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ANGOLAN NATIONALISM

Today the peoples of the "Third World" (non-aligned countries) have joined the makers of History. They have created a new equilibrium in international relations and their actions provoke a worldwide echo. Events in this Third World interest and concern all the peoples of the planet.

Angola, yesterday a country that few people could locate on a map and unknown to world public opinion, has today, with the beginning of its armed struggle for independence, definitely entered on the great scene of History.

It is not our purpose to discuss the programs of the political parties or the short-term tactics which accompany the armed fighting. It is rather to locate this vast movement of national liberation in its general context, to try to indicate the historical landmarks and the specific events which have given rise to the struggle that is occurring in Angola.

Due to its colonial context, the struggle of national liberation in Africa has specific special features. Consequently one cannot analyse validly any of the struggles for African independence and human dignity without taking into consideration the system of the particular colonizing country in question.

In regard to the evolution of the nationalist movement in a Portuguese colony, it is important to point to two essential factors that have seriously held back its progress. In the first place, the isolation imposed by the colonial system together with the character of the constitution in force in Portugal herself for the last 35 years, have placed Angola in the deepest zone of silence of Africa. Secondly, due to the fact that colonial administration made any legitimate and open political confrontation of the masses impossible, clandestinity became a permanent factor of political organization.

From a general point of view one can say that the precedence of events which took place in those parts of the African continent under French, Belgian and British colonial rule prevented, one after the other, world attention from focussing on the Portuguese colonies. At the same time the regime of Salazar perfected a propaganda machine designed to make the thesis of "territorial integration" and "spiritual assimilation" plausible.

Portuguese colonies have, until recently, been the only areas of Africa where modern political struggle has never taken legal forms. Since the 30's, for example, there has not been in Angola any public confrontation of the people with a party or a political leadership. In fact, the appearance of an organized leadership (a leader) in the revolt is a phenomenon that emerges in the late phases of Angolan nationalism. There have been of course some violent speeches during electoral campaigns for the presidency of the Portuguese Republic made by Angolan tribunes who wanted to take advantage of this opportunity to present a public denunciation of the miserable living conditions of the people. Such was the case during the electoral campaign of 1948 which has however a mere episode and not a manifestation of a permanent and stable political activity, based on a party structure, defying the colonial administration. For this reason the Portuguese authorities have been the only ones to speak to the world about their colonial policies.

The spectacular eruption of the Angolan Nationalism that has found expression in an armed struggle has spotlighted the nonsense of Portuguese government propaganda. One remembers in this connection, arguments advanced by the theorists of Portuguese colonialism and by the Brazilian sociologist, Gilberto Freyre, according to whom nationalist feeling could never emerge in the "overseas provinces".

According to them, racial fraternity, the understanding attitude of the colonizers and the co-existence of the black and white communities of Angola for five centuries necessarily eliminated the possibilities of African nationalism in this country. Present realities put these arguments in question. Nevertheless, official circles in Lisbon claim that nationalist activity in Angola is the work of foreigners or Angolans who have emigrated to the former Belgian and French Congos.

The line of development of the Angolan liberation movement is sufficiently clear to demonstrate the falsity of these assertions. Let us retrace the various stages.

Among the problems faced by the Portuguese liberal monarchy, towards 1856, was the effective occupation of these same colonies. Actions to that end were intensified following the decisions taken at the Berlin conference. During the ensuing military campaigns, Portuguese troops met numerous severe setbacks because of the strong resistance of the African population of Angola. A case in point is the resistance of the people of Dembos whose insubordination has since been designated by Portuguese historians as the "shame of the nation".

Fifteen successive expeditions were necessary to obtain the "pacification" of an area which in 1916 had only 55,000 inhabitants. From 1872 on, the people of Dembos variously renewed their fight against the Portuguese army and rebelled against colonial administrations that committed numerous abuses in the collection of taxes and the exploitation of small merchants. Between 1872 and 1907 the Portuguese did not succeed in their attempts to establish military outposts. A large expedition, the famous column of 1907, under the command of captain Joao de Almeida, which was 20 times larger than the previous contingent was completely wiped out by the native (nationalist) forces.

