



Hungarian Technology Export to Angola through ‘Socialist Solidarity’¹

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Abstract:

Hungarian activity in the developing world is being explored again. As the topic is quite peripheral, thus it needs a comprehensive analysis. As an Eastern Bloc country, Hungary was engaged with socialist solidarity, however it never had real colonial past, thus its anti-colonial point of view seemed credible for the newly independent African countries.

Decolonial orientation of the People’s Republic of Hungary started in the 1960s, and it had various other aspects as well. Different political and economic interests also played a key role, as Angola had an incredible abundance of resources, which gave a big push not only for Hungary, but for many other Eastern Bloc countries to play a significant role in the restoration of its economy, in the hope of establishing new commercial relations.

Hungary offered - among others - significant financial support, bank loans, and scientific-technological help to counterbalance the former colonial powers' and other capitalist countries, who were seen as possible enemies and oppressors. On the other hand this “socialist help” meant a search for potential new markets for the Hungarian economy, and the possibility to get access to western markets and technology through international cooperations in the African continent.

Keywords:

Angola, export, Hungary, socialist solidarity, technology

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Introduction

Today every region is connected to each other via numerous trade links. As a result of socialist orientation, Hungary as one of the Eastern Bloc countries became a part of the global trade networks in the 1970s through technology export supplied to the developing world.

The present paper raises an important question: how a semi-peripheral country tried to open towards the newly independent Angola to fuel its economy and innovation in the context of Cold War. Both countries promised each other the most favorable commercial treatment (Apáti, 1981, pp. 225, 229). In January 1980 the first session of the Committee for Hungarian-Angolan Economic Cooperation took place in Budapest to lay down the theoretical foundation of a long-term economic cooperation.

The study integrates some findings of the intensive technology transfer, which followed the basic patterns of Soviet foreign policy, although with specific Hungarian features. Furthermore, the key motivation can be compared to the trends of other Eastern Bloc countries (Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Poland, Yugoslavia) in the 1970s and 1980s, therefore different fields of technological cooperation (bus manufacturing, broadcast technology, medical equipment, agriculture, animal health) were examined in this turbulent period. The research is mostly based on new primary sources: archival records, daily news media archives and oral history interviews taken with former experts with still living Angolan memories, as they provided the researcher an unparalleled storehouse of interesting stories. Unfortunately, only very few contemporary articles, books and memoirs can be found about Hungarian-Angolan relations in the 1970s and 1980s.

The only monograph is Sándor Apáti's *Angola: múlt, jelen, jövő* ('Angola: past, present, future'). Sándor Árgyelán's dissertation *A szocialista orientáció kialakulása a volt portugál gyarmatokon, különös tekintettel az Angolai Népi Köztársaságra* ('The development of socialist orientation in the former Portuguese colonies, with a special focus on the People's Republic of Angola'), Nándorné Maász's thesis: *A gyarmati sorból szabadult Angola fejlődési problémái* ('The development problems of Angola freed from the colonial rule') as well as the article of Éva Hegedűs *Angola és Magyarország kétoldalú kapcsolatai 1975 és 1993 között* ('Bilateral relations between Angola and Hungary between 1975 and 1993'), are the only publications regarding this research topic. Consequently, the history of Hungary's economic and technological connection to Angola has become a vital field, which may have many positive contributions to the fruitful inter-state relations in the future.

The Origin of Hungarian Technology Export

After 1945 Hungary was isolated in terms of foreign policy, only on December 20, 1955, it became member of UN, but until 1963 the so-called 'Hungarian question' hindered



establishing international relations outside the Eastern Bloc (Király, 2006, p. 37-49, 47-48; Békés, 2019, p. 82). Western economic relations were considered a key issue in socialist times regarding Hungarian modernization, therefore foreign policy's Soviet aspects could be characterized mostly by conflict avoidance, flexibility and a strong willingness to cooperate (Békés, 2019, p. 193).

Transnational history of Eastern European countries, connecting to decolonization, understanding global economic integration and connections between the Second World and the Third World still remains a largely undiscovered field (Ginelli, 2017, p. 3). Examining Hungary's economic relations in the developing world the next points also had to be taken into account:

1. The role of political orientation was significant in Hungary's economic relations too, as socialist countries played a decisive role in decolonisation, which led to a necessary political alliance between the socialist and developing countries
2. International cooperation had been a fundamental condition for economic expansion, which was justified by the fact that the country is small with a narrow internal market
3. Expanding cooperation with developing countries was necessary for Hungary to import raw materials, which could not be covered only by cooperation with COMECON countries, in many cases only from the developing world (Szita, 1968, p. 132-134).

TESCO International Organisation for Technical-Scientific Cooperation was founded in 1962 as a state-owned Hungarian firm responsible for technological cooperation, and for sending experts of different fields to developing countries (Tarrósy and Morenth, 2013, pp. 10-11, 77-96). The very first political relations were founded with Angola in the 1960s during independence struggle between MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) and MSZMP (Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party), for the care of the wounded soldiers and by sending aid supplies (Apáti, 1981, p. 219; Hegedűs, 2008, pp. 7, 29-47).

