

Signal Cascades in Angola's Independence Struggle, 1955-1975

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Abstract: This article considers one aspect of the international relations of the Angolan independence struggle: the prevalence in archives of records reflecting strong support for one of three rival Angolan national liberation movements (NLMs), the MPLA. Simple explanations, including the post-independence dominance of the MPLA in Angolan politics, offer unsatisfactory explanations for the wide appeal of the movement and its platform to non-Angolan attentive publics. The MPLA successfully courted the international community through principled signalling; carefully selected language calibrated to reflect the discourse of liberation that was prevalent at the time. This messaging was reinforced and recirculated among solidarity movements. This 'signal cascade' helped the MPLA gain the moral high ground in a contentious and divisive battle for political control. Investigating the roles of principled signalling as informal internationalism grants important insights into how national liberation movements, as non-state actors, engage with the wider international community to achieve specific political goals.

Keywords: national liberation, Angola, transnational, anticolonial, signalling, signal cascade, solidarity, internationalism, independence

Introduction

During the 1960s, Angola became a site of international anticolonial contestation. The main Angolan national liberation movements (NLMs), the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), were locked in a destructive three-way battle to dominate the independence struggle and defeat Portuguese colonialism.¹ Cognizant of their own material limitations and the dynamics of the cold war international system, each of the three main Angolan movements actively engaged this system by soliciting military aid and moral support from the international community to achieve the collective goal of Angolan independence and their respective goals of destroying each other and dominating the anticolonial struggle.

At root, the fight for independence was a local and regional affair, conducted by the Angolan people. And yet, the international dimensions of decolonization were profound. The global dynamics of Angola's independence struggle were not limited to state-actors and the field of formal international relations. Over time, transnational activist and solidarity groups used their social and political capital to raise awareness about Portuguese intransigence and Angolan self-determination and positioned themselves as central to a global anti-colonial

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<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v20/v20i1a3.pdf>

solidarity movement against the continuation of race-based empire. Like “Vietnam” and “apartheid,” for anti-colonial activists “Angola” became synonymous with injustice on an international scale. Such transnational resistance movements helped to bring the Angolan independence struggle to global attention. However, within these broad, transnational attentive publics a serious question arose—with limited resources and three mutually-antagonistic parties, how best to determine which liberation movement was most deserving of support? That is, if each movement claimed to represent the will of the Angolan people and professed anticolonial values, how did concerned extra-Angolan publics decide where to allocate their limited resources?

To begin to answer this question, this investigation highlights one aspect of the inter- and transnational relations of the Angolan independence struggle: the prevalence of archival records reflecting strong support for the MPLA. This article posits a pattern and a provocation. A significant portion of the extant documentation from these transnational progressive publics, both in public and private archives, whether general, Africa-focused, or Angola-specific, reflects support for the Afro-Marxist MPLA (and consequently, limited support for the FNLA and UNITA). The pattern of pro-MPLA documents was identified through research in eight archives across five countries, with documents in English and French, among other languages, reflecting a mix of national archives and private collections, both physical and online. This pattern was identified during archival research in Portugal, the United States, and other western archives, and was also prevalent in both the textual and visual records.² The proliferation of MPLA-related documents raised the question—can transnational solidarity with the MPLA be explained solely by international socialism or post-civil war politicking, or might other, more suggestive factors be also at play?

As the Angolan nationalist movements expended much of their revolutionary fervour against each other, differentiating themselves became a necessary step to attract material resources (military and humanitarian) and to shift the ideological terrain to support their contradictory claims to representation and legitimacy. The MPLA successfully courted the international community through principled signalling, that is, carefully selected language calibrated to reflect the discourse of liberation that was so prevalent at the time. In its statements and propaganda for international consumption, the MPLA deployed (or exploited, depending on the interpretation) the rhetoric of revolution and the language of liberation more convincingly than its competitors, thus increasing its legitimacy in the eyes of transnational progressive publics, which then reinforced and recirculated this messaging. In turn, solidarity groups were subsequently more willing to commit their limited resources to ensure an MPLA victory and many worked tirelessly to promote the MPLA as the true vanguard of Angolan liberation.

In the campaign to differentiate Angola’s three main independence movements, the multiple processes of transmission, alteration, iteration, and circulation of affective or symbolic language in politicized communications can be considered a ‘signal cascade.’ In IR and international legal studies, a ‘norm cascade’ describes how certain transformative ideas, or ‘norms,’ emerge, are championed by advocates, and then crescendo until they “cascade” through the political environment and are eventually “internalized” and accepted by states.³ In

a signal cascade, by contrast, a primary message or tone is adopted which is then reconfigured and re-sent through various networks, until the idea permeates part of the social world, providing valuable information for attentive publics and actors. This combination of principled signals and signal cascades helped the MPLA gain the moral high ground in a contentious and divisive battle for political control.

A few caveats are in order. First, whatever the inter- and transnational dimensions of Angolan independence—and they were substantial—it was Angolans of all movements who bore the brunt of the fight for independence. And it was Angolans, whether politically engaged or not, who suffered through three decades of violence and destruction. This article does not claim that Angolan independence was an exogenous process. Rather, it explores the role that global connections played in raising the profile and shaping the dialogue around Angolan independence and decolonization, and how these connections emanated from Angolan agents themselves. Similarly, this article makes no claims about the MPLA's record once in power. As José Eduardo dos Santos approached his fourth decade of rule, international observers had long ceased to be enamoured with the MPLA, and intense debate remained about Angola's revolutionary socialist credentials.⁴ Finally, this is a preliminary investigation with correspondingly cautious conclusions. Archives are imperfect and mediated institutions; their collections reflect not unfettered 'reality,' but a combination of what others have deemed important and of historical significance, as well as what kinds of documents are created, saved, and rendered publicly accessible.⁵

Angola's Nationalist Movements

Though Angolans had been fighting for their independence since 1961, the international response escalated during the period of crisis between 1974-1976, contingent upon the collapse of the metropole in Lisbon. By the early 1970s Portugal's simultaneous colonial wars in Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, Cape Verde, Mozambique, and Angola, were sapping the nation's resources and straining its social fabric. On 25 April 1974, a group of disillusioned left-wing military officers, the Armed Forces Movement (*Movimento das Forças Armadas* or MFA), overthrew the right-wing government of Marcelo Caetano, itself a successor regime to that of dictator António de Oliveira Salazar. The new government moved quickly to end Portuguese colonialism and negotiate settlements with each territory, but the inter-movement competition in Angola dramatically complicated the situation. Though the date for the transfer of power was fixed for 11 November 1975, control of independent Angola was not. In autumn 1975, military interventions from the South African Defence Force, supporting UNITA, and the Cuban Military Mission, supporting the MPLA, shocked the world. The Soviet Union sent material support to the MPLA, but it was the United States, influenced by Zaire's Mobutu Sese Seko and Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda, which launched the covert action IAFEATURE to undermine the MPLA's new government.⁶

For most observers, this external action marked the internationalization of Angolan independence, and Angola was considered yet another cold war 'proxy' battle.⁷ However, there is ample evidence that Angola's competing nationalists actively engaged with the international community decades before the intense superpower attention and militarization of 1974-75. Not only did the Angolan NLMs participate in the wider conversations over independence, self-

determination, and liberation, but they sought out sympathetic international agents, institutions, and forums to plead their cases before a global public, which included formal international and transnational bodies, such as the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU, now the African Union), as well as informal appeals to transnational solidarity groups. Both strategies, formal and informal internationalism, were used to gain material aid and to help shift the ideological terrain around Portuguese colonialism and African independence.

Despite being key actors in many of the twentieth century's most dramatic and impactful political events, NLMs as a category of political actor remain understudied.⁸ The rise and mobilization of such movements accelerated geopolitical and social crises, primarily in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and many of the post-1945 conflicts commonly dismissed as 'proxy' wars between supposed clients of the United States and the Soviet Union are more accurately understood as crises of decolonization and self-determination intersecting with the cold war international system.⁹ Politics were made not only in the superpower capitals of Moscow and Washington, DC, or in highly localized acts of resistance, but also among and across the world's national liberation movements and their allies.