The same fate was accorded to the expeditions of 1909, 1913 and 1918. Finally, in October 1919, the Portuguese using Angolans from other regions, and soldiers from Mozambique, emerged temporarily victorious against the national resistance in the area of Dembos.

Thus, Angolan nationalism takes its inspiration from the struggles of the rural populations against the domination of Portuguese troops as well as from the campaigns conducted by journalists and intellectuals of the country during the years before the ascension of Salazar to power.

As soon as the military occupation was completed, Portuguese forces were used to liquidate physically the traditional chiefs and to destroy the tribal structure in order to impose direct domination. The administrative occupation that had begun in 1922 was accompanied by the expropriation of lands and goods, by the imposition of head taxes as well as by a system of forced labour. During this phase, the last outbursts of popular resistance were seen in the armed revolts that broke out in several areas of the country from 1924 to 1939.

At the same time another type of political struggle was organized by Angolans living in the urban areas, the "assimilados". These small groups of assimilated Angolans, mostly civil servants, commercial clerks, small land owners, artisans and workers, used the press as well as regional associations to denounce the thefts and the plundering of the colonial system. During this period the struggle was particularly ruthless. Many African publicists were, if not deported, sentenced to the loss of their civil and political rights.

Salazar's arrival to power was to deal a mortal blow to all political agitation in Angola. Nevertheless certain African associations were established in 1929, particularly the Liga Nacional Africana (L.N.A.) and the Gremio Africano, called later on, Associação Regional dos Naturais de Angola (Anangola), whose purpose was to gain, by means of legal pressure, better economic and social conditions.

With the progressive increase of the number of settlers and the increasing control of the Portuguese in all aspects of Angolan life, most of the members of these associations realized that the use of reformist methods in the open fight against the colonial administration could not be successful. These associations were the scene of divisions and conflicts for the generation of our parents, caught in a historical situation demanding a radical change of methods of struggle used hitherto.

The partisans of legal reforms, a minority among the active Angolans, sought the support of the colonial administration which, in its turn, took advantage of the existence of these candidates of treason to deepen the division among the Angolans. Others, at the same time recommended consistent political activity linked to the so-called native population. They proposed two methods; admission of Angolans deprived of political and civil rights to membership of these organizations, and extension of their political, social and cultural action to the mass of the people.

A crisis developed among the leadership particularly within the L.N.A. The minority, opposed to any connection with the masses, gave up the struggle. Taking advantage of the crisis, the Portuguese authorities were able, through corruption and bribery and moral pressure, to infiltrate into these associations agents of their security police and succeeded in replacing the elected leadership by administrative commissions named by the General Governor of the Colony. As time went by, the older generation lost hope in the success of the struggle against the Portuguese colonial administration.

The end of the Second World War saw the beginning of a new stage of the Angolan national movement. The Angolan youth of Luanda having digested the precedent political experiences in the light of the new historical context, made a noisy entrance on the public scene in about 1948. The young men began by developing activities within the legal associations directed toward the African masses, and trying to overcome the gap between the so-called "civilized" and "native" Angolans.

A campaign against illiteracy was organized and an effort made to give a nationalistic sense to cultural works. Angolan youth, in accord with the new ideas circulating in the world, brought through their literary work a new message which crystalized the national feeling. Magazines and cultural newspapers were forging political awareness. The colonial

administration was quick to put an end to this agitation by the Angolan youth who were the avant-garde of the legal struggle. This left only one possibility of continuing the struggle for the national awakening of the masses: the organization of political clandestinity.

From this point on the Angolan political movements were to grow and develop in a climate of police terror. In order to advance the idea of the urgent need of creating clandestine national organizations, serious studies were made in Angola dealing with international situation and with the nature of fascism. These studies were widely distributed in the whole country by a group of young urban dwellers.

The Partido da Luta Unida dos Africanos de Angola (P.L.U.A.) was created in 1953, and in 1956 the leaders of the P.L.U.A. and other organizations issued a manifesto calling for the formation of a vast grouping and thus founded the Popular Liberation Movement of Angola (M.P.L.A.). After a brief analysis of the process of imperialist domination of African peoples, the Manifesto reviewed the essential aspects of the Portuguese colonial domination in Angola from the political, economic, social and cultural points of view.