In February 1967 the first delegation of MPLA arrived at the invitation of Hungarian Solidarity Committee, two years later, Augustinho Neto³ himself visited Budapest. On February 10, 1973, a seven-member Angolan delegation arrived, which officially contacted both the Central Comitee of MSZMP and the Solidarity Committee (Apáti, 1981, pp. 219-220). The African continent, emerging from colonial rule quickly

³ Agostinho Neto was son of a Methodist minister from the Mbundu tribe. He was born on September 17, 1922. He completed his high school studies at the Liceu Salvador Correia in Luanda, later he studied medicine at the universities of Lisbon and Coimbra. Involved in anti-Salazar fights, he was arrested in 1952, after graduation in 1958 he returned to Angola with his Portuguese wife (Sugár, 1978, p. 37).

became one of the favorite topics of the contemporary Hungarian public, which was primarily mediated by popular art and literature (Apor, 2022, p. 289).⁴

In an agreement signed in Alvor, Portugal on January 15, 1975, the three independence movements declared that after the transition period, a democratic election would decide the future leading party of the country (Weigert, 2011, p. 56). As a result of the 14-year armed struggle, People's Republic of Angola became independent on November 11, 1975. The country's first president, Dr Agostinho Neto held this position until his death. As leading force MPLA movement has changed its name as MPLA-Workers' Party in 1977 (Gál, 1983, p. 113). However, the biggest problem in Angola were the lack of available foodstuff and disruptions in the continuity of public supply. After gaining independence, hundreds of thousands of people poured into the bigger cities, queuing in front of shops, thus speculation aggravated the supply problems (Maász, 1979, p. 18). However, there were serious shortages of consumer goods, the so-called 'parallel market' dominated the economy until the period of 1984-85 (Frigyes, 1999, p. 985).

Independence war was followed by a longer and more bloody war: all three liberation movements wanted to get rid of the other two (Birmingham, 2015, p. 83). 30-50 thousand people died during the war of liberation against the Portuguese colonialists, then 1.5 million died during the civil war, when the rival liberation movements (MPLA, UNITA, FNLA) turned against each other (Búr, 2020, p. 169). In Angola, parallel to the strengthening of the socialist orientation, the process of transformation of MPLA liberation movement into a party has accelerated significantly (Somogyi, 1981, p. 88).

Through Cuban internationalist military assistance by the end of 1977 an estimated 12,000 personnel were stationed in the country (George, 2005, p. 120). Although Angola chose the socialist way, by 1979 the ban on foreign investments was not only abolished, but the inflow of international capital was rather encouraged, especially in the oil industry (Black, 1992, p. 20). The large international monopolies have therefore made extra profits, while the population lived in incredible backwardness and poverty (Oliveira, 1962, p. 15). Diamond extraction entirely owned by American companies, while a British firm conducted petroleum research (Sík, 1964, p. 315). The agricultural production of the country has mainly taken place on a plateau in the northern part, close to the coast (Planalto), where outstanding coffee production has been going on for a long time. Cabinda exclave was the only primeval forest-covered area in Angola, where raw wood extraction was produced (Probáld and Szegedi, 1983, pp. 60-61).

⁴ The concept of 'socialist solidarity' had a global context: "It could mean spending financial support, organisation of international campaigns, direct involvement in the local (predominantly proxy) war, and general help programs." (Pálfi, 2022, pp. 68-69.)



In June 1977 the accredited permanent ambassador of Hungary started his work, who presented his credentials to President Neto. The Congress of MPLA took place in Luanda on 4-10 December 1977 on which György Aczél - member of the Political Committee of MSZMP - also took part (Apáti, 1981, p. 223). Socialist technology transfer to Angola traces back its origin to Neto's visit to Moscow in 1976, where he called COMECON countries to send skilled workforce from different fields. In April 1977, a decision was adopted, that the total number of foreign experts would be 900 in Angola, which would be increased to 6,000 by 1980. (MNL TESCO Angola) Neto mentioned: "The choice also defines our relations with the socialist countries: they are our natural allies in the struggle to build a socialist society, in the fight against imperialism" (Gulyás, 1978, p. 47).

According to the plan, socialist countries would have provided the leading state personels for 5-10 years, during this time a new generation of Angolan experts would have been trained. In the framework of this agreement, Hungary undertook to send only 50 experts in the first round, with the stipulation that the number of staff will have to be gradually increased to 100-150 by 1980. From the academic year 1977-78, Hungary made the training possible for twenty scholarship holders (MNL TESCO Angola; Hegedűs, 2008, pp. 10, 29-47). Angola has developed in an unequal and differentiated way, therefore business opportunities for Hungary was constantly changing. Hence efforts had to be made to expand foreign economic relations to this remote region, and there was a demand for further deepening economic cooperation as well (Hoós, 1985, p. 19-41, 39).