Defining 'national liberation,' determining who or what constituted a national liberation movement, or even determining what national liberation meant in a given context is no easy task. In general, however, an NLM can be defined as an expansive socio-political movement, often with a militarized wing, characterized by broad secessionist aims. In the post-1945 variant, NLMs have often justified their program under the aegis of anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism, emphasized the right to national self-determination as held in international law, and aspired to the creation of a formal, sovereign nation-state. To achieve this goal, NLMs use multiple tools, including appeals to the international community and international organizations, forming transnational networks with likeminded groups, and appropriating and legitimizing the use of force. Such movements pursued their revisionist agendas across multiple levels of analysis: local, national, regional, international, and transnational.

Previous research on the internationalization of Angolan independence clearly situated Angola's struggle in the wider continuum of anti-colonial independence movements that helped shape the twentieth century.¹⁰ Still, Angola's trajectory is unusual for two reasons: first, though anti-colonial movements crested in the early 1960s, arguably the height of Angola's independence struggles came after the Carnation Revolution in 1974 when the Portuguese state collapsed; second, Angola's 'late' entrée onto the stage of decolonization politics prompted a full-scale international intervention, with mercenaries and materiel streaming into the region. Each Angolan movement, the FNLA, the MPLA, and UNITA, insisted that they alone were the true representatives of the will of "the Angolan people" and thus entitled to commit acts of political violence on their behalf, to posit a vision of a postcolonial future (however ill-defined), and to represent "the Angolan people" on the international stage, in formal and informal spaces.

As the first of the Angolan independence movements to gain international recognition and support, both from the UN and OAU and from transnational activist groups, the FNLA helped set the tone of Angolan independence, at least for external observers. Led from Léopoldville

(now Kinshasa) by committed anti-communist Holden Roberto, the FNLA was also the first favourite of western governments.¹¹ As early as 1957 FNLA literature located the Angolan struggle in the international system.¹² Angolan independence was not simply about removing the Portuguese, but about ridding all Africa of colonial influence. In 1960, with Congolese independence looming, Roberto's movement opened an office in Léopoldville and began publishing a "torrent of mimeographed tracts in French, Portuguese, and the major vernacular languages of Angola."¹³ Roberto remained based in Congo and founded the Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile (*Governo revolucionário de Angola no exílio* or GRAE), electing to manage operations from there. It was through the GRAE that Roberto established his international credentials as the face of Angolan nationalism and opposition to Portuguese domination. Primarily, the GRAE styled itself not as a political party, guerilla army, or national liberation movement, but as the rightful government of Angola in wrongful exile. Yet while Roberto's movement was perhaps the first to convincingly articulate an internationalized view of Angolan independence, he was also the first to be linked to an 'imperialist' power, the US.

Next was the MPLA, which began as an offshoot of the Angolan Communist Party (*Partida Comunista de Angola* or PCA) in 1956. On 18 April 1961 in Casablanca, influential Cape Verdean revolutionary and intellectual Amílcar Cabral and others formed the Conference of Nationalist Organizations of the Portuguese Colonies (*Conferência das Organizações Nacionalistas das Colónias Portuguesas* or CONCP), which broadly united the leftist Portuguese African movements.¹⁴ The organization was a loose one, and each movement operated independently. However, the creation of CONCP meant that the MPLA could also point to a multinational collective of likeminded Afro-socialist independence movements, allowing the MPLA to claim to be in ideological affinity with the main liberation movements in the rest of the Portuguese territories, leaving the FNLA, and later UNITA, isolated. In 1962, Dr. Agostinho Neto, a Black Angolan physician and poet, and already an important nationalist figure, became the movement's leader upon his release from prison.¹⁵ The MPLA received military assistance from the Soviet Union, the socialist bloc (with the noted exception of the Peoples Republic of China), several Scandinavian states, and, decisively, Cuba.¹⁶

Finally, in 1966 Jonas Savimbi's UNITA entered the fray.¹⁷ In February 1961, Savimbi joined the FNLA, by 1962 Savimbi was the Secretary-General, and by May 1963 he was chair of the African Liberation Committee of the OAU.¹⁸ However, relations with Roberto deteriorated irrevocably with the establishment of the GRAE and Roberto's close ties with Mobutu. Like Roberto and Neto, Savimbi was personally ambitious, and began to develop his own independent contacts in Europe and Africa. In July 1964, Savimbi took 186 soldiers and left the FNLA, accusing Roberto of delaying an eastern front in the guerrilla war and misusing funds. A major point of contention was that neither the FNLA nor MPLA were based wholly within Angola. As such, Savimbi's carefully calculated portrayal of UNITA as rural and populist capitalized upon Angola's pre-existing ethnic and social tensions. As the last of the nationalist movements to form, arguably UNITA was at a disadvantage since there were already two viable movements in operation.

All three movements aggressively courted international opinion, for practical and political reasons. Creating a strong, international case against Portugal was key to convincing mainstream multilateral institutions such as the UN General Assembly to turn their time and

efforts towards supporting Angolan independence, and to secure much needed proffers of arms and funds from wealthier donor states. Unsurprisingly, these state level relationships consolidated along ideological lines, with the US, Federal Republic of Germany and other NATO allies first supporting the anti-communist FNLA, with some later shifting support to UNITA, and the socialist bloc supporting the MPLA. But when it came to the UN, the OAU, and other international organizations, the ideological lines were less clearly drawn. Highlighting the divisions among the movements was a questionable tactic, as no less than the OAU Liberation Committee expressed frustration at the factional strife. In February 1969, the Liberation Committee reported conclusively that each of the movements had received external aid, creating “some evidence of Sino-Soviet rivalries; GRAE claims that it receives Chinese arms but says nothing about receiving American supplies; China has praised UNITA; and the USSR has supplied aid to MPLA, the movement officially recognised by the OAU.”¹⁹ The OAU Liberation Committee spent considerable time and effort insisting upon FNLA-MPLA cooperation, to no avail.

Solidarity Movements Respond

While Africans could, and most certainly did, speak for themselves on the world stage, as the independence struggle continued extra-African organizations became increasingly interested in Angola’s nationalist movements. In tracing the international dimensions of Angolan independence, the records of such transnational solidarity movements are important evidence of the international reach and spread of the issue.²⁰ But much can also be learned by investigating the types of narratives and language present in these documents. It was during archival research into the nationalist movements’ international outreach that a pattern became evident. Despite the presence of three movements, a preponderance of archival material was from groups who identified primarily with the MPLA, often explicitly comparing them to the rival FNLA and UNITA. Moreover, the evidence suggests that this pattern became more pronounced in the period of 1968-1970, as several key organizations, such as the American Committee on Africa (ACOA), shifted their support from the FNLA to the MPLA.²¹ Like the UN and the OAU, solidarity organizations were forced to acknowledge the increasing public animosity among the three Angolan liberation movements, and difficult decisions had to be made about which movement to support.

A primary example is that of the American Committee on Africa (ACOA). ACOA was founded in 1953 in New York City with the express purpose of supporting anti-racist and anti-colonial liberation movements in Africa and to ‘speaking’ for Africa on the international stage.²² ACOA quickly become known for attending African conferences and debates, collaborating with the UN and OAU, and sending their assessments to the US government, thus gaining influential friends in Africa.²³ One of the first people ACOA Executive Director George Houser met when he visited Angola in 1954 was Manuel Barros Neaca, an early nationalist activist and Holden Roberto’s uncle. After Roberto slipped into Accra, Ghana to attend the All African People’s Conference in 1958, he wrote to Houser directly for travel assistance to New York City to speak at the UN General Assembly. It was apparently Houser’s idea to attach Roberto to another country’s UN delegation (Ghana or Guinea) to escape suspicion.²⁴ When Roberto finally

arrived in the US in December 1959, he frequently used ACOA offices as a base, even mimeographing his statement to the UN on ACOA machinery.²⁵

ACOA's advocacy work continued through the 1960s and is too extensive to review here. However, while tracing the evolution of ACOA's work a noteworthy pattern emerged. Like the UN and the OAU, by 1967 ACOA was forced to acknowledge the increasing public animosity among the three Angolan liberation movements. In Houser's words, "as contending and competing movements arose, whom should we support?"²⁶ Houser continued: "[o]nly gradually it became clear that the rise of the MPLA and an unfriendly competition between these movements with ethnic, racial, and ideological differences confronted me with some difficult choices."²⁷ Houser and the ACOA recognized "the primacy of the MPLA" at the end of the 1960s.