"We are humiliated as individuals as well as a nation" observed the Manifesto which denounced the new orientation of the Portuguese colonial policy based on the attempts of genocide against the Angolan people, the subordination of the masses to forced labour, the detribalisation, the lack of sanitary assistance and the dreadful rate of infantile mortality. In recent days, adds the Manifesto, Portuguese colonial oppression has increased because of the penetration in Angola (via Portuguese colonialists) of foreign capital, monopolies and international trusts.

In face of this situation, it invited the Angolan people to organize and to struggle on all fronts and under all conditions "for the liquidation of Portuguese colonialism, for Angolan independence, for a democratic government, a coalition government of all the forces that have fought Portuguese colonialism. However, Portuguese colonialism will not fall without a desperate fight. Therefore, only one way exists to liberate the Angolan people: that of revolution. But this struggle can reach its goal only through a united front of all the anti-colonial forces of Angola, regardless of political opinions, social situations, religious beliefs and philosophical tendencies. Only through the formation of a wide popular movement for the liberation of Angola. This movement shall not however constitute a membership of all Angolan patriots to only one organization or association. This movement shall be the sum of the activities of Angolan organizations." Such were the ideas that spread among the inhabitants of the whole country. Peasants, workers, civil servants, intellectuals and religious leaders adhered to the program of M.P.L.A. Among other organizations that were also created was the Movement for National Independence of Angola (M.I.N.A.) founded in 1958, which later on fused with M.P.L.A.

Angolan nationalist tendencies developed also among the emigrant circles of the Congo, in particular the messianic movement of Simao Toco. Born in Angola, in 1917, this religious leader had emigrated to the Congo (Leopoldville) where he created and developed the organization known by his name. The movement whose essential goals were to be realized by the practice of peaceful civil disobedience to the laws of the colonial administration, had a large following in the interior of Angola. Expelled from the Congo, Simao Toco went

back to his native land where the Portuguese authorities took measures against him and his followers going so far as to deport them to the concentration camp of Baia dos Tigres. Today he is employed as an assistant to the lighthouse keeper of Porto Alexandre.

Several other groupings, based sometimes on ethnic and cultural sometimes on regional ties, gave birth in the Congo (Leopoldville and Brazzaville), at first to some friendly and mutual associations, and later to true Angolan nationalist movements, aided by the evolution of political events in these regions. Let us mention among them the Uniao das Populacoes do Norte de Angola which became in 1958 the Uniao das Populacoes de Angola (U.P.A.), L'Alliance des Ressortissants de l'Enclave de Cabinda (A.R.E.C.) today Mouvement de Liberation de l'Enclave de Cabinda (M.L.E.C.) and L'Alliance des Ressortissants de Zombo (ALIAZO).

To come back to the interior course of events, it is important to mention the essential facts that have, since 1956 marked the life of the nationalist movements in Angola. The Portuguese, having decided to face a changing political situation showing definite signs of nationalist restlessness, installed their security police, the International Police for Defense of the State (PIDE) in the colony, in the beginning of 1957. The persecution of Angolan nationalists took a new character at this point and it was systematically organized. The first Secretary General of M.P.L.A., Viriato Cruz, was forced to escape and sought refuge in Europe.

1958 was a year particularly marked by political activity.. By means of tracts, programs of action, proclamations of the anti-colonialist struggle and the organization of clandestine schools, the agitation of the Angolan masses continued to increase and to bother the Portuguese. Luanda's population will recall for a long time a certain Easter Sunday of 1959 as a tragic date in the annals of Angolan nationalism. The 29th March of that year marked the first spectacular operation of terror set loose by PIDE against the African masses of the capital city. Notorious nationalists and those suspected of participation in political movements were imprisoned. The peaceful population was treated with violence.

Within the framework of the defense of "overseas provinces", the Portuguese Under-Secretary of Aeronautics presided on the 26th April, 1959, at a ceremony installing the Portuguese Air Force in Angola, a ceremony that demonstrated the destructive powers of their weapons. Luanda press was delirious over the event. The "Comercio de Angola", for instance, which dedicated nearly an entire issue to these manifestations, begins by calling all these war flights "The first Festival of the Angolan Air Force". And it goes on, "It was with emotion and enthusiasm that a tremendous popular mass of over 100,000 people attended the demonstration of the Air Force."

