximate western models.

The democracy aspired to by Angolans is expressed in the New Constitution of May 1991. According to this constitution, "the Popular Republic of Angola is

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[8]. *David Held, Models of Democracy, (Oxford, Polity Press, 1988),3.*

a democratic state by law which accepts as a fundamental principle national unity, human dignity, the pluralism of expression and organisation of politics, the respect and guarantee of rights and liberties be they of individuals or any member of an organised group".[9] *Article three of Chapter one of the new constitution states that "sovereignty resides in the people who will exercise it according to the provisions of the present law. The Angolan people will exercise political power through universal suffrage periodically for the election of their representatives through the referred to and other forms of democratic participation of the citizens in the life of the nation".*[10] *It should be clear to every one that the democratic principles espoused in the constitution reflect an adherence to the generally accepted values as earlier expressed by Held. This paper focuses on the challenges facing Angolans in the realisation of their form of democracy.*

The Colonial Heritage

In the last five hundred years Angolans have been terrorised by the rapacious Atlantic slave trade, "ultra-colonialism", and the longest and most violent civil war the African continent has witnessed. Until recently, Angolans have not had an opportunity to freely participate in the running and protection of their own interests. The non-participation in the political life of their nation has it s roots in the colonial heritage, the continuous state of war since the outbreak of the liberation war, the civil war between the MPLA and UNITA factions and not the least, the MPLA socialist policies.

The indigenious political system that existed prior to the arrival of the Portuguese on the shores of the Congo exhibited ernomous structural variety and diversity. This diversity reflected a medley of societal political thought and value system. Potholm writing on African politics argued that "the structural

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[9] Lei Constitucional e Outras Leis Complementares (Luanda: Republica de Angola, 1991).

[10] Lei Constitucional e Outras Leis Complementares (Luanda: Republica de Angola, 1991).

variety of African forms reflect certain basic assumptions that Africans made about the nature of human collectivities, the nature of societal interaction and the desired relationship between power and authority".[11] *That Angolan society was characterised by a plurality of political institutions and thought is briefly illustrated below.*

Moving from north to south, we begin with the well known centralised and unitary Kongo state through the partially centralised states in the centre to the segmentary political systems of the Ovambo in the south. Traversing the country from east to west, we note a mixture of centralised states among the Mbundu to the partially centralised Chokwe states in close proximity with centralised Lunda polities. The Kongo kingdom provides scholars with material for examining the indigenous political pluralism in its natural setting and the subsequent process of acculturation wrought by the contact with Portuguese mercantilism. The elaborate systems of legitimation and investitures in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was a curious blend of the Portuguese and Bakongo value systems. It may well be argued that had the Bakongo pluralism been allowed to develop freely in subsequent centuries, the political system would have evolved into a system capable of regulating and mediating between diverse political interests. What the Bakongo system of acculturation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries prove is the fact that given time African political systems could interact with western systems and produce a mosaic of African political systems capable of allowing the fulfilment of human emancipation.

Pluralism in Angolan societies was premised firstly on the recognition that they and others belonged together in this world, hence the acceptance of the Portuguese as equals in their society. Secondly, they appreciated the importance of collectaive security. A further examination of the collective security reveal the recognition of the importance of sharing with others the private and communal resources such as water, land, forests, grazing or hunting land. Attempts to monopolise political power or other resources were contested and regulated

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[11]. *Christian P. Potholm, The Theory and Practice of Politics, (New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1979),4.*

through many mechanism such as emigration, mediation or even going to war. The third principle of African pluralism in Angola was the belief in leadership. In no single society was there a belief in the wisdom of one leader or clan. African pluralism was not antithetical to democratic values though the basis was not the individual's rights but the unalienable rights of communities. The undermining of these values in Angolan societies took place over hundreds of years and is credited to the advent and meddling of the Portuguese.

The society bequeathed to the MPLA at independence was deeply and deliberately divided by the Portuguese to maintain the imperial autarky and the interests of white settlers. The society was divided into privileged whites, poor white peasant settlers, mesticos, assimilados and the majority of the Africans derogatorily called indigenas. Africans' civil liberties and property rights were not guaranteed by any juridical framework. They were governed directly by Portuguese administrative authorities where the administrator was the judge, jury, prosecutor, defence counsel and supervised the execution of his own sentences. Thus in Angola there were those who were citizens enjoying civil and property rights and others considered to be "uncivilised" who were treated like beasts of burden.[12]