Between 1977 and 1981 Angola and Hungary realised a range of bilateral agreements, including the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, Trade Agreement, Cultural Agreement, Health Cooperation Agreement, Television Cooperation Agreement and Inter-Bank Cooperation (Hegedűs, 2022, p. 82). Nearly 140 Hungarian experts worked on assignment, with the largest number at the bus assembly plant in Viana and at the bus repair and engine generating plant MANAUTO 3 near Caxito. All costs of the paid specialists were covered by Angola, but for unpaid experts only the cost of the trip, food and housing (Hegedűs, 2008, pp. 10-13, 29-47). Depending on education and experience, they received a monthly salary of 730-1290 dollars, which was considered outstanding. As a kind of "informal advertisement" their role was also to showcase industrial products and the achievements of modern Hungarian agriculture (Apáti, 1981, p. 228; Hegedűs, 2008, pp. 18, 29-47).

In April 1977, the first delegation of experts arrived, who held training sessions for representatives of Angolan specialized ministries. In 1979 a contract for the delivery of day-old chicks was signed, and an offer for the establishment of complex poultry farms and fish hatchery stations were also made (Apáti, 1981, pp. 229-230.).

Ikarus: Hungarian Bus Production and Maintenance in Angola

MOGÜRT Foreign Trade Company concluded an 11-year contract with Angolan ENACMA in 1979, for the delivery of bus bodies packed in crates to the factory in Viana (20 kilometers from Luanda) (Népszabadság, 1983). In 1973 Ikarus company signed a contract with Iraq for the delivery of packaged bus units. In the meantime, the market expanded: in addition to Iraq, SKD-CKD elements were also transported for Cuba, Angola and the Malagasy Republic. Ikarus delivered the main units and spare parts needed for the assembly of 780 buses to Iraq and 350 to Angola, and everything was packed in crates. The bus body is built on Scania and Volvo and Saviem chassis. (Vasas, 1981; Népújság, 1979).

In a ten-year period around 9,000 Ikarus buses were planned to be assembled at the Angolan bus factory, mostly from Hungarian components. According to the agreement, Ikarus also provided technical documentation and plans to its partner and supplied special tools for production (Zalai Hírlap, 1979). The bus factory undertook the production and delivery of the bodywork and interior equipment in its Székesfehérvár factory, where crates of the right size had to be produced for the shipment for a 3-4,000 km journey. From 1981, the entire documentation was done by computer, the uniform packaging system was developed at the end of 1980. Ikarus also handed over documentation and technological plans to the Angolan factory unit. The task of the dispatched Hungarian specialists was to train local workforce (Ikarus, 1981b; Magyar Hírlap, 1979; Zalai Hírlap, 1979).

Work began with restoration of 55 different buses left over from the Portuguese colonialists. Visitors of the Keve Bus Factory immediately noticed the sign written in Hungarian at the entrance: “Long live Angolan-Hungarian friendship and cooperation!” (Ikarus, 1981a) According to László Viola, who arrived with the first team in January 1980, “we had to build a factory here almost from scratch”, because the Portuguese destroyed all tools and machines, only the hall has remained.⁵ The building of a new, modern construction hall was planned for 1984, where eight buses could have been assembled a day (Népszabadság, 1985).

In 1983, ten Hungarian professionals worked here, mostly the achievements of Lajos Kolompár⁶ were praised by the Angolan side, who from 1983 acted as the head of Mogürt-Ikarus’ customer service (Népszabadság, 1983). In 1985, 280 locals were employed under the management of four Hungarian experts, the initial staff of 11 technicians was no longer needed due to the growing number of trained locals.

⁵ According to the observation protocol kept in the Historical Archives of State Security Services, László Viola “would like to stay for several years, and his contacts are only with the branch management and his Portuguese language teacher. He speaks English and Portuguese well.” (ÁBTL Kongó).

⁶ He only spoke basic Portuguese, but knew some Russian. He arrived on July 8, 1980. Although his contract expired in the summer of 1981, he wanted to extend his stay by another year. His contacts were limited to his workplace, so according to the monitoring report, he probably could not have posed a threat to the state security order (ÁBTL Kongó).



According to a new agreement ‘small Keve minibus’ was planned to launch on the market (Népszabadság, 1985). However, the drop in oil prices and external debts negatively affected the balance of Angolan payments (Ikarus, 1983).

According to an article published in government paper Népszabadság (‘People’s freedom’), the company’s CEO Simao Silva mentioned significant results in production, but he has complained about organisational problems too. His views were also shared by Hungarian technicians László Viola and János Wieland, as production worked at almost half-steam, fearing that if all the delivered elements were used, it had to be interrupted due to supply disruptions (Népszabadság, 1983). As production director Gaspar Francisco Pereira observed, the main obstacle was the small number of skilled workers. Various social benefits - such as free breakfast and lunch - were also supplied; however, if it had not provided, the day’s work must have already declared finished (Magyar Hírlap, 1982).