The parade of the paratroopers at the airport also received a great ovation... examples of attacks with napalm bombs as well as intensive machine gun fire on targets, had simply overwhelming effects... It is, in any case, certain that the operations took place in a military fashion, the authorities having clearly indicated that they would not hesitate to use this form of combat to subdue an eventual anti-colonial rebellion or even to prevent its occurrence.

To begin with, the launching of paratroops (it is to be remarked that the first paratrooper to reach the ground was the Roman Catholic chaplain who had accompanied the Air Force from (Lisbon). Secondly, napalm bombs (45 kgs) and machine-gun fire.

"Alert, athleticism doing the goose step, the soldiers astonished the European population", and the enthusiastic colonial press continues, "many observers had apparently only one wish: that all this demonstration of force be not only an exercise."

Other such manifestations were organized in southern regions of Angola: Nova-Lisboa, Sa da Bandeira, Lobito, Benguela. At the Portuguese National Assembly, the colonial deputy of Mozambique, colony of the Eastern coast, demanded the establishment of military forces.

Hailing the war flights of the "First Festival of the Air Force" in a Portuguese colony, the General Governor declared, "In our days peace is possible only when States dispose of sufficient forces to face the threats of agitators and disturbers who are generally inspired by Communism under its most veiled forms. A country can be defended only within a military framework, and every piece of Portuguese territory must be provided with land, sea and air forces, constantly present and vigilant to prevent the yielding to covetousness and to false ideas." And he continues, "these troops must have a moral force strong enough to resist all kind of propaganda intending to undermine them, since it is well known that the army is the main obstacle to any diffusion of propaganda. This is a period of leaflets... which considers the military force as the obstructing foe. Evidently these leaflets have now made their apparition even in Angola..."

A new state of vigilance was called for. More than 150 people were imprisoned during the month of July 1959 in the single town of Luanda. Ilidio Machado, intellectual and nationalist leader of M.P.L.A., was arrested in Lisbon during his vacation. After these numerous imprisonments, PIDE prepared the trial of 57 people (50 Angolans and 7 Europeans). This "Trial of the 50" was presented by the Portuguese political police as a vast conspiracy organized within Angola. It was composed of three different trials: the first one concerning 15 Angolans (one of them from Pointe-Noire, one Guinean, one American Negro and a Cuban Negro); the second concerning 7 Portuguese, and the third for 32 Angolan nationalists, 20 of which were being held in Luanda and 12 lived in the Congo, in Europe, in Brazil or elsewhere.

The accused belonged to the most diverse social circles: civil servants, commercial employees, male nurses, workers, intellectuals and students. "The Trial of the 50" showed to what extent the struggle for Angolan independence had developed and demonstrated the organizational capacities of the various nationalist movements.

The reading of the trial proceedings made us realize that the Angolan Nationalist movement had arrived at a turning point which would lead it on one hand to the organization of clandestinity, and on the other hand to the constitution of a united front of liberation. If PIDE had not at this point decided to hold out a dragnet, the political course of events in Angola would present today a more positive aspect, since the nationalists had been trying to realize the union and association of all nationalist forces.

The proceedings of this trial began towards the end of 1959, but the date of judgement, fixed primarily for the 7th March, 1960, was put off several times. In August 1960, with the purpose of confusing the true issue involved in the Angolan nationalist struggle, PIDE demanded the trial of the 7 Portuguese accused of having distributed clandestine leaflets calling for independence of the colony. These men were subsequently sentenced to jail terms from 3 months to 3 years and to the loss of their political rights for 15 years. The Supreme Court

of Justice of Lisbon, after revising the trial, increased the sentences to a minimum of five years.

On 5th December of the same year, the military court of Luanda undertook a show trial of 20 Angolan nationalists, members of M.P.L.A. and other political groups. During this trial all kinds of irregularities were done: isolation of the defense lawyers prevented from consulting the proceedings, from visiting their clients and even from hearing the witnesses of the defense. Aware of their responsibilities as struggling nationalists, the accused people refused to grant to a foreign court the right to judge them, an attitude which gave to the great majority of Portuguese lawyers the pretext to abandon their defense. Only two lawyers, Almeida Valadas and Maria do Carmo Medina, courageously continued the defense, an act which brought them immediate reprisal from FIDE.