The Portuguese fostered animosities between the mesticos, assimilados and the African majority (indegenas) had serious repercussions for the forging of nationhood. With the departure of the Portuguese from Angola at independence, the mesticos and assimilados who were the most highly educated staffed government institutions and this perpetuated the animosities between them and the majority of Africans. The Alves coup attempt of 1977 was just one manifestation of the strife between the social groups.[13] *The social divisions between the mesticos and the majority of Africans have continued to bedevil not only the country as a whole but the MPLA-PT in particular. In a democratic Angola, class cleavages intertwined with the racial divides are likely to pose a danger to stability.*

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[12] *Y.N. Seleti, "Portuguese Corporatism in Angola, 1930-60", in T. Shaw and H. Nyangoro, Corporatism in Africa, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989).*

[13] *D. Birmingham, "The twenty Seventh of May: An historical Note on the Abortive Coup Attempt in Angola", African Affairs, 77, 307 (1978).*

The struggle for Angolan independence is renown for its failure to forge broad national coalitions for the purpose of removing the colonial rulers. In most African countries nationalists united in a broad national front to drive out the colonial dictators. The national alliances were constituted by people divided into different social classes and ethnic affiliations, some representing antagonistic class interests but brought together by historical circumstances of foreign rule. Although Angolans were faced with the same major contradiction of Portuguese rule, the nationalist movement failed to form a country-wide alliance. It should be pointed out that, ethnic divergence, ideological differences and military adventurism of some parties checked the formation of a national alliance against colonialism.

The make up of liberation movements was profoundly affected by ethnicity in Angola. It is common knowledge that the MPLA sprung up in Luanda and in the Catete-Dembos areas and hence it based its support on the Mbundu and the urban based mesticos and assimilados. Holden Roberto's FNLA drew exclusively on tribal loyalties of the Bakongo in the far north of the country. Jonas Savimbi, disgusted with the dominance of the Bakongo in FNLA, left and founded his own tribal movement among the Ovimbundu, the most populous of Angolan ethnic grouping. During the struggle for independence the three movements pursued their individual struggles in their areas of operation. This implied that in Angola the ethnic factor coincided with the geography of the guerrilla war in fragmenting and balkanising the liberation movement.

The fragmentation and balkanisation of Angola culminated in the liberation movements failure to create national networks for the broad based mobilisation of the people for the dismantling of Portuguese rule. Although the MPLA tried to be broad based, its efforts were restricted to the urban few and the eastern zone. at no time did any nationalist movement experience a national wide campaign against Portuguese colonial rule. At the time of independence no movement had experimented with nation building through the establishment of nation wide political participation and power sharing. It can thus be argued that the political movements in Angola were inexperienced in plural politics. The art of tolerance and power sharing between adversaries was unknown as they continued to operate in their

separate spheres. Clashes between the three liberation movements date back to the formation of UNITA and they were as common as the encounters with the Portuguese.[14]

The intra-party strife was compounded by the fact that the Portuguese authorities did not allow them to operate in the open. Under the Portuguese surveillance which was spearheaded by the notorious secret police, PIDE, the nationalist movements' clandestine activities left little room for total mobilisation of the people for independence. The Portuguese continued refusal to grant rights of self-determination to Africans until the collapse of the regime in April 1974 denied Africans an opportunity to experiment with open politics. The sudden collapse of Portuguese rule and the hurried transfer of power did not leave sufficient time to experiment with the forging of alliances between political movements. It is clear that at independence in 1975 Angolans were not prepared for open and plural politics. Their heritage had been to struggle for power militarily and not by political means.

It is therefore not surprising that the military option for taking power has hitherto dominated the Angolan scenario. As early as 1961, the year of the advent of the liberation war, the use of military means to eliminate rival groups was initiated by Roberto's UPA against the MPLA. In October 1961, UPA (later called FNLA) troops captured and killed 21 MPLA guerrillas.[15] *The subsequent course of the Angolan war was characterised by FNLA's and UNITA's attempts to annihilate the MPLA. Within a few years of the liberation war the MPLA was under fire from the USA-backed Zairian leadership of Mobutu, Roberto's FNLA and Savimbi's UNITA. When the left-wing army officers overthrew the Portuguese government and committed themselves to the granting of independence to the African colonies, the only relationship between the liberation movements was that of battlefield foes. The attempts to arrange a peaceful transition through the signing of the Alvor*

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[14] *W. Minter, Operation Timber, pages from the Savimbi Dossier (New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1988), pp.6-7.*

[15] *W. Minter, Operation Timber, pages from Savimbi's Dossier, (New Jersey, Africa World Press, 1988), pp.7.*

Agreement of a government of national unity came to nothing because of the deep-rooted suspicions and mistrust that had been wrought in the battlefields.