Other examples from the archival record reflect a similar pattern. Consider the recollections of Nordic activists, whose memories on Angolan independence were compiled in a series called *Nordic Documentation on the Liberation Struggle in Southern Africa*. Like many, Swedish activist and professor Dick Urban Vestbro became aware of the struggles on the African continent in the wake of the Sharpeville massacre in South Africa in 1960. In 1966, Vestbro and his university and activist colleagues in Lund turned their attention to the Portuguese Territories. At that point, most Scandinavian organizations were in contact with the FNLA. As Vestbro recalled, initially, "[t]here was very little attention paid to Angola and the attention that was gaining momentum was not necessarily for MPLA but rather for FNLA. ... No one wrote much about MPLA but I got a very favourable impression by asking questions of Aghostino [*sic*] Neto and other MPLA people."²⁸

Yet by 1969, when Vestbro attempted to visit the liberated zones in Angola, things had changed: "when I came back to Sweden, after a year keeping in touch with most of the liberation movements all that time... The MPLA became my main contact." As Vestbro recalled, in the highly ideological atmosphere of the 1960s, dominated by the shadow of the Vietnam War, the MPLA's message of anti-racist, anti-imperialist solidarity truly resonated and is worth reproducing at length:

We started to analyse the situation in Angola where there were three organizations calling themselves liberation movements, the MPLA, FNLA and UNITA. We decided not to take the stand that it was up to the Angolans to sort this out, but said we'd better examine them, so we collected all the information we could get. To do that, we kept in touch with other solidarity organizations in Europe and in North America. I've looked at my correspondence from the time and I really kept in touch with a lot of organizations. We managed to get quite a lot of good information. We also looked carefully at the Portuguese war communiqués and compared them with what the liberation movements said, and so we found that MPLA was serious, it was anti-racist which UNITA and FNLA weren't, and it was anti-imperialist... [A]fter intensive discussion among ourselves, in all five Africa Groups, we decided not to support UNITA or FNLA but only MPLA.²⁹

Progressive religious organizations also reflected this pattern. In 1970 the World Council of Churches (WCC) allocated \$20,000 in aid to both the FNLA and MPLA, and a further \$10,000 to UNITA. By 1971, however, the WCC donated \$25,000 to the MPLA, and \$7,500 each to FNLA

and UNITA.”³⁰ Furious, the FNLA released a statement on 20 September of that year accusing the WCC of basing its judgements on “political rather than humanitarian” considerations.³¹ The FNLA claimed to be recognized by approximately thirty African and Asian states. The report also emphasized that the FNLA alone was responsible for the almost 600,000 who had “fled colonialism” and found refuge in Zaire. Perhaps most tellingly, the FNLA/GRAE army (formally the Angola National Liberation Army) insisted it was the only fighting presence in areas which held Angola’s exportable resource wealth, coffee, and diamonds, thus “[c]olonialism [was] forced to concentrate the majority of its fighting in those regions.” The MPLA, in contrast, fought “sporadically” on the Zambian frontier, “a zone of savanna [*sic*] and desert (one inhabitant per square kilometre) which [had] no economic significance.”³²

In a March 1974 report titled “Education: A Strategic Element in the Angolan Liberation Struggle,” the World University Service, Denmark (WUS-DK) pointed to the MPLA as an example of the importance of education in the revolutionary process.³³ The report began by asserting that a “great part of the danish [*sic*] support has been given to *the Angolan liberation movement MPLA* [emphasis in original].”³⁴ The MPLA’s emphasis on revolutionary education, or “Pupil as Worker” clearly resonated with WUS-DK, which enthusiastically noted that “[e]ver since the start of the national liberation struggle in 1961 MPLA has given high priority to education. At the end of the fifties some of the co-founders and originators of the movement were teaching in *secret schools* in the towns, where the movement started....Today MPLA runs a number of schools in Angola itself [emphasis in original].”³⁵ Famous ‘secret schools’ included the Angolan Institute of Education, near Dolisie, Congo-Brazzaville, and the Augusto Ngangula Institute, in Zambezi, Zambia. In them, students worked alongside militants and civilians in the “physical, practical work with the soil, with trees and crops” and were taught history, geography, tool-making, animal husbandry, and “principles of revolutionary organization.”³⁶ The purpose of the MPLA’s schools was to prevent the ‘brain drain’ of young Angolans sent abroad for schooling and to create a “national consciousness” to help Angolans prepare for a post-colonial future.³⁷ As the report noted, “the importance of children remaining in close contact with the national problems, the liberation struggle and their own cultural background cannot be overestimated.”³⁸

Later that year in November 1974, a collective of three Québec-based NGOs, OXFAM-Québec, *Rallyes Tiers-Monde* and *Service universitaire canadien outre-mer* (SUCO) which began in June 1961 as the Québécois analogue to Canadian University Service Overseas (CUSO), published an appeal to the Canadian government asking the Minister of External Affairs Allan McEachern to commit funds to assist the southern African liberation movements. To bolster their appeal, the organizations listed their own contributions. These included, from OXFAM-Québec, \$33,000 for school equipment and books for the MPLA’s Department of Education and Culture (DEC), \$20,000 for instruments and medicine for physicians and the *Service d’Assistance* mobile medical teams in the ‘liberated zones,’ and \$20,000 for construction and equipment for a garage and workshop for training auto mechanics; SUCO raised \$20,000 for “informational materials for the Angolan people;” finally, *Rallyes Tiers-Monde* (RTM) – Joliette branch raised \$2750 for medical supplies for the MPLA hospital in Brazzaville, and *RTM-Trois-Rivières* sent

\$10,000 for warehousing costs for multiple MPLA aid programs (*frais d'entreposage*).³⁹ No other Angolan liberation movement was mentioned.

Small-scale solidarity movements sprang up, particularly in western churches and on university campuses. Again, the evidence suggests that such groups supported the MPLA, either on their own or in concert with the other CONCP movements. Many of these groups were ad hoc, of limited duration, and of questionable actual support to Angolans, but their professed solidarities speak to the broad progressive appeal of the MPLA's political messaging. Solidarity organizations published MPLA statements verbatim. The London-based Committee for Freedom in Mozambique, Angola, and Guine [*sic*] (CFMAG) published a document collection in which considerable space was devoted to a statement from the MPLA explaining the delay in holding the First Congress, which was announced in September 1971 but did not actually take place until 1974. The document explained away the MPLA's relative lack of military success at these crucial instances with accusations of assassination plots and infiltration with spies. The subsequent rise of a "multitude of political groups...almost all of them opportunist in character, with no past of struggle or else marked by close collaboration with the former regime" also undermined Angola's independence by using "racism, tribalism and slander." The statement ended with, among other points, a call to "all the countries of the world, all organisations and friends to maintain high their unchanged support for the just struggle of our People and the MPLA, so that Angola may live."⁴⁰

Even after independence the pattern remained. In a post-Carnation Revolution newsletter, CFMAG credited FRELIMO, MPLA, and PAIGC for overthrowing the Caetano government in Lisbon on April 25, 1974. They called upon the British government to "give its full and unconditional support" to the former Portuguese African territories, to "denounce the racist and neo-colonialist manoeuvres being employed in Angola and Mozambique by forces working against independence," and to "support and send a delegate to the conference on solidarity with the African liberation struggle we are organising [for Saturday 7 December in London]."⁴¹ In a 1975 pamphlet published by the Anti-Imperialist Movement in Solidarity with African Liberation, New York Chapter (AIMSAL-NYC), the clearly partisan editors began by acknowledging "further evidence of the strong solidarity in the United States and throughout the world in support of the People's Republic of Angola [*sic*]." The report confidently declared that "the so-called FNLA and UNITA [were] direct and overt agents of the United States and South African imperialism." The MPLA's erstwhile rivals remained tainted, beholden to "international monopolies" and benefitting from "close ties to Mobutu's bloody dictatorship in Zaire" and an "unseemly relationship with the racist South Africa," respectively.⁴² Like others, AIMSAL-NYC quickly conflated the new People's Republic of Angola with the MPLA itself.

