

# InSHORT



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## ANGOLA'S FORGOTTEN WAR

**T**he Cold War rages on in the southern African nation of Angola, the site of a ferocious civil war with roots in the old Soviet-U.S. rivalry. The war has killed an estimated 100,000 people since October

**APPALL-O-METER**  
The In These Times index of indecencies.

By Woody Igou

### A healthier Armageddon

The Boulder, Colo., *Daily Camera* reports that the U.S. Air Force will soon equip its ICBMs with special cooling



systems that do not use chloro-fluorocarbons (CFCs). The stated purpose is to protect the

Earth's ozone layer and to prevent global warming, while carrying as many as 10 nuclear bombs through the atmosphere.

*Thank God. Two sunburns in one day would be too much.*

### Binary death

Big Springs, Texas, resident Karen Lowe has been fighting the Social Security Administration for more than a year



to prove she is not "dead." Government records show she died in February 1985.

Since that time, she has been unable to purchase a car, get credit, open a bank account or get a government loan. "I basically don't exist in a computer world," she laments. *Stop worrying. Go on tour as the "Last Free Human."*

## Invaluedictorian

Serbian refugee student **Adelina Kabashi** was recently ruled **ineligible to be valedictorian** by the Crawford County Board of Education near Atlanta.



Although she graduated with the highest

grade point average, the parents of the student she beat out complained that her Yugoslavian transcripts, which transferred over, should not count. She came to America because the Serbs "won't allow Albanians to get an education because they don't want us to have a future."

*I guess she'll have to find an Albanian-Serb to take to the prom, too.*

## Pitiful, pitiful

The latest National Rifle Association convention, held in Minneapolis, brought out 20,000 faithful, including Ed Williams.



Williams was quoted by the *New York Times* as saying that the right to

self-defense was a God-given right, explaining that "Jesus said even if you must sell your garment, protect yourself, and work with one hand and carry your sword in the other."

*Exactly how many times did Jesus and his disciples use those blades, Mr. Williams?*

## APPALL-O-METER SCALE

1. Weightless banality
2. Green Acres stupid
3. Malicious cretinism
4. Howard Sternesque
5. Mary Matalin mean
6. Gangrenous venality
7. A touch of evil
8. A cancer in the Zeitgeist
9. Et tu, Pol Pot?
10. Horseperson of the Apocalypse

1992—a terrible blow to a country with a population of 10 million. But the U.S. media has mostly ignored Angola's suffering.

The latest round of fighting—between the government of President Jose Eduardo dos Santos (known as the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola [MPLA]) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) led by Jonas Savimbi—began in the wake of the September 1992 elections.

UNITA, long backed by the U.S. government, suffered a defeat at the polls and took up arms, reigniting a 16-year conflict that has already taken hundreds of thousands of lives. Last year, at the height of the conflict, the U.N.'s representative in Angola, Alioune Blondin Beye, said that figures of 1,000 deaths a day must "be considered conservative." Today the country lies in ruins, and only the efforts of relief organizations have prevented mass starvation.

Despite casualties that rival the war in the former Yugoslavia, where 200,000 people have died, Angola has received only a tiny fraction of the attention afforded Bosnia. Indeed, with the world transfixed on high-profile hot spots such as South Africa and the Occupied Territories, Angola's plight has produced scant media coverage.

In 1993, for example, *Time* and *Newsweek* ran a total of four paragraphs on Angola. A nine-month UNITA siege of the city of Cuito, the capital of Bie province, in which an estimated 30,000 people died, generated only a few lines in major newspapers.

The media's lack of attention to the Angolan conflict is striking, given that the United States is partly responsible for the war. During the Reagan years—and up until 1991—the United States and the government of South Africa provided UNITA with tens of millions of dollars to finance its war with the Cuban and Soviet-backed MPLA government.

In the '80s, Savimbi had powerful friends in Washington—including Sens. Jesse Helms (R-NC) and Orrin Hatch (R-UT), the Heritage Foundation, and the *Washington Times*—who pushed for aid to UNITA. Former U.N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick expressed the sentiments of the UNITA lobby when she remarked in 1986 that Savimbi is "one of the few authentic heroes of our time."

Others disagreed. A 1989 report on Angola by Africa Watch noted that "UNITA has indiscriminately and deliberately attacked and killed civilians in government-controlled areas ... [and] has attacked medical facilities and burned civilian homes." The report called for an end to U.S. aid to the guerrillas.

Africa Watch has accused both sides of human rights violations in the current conflict. But according to Angola expert Shawn McCormick of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C., "The group that began the cycle of violence that led to the resumption of the war was UNITA." And in a recent issue of *The New Statesman*, Victoria Brittain, an African specialist based in London, described how UNITA's military strategy prevents aid shipments from reaching besieged areas of the country.

There are some signs of hope. After months of peace talks in Zambia, the two sides are making progress toward a negotiated settlement. As part of the proposed agreement, a United Nations peacekeeping force of 5,000 troops will reportedly be sent to Angola for a period of one and a half to two years. But given UNITA's failure to abide by past agreements, any peace plan must be viewed with skepticism.

—Scott Sherman