The struggle for the control of Angola which commenced at independence was characterised by a step by step escalation of violence in which internal conflict merged with external intervention. The escalation of violence was initiated by the United States grant of $300,000 to FNLA which precipitated a joint FNLA-Zaire incursion in northern Angola and hence heralding direct external involvement inside Angola by August 1975. This was followed by the United States' encouragement of South Africa to support Savimbi so as to stop the communist menace. With the destruction of FNLA as a military force by the joint MPLA-Cuban reply to the incursion from the north, UNITA emerged as the only force that could be put forward as credible proxy of the United States and South Africa. For 14 years until they met with resounding defeat at Cuito Cuanavale in 1988, South African forces intervened openly and massively against the Angolan people on behalf of their proxy force of UNITA. In the sixteen years leading to the signing of the Bicesse Accord, UNITA had deployed rural terrorism resulting in starvation, 500,000 deaths between 1980 and 1988, displaced over 1.5 million people and made Angola to have the highest proportion of limbless (40,000 amputees) in the world.[16]

Cuito Cuanavale and Peace Initiative

The defeat of South Africa at Cuito Cuanavale by a joint Cuban-FAPLA (forcas Armada Popular para libertacao da Angola) army signified a change of balance of forces in Angola and in the region. The MPLA's military victory precipitated the New York Accord of December 1988 that culminated in the independence of Namibia in 1990. Cuito Cuanavale also provided the necessary impetus for an international settlement in Angola. It was as a result of the events of Cuito that South African officials were forced to the negotiating table with the MPLA. Hitherto South Africa opted for a military option of overthrowing the MPLA government in contrast to the United States policy of forcing the MPLA to the negotiating table with UNITA. The

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[16] *W. Minter, Account from angola: UNITA as described by ex-participants and foreign Visitors (Amsterdam: African European Institute/AWEPAA, 1990), pp.6.*

failure of the military option in Angola facilitated the ascendance of bureaucrats over securocrats in determining South African foreign policy.

Other factors that contributed to bringing the MPLA and UNITA to a negotiating table included internal strife within the MPLA, economic hardships and also the rapprochement between the two superpowers entangled in the Angolan conflict. It has to be stressed that the United States and the Soviet Union had pursued a two-prolonged approach: continued military support for the warring factions and encouragement of a negotiated end to the civil war. The successful implementation of the USA brokered Tripartite Agreement of 22 December 1988 bolstered the USA-Soviet credibility as brokers and guarantors of regional agreements. Although many initiatives were undertaken by many parties including leading African statesmen,[17] it was the mediation of Portugal, the USA and the Soviet Union that broke the deadlocks in peace talks leading to the signing of the Bicesse Accord of 31 May 1991.

The Transition to Democracy

The Bicesse Accord of May 1991 ushered in the ceasefire and heralded the advent of a transition to democratic society. The timetable for the transition was a compromise between the MPLA three years and UNITA's one year period of preparation for the election. Both parties genuinely believed they could win open elections. Under the Bicesse Accords the initiation of the electoral process was left with the government of the day. To facilitate political activity the MPLA government passed a new law of association allowing for the first time the formation of political parties. However, the electoral law rigid requirements of 3,000 signed up members from at least 14 of the 18 provinces initially hampered the registration of parties until the January 1992 multi-party conference agreed to relenting them. UNITA's boycott of the conference and its refusal to recognise the smaller parties failed to prevent their participation in the electoral process.

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[17] *Africa confidential No.30 15 December 1989.*

In the transition period between the signing of the peace agreement and the elections Angola witnessed a proliferation of political parties, spawned by the new law of association. By August 1991 Africa Confidential reported 30 political parties in existence. Most of these emergent political parties were led by former MPLA members and their programmes were not any different from the MPLA's. The majority of the political parties had too narrow a regional base to have any significant influence. Their hope lay in coming together as a third force providing an alternative to the two major parties. That the political parties failed to form an alliance was the making of their own downfall.

It is only fair to indicate that the MPLA government had attempted and succeeded in implementing most of the provisions of the Bicesse accords. Both UNITA and MPLA took their places on the peace commissions (such as the Joint Political-Military Commission, Political Commission, Mixed Verification and Monitoring Commission and the Commission for the Formation of the Armed Forces) to ensure that the activities and legislation followed the accords. The major problems with implementing the provisions of the accords lay with delaying the release of political prisoners and UNITA's interference with the freedom of movement of members of other political parties.[18] *(Infringements of a military nature are discussed below). Although UNITA was prepared to monitor the implementation of the accords they did not want to be associated with the responsibility for government. The strategy was to wait for the government to trip over its laces and make political milage out of it. On the overall, the transition period had gone so well that no parties talked about boycotting the elections because of serious violation of the peace accord. The peace agreement of May 1991 held and lasted until the elections.*

September 1992 Elections

The election campaign and the elections themselves were a clear demonstration of Angolans' commitment to democracy as a way of resolving political conflicts. Campaigning opened de jure in August 1992. During the electoral campaign the

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[18]. *Africa Confidential Vol.32 No.17 30 August 1991.*

two major parties took diametrically opposite strategies. The MPLA under President Dos Santos championed the cause of reconciliation assuring Angolans that the bitter battles of Cuito Cuanavale, Cunene, Mavinga and many more should be put behind. The MPLA committed itself to openness and the reconstruction of the economy. Dos Santos' populist and slick approach broached by his experienced Brazilian election managers won him support on the day of reckoning.