Principled Signals and Signal Cascades

The prevalence of the MPLA in this body of transnational solidarity literature is itself noteworthy, but a more compelling question is why? Possibly, pro-MPLA documents proliferate because the MPLA went on to form the Angolan government and has remained in power ever since. It seems unlikely, however, that the MPLA's reach could extend so far as to shape the content of western archives, and especially private collections. Some archives, such as the *Centro de Intervenção para o Desenvolvimento Amílcar Cabral* (CIDAC) in Lisbon, emerged from

the collections of Portuguese anti-colonial activists, many of whom supported the leftist movements in the decades-long battle for independence of the former Portuguese African territories.⁴³ It may also be that the MPLA's Departments of Information and Propaganda or Education and Culture were better resourced and more prolific. Perhaps the MPLA's socialism all but guaranteed them an international audience of fellow 'revolutionaries,' or the MPLA's international supporters were simply more likely to keep keen records of their time 'in the struggle' because the MPLA were victorious and therefore MPLA supporters found themselves on the proverbial right side of history. Other possibilities include the MPLA's strong presence in the capital, Luanda, which might have provided increased access to foreign activists and reporters, and UNITA's habitual reluctance to engage with the international media.⁴⁴ But these are incomplete explanations that do not answer the question of the MPLA's broad transnational appeal.

The MPLA professed a variant of revolutionary internationalism that drew upon Angolan history, socialist pedagogy, revolutionary discourse, and contemporary events. It was a surprisingly successful mixture which linked traditional Angolan stories of resistance with socialist orthodoxy and transnational anti-colonialism. Much of the surviving MPLA propaganda uses strikingly consistent language and reflects the same themes: anti-racism, international solidarity of the oppressed, the end of colonialism and economic neocolonialism, the perniciousness of the US and its NATO allies, and political independence for all African nations, especially Angola. This same language was evident not only in MPLA propaganda, but also in the myriad of statements made by affiliated solidarity organizations.

For example, early MPLA leaders Mário Pinto de Andrade and Viriato da Cruz wrote of the international dimension of national liberation. In 1961 da Cruz speculated on possible configurations of the 'new,' decolonized African continent:

In the fight against colonialism, African unity is the strongest weapon on our continent. ...Several views on the possible future development of Africa have been set forth:

- a) East African nations allied with non-Communist Asian nations, and West African nations with the Atlantic Community;
- b) An Arab bloc in North African [sic] and a black federation south of the Sahara;
- c) A close, firm alliance of Africa and Europe behind the protective shield of the United States;
- d) Former metropolises [mother countries of colonies] forming blocs with their former colonies;
- e) All Africa forming a federal bloc.⁴⁵

Cruz was also a noted poet, and his poem "Black Mother" wrote of the sorrows of the "Voices from the plantations in Virginia[,] from farms in the Carolinas[,] Alabama[,] Cuba[,] Brazil[,] Voices from all America, Voices from all Africa," as well as referencing black American poet Langston Hughes and Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén.⁴⁶ Andrade especially was known for his prodigious written output and elegant style. In the formative years of the 1950s and 1960s Andrade was perhaps the most eloquent spokesperson for Angolan independence.⁴⁷ Writing in 1963 Andrade made his point perfectly clear:

Today the people of the 'Third World' have become the protagonists in history. They have created a new balance in international relations and have provoked world-wide reactions. The entire world is convinced that any event concerning nations is [*sic*] fundamental for all mankind. Angola, yesterday unknown in international public opinion, a country that few persons can locate on a map, has made its definitive entrance onto the stage of history, at a time when armed combat has been initiated in that part of Africa.⁴⁸

For the MPLA, the Portuguese were but a small cog in an insidious imperial machine and restive Angolans were part of the revolutionary vanguard which would undermine them. History and public opinion favoured the MPLA. Despite the obvious hyperbole, when Neto claimed that there was a "special international fascist brigade directed against the Angolan people," it had a kernel of truth as Portugal, the US, South Africa and others did collude to contain and manage Angolan independence.⁴⁹ This fact influenced the MPLA's operating strategy, as Neto claimed, "[t]his [CONCP] union is just and necessary, and the forms of our cooperation in the struggle must be perfected because our enemies also coordinate their activities. Nobody is ignorant of the support given by the NATO countries to help Portugal continue her unjust war..." [emphasis in original].⁵⁰

The first MPLA National Conference in 1962 identified four principles of foreign policy, including "militant diplomacy," "[r]einforcement of our African alliances," and "[i]nternationalization of the Angolan problem by the reduction of our enemy's field [that is, uniting progressive states to oppose Portuguese policy]; effective contribution to the isolation of Portugal on the world scene by active participation in the organization of a diplomatic and economic boycott [all emphases in original]."⁵¹ A 1965 tract entitled "Historical Premises of Revolution" first explained the development of Portuguese colonialism in Marxist terms, noting that the colonists were directed by the "foreign bourgeoisie," either Portuguese or from other countries.⁵² It then describes Angolan nationalism, drawing a straight line from the historical ruler Ngola Ndambi Kiluanje who fought the beginnings of the Portuguese empire in 1575 through to the infamous February 1961 raid on the Portuguese barracks in Luanda. Though largely ineffectual, the raid was elevated to a legendary act of class warfare, akin to the July 1953 attack on the Moncada barracks in Cuba, thus situating the MPLA soundly within the international socialist community.⁵³ The tale ends with the "heroic Angolan people comporting themselves, as a revolutionary vanguard, beside the peoples of the world, in the final struggle against oppression."⁵⁴ The MPLA termed this epic vision of the Angolan people *o poder popular*, or "people's power." Ending Portuguese colonialism, while essential, was not the end of the struggle. Complete independence also necessitated an end to the true evil, the "economic dominance of imperialism."⁵⁵ The linkages between Angola's subject status and the destructive capacity of international capitalism became a familiar refrain in MPLA ideology, and the language of international solidarity was a touchstone of MPLA literature.

There are also examples of the MPLA specifically tailoring its message of global anti-imperialist solidarity to everyday Angolans, those whose support was necessary to win the ground war. A 1968 MPLA literacy manual entitled *A vitória é certa [Victory is Certain]*—the MPLA's slogan—begins with the lesson "*Angola é a nossa terra*" [*Angola is our land*] as a convenient way to introduce the Portuguese vowels.⁵⁶ By lesson 27, however, the newly literate

read entire paragraphs with components of analogical reasoning, such as: “X is like imperialism. Imperialism always hides from the eyes of the people and appears in many different forms. Sometimes imperialism changes its form and appears as neo-colonialism....”⁵⁷

Neto’s status as a physician, an artist, and a revolutionary only augmented his image as the champion of African nationalism, African socialism, and transnational progressivism. A 1972 English-language edition of political poetry from Lusophone Africa entitled *When Bullets Begin to Flower: Poems of Resistance from Angola, Mozambique and Guiné*, introduced Neto’s writing in this way:

It is not an accident that Agostinho Neto, perhaps Angola’s greatest living poet, is also president of the People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). For there can be no national literature until there are citizens to hear it. ... In such a situation a poet’s vision is likely to make him first and foremost a revolutionary; his poetry, when he can steal the time to write it, will be the expression of this revolution in which his life is spent.⁵⁸

Editor Margaret Dickinson’s introduction is an example of the potency and allure of the MPLA’s revolutionary discourse. It also suggests that the idea of Angolan independence as an international issue had solidly entered the popular consciousness. As Dickinson noted,

Although the poets are writing primarily for their compatriots and comrades this need not lessen the impact that they have on other people. Their anger and aspirations are shared by everyone who challenges an unjust established order. The struggle they celebrate is not isolated. Though its immediate aspect is anti-colonial it is more than a struggle for independence.⁵⁹

More than the FNLA and UNITA, the MPLA successfully positioned itself as part of an international, progressive movement against injustice. It was a message that served the MPLA well and helped establish Neto and the MPLA as the exemplars of revolutionary heroism.