Engine generation and body repair were also carried out at the Ikarus service center called MANAUTO 3. The tender was won by the firm 14th AFIT from Pécs. Intergovernmental agreement was signed in the fall of 1981. As first step, a plant capable of refurbishing 300 buses was created, and a comfortable residential complex was built in Luanda for the Hungarian mechanics. 27 people started an intensive Portuguese language course in Pécs led by a high-school teacher. The first technicians arrived at fall 1982 (Dunántúli Napló, 1982).

MANUTO 3 repair plant for Ikarus buses was organized by Géza Tóth, a graduate of Szolnok Technical University of Transport, that time engineer of the 14th AFIT Company in Pécs, who first arrived in February-March 1980 to assess exactly what was needed, and found that practically everything: machines, tools, medicine, etc. (Dunántúli Napló, 1981). The former Portuguese car repair facility may have been built about 15 years earlier to overhaul English Leyland buses, many wrecks were still in the yard, even a Ford T-model.

Although the building was completely empty - as the Portuguese had taken all movable equipment with them - it was still found in acceptable condition, with excellent natural ventilation and lighting. Géza Tóth first surrounded the territory with a three-meter-high concrete fence, barbed wire and moat on the advice of the local police. In addition, even Linda and Petya, the Hungarian pooch couple kept a watchful eye on order. The equipment was transported in 45 six-foot containers, each weighing 20 tons, to the port of Luanda via the port of Hamburg. The ship covered the 8,000-kilometer distance in one month, but there were also interesting “sabotage actions” in the port, when the tied-down container was “accidentally” dropped by the crane and fell on its heel, so that its door opened (Interview with Géza Tóth, 2021).

There were three MANAUTO plants in Angola, each of them specialised to a type of socialist vehicle (e.g. Škoda, ZIL, etc.), MANAUTO 3 maintained Ikarus buses. According to Géza Tóth’s memories, this plant was located next to Caxito, at 250 Cacuo

National Road, 30 kilometers from the capital. The total number of employees was around 100 people, at the beginning all Angolan workers were assigned to a more experienced Hungarian specialist. There was significant fluctuation among the workers, since most of them just joked or drank all day. The general manager, Armando José Carvaiho, did not have enough authority to improve productivity either, only a single “foreman”, whose word was immediately listened to. The deputy of the local tribal chief, and at the same time the highly respected sorcerer of the tribe. Géza Tóth had good relationship with him, he just called the wizard, and everyone continued working at that moment (Interview with Géza Tóth, 2021).

The wage of Hungarian experts was considered outstanding, with a value of around 1,000 dollars per month, but in Angola paying in dollars was strictly forbidden, although local currency (kwanza) has worth almost nothing. Instead of the official exchange rate of 1 USD = 30 kwanzas, on the black market 1 USD rated 5,000 kwanzas. Angolan workers earned around 600 dollars, which was considered a good salary even in local conditions. Hungarian experts could only spend their money in the diplomatic shop. Géza Tóth had to write the celebratory speech on May Day, where on the parade various local companies presented themselves with spectacular scenery on marching trucks, although people were not allowed to take photos, since at that time Angolans still had a kind of ritual fear of the camera (Interview with Géza Tóth, 2021).

Experts had time for entertainment too. A huge garden party was organized by the Hungarian colony around 1985. All state leaders were invited, only Dos Santos did not come, who otherwise never went to any event. All the ambassadors were among the guests: Portuguese, French, German, Soviet and Czechoslovak, as well as representatives of African states. The female members of the Hungarian community cooked day and night for 2-3 weeks, the embassy staff has served as waiters; as locals remembered there was no such event even in the Portuguese times (Interview with János Valentovics, 2023).

On Candonga (black market) one could buy almost everything. Since payment in dollar was forbidden, only beer and whiskey were used. Géza Tóth has bought a Barkas van from the Cuban soldiers and made them dug a 3-meter-wide and 2.5-meter-deep pool in the garden, which he filled with fertile soil (since the area had red sand, not suitable for growing plants). He installed a small kitchen frame where he could grow tomatoes, pineapples, bananas, papayas, Angolan roses and ‘diabo’, a very strong, long, narrow pepper-like herb. He was accompanied by her daughter, Andrea, who in the daytime worked as a warehouse manager, at home she cooked and was the boss of three black girls. Mr. Tóth ordered daily necessities for the whole Hungarian community worth of \$10,000 from Lloyd Diplomat Supply Store. Despite he kept all the accounting in a huge spreadsheet there were no gaps in the invoice (Interview with Géza Tóth, 2021).



All bus drivers must have taken part in one-month internship under the supervision of Hungarian technicians, then pass an examination on maintenance. Strange complaints have occurred, as somebody poured water into the engine instead of oil, and oil into the battery and didn't understand why it was out of work. However, after all the drivers were thoroughly trained in maintenance, there were no such problems (Interview with Géza Tóth, 2021).