On the contrary, Savimbi's electoral chances were damaged by a series of miscalculations which depicted a failure to switch from authoritarian military style struggle to open electoral politics.[19] *UNITA waged a vicious campaign of vindication and revenge if it won the elections. Fernando Goncalves had detailed UNITA's threats and acts of violence which portrayed the movement as intolerant and not providing so much a better alternative to the MPLA.*[20] *While Dos Santos focused on reconciliation and opening possibilities for a government of national unity, Savimbi targeted his campaign on empty anti-MPLA and anti-Dos Santos slogans denouncing any government of national unity. The UNITA strategies of intimidating its opponents only served to alienate would-be followers. It was earlier argued that UNITA's reputation for viciousness manifested in the planting of anti-personnel mines in the fields of peasants calculated to prevent them from cultivating their crops and the elimination of opponents counted on election days.*

The elections, supervised by a UN mission, were judged free and fair by the 800 international observers who had unlimited access to the country and to the electoral process. In fact some of the observers had seen the whole process through from the passing of the Electoral Act, the registration of voters, the election days to the counting of the votes. The electoral process was applauded as one of most exemplary in Africa despite the extreme logistical difficulties in a society bedeviled by high illiteracy and deep rooted divisions. The turn out at the more than 5,000 polling stations throughout the country was very high, over 90% of the registered voters. Within a day of the final voting the international observers and the UN

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[19]. *"The Rape of the Region", Africa South and East, November, 1992*

[20]. *Fernando Goncalves, "Angolan Elections: Fair and Feared", SAPEM October 1992.*

pronounced the elections fair and free.

Two days after the elections with the partial results showing MPLA and Dos Santos leading, opposition leaders from other parties attempted to persuade Savimbi to accept the election results. Instead Savimbi retreated to Huambo where he claimed that the elections had been rigged and threatened that the announcement of the results would cause his supporters to resort to violence. Although he rejected the concept of a coalition government before the elections, after a sound defeat he called for a coalition government between the MPLA and UNITA. The swift dispatch of independent observers and members of other parties to 18 provinces to investigated fraud allegations came up with the verdict of the elections being "fair and free". However, from a logistical point of view the number of election UN monitors was smaller than the polling stations and fraud could happen without being detected. It is equally true that the UN was not the only organisation with election monitors in Angola.

The repeatedly delayed announcement of the election results came on 17 October 1992. By this time every Angolan had known that UNITA had obtained 34.10% while the MPLA had 53.74% of the parliamentary votes. In the presidential elections results Dos Santos obtained 49.57% a little less than the 50% required by the electoral Act to win outrightly, Savimbi got 40.07%. Under the electoral Act there was to be a second round of presidential elections.[21] *At the provincial level UNITA only managed to control four provincial legislative assemblies and the other 14 went to the MPLA. UNITA had been defeated at every level by a margin of more than ten percent points. It is worth noting that the MPLA had reversed the recent trend where the incumbent leaders and their political parties had been rejected in the polls by populations keen to vote out old authoritarian regimes.*[22]

One of the factors contributing to the escalation of the conflict in Angola was the international community's failure to back the democratically elected MPLA

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[21]. *Facts and Reports, vol.22 No.V 30 October 1992, quoting Radio Nacional de Angola, Luanda.*

[22]. *Goncalves, "Angolan Elections: Fair and Feared", p.35.*

government shortly after the election results were announced. The strong arm-twisting, mediating tactics of Pik Botha, in the country which he helped to wreck, only compounded the situation. The strategy of calling for a government of national unity and increased role of Savimbi in the government even after he had been defeated only gave UNITA confidence to reject the elections. A lesson to be drawn from this experience is that the international community should stand steadfastly in support of democratically elected governments while forcing the losers to accept defeat.