Thus, one compelling possibility is that part of the MPLA’s appeal to transnational audiences was due to careful positioning or ‘signalling.’ Adapting a concept from International Relations (IR) theory, economics, communications, criminology, marketing, and biological sciences, among other disciplines, at its most basic signalling arises from the need to communicate with others while overcoming or adjusting for asymmetries of information.⁶⁰ The “signaler,” or sender, wishes to share specific information with a defined audience or “receiver,” often to encourage cooperation in some realm. But the receiver lacks access to all relevant information and cannot directly observe the sender—the asymmetry occurs because “different people know different things.”⁶¹ According to Erik Gartzke, “[s]ignaling involves actions or statements that potentially allow an actor to infer something about unobservable, but salient, properties of another actor.”⁶² One such critical salient property is “information about quality and information about intent” of the sender.⁶³ The sender can be of high-quality (that is, credible, reliable, authoritative, and well-informed) or low quality, and the resulting signals can be “cheap,” such as a limited-distribution pamphlet, or “costly,” such as a well-publicized speech at the UN General Assembly. Thus, decisions made about whether to cooperate with the sender are influenced by determinations about the quality of the sender as well as the effectiveness of the message sent.⁶⁴

As a subset of game theory in international politics, signal theory presumes a single source for sending the signals (generally a state organ) and that signalling occurs between states, or between states and their citizens. But signalling and symbolism also matter greatly in contested or transitional political spaces. To paraphrase Eric Posner, rather than being issued from a single, controlled point, symbolic language permeates the zeitgeist, and recipients are generally free to receive, interpret, perpetuate, and act on this symbolic language if and as they so choose.⁶⁵ As Posner noted, “[s]ymbols matter because a person’s manifested attitude toward symbols tells others something about that person’s character. People rely heavily on this information when deciding whether to engage in cooperative behavior in all realms of life.”⁶⁶ Posner’s ideas about political symbols in nation-states offers insights into the adoption and repetition of symbolic language in contested or transitional political communities, such as a subject territory in the throes of an independence struggle.⁶⁷

For interested parties, the ‘quality’ of Angola’s nationalist movements could be assessed in multiple ways: number of cadres, percentage of liberated territory in comparison to each other and to the Portuguese state, access to weapons of war, etc. But such numbers fluctuated during the fifteen-year battle, were relatively easy to exaggerate, and extremely difficult to verify. On the military plane, it was difficult to tell which movement was dominant at any given point, who was making the most progress against the Portuguese, or who had the most soldiers, especially since there were reports of Angolan villagers being forcibly impressed into service. Each movement issued a continuous stream of unsubstantiated communiqués listing Portuguese troops captured, convoys ambushed and weapons confiscated, combatants freed from Portuguese jails, and territory ‘liberated’ from the Portuguese and from each other. The Government of Portugal retaliated with its own series of questionable official communiqués on damage inflicted to the nationalist movements. External observers returned from the warzone with equally conflicting reports. As for the nebulous but revolutionarily essential claim to be the ‘true representative’ of the people, this was of course even more difficult to verify.

If most of the attentive international community could not directly observe the Angolan independence struggle, concerned publics made decisions about which party to support based on limited and imperfect information. Those attuned to Angola’s independence struggles received information about the movements, their ideologies, their success and limitations from journalistic accounts, official statements, and dispatches from the few who had visited the battlefronts and liberated zones, or worked for solidarity organizations in Africa. While anti-communists or imperial sympathizers would not be persuaded by the MPLA’s invocations of global revolutionary solidarity and anti-racism, those who already considered themselves “progressive receivers” would be attuned to such symbolic language, would seek relevant information out, and would replicate it in their communiqués and solidarity practices, which in turn influenced the actions of other like-minded activists.⁶⁸ MPLA propaganda helped mobilize public opinion and gave self-proclaimed activists in places like Harvard Yard, Oslo, or Toronto a sense that they too were part of the struggle, even if they never set foot on Angolan soil. This set the MPLA apart as being the only movement to define itself not only by rejecting Portuguese authority and claiming a broad anti-imperialism, but also by advocating a revolutionary international identity.

This does not imply that FNLA and UNITA did not have internationalist-oriented propaganda, international support, or a presence in the archives. But, the MPLA's comparative success on the plane of international opinion was noteworthy enough to even rankle its opponents at the time. In August 1970, Mobutu informed US Assistant Secretary for African Affairs David Newsom that there was "no question that Angola would eventually become independent."⁶⁹ The issue was who would lead when independence finally happened. Mobutu naturally supported the FNLA, but believed that the majority of African states supported the MPLA, a situation which in the long run "could lead to grave difficulties." Mobutu urged the US to use its influence to "persuade Lisbon to negotiate with [the FNLA's] Roberto," and to use US investments in oil and diamond companies in Angola as leverage.⁷⁰

A common UNITA refrain was that inter-movement solidarity, and therefore the fight against Portugal, was being consistently undermined from abroad by MPLA supporters. There is some evidence that UNITA also tried to claim a revolutionary progressive identity. In a pamphlet published in the wake of the 1973 Third UNITA Congress, Savimbi declared that UNITA had to continue the battle against Portuguese colonialism and "international imperialism," and that UNITA would happily accept aid from external sources.⁷¹ After calling for the unification of all of the movements (presumably under his own direction), Savimbi deployed the language of liberation, saluting the Vietnamese people "on the occasion of their victory against the most dangerous imperialist of our era."⁷² He then shifted to the language of racial solidarity, sending UNITA's "most militant greetings and renew[ed] expression of its active solidarity" to "our African brothers and sisters living on both American continents where they struggle against imperialist oppression."⁷³ Later, a March 1974 UNITA publication stated that "[p]ublic opinion in America, which has forced the government to get out of Vietnam, could do a lot in denouncing this criminal alliance [between the US and Portugal]."⁷⁴ Yet frustratingly, rather than tackle the shared enemy, public opinion focused on differentiating the parties and supporting the MPLA. Even supposedly objective academics had taken sides. In one particularly direct statement, UNITA criticized noted Africanist Basil Davidson and the influence of pro-MPLA discourse:

Those so-called specialists in African affairs like Mr. Basil Davidson....With their biased writings, attacking freedom fighters as if they were denouncing the enemies of Africa, they are the best allies of our enemies. They confuse public opinion which could be our best ally in exposing Portuguese diplomatic manoeuvres....Basil Davidson has been, in the past, guilty of denouncing UPA (FNLA) and its leader Holden Roberto. Now he has got into the hysteria of denouncing UNITA and its leaders. History will not forgive him for disarming public opinion in support of the Angolan struggle. Since internal difficulties have arisen in the movement which he claims to be the liberator of our people, public opinion now has the impression that the war is over in Angola. *And the Portuguese have capitalized on the work of Davidson* [emphasis in original]. Real friends of Angola make propaganda in favour of the liberation struggle as a whole.⁷⁵

Ultimately, UNITA's attempts to share the progressive space with the MPLA were unsuccessful, as UNITA transgressed the boundaries of anti-imperialist solidarity by first

negotiating a non-hostility pact with the Portuguese, then colluding with the South African Defense Force.⁷⁶

Conclusion

Whether or not the kinds of humanitarian and solidarity assistance received by the MPLA was decisive in its military victories is highly debatable. Given the evidence, it remains more likely that the MPLA's military successes in the autumn of 1974 through 1975 were due to a combination of factors, including the Portuguese Carnation Revolution in April 1974 which brought to power a leftist revolutionary junta that many viewed as explicitly pro-MPLA, internal disruptions within the FNLA, and the arrival of the Cuban Military Mission. Yet before the MPLA won the military battles, did it win the ideological and political battles on the battlefield of international public opinion? Certainly, the MPLA's Afro-Marxism exposed it to harsh criticism from western governments and anti-communist civilians. Investigations of documents 'from above,' such as diplomatic cables from the US, the United Kingdom, Zaire, Canada, and Portugal, for example, reveal deep suspicions about the MPLA's communism and capabilities. However, an investigation 'from below' reveals a different pattern—a seemingly sincere groundswell of support for the MPLA.

Securing the support of transnational attentive publics was an essential strategy of the Angolan national liberation movements in order to compensate for their military weaknesses *contra* the Portuguese state, but also to counter the aggressive Portuguese propaganda machine which argued that the nationalists were little more than communist-inspired terrorists. Part of the MPLA's success was due to a popular perception that it did not toil in noble, but ineffectual, isolation, but rather was in league with the progressive forces of the world, both on and off the African continent. Several archival sources support this conclusion, attesting "to the broad international support that the Angolan government [MPLA] has garnered throughout the world: in heroic Vietnam, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau, all of which recently repelled the bitter lash of imperialism."⁷⁷

There were no codified or widely-accepted mechanisms for determining the 'authenticity,' 'legitimacy,' 'representativeness,' or 'success' of the respective movements. So, did these repeated acts of 'global positioning' or signalling help the MPLA become the 'legitimate' liberation movement in the eyes of transnational progressives, affecting public opinion? These observations raise still relevant questions about the intersections of representation, revolution, and resistance, and the ways in which national liberation movements intersected with the wider international system. Ending Portuguese rule required negotiating two interrelated, yet distinct iterations of the world—an international system characterized by cold war bipolarity, racial hierarchy, and minority rule—and a global order which was increasingly characterized by anti-racism, decolonization, and revolutionary third worldism. This language became increasing mainstream as the 1960s progressed. Principled signalling and the resulting signal cascade burnished the MPLA's image among transnational progressive publics.