According to the article of *Dunántúli Napló* ('Transdanubian Diary'), in 1981 after a serious accident, general manager Armando José Carvaiho spent a few months in Hungary for medical treatment. First at the 400-bed Munkácsy Mihály street clinic in Pécs, followed by the special spa treatment in Harkány. He was very grateful for the care of the nursing staff and the 14th AFIT company, who not only served delicious coffee and Portuguese-language newspapers, but presented him a new Portuguese-Hungarian technical dictionary written by a local author from Pécs, which he found very useful (*Dunántúli Napló*, 1981).

Newspapers do not mention a common case, that Angolan chief officers organized break-ins almost everywhere in Luanda hoping for money.⁷ According to Géza Tóth, such cases were commonplace, often the experts had to report it to President Dos Santos himself. Local military officers regularly cut out the doors of their apartment buildings with welding guns (Interview with Géza Tóth, 2021).

Tamás Zilahy, a journalist from *Néphadsereg* ('People's Army'), visited Manauto 3 plant in 1987. Following his description, the seven-person Hungarian community has created a wonderful oasis, being almost self-sufficient. In addition, air conditioners and fresh drinking water were available, but the most important thing for the journalist was the amazing cohesion and solidarity of these people (*Néphadsereg*, 1987).

Export of Broadcast Technology

Hungarian news technology industry proved to be suitable for technical cooperation, it looked back on almost a 100 years of scientific and industrial history, and dynamical export-oriented production grew rapidly (Czeglédy, 1974, pp. 130-134). In 1981 BUDAVOX Foreign Trade Company started supplying USW broadcasting equipment to Angola, telephone switch components were manufactured in the Budapest Radio Technology Machinery Factory, which realized almost \$1 million business in July 1981. At the end of the year it fulfilled another \$1.2 million obligation (*Esti Hírlap*, 1981).

⁷ Archival records also confirm that armed robberies against foreigners were regular: "...the many unemployed (especially in the capital), the lack of basic foodstuffs, speculation, the devaluation of the local currency, the public wealth and number of common law crimes against private homes. The general public safety of the country can be classified as bad." (*ÁBTL Kongó*).

In 1985 the company sold a communication system consisting of radio telephones for \$1.12 million, next year roughly one-third of all exports were shipments of different equipment. The fact that Angolan exports declined later, - between \$152 thousand and \$2.5 million a year -, was mainly caused by general fluctuations in the country's monetary solvency (Világgazdaság, 1985).

Budavox strengthened its market positions with new export contracts in both the Middle East and Africa. After that, another deal worth 2.5 million dollars was concluded for the delivery and installation of microwave lines. As a novelty, the firm even managed to realize advantageous cooperation for the delivery of telephone factory transmission equipment (Veszprémi Napló, 1984). Export of radio communication network infrastructure was so successful that a second similar contract had to be signed for the sale and delivery of broadcasting equipment in order to build a complete communication system of fixed, mobile and portable USW radiophones for a total of \$1 million 200 thousand (Világgazdaság, 1985).

Medicines and Medical Equipment Production

Export of medicines and medical equipment was carried out by MEDIMPEX Pharmaceutical Foreign Trade Company, that accounted for 15 % of the total export. It was considered quite profitable, as its increase was justified by the growing demand for medical products and the catastrophic situation of local health care (Hegedűs, 2008, pp. 21, 29-47.). When the country became independent, the value of Hungarian medical export was only \$150,000, although it mainly consisted of life-saving drugs. Between 1976-79, the company was able to realize really high export improvement worth \$1.5 million per year. By 1980, the upgrowth of exports rose to 10-15 % (Világgazdaság, 1979).

Angolan pharmaceutical industry collapsed, and temporarily ceased operation in the year of independence (1975) due to the departure of Portuguese specialists, whose absence was felt strongly. On the other hand Kőbánya Pharmaceutical Factory played a great role in the restart, as a result of the superhuman work of Hungarian experts in 1977-78 (Világgazdaság, 1979).

In 1979 those drugs that were totally unknown in Angolan medical circles were presented in the framework of a Hungarian pharmaceutical exhibition. László Kádár, the deputy general manager and his colleagues signed a \$750,000 agreement with the Angolan pharmaceutical procurement company for the export of animal feed premixes provided by Bábolna BCR Works, established as a joint venture (Világgazdaság, 1979).

In April 1984 the delegation of MEDIMPEX negotiated with foreign trade representatives of Angomedica company, as they examined the distribution of imported foreign medicines, on the other hand a Hungarian-Angolan joint pharmaceutical



production company was planned in the near future. The foreign trade company supplied Chlorocid, Semicillin, Vitacolan and various vaccines and premixes (Világgazdaság, 1981; Hegedűs, 2008, p. 21).

New marketing strategies were also implemented, when in 1979 Hungarian Pharmaceutical Days were held, a range of new medicines were introduced in both the countryside and in the capital. With the help of Hungarian specialists, two drug manufacturing laboratories were united in Luanda, thus the first pharmaceutical factory of Angola was established (Világgazdaság, 1981). Marcela Ramalho, director of the serum production laboratory, praised the work of Hungarian pharmacists, for example the work of Dr Zoltán Riedl, who established the production of anti-malaria tablets in Angola.