The worst War in the World of 1993

Savimbi's withdrawal to Huambo in mid October 1992 and the subsequent rejection of the election results and his appeal to all UNITA armed forces to return to their units to resume "the battles for restoring the dignity of the Bantu" signalled the outbreak of the civil war yet again. According to Chris McGreal, foreign military observers believed that UNITA started preparing for another war the day the fighting stopped in 1991.[23] It is a known fact that UNITA employed delaying tactics and always postponed the dismantling of its army. UNITA in fact stockpiled weapons and continued to receive supplies from South Africa and Zaire in direct contravention of the Bicesse Accords. While handing in dilapidated AK-47s, UNITA tucked away the multiple rocket-launchers, rocket propelled grenades and specialised armoured cars. South Africa's involvement drew protests from Zimbabwe and Botswana whose air space had been violated by transport planes from South Africa. It should be said that UNITA used the cover of the ceasefire to infiltrate the cities it had been unable to penetrate during the war.

The MPLA were least prepared for the outbreak of the war for a number of reasons. McGreal observed that for the MPLA "large chunks of its forces did not so much demobilise as disintegrate".[24] The government forces were faced with indiscipline and low morale and most of them could not wait to get out of the army. The other

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[23]. *Chris McGreal, "Unita Piles up arms as war come closer", Facts and Reports, vol.22, No.v 30 October 1992.*

[24]. *Mcgreal, "Unita piles up arms".*

factor is that the new army was barely ready to take up a challenge posed by disciplined UNITA forces. Admittedly, the government had trained a crack urban police force nicknamed by Savimbi as "ninjas" which was well equipped and could be effectively used in any urban conflict. In fact the "ninjas" came in handy in preventing a UNITA military take over in Luanda.

The civil war that broke out after the elections had been described as the world's bloodiest conflict, unremitting human suffering with a death toll of one thousand people a day. Apart from wrecking such human tragedies as forcing people to feed on rodents and roots, the country has witnessed the worst tribal genocide ever in the name of getting rid of UNITA's Ovimbundu and Bakongo supporters from MPLA controlled areas. Stories of UNITA's beheading fugitives running from the war only aggravates our grief for the innocent civilians. Insecurity has come to permeat the whole country as a consequence of the renewed conflict.

The balance of forces in the war has been changing. At the beginning UNITA inflicted heavy loses on the government especially in the battles for the control of Huambo, Soyo, Cuito and Menongue. Military analyst put UNITAs strength at more than 35,000 men while the government fighting force was estimated at 20,000 troops by November 1993. The government's fortunes seem to have turned around with the Troika's (USA, Russia and Portugal) recognition of the Angolan government to self determination. The diplomatic victory of the MPLA over UNITA was depicted by the Clinton administration's recognition of the government.

The impact of the diplomatic coup by the MPLA is that UNITA's historical supporters such as the USA and South Africa have changed sides and they are providing logistical support to government forces which has tipped the balance of forces. A combination of factors, including the first ever UN oil embargo on a political organisation, MPLA's access to western weapons, Russian willingness to resupply military hardware, Israel's updating of MPLA's MiG 21s and MiG 23s with new guidance systems and internal and external political pressure on the South African government to stop private supplies to UNITA has finally isolated Savimbi

and tilted the balance of forces in favour of the government.[25] *But UNITA's ability to sustain the conflict and countenance isolation has not been easy to determine.*

The government strategy had been to remobilize an army of 75,000 troops that would drive UNITA guerrillas away from the cities and back to the bush where it could remain politically isolated and unable to wage a full scale civil war. At this stage of the conflict it appeared as if for the first time a military solution to the problem was possible. Savimbi has been drawing support from very limited sources such as Zaire and private or covet government supplies from South Africa. The change in the fortunes was underlined by UNITA's Secretary General Eugenio Manuvakola's admission of his forces suffering heavy loses during the government air offensives that commenced in August 1993.[26]

Peace Talks and Prospects for a Peaceful Settlement

Margaret Anstee and her successor Malian Alioune Blondin Beye, UN special representatives in Angola, have worked tirelessly to get the Angolan peace talks going since the break down of the peace accord in early October 1992. Margaret Anstee's efforts to broker peace resulted in the aborted Addis Ababa summit where UNITA failed to show up and in the May Abidjan peace talks. The peace talks collapsed over the timing and mechanics of UNITA's withdrawal from the territories it occupied after the elections. Many analysts agree that UNITA was not ready to make a deal in May because it was winning the war then. Anstee is of the opinion that had the UN allowed a symbolic peace keeping force she would have cut a deal during the peace talks.[27]

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[25]. *Africa Confidential 27 August 1993.*

[26]. *SouthScan, 13 August 1993. The Natal Mercury (14/10/93) reports continued South African violations of the Botswanan and Namibian air space by cargo planes believed to be carrying military equipment for UNITA in defiance of the UN embargo against the rebels.*

[27]. *The African News Network report by Paul Taylor of the Washington Post Foreign Service.*

Following the collapse of the talks, UNITA, sensing its strength and paralysis of the international response, took the oil option so as to scare the oil companies into stopping production and shutting of the government lifeline. In this regard it succeeded in retaking Soyo and was attempting to forge an alliance with Frente para Libertacao do Enclave do Cabinda - Forcas Armadas do Cabinda (FLEC-FAC). As indicated earlier, the MPLA fortunes turned around with its diplomatic victories that has culminated in a rejuvenated Forcas Armada do Angola (FAA) capable of inflicting heavy losses on UNITA.