As Manfred Steger and others have argued, "the decolonization dynamics in the Third World" were part of the "new ideologies" that characterized the latter half of the 1960s.⁷⁸ The ideological and affective transnationalism as exemplified by the Angolan independence struggle suggests that the "rise of the global imaginary" nascent in the 1990s may actually begin

earlier in the revolutionary transnationalism of the 1960s, a moment when the project of national liberation self-consciously expanded beyond the bounded creation of a nation-state to embrace the idea of a fluid new global order.

As a recent study described, “[a]lbeit with staunchly empirical defences, international history shares with International Relations theory an interest in how power is distributed globally between states, groups of states, and other regional and supra-national power blocs.”⁷⁹ But it can also be concerned with how less powerful actors get their messages across and negotiate a complex and dynamic international system. Investigating the roles of principled signalling grants important insights into how national liberation movements, as non-state actors, engage with the wider international community to achieve political goals.⁸⁰ While local contexts, actors, and specificities are essential to understanding independence and decolonization, national liberation movements did not operate in isolation, and transnational and solidarity work was also a key component of self-determination struggles throughout the twentieth century.

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Notes

1 In the original Portuguese: Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola, Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola, and União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola, respectively. There were other competing national liberation movements working for Angolan independence. In his seminal account of Angolan decolonization, John Marcum listed at least forty-three Angolan movements, some of which were subsumed into the three dominant movements. Yet those voices were hushed in comparison to those of the MPLA, FNLA and eventually UNITA. Marcum 1969, p. 343.

2 For a small example, the digital repository of the African Activist Archive (University of Michigan) currently has 451 activist buttons on display, with artifacts from 1965 to 2012. The vast majority of the buttons are tied to the anti-apartheid struggle, but several reflected general African solidarity sentiments. Of those, sixteen explicitly referenced Angola. Four were 'unspecified,' meaning they espoused anti-Portuguese sentiment but did not reflect loyalties to any one liberation group. The other twelve explicitly referenced the MPLA, either by name or by depiction of a key MPLA figure, such as MPLA leader Agostinho Neto. None of the buttons reference the FNLA or UNITA. African Activist Archive, April 2020.

<http://africanactivist.msu.edu/>

3 In the constructivist tradition of international relations, ideational concerns matter and can alter the political landscape. In Finnemore and Sikkink's now classic formulation, norms are defined as "a norm as a standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity." Indeed, "From a constructivist perspective, international structure is determined by the international distribution of ideas." Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, p. 891. But while many assume that norms further international stability, there are historical periods where normative ideas challenge the existing order.

4 Dos Santos, a veteran of Angola's liberation struggle, replaced Agostinho Neto on 20 September 1979 following Neto's death from cancer. Dos Santos finally yielded control of the presidency in August 2017. His personal fortune is popularly estimated at \$20 billion. Gaffey 2017. His daughter Isabel, noted as Africa's richest women, has amassed a personal fortune of \$2 billion, and at writing is the subject of a major corruption investigation, known colloquially as "Luanda Leaks." She is also apparently considering a run for the presidency. Jason Burke and Juliette Garside, "Isabel dos Santos: president's daughter who became Africa's richest woman," *The Guardian*, Sunday, 19 January, 2020. URL:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/19/isabel-dos-santos-president-daughter-africa-richest-woman-angola>. The overtly socialist nomenclature of the People's Republic of Angola was dropped in 1992 for the more prosaic Republic of Angola. The MPLA is still a member of the Socialist International, but so are the ANC, FRELIMO and the African Party of Independence of Cape Verde (*Partido Africano da Independência de Cabo Verde*, PAICV), the inheritor of the PAICG. In September 2017, the Agência Angola Press (ANGOP) reported that the MPLA's electoral victory that year was "a source of satisfaction for the International Socialist (IS)."

5 Ann Laura Stoler and others remind us that archives themselves can be read as examples of 'colonial' epistemologies and orders of knowledge production. Stoler 2002, pp: 87–109. See also *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010.

6 United States Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)*. Volume XXVIII, "Memorandum for the Record, 40 Committee Meeting," 8 August 1975. Document 123: 293-298. URL: <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v28/d123>. On the US Congressional debate over IAFEATURE see Robert David Johnson, *Congress and the Cold War*, Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

7 This 2001 quotation is illustrative: “For years, Angola was a sleepy Portuguese colony in Africa where nothing ever seemed to change and about which outside powers did not concern themselves. As a result of the revolution that culminated there in 1975, however, Marxist Cuba and white-ruled South Africa each sent thousands of troops to Angola, which would be an arena of Soviet-American competition for the next fifteen years.” Katz 2001, p. 1.

8 Scholarly attention to the topic has been uneven at best, with most recent work focusing on the ideologies of specific movements, notions of self-determination (such as Weitz 2015, “Self-Determination: How a German Enlightenment Idea Became the Slogan of National Liberation and a Human Right,” *American Historical Review*. April: 462-71), or on the use of violence in the context of civil wars (for example, in *International Law and the Use of Force by National Liberation Movements*, Heather Wilson defined a *war* of national liberation as “a conflict waged by a non-State community against an established government to secure the right of the people of that community to self-determination.” Wilson 1988, p.2. Three illustrative works include Rupert Emerson’s, *From Empire to Nation: The Rise to Self-Assertion of Asian and African Peoples* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), J. Bowyer Bell’s *On Revolt: Strategies of National Liberation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), and Nigel Harris’, *National Liberation*, (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1993). For recent works see Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination*, Princeton University Press, 2019 and Redie Bereketeab, ed. *National Liberation Movements as Government in Africa*, London: Routledge 2017. It is worth noting, however, that texts on the related concepts of decolonization and postcoloniality are legion. Fewer scholars have focused on the movements themselves. Key sources include Marcum’s two volume set, which used limited sources from the movements, and Jean-Michel Mabeko-Tali’s *Dissidências e Poder de Estado: O MPLA perante si próprio 1962-1977*, Lisbon/Luanda, Caminho/Nzila, 2001: Volume I: 1962-1974, and Volume II: 1974-1977, which deals only with the MPLA. Piero Gleijeses points out that the most famous biography of UNITA’s Jonas Savimbi, Fred Bridgland’s *Jonas Savimbi: A Key to Africa*, is widely viewed as hagiographic and of questionable impartiality. Gleijeses 2002, p. 235.

9 The post-Second World War international system came to be characterized by the ideological and military antagonism between the United States and the Soviet Union. This cold war variant was defined by the presence of ‘superpower’ states with hegemonic properties with an emphasis on strategic bipolarity, a subsystem of alliances, and the existence of so-called ‘client states’ with limited agency. Handel 1990, p. 31. The prevalence of superpower entanglements in independence and decolonization movements challenges this narrative of ‘weak’ states.