On December 21st the 20 Angolan patriots were sentenced to jail terms from 3 to 10 years with loss of their political rights for a period of 15 years. "The Trial of the 50" was the first official acknowledgment of the existence of Angolan nationalist movement having ramifications throughout the country, and the following testimony of an Angolan girl describes well the development of Angolan national consciousness between 1956 and 1959.

"Our private and public life in Luanda had become more and more unbearable: we were being surveyed in church, unsafe at home and ridiculed in school. Everywhere our survival depended on the Portuguese will and abuses were "our daily bread". I was obliged to carry always my identification card with me to avoid being arrested on the street and consequently sent away to where servants were in demand. I often saw white officers flogging my people, under the burning sun of March, if they did not work fast enough. We, native women, were often attacked by white men though to a lesser degree than the Portuguese soldiers are doing today. I have always seen, wherever natives were being ill-treated, some black women speaking up to defy their oppressor. I felt strengthened by the courage of my illiterate sisters, but at the same time I was ashamed of my own silent cowardice and passivity before all this cruelty and injustice.

Early in 1956, I had a decisive experience: with about 50 other slaves (contratados), I covered more than 1,000 kilometers. All my life I had seen and heard slaves around me, but this time the immediate victims represented a witness of what I was searching for. On the road, my brothers sang a sad melody in Kimbundu (our language), mourning the difficulty of forced labor, wondering when they would return home and asking why they had not died before. Their refrain was that conditions would change, they had to change some day. I saw some of them weeping as they sang. Then we stopped in the village of one of these men to allow him to say good-bye to his unfortunate wife, his innocent son, his poor mother and friends. The moment the 5-year old son asked his father when he would return was the most impressive. Smiling courageously, the father took the boy in his arms, saying simply, "I don't know." This touching scene brought a deep silence upon us, broken only by the dhouting of the white driver, "Vamos embora, rapaz" (Let's go, boy). The last tears and the last words were exchanged and the truck left, hiding the village and its people in a cloud of dust and insecurity.

The things that really influenced my life were my parents and our meaningful family life, the first seven years of my life spent in the hinterland where I saw and experienced many difficult situations, my two primary school teachers and, later on,

my contacts with other students, particularly an agriculturist and a Roman Catholic priest. I was obliged to work for a year before completing my 7-year high school studies. On my way to work, I had to go through the overcrowded Sambizanga slums where life for the natives much more miserable and exacting than I had ever suspected. The horrible conditions of life of my poor people of Sambizanga made me reflect seriously on the possibilities of helping them restore their human dignity, of changing our national situation and of uniting the hundreds of fellow-countrymen belonging to the underground nationalist movement that struggled for the freedom of our country.

PIDE, the Portuguese security police, became more and more omnipresent and omniscient, and the nationalists had to be very careful in their contacts. I did, however, try to meet some of the active members of the underground movement but, being a teenager, I did not succeed at once. I decided therefore to organize my own friends and began by inviting them individually for tea, at our home, and there I would ask them about their ideas concerning our national situation. We all agreed that the Portuguese had already gone far enough, that they had to be stopped, so that we could at least have the right to breathe freely in our own country. Some of these young people were already members of the nationalist movement, and others were encouraged to follow them. Some of my friends must have talked to members of the underground movement about my tea invitations, since a member of the nationalist movement entrusted me with a responsible task. I think that my first service pleased my fellow-countrymen because they demanded more and more of my co-operation. I was grateful to be working instead of studying at that time for it enabled me to help more. One day I was introduced to most of the leaders and some of them did not like a teenager mingling in such serious affairs. At the beginning I was somewhat discouraged by this distrust but little by little I gained their confidence and was finally granted membership. At this point, I could resume my interrupted studies. Therefore, nationalist activities do not constitute an obstacle to furthering one's education.