The familiar pattern from UNITA has been to call for an immediate halt to the fighting and opening negotiations with the government once the war turns against its forces. On 11 August 1993 Savimbi called for an immediate halt to the fighting and the unconditional resumption of peace talks.[28] *The government rejected Savimbi's peace offers insisting on UNITA's signing of the Abidjan protocol and abiding by existing peace agreements and UN resolutions. In the meantime the UN sponsored arms and oil embargo came into being after the 15 September 1993 deadline. With odds working against him in the battlefield and diplomatically Savimbi made yet another call on 6 October 1993 for peace talks recognising the outcome of the 1992 election results and the validity of the May Bicesse accords. This was followed by a unilateral declaration of a ceasefire. In both calls UNITA had indicated that the accords will have to be "brought up to date".*

As long as UNITA did not offer to withdrawal from the territories it occupies since the elections there was very little in its offer to entice the MPLA back to the peace talks. In fact the MPLA had reasons to doubt Savimbi's self-declared ceasefire as fighting continued to be reported in northern Malange province by 14 October.[29] *Although the MPLA had indicated a preference for a peaceful solution to the problem, the victories over UNITA in late 1993 may have hardened their stance towards the rebels. There was talk of hardliners taking centre stage in directing MPLA's policy towards UNITA.*

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[28]. Namibian *12 August 1993*

[29]. *"Starving Angolans now eating rodents"* The Natal Mercury *Thursday 14 October 1993.*

Both UNITA and the MPLA had hard choices to make in their search for a settlement. Although the military option appeared attractive if and when Savimbi could be driven from the occupied towns, it entailed further destruction of the already dilapidated economy and infrastructure, more deaths and human misery. From a military point of view a further weakening of UNITA to a point were it could no longer control towns may appear alluring because it would eliminate a serious obstacle to reestablishing of peace in the country. This scenario assumed that a weakened UNITA will engage in peace talks seriously but with reduced bargaining power than at present. This view would be an accurate reading of UNITA's tactics over the past years. The danger in this approach is that the rebels may choose to continue fighting and this will not provide a foundation for building a better Angola.

In December 1993, the MPLA choice of a process of political accommodation at the time of its's strength and high moral ground laid a basis for neutralising Savimbi without continued destruction. There is merit in advocating the creation of a favourable climate for dialogue by acting in such a way as avoiding UNITA's international isolation which could create a vacuum and close off all doors on peace talks. Savimbi is already isolated and offering him an "honourable" settlement could secure his cooperation in implementing the peace accords. By taking up UNITA's recent call for them to come up with proposals that provide guarantees for its continued existence and participation in a government of national unity the MPLA government had seized a great opportunity that could return Angola back on track of implementing its democratic changes. In whichever way peace returns to Angola a policy of reconciliation will be imperative and a negotiated settlement provides a better starting point.

The Lusaka talks which commenced in November 1993, almost a year after the outbreak of renewed conflict,have been tough and difficult. Although much has been achieved, the frequent breakdowns of the talks has dampened the hopes of a negotiated settlement that would return Angola to a peaceful and meaningful life. The talks have broken down on political grounds which had been the last hurdle with the two sides having already agreed on legal and military issues.

Disagreement centres around two issues; the ministries to go to UNITA and the governorships of provinces. The government proposed the ministries of health, tourism, commerce and construction materials while UNITA preferred defence, finance and interior. The other crucial issue where disagreement has emerged is that of the governorship of the provinces for UNITA. It should be remembered that UNITA won elections in four out of 18 provinces, namely, Benguela, Bie, Huambo and Cuando Cubango. The government has offered UNITA the governorship of Cuando Cubango, Uige and Lunda Sul. However, UNITA wanted Huambo to be added to its list. The government also offered UNITA the deputy governorships of Luanda, Cuanza Sul, Benguela, Huila and Bengo. Here again UNITA asked for Cuanza Norte instead of Cuanza Sul, Bie in place of Bengo and for the inclusion of Moxico and Malange.[30] *It is worth-noting that in all these UNITA has been raising the stakes all the time. What is curious is the government's choice of provinces to give to UNITA. It is evident that the struggle for political control has shifted from the ballot box to the negotiating table. The prospects of rewarding a loser at the polls with power not mandated by the people smacks of cheating the electorate and does not auger well for democracy.*