10 The best book on the Cuban intervention is Piero Gleijeses’, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002). The follow-up text is *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976-1991* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016). There are several informative texts on South Africa’s role, including William Minter, *Apartheid’s Contras: An Inquiry into the Roots of War in Angola and Mozambique* (Witwatersrand: Witwatersrand University Press, 1994), John S. Saul, *A Flawed Freedom: Rethinking Southern African Liberation* (London: Pluto Press, 2015) and *Liberation Lite: The Roots of Recolonization in Southern Africa*

- (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2011), and Sue Onslow (ed.), *Cold War in Southern Africa* (London, UK: Routledge, 2009). On the Soviet role, see Vladimir G. Shubin, *The Hot 'Cold War': The USSR in Southern Africa* (London, UK: Pluto Press, 2008).
- 11 Roberto's 1962 marriage to the sister-in-law of Congolese (later Zairian) leader Joseph-Désiré Mobutu was viewed with suspicion, as Mobutu was a known US ally. Roberto himself received a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) a monthly stipend beginning in 1962: "Roberto's political life was defined by his decision in the 1950s to take an annual stipend from the US national security council of \$6,000 a year, rising to \$10,000 a year in 1962," Brittain 2007. John Stockwell, former CIA Angola Task Force Chief in 1975, has argued that "From the mid-sixties until 1974, the CIA had little contact with the FNLA or any other Angolan liberation movement. Holden Roberto accepted personal financial support from the CIA in the early sixties, but contact with him was sporadic and payments to him were suspended for a number of years, from the mid-sixties until 1974." Bender 1979. Stockwell resigned from the CIA in 1976 after a successful twelve-year long career, citing concerns over the CIA's covert actions in Angola, and published a successful—if controversial—memoir. Stockwell 1978, p. 67.
- 12 Holden Roberto's independence movement had at least four main iterations: The Union of Populations of Northern Angola (UPNA), the Union of Angolan Populations (UPA), the Revolutionary Government in Exile (GRAE), and finally the National Front for Angolan Liberation (FNLA). Since these versions often co-existed, the names are at times used interchangeably in the literature. The FNLA became a political party in 1997.
- 13 Marcum 1969, p. 84.
- 14 The CONCP broadly united the leftist Portuguese African movements: the Mozambique Liberation Front (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique, FRELIMO), the Movement for the Liberation of São Tomé and Príncipe (Movimento de Libertação de São Tomé e Príncipe, MLSTP), Cabral's African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (Partido Africano para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde, PAIGC), and the MPLA. The organization was a loose one, and each movement operated independently. Chabal 2002, p. 86.
- 15 Neto was first imprisoned by the Portuguese secret police, the *Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado* (International and State Defence Police, PIDE), in 1951. He was released in 1958, only to be arrested again in June 1960.
- 16 The CIA believed that this aid was halted in 1973 when it became apparent that the MPLA had made little progress toward an independent socialist Angola. Central Intelligence Agency, "Soviet and Cuban Aid to the MPLA in Angola from March through December 1975," *Interagency Intelligence Memorandum* (NIO IIM 76-004), 24 January 1976, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, (hereafter: NARA II), Central Intelligence Agency Records Search Tool (hereafter: CREST), Annex 1.
- 17 Though several sources cite UNITA's foundation as 1965, the party's own website lists its official inauguration date as March 13, 1966. See: <http://www.unitaangola.org/>.
- 18 Heywood 2000, p. 163.
- 19 "Angola," *Africa Contemporary Record: Annual Survey and Documents, 1969-1970*, Colin Legum and John Drysdale, eds. Exeter: Africa Research Limited, 1970, p. B 348.

- 20 The postwar rise in formal multinational institutions such as the UN (1945) and the OAU (1963) was paralleled by a rise in international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), quasi-autonomous non-governmental organizations (QUANGOS), and other civil society institutions, including informal international solidarity movements. Since the 1990s historians have increasingly turned their attentions to transnational histories of ideas and institutions, as well as their international and transnational connections. See for example Michael Geyer and Charles Bright, "World History in a Global Age," *American Historical Review*, 100:4 (1995), pp. 1034–1060, Akira Iriye, "The Internationalization of History." *American Historical Review*, 94:1 (1989), pp. 1–10, Patrick Manning, *Navigating World History: Historians Create a Global Past*, New York: Palgrave, 2003, Bruce Mazlish, "Comparing Global to World History." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 28:3 (1998), pp. 385–395, Sebastian Conrad, *What is Global History?*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2016, and Manning Marable and Vanessa Agard-Jones, eds., *Transnational Blackness: Navigating the Global Color Line*, New York: Palgrave, 2008.
- 21 ACOA developed out of the group Americans for South African Resistance (AFSAR), an organization itself devoted to supporting the African National Congress' (ANC) Campaign of Defiance Against Unjust Laws. In 1954 ACOA launched its flagship publication, *Africa Today*, which became an independent journal in 1967. After several institutional changes, in 2001 ACOA, and two other affiliated groups, The Africa Fund, and the Africa Policy Information Center, merged to form Africa Action. For a complete history see George M. Houser, *No One Can Stop the Rain: Glimpses of Africa's Liberation Struggle*, Foreword by Julius Nyerere, New York, NY: The Pilgrim Press, 1989, and Houser, "Meeting Africa's Challenge - The Story of ACOA", *ISSUE: A Quarterly Journal of Africanist Opinion*, Volume VI, Numbers 2/3 (Summer/Fall 1976): pp. 16-26.
- 22 Houser had impeccable progressive credentials, having spent a year abroad in Jiang Jieshi's China in 1935, attended his first picket line in support of A. Philip Randolph's Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and was arrested and imprisoned for resisting the Selective Service Act in 1940. In 1942 Houser founded the Congress for Racial Equality (CORE), a prominent antiracist organization that was heavily active in the African-American civil rights movement. In Houser's own words: "My own introduction to African affairs came at a time when there were only four independent states and the anti-colonial struggle was the focus. This was an exciting and relatively uncomplicated time. My initial interest and concern was not primarily academic. I trained for the Christian ministry. My concern was for the application of the Christian gospel to the great issues of the day – peace, and the confronting of racial and economic injustice." Houser 1987, p. 18.
- 23 By December 1958 ACOA was granted "fraternal-delegate" status at the First All-African People's Conference in Accra, Ghana. In an undated (c. mid-1959) annual report entitled "Who Speaks for Africa?: A Report on the Activities of the American Committee on Africa," ACOA defined its role as providing "specific channel for Americans to express their sympathy with legitimate African aspirations for greater freedoms." Reflecting Houser's initial commitment to the civil rights movement, ACOA was also active in linking African independence to domestic African-American politics. Among ACOA's activities included sponsoring an Africa Freedom Day event at Carnegie Hall on 15 April 1959, which counted