In the meantime, the active nationalists became aware of the fact that they were being followed by PIDE. I was disturbed by the presence of a white PIDE agent at the corner of our house, who insulted me many times. Also, I shall never forget the evening a police car stopped next to me as I was returning home carrying some nationalist material under my arm. I could hardly breathe but the car went away almost immediately. When I arrived at home, the same car had already stopped at our door. I rushed into the house through another entrance to hide the documents as best as I could, thinking that my turn had come but nothing happened. The same evening, to my great sorrow, I burned the pictures of our nationalist group. However, I did keep some "dangerous", undeveloped films that I did not want to destroy. Without taking time to dine, not saying a word to my parents, I left in search of a place to hide my treasure. Now PIDE could return, they would find nothing. The next day, as I was listening to a newsbroadcast from Radio-Brazzaville, a friend of the nationalist group arrived and asked me, "What was that white man listening from your window outdoors? He left as soon as I came in". I was relieved to know that I had either burned or hidden all "dangerous" documents.

In spite of all this, we continued our work, discussing with our brothers and sisters how to stand up for our rights and how to fight abuses and injustices. Being most of the time obliged to reassure myself, I was nevertheless afraid for my friends and never did I tell them or my parents my experiences with PIDE. I wanted to avoid increasing their anxiety.

Then I was granted a scholarship to pursue my studies abroad. It was a bad time to leave my defenseless people, at the mercy of the Portuguese, and even more so to leave my companions of the Nationalist movement. A farewell party was given for me to which a PIDE agent introduced himself disguised as a man looking for a friend among us. None of us was deceived

With a heavy heart I left Luanda in February 1959 and a month later most of my companions were arrested. They still hover between life and death in a Portuguese prison today. There is one thing I shall never understand: how and why PIDE let me leave ANGOLA after having surveyed my movements for such a long period of time."

As the myth of the total adherence of the Angolan natives to the Portuguese nation was being radically shaken, it became easier for the political movements to impose the reality of Angolan nationalism on an international level. Moreover, since 1957, the nationalists of different Portuguese colonies in Africa studied the best way of supporting the liberation struggle within their respective countries.

First of all, they intended to unify the liberation movements of all the Portuguese colonies. The first united front, the Anti-Colonialist Movement (MAC) was created in Europe by militants of MPLA, the African Party of Guinean Independence (PAI), and by nationalists coming from Mozambique, Cape Verde, St. Thomas and Prince. In January 1960, at the time of the second African Peoples Conference, MPLA and the Guinean PAI created the Revolutionary African Front for the Independence of Portuguese Colonies (FRAIN) and dissolved MAC. In its turn, FRAIN was dissolved by the Conference des Organisations Nationalistes des Colonies Portugaises, in April of 1961. It is during the "African Year" that the Angolan nationalist movement found the necessary support for the definite establishment of outside offices attached to independent African governments.

The Portuguese reactions to the approaching proclamation of the Congo's (Leopoldville) independence are well known: a preventive military action increasing the patrols and the aerial forces protecting the Angolan borderlines. Going far beyond brutalities and repressive measures against the population, the police arrested political leaders and Angolan personalities, such as Dr. Agostinho Neto and the Reverend Father Joaquim Pinto de Andrade, at the end of June 1960.

In a declaration of June 13th, 1960, MPLA states that it would consider the following as signs of the rejection, on the part of the Portuguese government, of the use of force: "the urgent and effective realization of the principle of self-determination for the Angolan people, the establishment of political liberties, the convocation of a round table before the end of 1960 including the representatives of all Angolan political parties to discuss with the representatives of the Portuguese a peaceful solution to the colonial problem in Angola."

MPLA with the other Angolan nationalist organizations made it clear that their position at a moment where everything indicated that the Salazar government was preparing itself to drown in blood a nationalist uprising going, if necessary, to the point of provoking it. The Portuguese government instead of engaging in a discussion on the issues that opposed us to the colonial administration, responded by a reinforcement of the repressive apparatus in our country and by the slaughter of our people. In November 1960, twenty nine political

prisoners, most of them from Cabinda, were executed in the court of the local jail.

Urgent calls were coming to us from the interior of Angola: the masses insisted on the creation of organized plans for an active self-defense. Faced with the ever greater intensity of the repression and the pressure coming from the masses, MPLA defined once again its attitude towards Portuguese obstinacy. At a press conference in London, at the Chamber of Communes, on December 6th, 1960, MPLA together with other organizations of Portuguese colonies (particularly the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and the Political Convention of Goa) reaffirmed that the Portuguese government, instead of considering the propositions for a peaceful solution of the colonial problem, was intensifying its preparation for war. We declared that the Salazar government left only one alternative to the nationalist movements of the Portuguese colonies: to resort to direct action.