UNITA's choice of war over a negotiated settlement will further isolate it from the international community. The implementation of the arms and oil embargo could be fatal to its continued military existence in a future Angola. An acceptance of the accords, the election results and withdrawing from the territories it occupies could still earn Savimbi some living space in Angola. To accept a negotiated settlement while the movement is strong would help curve out an increased role in the future political era. It is unlikely that UNITA could obtain a military victory in the present circumstances. The choices facing UNITA will not give it its much vaunted dignity. What it will be accorded is humiliation but how that comes about is what matters for the future of democracy in Angola.

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[30] *"UNITA accept posts in new Angola Govt", The Citizen Saturday 19 March 1994.*

Challenges

The major political challenge facing Angolans is that of national building in a divided country. This is probably the first time in the past 500 years that Angolans had the opportunity to forge ahead with nation-building. In a democratic Angola class cleavages intertwined with racial and ethnic divisions are likely to pose a threat to stability. The continued balkanisation of Angola by the current civil war perpetuates a process of fragmenting society begun under colonial rule. As we all know none of the political parties have access to all parts of the country, the task of opening up the country to all who live in it is mammoth.

The second major political difficulty is the commitment to the use of political means of sovling problems within the country. The heritage and norm over the years has been the resorting to military means. This entails the transformation of the warring parties from military organisations to political movements. The outbreak of the second civil war has demonstrated the hazards inherent in this transformation. The task of transforming UNITA especially into a political movement committed to peaceful ways of solving political differences is tougher and will be viewed with susciption. It is important to mention that for the other political parties the transition has been completed rather successfully. The on and off discussions being held in Lusaka are a necessary step to diffuse the political problem in Angola, however, they have set a bad precedent. Losers in the political arena should never be allowed to browbeat others through the military means until they agree with them. This is a negation of the process to democracy.

One of the weaknesses of the democratic process in Angola has been to focus on the reform of state power and the neglect of the restructuring of civil society. Hall maintains that "If democratic life involves more than a periodic vote, the locus of people's actvities will be the 'private' realm of civil society and the the scope of their actions will depend largely on the resources they can command".[31] In Angola the MPLA government had assumed that it could replace civil society by collapsing the state and civil society into a single movement. As already evidenced during the

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[31]. Hall, Modernity and Its Futures, p44.

1992 elections civil society in Angola is very weak. What then is required is ffor the state to provide opportunities for people to establish themselves in their capacities of being citizens. This could take various social movements within the society, but this has been slow to emerge in Angola for obvious reasons.

Angola requires a cease-fire under the supervision of the UN whose task would be the confinement and demobilisation of UNITA and government forces and the formation of the Angolan Armed Forces. This is a conditio sine qua non for the creation of conditions enabling the second round of presidential elections to be held. An effective and well supported role of the UN is therefore essential to the completion of the transition to democracy in Angola. It is hoped that when the opportunity come to implement the cease-fire and the peace accords the UN and the international community will have learned from their mistakes of trying to achieve peace on the cheap. International meddling in Angolan security matters should also be brought to an end. In fact angolan security should linked with other countries to a regional security package in the post-apartheid. The price for democracy does not come cheap.

A democratic Angola will require a strong economy to shoulder the cost of reconstruction. In the past one and a half years the Angolan economy has been battered more than in the sixteen years of the first phase of the civil war. With the war spreading to every corner of the country economic activities have been brought to a standstill. Insecurity bled by the war has brought peasant agricultural activities to a halt. As the diamonds fields in Lunda Norte have been turned into battlefields current production of 20,000 carats a month amounts to 50 percent of normal activity.[32] *UNITA's selling of diamonds coupled with the flourishing parallel market in diamonds are manifestation of the economic turmoil facing Angola. Over the last months UNITA had taken the strategy of disrupting oil production and shutting off the government financial lifeline through attacks on oil installation. The US diplomatic recognition of the MPLA removed any remaining constraints UNITA had on attacking the oil installations. Fears of UNITA- FLEC*

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[32]. West Africa *16 August 1993.*

Renovado alliance and a possibility of a joint campaign caused grave concern in government circles. Whether UNITA would take the war to the oil companies remains to be seen. Cabinda is one area of Angola said to be well fortified. The material damage being inflicted on economic installations in diamond and oil fields will be paid for by the Angolans. In this regard the war is a serious set back to the process of reconstruction. The task of reconstructing the economy will be tougher than two years ago when peasants began returning to their homes and life was beginning to be normalised. So long as the war continues Angola will sink further into an economic quagmire.