- over 3000 participants, including Kenyan activist Tom Mboya, Governor of Michigan G. Mennen Williams (who shortly joined the Kennedy administration as the second, and most active, Undersecretary of State for African Affairs), A. Philip Randolph, Harry Belafonte, "and Ambassadors from most of the African Independent States [were] also on the program." ACOA counted several prominent members, including Eleanor Roosevelt; "Mrs. Chester Bowles"; Congressmen Charles C. Diggs (D-MI) and Adam Clayton Powell (D-NY), both prominent Black Representatives; award-winning librettist and producer Oscar Hammerstein II; Democratic Senators Hubert H. Humphrey, Eugene McCarthy, Edward Muskie, and Wayne Morse; Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr; Sidney Poitier, Jackie Robinson, Dr. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Dr. Immanuel Wallerstein, and Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., American Committee On Africa (ACOA), "Who Speaks for Africa?: A Report on the Activities of the American Committee on Africa," [nd], African Action Archive - African Activist Archive. URL: <http://kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/50/304/32-130-D86-84-32-130-D86-84-al.sff.document.acoa001022.pdf>. Accessed: 3 June 2012.
- 24 Houser 1987, p. 79.
- 25 Houser 1987, p. 80.
- 26 Houser 1989, p. 24.
- 27 Houser 1989, p. 24. Regarding Savimbi and UNITA, Houser commented, "Savimbi's role in the liberation struggle was underplayed and did not confront those of us outside with dilemmas at that point."
- 28 Vestbro 2005.
- 29 Vestbro 2005 noted "[Mozambique's] Frelimo was very important, the ANC, to some extent [Namibia's South West Africa People's Organization] SWAPO and [the Zimbabwe African People's Union] ZAPU, but almost none of the others...."
- 30 "Angola." *Africa Contemporary Record: Annual Survey and Documents, 1971-1972*. Colin Legum, Editor, Anthony Hughes, Associate Editor, Richard Synge, Chief Research Assistant. London, UK: Rex Collings, 1972, p. B 444.
- 31 "GRAE Refuses Gift of the WCC Executive Committee." Press release published by Angola Information Bureau, Geneva, 20 September 1971, *ACR, 1971-1972*, p. C 21.
- 32 "GRAE Refuses Gift of the WCC Executive Committee", Press release published by Angola Information Bureau, Geneva, 20 September 1971, *ACR, 1971-1972*, p. C 21.
- 33 For an extended discussion of the WUS-DK see Christopher Munthe Morgenstern. 2003. *Denmark and National Liberation in Southern Africa: A Flexible Response*, Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute.
- 34 Fundação Mário Soares – Arquivo Mário Soares (FMS-AMS). World University Service, Denmark, "Education: A Strategic Element in the Angolan Liberation Struggle," March 1974, Lisbon, File: 04311.005.012, p. 1.
- 35 "Education: A Strategic Element in the Angolan Liberation Struggle," p. 2. The schools were 'secret' in that they were purportedly hidden from Portuguese view and could be scattered and reconstituted in the event of discovery by a patrol. However, they were extensively referenced in propaganda statements.
- 36 "Education: A Strategic Element in the Angolan Liberation Struggle," p. 5.
- 37 "Education: A Strategic Element in the Angolan Liberation Struggle," p. 3.
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- 38 "Education: A Strategic Element in the Angolan Liberation Struggle," p. 4.
- 39 Centro De Intervenção Para o Desenvolvimento Amílcar Cabral (CIDAC). OXFAM-Québec, Fédération des Rallyes Tiers-Monde and Service Universitaire Canadien outre-mer, "Mémoire concernant la politique d'aide du Canada aux mouvements de libération de l'Afrique austral, présenté à l'Honorable Allan J. McEachen [sic], Secrétaire d'Etat aux Affaires extérieures du Gouvernement du Canada," 7 November 1974, Lisbon, pp.11-12.
- 40 CIDAC. Committee for Freedom in Mozambique, Angola, and Guine (CFMAG), CFMAG Briefing No 1: MPLA Recent Statements, London, May-September 1974. H-desc. 5-7: Congresso do MPLA e Conferência Inter-Regional de Militantes – May-Sep 1974, pp. 1-2,5.
- 41 CIDAC. Committee for Freedom in Mozambique, Angola, and Guine (CFMAG), "Our Solidarity with the Liberation Movements must continue," *Campaign Statement on the post-coup situation by the Committee for Freedom in Mozambique, Angola, and Guine*, London, UK. N.d.
- 42 Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. New York Public Library. Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference Division. "The Facts on Angola: News Reports from the Press form the U.S.A., France, Somalia, Tanzania, Algeria, the U.S.S.R., Guinea and other Countries," *Anti-Imperialist Movement in Solidarity with African Liberation*, New York Chapter (AIMSAL-NYC) *nd*, p. 1.
- 43 These movements included the Mozambique Liberation Front (*Frente de Libertação de Moçambique*, FRELIMO), the Movement for the Liberation of São Tomé and Príncipe (*Movimento de Libertação de São Tomé e Príncipe*, MLSTP), the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (*Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde*, PAIGC), and MPLA.
- 44 I thank an external reviewer for this point.
- 45 Viriato da Cruz, "Responsibilities of the Black Intellectual (1961)," Chilcote 1972, p. 200.
- 46 Margaret Dickinson, ed. 1972. *When Bullets Begin to Flower: Poems of Resistance from Angola, Mozambique and Guiné*. Nairobi, Kenya: East Africa Publishing House, pp. 53-54.
- 47 Andrade became internationally famous in 1974 when he broke with Neto and eventually formed his own movement, the *Revolta Activa* (Active Revolt).
- 48 Mário Pinto de Andrade, "Angolan Nationalism (1963)," Chilcote 1972, p. 185.
- 49 Agostinho Neto, "Long Live the People's Republic of Angola!: Independence Day Speech," in *Road to Liberation: MPLA Documents on the Founding of the People's Republic of Angola*, Toronto, ON: LSM [Liberation Support Movement] Information Center, 1976, p. 1.
- 50 Neto in LSM 1976, p. 7.
- 51 MPLA, "First National Conference of the MPLA (1962)," Chilcote 1972, p. 256.
- 52 MPLA, "Premissas Históricas da Revolução," *Textos do M.P.L.A. sobre a Revolução Angolana*, Lisboa, Portugal: Edições Maria da Fonte, 1975, p. 11.
- 53 MPLA, "Premissas Históricas da Revolução", pp. 16-20. The history does mention Roberto's UPA (later FNLA) as one of a growing number of liberation organizations in Léopoldville at the time.
- 54 MPLA, "Premissas Históricas da Revolução," p. 20.
- 55 MPLA, "Premissas Históricas da Revolução," p. 22.

- 56 CIDAC. MPLA, *A vitória é certa: manual de alfabetização*, Edição do Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola, 1968. File: BAC-0291/13, p. 8.
- 57 *A vitória é certa: manual de alfabetização*, p. 18.
- 58 Dickinson 1972, pp. 9-10. It is worth pointing out here that UNITA also portrays Jonas Savimbi as a poet and revolutionary intellectual. One 1985 collection of Savimbi's poetry was titled *Quando a Terra Voltar a Sorrir um Dia*, published by Lisbon's Perspectivas & Realidades, but this collection was not found in an archive.
- 59 Dickinson 1972, p. 12.
- 60 Connelly et al. 2011, pp. 40-43.
- 61 See among others Joseph Stiglitz, "Perspectives on Information Analysis," in *Selected Works of Joseph E. Stiglitz: Volume I: Information and Economic Analysis*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 67-71. As noted by Connelly et al., "Stiglitz (2002: 469) explained that information asymmetries occur because some information is private, information asymmetries arise between those who hold that information and those who could potentially make better decisions if they had it." Connelly et al. 2011, p. 42.
- 62 Erik Gartzke quoted in Thyne 2007 p. 28.
- 63 "Although most signaling models include quality as the distinguishing characteristic, the notion of quality can be interpreted in a wide range of relevant ways. For the purposes of our review, quality refers to the underlying, unobservable ability of the signaler to fulfill the needs or demands of an outsider observing the signal." Connelly et al., p. 42.
- 64 Thyne 2007, pp. 35-36. For a further discussion on the utility of signals in fomenting "rebellions" see Thyne 2007, pp. 41-144, and Connelly et al. 2011, pp. 40, 45-46. In general, costly signals are determined to be more efficacious.
- 65 Posner 1998, p. 794.
- 66 Posner 1998, p. 767.
- 67 Posner 1998, pp. 772-73.
- 68 Connelly et al. define 'receiver attention' as "the extent to which receivers vigilantly scan the environment for signals." Connelly et al. 2011, p. 54.
- 69 United States Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States Volume XXVIII*. Memorandum of Conversation, "Meeting with Congo (K) President Mobutu: Portugal and Angola (Part 3 of 5)", 4 August 1970, Document 91. pp. 210-211. URL: <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v28/d91>
- 70 United States Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States Volume XXVIII*. Memorandum of Conversation, "Meeting with Congo (K) President Mobutu: Portugal and Angola (Part 3 of 5)", 4 August 1970, Document 91. pp. 210-211. URL: <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v28/d91>
- 71 Fundação Mário Soares–Arquivo Mário Soares (FMS-AMS). Bureau de l'UNITA à l'étranger, Communiqué Final du IIIème Congrès, Terre Libre de l'Angola, 21 August 1973. File: 04399.002.035.
- 72 Bureau de l'UNITA à l'étranger, Communiqué Final du IIIème Congrès.
- 73 Bureau de l'UNITA à l'étranger, Communiqué Final du IIIème Congrès.
- 74 Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. New York Public Library, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division (MARB). Interreligious Foundation for Community *African Studies Quarterly* | Volume 20, Issue 1 | January 2021
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Kwacha Angola – U.N.I.T.A. Information Bulletin, London, England, March 12, 1974, p. 15.
- 75 “The Present Situation in Angola: An Analysis,” pp. 15-16.
- 76 In *Conflicting Missions*, Gleijeses wrote that after Caetano’s ouster, UNITA launched its most successful military raid – capturing an entire Portuguese company and returning them to their barracks naked and disarmed. With this, “Savimbi refurbished his credentials as a freedom fighter.” However, this point begs the question – in whose eyes was Savimbi redeemed, and what did redemption mean in this context? Gleijeses 2002, pp. 241, 275-276.
- 77 AIMSAL-NYC, p.1.
- 78 Steger 2008, pp. 10-11, p. 149.
- 79 Thomas and Thompson 2014, p. 154.
- 80 Streets-Salter and Getz 2015, p. 446.