

Soldiers of Fortune Signing as Mercenaries in Angola Warfare

By Michael Hellier

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Soldiers of fortune are signing up in Europe to fight in Angola, the newly independent former Portuguese colony in southwest Africa, torn by civil war.

Many of the mercenaries are British. Some will fight for the Communist-backed (by Russia and Cuba) MPLA; others will bolster the FNLA forces, their \$2800-a-month paychecks perhaps guaranteed by American aid.

The mercenaries are heading for Brussels, which is the main recruiting center in Europe. They are attracted by discreet advertisements in the personal columns of certain newspapers such as the International Herald Tribune. A gathering point for the mercenaries is a cafe in the old part of Brussels run by a former British army officer who fought as a mercenary in both the Congo and Biafra.

"Africa isn't my cup of tea any more," says Captain Charles

Masy. "I am too old now. But the recruiters come to see me all the same and I put them in touch with the right people . . . chaps who are still in the business, so to speak."

The ranks of the mercenaries also include Americans, veterans of the Vietnam war who have found civilian life not to their liking after the excitement of the battlefield.

"A few of us went to Ireland and are fighting with the Irish Republicans against the British, but they don't pay very much; there's lots of high-falutin' talk in Ireland, but not much money," a former U.S. Marine from Idaho said. He had just signed up for Angola.

It is only money the mercenaries fight for; no political leanings or national loyalties are offered or sought. The contracts being offered by both sides in Angola include \$2200 a month "combat pay" in addition to the \$2800 basic wage, plus free transportation from Europe, a

\$10,000 life insurance policy and a \$12,000 bonus at the end of the six-month contract.

"It's the only chance I have of getting away from all the rot and red tape of Europe," said a young Briton. "I hope to start a new life in Africa. I don't care who I fight so long as the pay is good and comes on the dot."

The fact they may wind up fighting each other on different sides in the Angola conflict makes no difference. "It's all in the business," they shrug. "We are paid to do a job and we'll do it. If we meet on the battlefield, then the best man will win."

There are three big mercenary groups reportedly operating in Brussels: One financed by an unidentified West German multimillionaire and operating as a private army; another almost exclusively British, and the third a clearing house for foreign armies recruiting mercenaries.