Although a return to peace is a conditio sine quo non for a broader based economic recovery, the convergence of the MPLA and UNITA views on necessity of a market economy should improve prospects of success of the reconstruction programme. The government of national unity will require to correct the equilibria in the balance of payments. Angola is already implementing the international monetary fund structural adjustment programmes (SAPs). The political costs of implementing SAPs which entails devaluations of currency, worsening of inflationary spiral, limitation on public expenditures on social programmes such as health and education, and also the regressive shift in income distribution culminate in the depoliticisation of the populace and thereby undermining an incipient democracy. Elsewhere in Africa SAPs have enhanced economic depence on the west and undermined both legitimacy and political of these states. SAPs involves the state in the reproduction of the inaqualities of every day life. Angolans have reacted violently to the austerity measures and this certainly is a serious threat to stability.

Angola will be invaded by a swarm of foreign government and non government development agencies purporting ostensibly to alleviate poverty, to increase economic output ant ot reduce dependence on foreign nationas. The experience of Southern African countries such as Lesotho and Zambia is that it gives rise to a substantial "development aid industry" employing expatriate "consultant and exparts" by hundreds and churning out programmes which host contries have little time to evaluate and implement. The proliferation of development aid agencies in Angola and their modus operandi could lead to duplication, rivalry and

balkanisation of the country which could undermine the capacity of the state to regulate the economy. The international aid problematic's advocacy of the disengagemnent of the state from directing economic development will impose an unregulated reign of foreign private capital which could create unfree and unequal conditions of political participation of Angolans, antethetical to democracy.
If democracy is seen as a way of containing the powers of the state and of mediating among competing individuals and collective projects, the same principles should also be applied to the economic arena. Liberalisation and SAPs should be subject to mediation among competing interests.

Government intervention in the economy will be necessay in search of mechanism to prevent the wrecking of the economy by the excesses of international and private capital. The reconstruction of the economy into one capable of satisfying and assuring basic needs and rights of Angolans is an essential condition for a stable democracy and needs to be protected from the unbridled international capital. The challenge facing Angola is to select an assortment of measures such as selective protectionism, regulation of foreign enterprises, promotion of exports and joint ventures between the state and private capital. The state in Angola should continue to play a leading role in regulating the economy in order to safeguard democracy, to protect the impoverished civil society from further declines in living standards, to prevent undue international capital's influence that could erode legitimacy and self-determination and hence undermine the democratic prospects of the country.

Caught in the middle of all this madness are the Angolans who have known nothing but anguish for thirty years. According to reports the fighting has left an estimated two million Angolans as refugees in their own country. The fighting has prevented a group of UN agencies and private relief agencies from supplying food to the starving thousands. It took courage from Manuel da Silva, director of UN humanitarian aid in Angola, to negotiate the resumption of food supplies to cities such as Cuito where the government claimed residents had eaten human flesh to survive.[33] *While thousands are starving and scores dying from hunger, health*

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[33]. *"Bid to get Cuito aid", The Natal Mercury Tuesday October 19, 1993.*

worker are forced to cut off legs and arms with no medication.[34] *Until the second week in October 1993 UNITA had denied humanitarian groups safety guarantees to fly to besieged cities such as Cuito and Menongue. Human suffering for no real reason except for the greed of a few political lunatics will continue, exacting a heavy toll on lives of thousands of Angolans who would want to be left alone. The world should never allow individuals such as Jonas Savimbi to unleash such human catastrophe as this. The support of the international community for democracy should not only be for the successful cases such as Namibia or Zambia, all those who profess a faith in a multi-party democracy should put an end to disruptive forces.*

Angola faces a tough time ahead in all spheres of human endeavour. The reestablishment of a secure future where individuals will not be allowed by society to wreck such havoc as we have witnessed should be a priority. As already stated this will require disarming all the warring parties under the auspices of an effective UN peace keeping force. The economy will require massive infusion of resources to resuscitate. At the moment the economy is dominated by barter relations and it will require the reintroduction of a cash nexus. This is a mammoth task. The rebuilding of the cities destroyed by the war will cost thousands of dollars. The IMF structural adjustment programme which the government had begun implementing before the resumption of the war will impose additional hardships on a weakened population. The country's strength to rise from the ashes lies in the people of Angola who have demonstrated their determination to survive the mayhem that has engulfed the nation. The road to democracy in Angola is hazardous and fraught with dangers from within and without.

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[34]. *"Now it's 'Apocalypse Cuito' The Star Monday October 18 1993.*

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