According to a news report in Népszabadság, countless difficulties have occurred with the lack of technological discipline among the local workforce, but the quality requirements could not be relaxed either (Népszabadság, 1983). In addition to these, the Hungarian specialists also participated in the operation and modernization of Angolan health institutions (Besenyő et al., 2013, p. 108).

Cangola Agricultural Secondary School

From 1978 Dr Lajos Szabó, a scientific associate of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture Department from Gödöllő University of Agricultural Sciences spent several years in Angola to teach professional skills in Malange. Since this institution was still under construction, the director commissioned him the opening of Cangola Agricultural Vocational School in Uige province in the middle of the primeval forest (Mezőgazdasági mérnök, 1981; Interview with József Pekli, 2023).

The buildings of the former Capuchin priest training institute in Cangola had to be transformed into a new agricultural school, which was done only in three months (Mezőgazdasági mérnök, 1981). Different classes were organized: plant cultivation, plant protection and animal husbandry. G. Luiukuta became the director, meanwhile two more Hungarian colleagues Lajos Bíbor and Dr András Markó arrived in January 1979, to help in organization, in addition they have also written five textbooks for Angolan students (Népszabadság, 1983).

According to the observation protocol in the Historical Archives of the State Security Services, Lajos Bíbor had good relations with the leaders of local and provincial bodies, especially the provincial commissioner, who was a member of the Central Committee of MPLA-Labour Party. He maintained friendly relations with the local Portuguese - mainly communist-minded - experts. On summer he dared to travel from Portugal to Morocco without Hungarian state permission (ÁBTL Kongó).

The school had to be built almost from scratch. Armando Muta, a staff member of the International Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, highly appreciated the activities of Hungarian teachers working at the Cangola Agricultural Vocational School (MNL TESCO Angola). In 1983 the first graduates were released: 12 animal breeders and 22 plant growers. Since pre-training was extremely low, teaching was not easy, but the instructors became almost friends with all the students, who were often interested in everyday life of Hungary. A small celebration was even held on the occasion of the Béla Bartók centenary, thus it was a surprise when it turned out that two students had already heard of the famous Hungarian composer (Népszabadság, 1983; Interview with Dr József Pekli, 2023).

The teaching staff consisted of educators of Angolan, Portuguese, Bulgarian, Cuban and Hungarian nationalities, but there were also some Dutch, Congolese and Cameroonian ones, and a fifth-year Angolan student was also asked to teach due to the dire shortage of teachers (Mezőgazdasági mérnök, 1981).

Since Dr Lajos Szabó's subject only started in the second academic year, he had plenty of time in Luanda to acquire the still missing equipment, and at the director's request, he also held courses in Huambo Agricultural Research Institute under the title "Soil protection in tropical conditions" (Mezőgazdasági mérnök, 1981). He also had to write the necessary textbook for the two-year university preparatory course, on the other hand the Minister of Agriculture wanted him to teach soil protection and ecology at the Faculty of Agriculture of Angolan State University, thus he had to reach the appropriate level of Portuguese language in just half a year (Szent István Egyetem, 2004).

In addition to these activities, he has also actively participated in the restoration of a 50,000-hectare teaching farm, and during his free time, he took on the physical training of the local tennis team, during which he made many new friends (Mezőgazdasági mérnök, 1981).

Animal Health Assistance

Even in the Portuguese era, veterinary health was lagging behind, after independence only a few dozen veterinarians remained. In 1980 COMECON organized a vaccination campaign of the livestock in Angola, where all vaccines were made available free by the socialist countries. On February 4, 1980, a group of eight Hungarian veterinarians set off on the scheduled Aeroflot Moscow-Budapest-Luanda flight on board of an IL 62 plane (Népszabadság, 1983).

The Hungarian veterinarians were distributed in Angola to the following places:

Location	Veterinary's name	Task
Cunene province (Cahama)	DVM Lajos Radácsy	vaccination
	DVM Miklós Török	diagnostics
Huila province (Lubango)	DVM László Merényi	mobile lab
	Mustafayev	Soviet coordinator
Benguela province (Benguela)	DVM László Écsi	diagnostics
	DVM Sándor Gabnay	in a bacteriology lab
Uige province (Uige)	DVM Péter Perényi	in a parasitology lab
Huambo province (Huambo)	DVM Béla Juhász	vaccination
Luanda	DVM Tamás Szabó	vaccination and diagnostics

Table 1: Territorial assignment of the Hungarian veterinary group, Source: Merényi and Szabó, 1981, p. 572

The other experts (Soviet, Czechoslovak, Polish, Bulgarian, East German, Cuban, Mongolian and Vietnamese) were already in Luanda. Dr Fernando Riberio Leal, head of the veterinary service, and Victor Duarte, director of the Huambo Veterinary Institute, were the professional supervisors. Georgy Alexeyevich Yugyin, the Soviet COMECON coordinator, divided all experts into mixed international brigades, emphasizing the internationalist nature of the assistance, thus a total of 25 brigades worked in the country's 13 provinces: 12 groups vaccinated the animals, and 13 brigades performed related diagnostic work.

