

Elusive Group in Britain Is Recruiting for Angola

NYTimes By BERNARD WEINTRAUB

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Special to The New York Times

CAMBERLEY, England, Jan. 30—The man in his 20's, shivering in the icy winds, placed a sheet of paper beneath two locked doors in this pleasant army town. The papers contained the youth's name, his telephone number and the date of his army discharge.

Then the young man caught a ride back to London's Euston Station, 30 miles away, for the trip home to Scotland. "I'll make it to Angola," he said. "I know what these guys want—they want types like me."

The former soldier — in-

tense, firm and fast-talking— has served with the British Army in Northern Ireland, Borneo and Aden. He said that he had lived in Canada for the last year, had traveled through the United States and Mexico and had worked in South America. He speaks German and Spanish.

Within recent weeks, an elusive Camberley organization, called Security Advisory Services, based over an automatic laundry here and run by a former paratrooper, has recruited at least 90 mercenaries — some sources place the figure as high as 200— to fly to Angola to serve as

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Continued on Page 8, Column 1

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Associated Press

Men reported to be mercenaries cover their faces as they arrive at Heathrow Airport in London to travel to Kinshasa, Zaire, via Brussels. Zaire borders with Angola.

Group in Britain Recruits for Angola

Continued From Page 1, Col. 2

advisers to forces fighting against the Marxist-led Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola. It is the largest mercenary recruitment operation in Britain since the civil war in Nigeria in the late 1960's.

Two Contingents Sent

The publicity that followed the departure of two contingents of British mercenaries on Wednesday has led to the locking of the offices of Security Advisory Services. Telephone and telex calls are unanswered. But a butcher shop and a neighbor in the small shopping center on Yorktown Road are apparently serving to assist youths seeking to go to Angola.

Young men are told to place their names, addresses and some background information beneath locked doors of two homes. They are told that the owners of the company will, if necessary, contact them. The owners are said to be in London, recruiting more men.

As the chief source of British mercenaries, Security Advisory Services has two main owners. One is said to be Leslie Aspin, a former smuggler and double agent who negotiated an arms deal in Amsterdam for the Irish Republican Army in 1973 and then tipped off the police.

Another owner is John Banks, a former paratrooper who placed an advertisement last summer in a newspaper reading: "Ex-commandos, paratroopers, S.A.S. [Special Air Services] troopers wanted for interesting work abroad." That plan, for an abortive venture against white troops in southern Rhodesia, attracted about 300 replies and resulted in a dossier of names that provided for the initial recruitment to Angola.

Third Key Figure

A third key figure in the hiring of British mercenaries is Norman Mervyn Hall, a 24-year-old former paratrooper who was dismissed from the army after selling weapons to the Ulster Volunteer Force, an extremist Protestant group.

According to reports, Mr. Hall appeared in London three weeks ago after having spent four days in Angola as driver for Holden Roberto, leader of the National Front for the Liberation of Angola. Mr. Hall, who bore a letter

of accreditation signed by Mr. Roberto as well as \$25,000—enlisted the help of Security Advisory Services, whose Camberley headquarters is near Sandhurst, the military academy, and Aldershot, Britain's major army base.

The Camberley office is listed in the name of Mr. Banks, who accompanied one group of 43 mercenaries from Heathrow Airport on Wednesday aboard a Sabena airliner to Brussels. From there the men—without Mr. Banks, who later returned to London flew on a charter flight to Kinshasa, the capital of Zaire, Angola's neighbor. A second group of about 50 men left on a plane for Antwerp, Belgium, later in the day for another charter flight to Zaire.

Mr. Aspin, who has been interviewed on British television with his face shrouded in darkness, said that each man would receive \$300 a week. "They are on a six-month contract and a month's paid leave and a return ticket to anywhere in the world," he said. "They can sign up for another six months, and I know they will. This is the beginning of a long campaign."

He added: "The majority have clean discharge papers, but some were rendered discharged through striking a superior officer—that sort of thing. That is about the worst."

Group Called a 'Spearhead'

One of the mercenaries said at Heathrow Airport: "This is a spearhead" and there will be lot more following. It has all been arranged through the Zaire Government and we have been dealing with Mr. Les Aspin."

Today the former soldier from Scotland, who declined to give his name, said that the bulk of men seeking to go to Angola were neither committed to anticommunism nor seeking money. The man himself seemed assured in his knowledge of military equipment and tactics. "This kind of active service draws you," he said. "It's for people who want some drama and excitement. It's a calling."

He said recruitment for mercenaries was taking place in Kuwait, South Africa, several South American countries and among the Kurds in Iraq.

"The last place I served was Northern Ireland, bloody awful Northern Ireland," he said. "You're restricted. You can't be a soldier, you're like a puppet. It's the politicians who are running that one, not the army, and it's an insult to the soldiers."

"If you see someone pick up a weapon, you can't fire at them unless they're pointing right at you," he said. "They parcel out bullets to you in the morning and they count them when you come back. If you shoot at anything, you've got to file a report. That's no war."

F.B.I. Inquiry Reported

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 30—The Justice Department has asked the Federal Bureau of Investigation to look into apparent violations of the Federal neutrality statutes by mercenary soldiers signing up to fight in Angola and by those who are recruiting them, sources in the department said today.

One source termed the statutory violations "actual" rather than "potential," and another said that several unnamed recruiting organizations and individuals, "Americans and non-Americans," were the subjects of the F.B.I. investigation.

None of the sources would say, however, whether criminal indictments could be expected in the case, or how soon such indictments might come. An F.B.I. spokesman had no comment on the nature or scope of an inquiry by the bureau.

Under the Federal Criminal Code, any American citizen who is convicted of aiding a foreign government, "colony, district, or people" in an act of war can be sentenced to a maximum of three years in prison and a \$2,000 fine.

200 Recruits Reported

Some 200 Vietnam-era combat veterans, mostly black, reportedly have been recruited through newspaper advertisements here over the last few weeks to fight alongside troops of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, led by Jonas Savimbi.

That faction, with the support of arms and material from the American Government, is opposing the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, which is backed by the Soviet Union.