

Angola 1983, Lebanon 1982

Same Story, Same Aggressor

Today the racist regime in South Africa is facing a multi-faceted challenge:

— Internally, the African National Congress continues to advance in the context of overall mass opposition to apartheid and the capitalist super-exploitation it ensures. This past year, the ANC has clearly exhibited its rising military capacity. Moreover, the formation of the multiracial United Democratic Front, with goals similar to those of the ANC, gave political expression to the snowballing popular resistance to Pretoria's policies.

— In occupied Namibia, SWAPO is continuing its liberation war in defiance of Pretoria's recurrent claims to have "crippled the terrorists". SWAPO's mass base remains firm, as does its international status as the sole, legitimate representative of the Namibian people.

— Despite ongoing South African-instigated destabilization attempts, Angola and Mozambique retain their determination to support SWAPO and ANC, and to work for the socio-economic progress of their own people. The very existence of these popular, revolutionary governments is perceived as a threat by the South African racists, because of the example thus provided to the African masses fighting apartheid and occupation.

New invasion

This past December, the Pretoria regime set out on a new military venture, intended to settle accounts with these challenges once and for all. Up to 2,000 South African troops, supported by air raids and artillery, including internationally forbidden chemical shells, pushed far into Angolan territory. Announced as a preemptive raid against SWAPO guerrillas, the invasion was actually an attempt to undermine Angola's independent policy. This was the rationale for massive death and destruction, inflicted first and foremost on civilians.

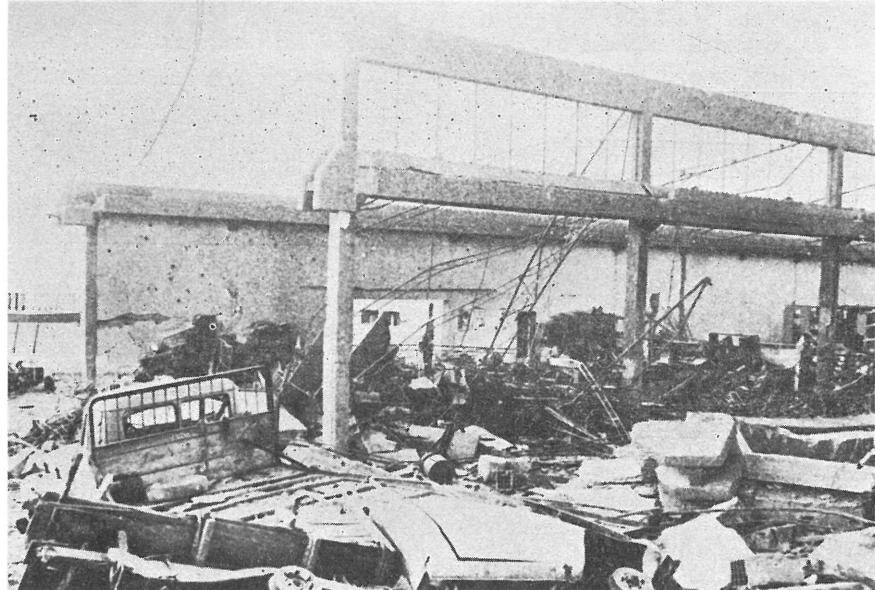
Many parallels can be drawn between the latest South African invasion and the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Most significant is that, in both cases, it was actually US imperialism's war that was being pursued. Behind Pretoria's drive for "security" lie vital US economic and strategic interests.

For one, US investment in South Africa is much greater than normally assumed. "Instead of 2.6 billion (officially noted direct investments), total US financial involvement is probably in excess of \$14.6 billion... 250 of the 'Fortune 500' biggest US corporations maintain subsidiaries or affiliates in South Africa... US investors own 57% of all foreign holdings of the Johannesburg stock exchange

in gold mines, mining houses, platinum mines, Debeers and Palatin. Among these investors is US CIA Director William Casey." (AfricAsia, January 1984, citing US agencies' internal studies).

Here one is reminded that in December 1982, South African soldiers massacred over forty persons in Lesotho, in a raid purportedly directed against ANC members. This occurred just after

Furniture factory in southern Angola, destroyed by Pretoria's terror bombing



Casey visited Pretoria with a CIA report warning of ANC's growing influence, which the report termed a threat to the US policy of "constructive engagement" with the South African regime. Later, South African radio reported that the US and South Africa had reached a mutual agreement whereby Pretoria intervenes in neighboring countries as the US does in Central America (Swedish left newspaper, *Proletaren*, May 1983).

This corresponds to imperialism's need for a garrison state to protect its interests in southern Africa, as the Zionist state does in the Middle East. More specifically, the current invasion was intended to enforce the US condition that Cuban troops withdraw from Angola before Namibia's independence can be determined, this in accordance with the Reagan Administration's global anti-communist crusade.

US 'diplomacy' "to the rescue"

However, the South African troops met concerted resistance from the Angolan armed forces, and hundreds of young Angolans flocked into militias to defend their country. Like 'Israel' in Lebanon, Pretoria tasted the difficulties of imposing its retrograde political aims through military conquest alone. The racists themselves admitted more fatalities among their troops than in any military campaign since 1975, and officials spoke openly of the fact that South Africa could not bear the economic burden of the invasion or of sustaining the destabilization