All Hungarians worked in such a diagnostic team, their task was to examine the cattle herd, detect tuberculosis, brucellosis and contagious lung disease. DVM Merényi worked in Lubango, where he lived with a Polish and a Vietnamese expert. Lunch was almost rice every day, fruit was sold in the street, but the only local shop had a very poor selection: only raw fish (Merényi and Szabó, 1981, p. 572). Hungarian specialists did not take Portuguese language course⁸, they were only required to know Russian. For Mustafayev, the Soviet coordinator they had to write a daily report either in Russian

⁸ With foresight, DVM László Merényi visited the antiquarians in Budapest before his departure, and with great difficulty found an English-Portuguese dictionary in the Foreign Language Book Shop. He rarely used it, as learning the Portuguese language orally proved to be much more useful. He was able to communicate in English with the laboratory manager who was more qualified than the others (Interview with DVM László Merényi, 2022).

or Portuguese, but the latter language was preferred, because the lack of Cyrillic typewriters it would have been quite tiring to write everything in Russian by hand (Interview with DVM László Merényi, 2022).

The main task was to vaccinate cows against anthrax, squealing heifers and contagious lung lobe. During their stay, they often threatened by the danger of malaria, although Hungarians regularly took the tablets, two Polish colleagues caught the terrible disease, thus they had to travel home earlier. The Vietnamese, in a forward-thinking way prepared mosquito nets to protect themselves against the tsetse fly, which carries the dangerous African Sleeping Sickness. Everyone was vaccinated against yellow fever, but they were allowed to drink only boiled water, tea or milk made from milk powder. They tasted the local beer called 'Cuca' or the rare 'Flamingo' whiskey too (Interview with DVM László Merényi, 2022). During their stay a total of 1,022,243 cattle were vaccinated, in 43,232 cases brucellosis was detected, in 6,910 cases contagious lung lobe was observed (Merényi and Szabó, 1981, p. 572).

DVM László Merényi worked as the only Hungarian veterinarian in Lubango, the capital of Huila province, with Polish bacteriologist Tadeusz Malciewski (nicknamed Tadek), a Soviet-Armenian serologist and a Vietnamese veterinarian in a poorly equipped laboratory. Their task was to start an animal health laboratory, to train the local staff, to carry out parasitological tests and to vaccinate the cattle. Since they lived far from the capital, not even the local representatives of TESCO visited them. Although the small Hungarian team faced many unexpected situations, it managed to overcome all the problems. The tragedy of László Écsi shook everyone, as he and his Vietnamese colleague were just leaving work when two unknown soldiers opened fire on them⁹, in which the Hungarian veterinarian lost his life (Interview with DVM László Merényi 2022).

Three slaughterhouses have operated in Lubango, the most equipped one produced only for export, but veterinarians were not allowed to enter there. The other two were characterized by a high degree of unpretentiousness, - even goats were slaughtered here -, where veterinarians came regularly to prevent the spread of infectious parasites. Due to continuous civil war, water or electricity cuts occurred almost every day. Many times shortages happened during slaughtering, which could also have resulted significant hygiene risks (Interview with DVM László Merényi 2022).

This is how he writes about the city of Lubango in his diary: "Around the center, even though it's like a farm, there is a kind of peripheral city. According to my imagination, during the time of the Portuguese, mainly whites lived in the city, - judging

⁹ However, it was not revealed that the attackers could have been government troops or UNITA guerrillas, since almost "everyone there shot at everyone without consideration". The Vietnamese colleague spoke perfect Hungarian, since he attended university in Budapest, he was able to tell the authentic story of what happened. However, for understandable reasons, it was not allowed to write down the story after returning home (Interview with DVM László Merényi 2022).

by the houses - and blacks lived in the periphery. Lubango must have been nice once upon a time. Full of shops, wide tree-lined roads, parks. Now it gives a very neglected impression, despite the fact that even in empty shops, the lights come on in the evening, the neon signs work. Many Western companies were represented here: Peugeot, Shell, SKF, Pelikan, Mobil, etc. Now it's all empty" (Merényi 2013, p. 94).

Although there were little opportunities for entertainment, they sometimes played cards, but everyone was a bit careful with each other. The other two veterinarians, Dr Miklós Török and Dr Lajos Radácsi rarely came to visit, with whom they went to Casino Park on the outskirts, which was closed, but the large swimming pool was still there, although there was no water in it. The small zoo in Lubango and the modern cinema - where films ran in French - were also free time options. On a basketball match Dr Radácsi, - pretending to be a foreign journalist - made a thorough sports report.

On 4th, April the veterinarians announced that since it was a state holiday in Hungary, they would not be working, but take a trip to Moçâmedes on the coast. It was also very important not to deviate from the designated asphalted roads, because of unknown mined areas. They met a group of chimpanzees who were very afraid of humans. During such a walk, they noticed an interesting road sign on which the inscription "Hungaria" could be read, thus everybody believed it might have been the former settlement of the great Hungarian scientist, László Magyar, since he lived somewhere in the area in the 19th century (Interview with DVM László Merényi 2022).

For Women's Day held on 8th, March a military unit came to Lubango to ensure the street carnival, where everybody danced kizomba, played drums on metal barrels, soldiers got so drunk that they kept shooting in the air. At night DVM Merényi only heard that a gun was drawn outside the house, after that an incredible big bang could be heard. All they were frightened, since the door was only made of plywood and could not be locked; thus a gunman could have easily entered. Two Cuban soldiers immediately jumped out of the window from the other room and asked the Angolans why they had fired. The only answer was that they were just drunk and had the idea that someone was trying to break in. Anyway, they were happy to shoot in the heat of celebration without any reason. The other heavy gunfire was heard when South African fighter jets fired intensively at a concrete statue in Lubango, in which Cuban soldiers were believed to be hiding. During each attack planes thoroughly fired the area, but fortunately no one was injured (Interview with DVM László Merényi 2022).

According to the Angolan Minister of Agriculture, COMECON's veterinary campaign had been a great success, he expressed his gratitude to the government of the Hungarian People's Republic in addition to other socialist countries (Merényi, and Szabó, 1981, p. 572).

End of Cooperation

From the beginning of the 1980s, the expansion of economic relations was hindered by a number of factors:

1. Angola, as an integral part of global economy was forced to use its relations with traditional capitalist states too
2. Economic crisis severely affected Luanda, as oil prices stabilized, trade began to deteriorate, so austerity measures must have been taken
3. Economic problems of the socialist world have increased, the assistance of COMECON has narrowed
4. Serious liquidity problems arose, that affected the growing debts (MNL 1985a).

In 1983, Luanda declared insolvency to its creditors and requested the rescheduling of its debts. In 1984, an intensive consultation between the Hungarian National Bank and the Angolan National Bank started, as a result the Angolan party had to transfer only 10 % of its overdue receivables in advance, and the remaining 90 % only from July 1984 in equal installments over 24 months (MNL 1985b). During discussions the number of Hungarian experts were required to be fixed at 50, those of which worked without salary could have not exceeded 10%. In addition, the number of all Angolan scholarship holders in Hungary was limited to 30 students (MNL TESCO Angola).

According to former ambassador András Gulyás, the number of the Hungarian community was close to a hundred people in its heyday, including experts, doctors, pharmacists, car mechanics, veterinarians, members of the financial advisory group and family members. There were regular weekly film screenings and lectures at the embassy, New Year's Eve parties, trips to the nearby safe beach, these were the main forms of relaxation (Interview with András Gulyás 2022).

From the middle of the 1980s the sending factor was also made difficult, in many cases it was unable to provide qualified professionals, thus Hungary together with other socialist countries, restrained the sending of technicians (Hegedűs, 2008, pp. 10-11, 29-47). On the other hand experts were very slowly accepted in Luanda, requirements were modified several times during the procedure, and the partner could not always fulfill its commitments regarding accommodation and food either.

In 1988, there was still a Hungarian community of 42 people: 25 workers, 8 wives and 9 children. In 1989, the commercial office in Luanda was closed, the next year TESCO stated that it could provide additional expert assistance only on a regular fee basis (MNL 1988c). After that Hungarian Defence Forces officers served in UNAVEM missions on United Nations (Besenyő, 2019, pp. 12-16).

Conclusion

The entire Socialist Bloc - including Hungary - have always paid great special attention to the Third World including former Portuguese colonies. Like other members, Hungary wanted to put an emphasis on the expansion of foreign trade relations, on one hand for ideological reasons (Marxism-Leninism), on the other hand to counterbalance its foreign policy isolation through gaining access to Western technology and currency. Marxist ideology could have only served as a kind of common ground in Angolan-Hungarian bilateral relations. Hungary needed raw materials and new markets for its products, Angola needed specialised expert help and infrastructure.

In the course of my research, which basically serves to uncover the missing primary sources, I have collected a number of previously unknown documents, and I wanted to show a tabloid of the colourful memories of former experts. In the near future I would also need new archival materials of the Angolan Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to be able to put my results in a wider context. I hope that a detailed analysis and interpretation can enrich the ongoing research on the connection between the Eastern Bloc and the Third World in the framework of transnational and global economic history.

My series of in-depth interviews with former experts and diplomats also proved to be useful for mapping the basic information of the process of technology transfer. I could also find primary information in Soviet documents kept in the archives of the Russian Federation, but this is rather doubtful due to the current political situation and the limited accessibility. I hope that more “relics” could be found in the future either in Hungary or Angola.

Conflict of Interest

The author hereby declares that no competing financial interest exists for this manuscript.

Notes on Contributor

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