The Portuguese did not hesitate to demonstrate, by declarations as well as by concrete measures, that they intended to continue their classic methods of exploitation and their fight to remain the sole master of our countries.

For along time already, Luanda's population had intended to liberate the leaders of MPLA and other nationalists being held in their town. The audacity of our militants in the attack of the military and civil prisons of Luanda, in February 1961, can only be explained by the climate of terror that prevails in the country and by the national consciousness of our people.

As we had foreseen the Portuguese government, obstinate in maintaining its domination and system of oppression, was to impel the Angolan masses to direct action by the very force of circumstances.

The circumstances that preceded the attack on the prisons showed the level of revolutionary consciousness of Angolan patriots. It was their political maturity that made them take advantage of the presence of several journalists waiting for the arrival of "Santa Maria" in order to better alert international opinion.

It is not true that the pistols used in the attack of February 4th had been provided by the Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia. They had been taken from Portuguese policemen during a preceding assault by MPLA militants on police jeeps patrolling the Negro quarters of Luanda. In spite of their seemingly suicidal character, these attacks have brought the Angolan situation to national and international awareness.

The importance of the attacks on the civil and military prisons of the capital of Angola does not need to be demonstrated, since it is beginning with this courageous action that the vast field of popular insurrection has spread all over the country, that insecurity has established itself in the body and soul of the Portuguese colonizers.

The forces of repression responded to these events by the means at their disposal. On February 5th, following some provocations that occurred during the funeral of Portuguese soldiers killed by our militants, they proceeded to the slaughter of 3,000 Angolan patriots. This 5th of February witnessed other events that have not been brought to international public attention.

Several nationalists who had participated in the attacks mentioned above, succeeded in escaping Portuguese repression and

fled to the Eastern regions of the country. In Baixa do Cassange, district of Malange, they organized the plantation workers who revolted against the abusive practices of an agricultural company called Cootonang. The attacks were directed against European properties, official regional government residences and against a Roman Catholic mission. However, few white men were killed. There again, the reaction of the Portuguese forces was violent: villages were bombed and according to certain sources, 10,000 Angolans killed.

The governor of the Malange district, Mr. Monteiro, a native from Cape Verde islands, after a personal investigation of this affair, sent a report to the General Governor concerning the coercive methods used by the Cootonang Company. He also sent leaflets, written in Kimbundu, mentioning the refusal of the Angolan people to cultivate cotton against their will. Naturally, the colonial company obtained satisfaction and Mr. Monteiro was relieved of his position.

C O N C L U S I O N

You have followed the itinerary of the nationalist movement in Angola, its demands and the reactions of the colonial administration.

We have tried to draw the essential steps in the formation of a national consciousness in Angola, while keeping ourselves above the present factional struggles. That is why we did not deal with events beyond the 15th March which represent a new chapter in the history of Angolan nationalism.

The struggle for liberation has shown first of all the immediate aspect of a resistance to the military occupation of the Portuguese and to the annexation of lands. Until the arrival of Salazar to power, the nationalists were able to use legal forms of combat, but their demands found fewer and fewer echoes on an international level. The past 30 years during which Angolan nationalism has faced a regime of colonial exploitation, the most ferocious that Africa has known, represents the great period of the clandestine struggle. During this period, the Angolan people has gained energy, courage and foreign alliances. All this made an armed struggle possible.

Several conclusions can be drawn at this state of research, regarding the characteristics of Angolan nationalism:

1. It is a stifled nationalism which has developed in a climate of peculiar secrecy. The nationalists finding it impossible to organize the rural masses, at the beginning, approached above all the urban masses and a certain elite, who were thus the first to be affected by the propaganda of the nationalist parties. Moreover, the colonial administration maintained social divisions and created a gap between the "civilized" and the "uncivilized" Angolans. Most of the secret organizations have adopted the group as a base of their structure, and these groups represent genuine cells defending the African communal interests.

2. While the messianic movement of Simao Toco has not gone beyond a refusal of obedience to the civil laws, it can be said that the Angolan nationalist movement has shown from the start a revolutionary aspect in its demands, in the sense that the parties, in their tracts, demanded less an improvement of the

conditions of the colonized than an overthrow of the colonial system itself. This attitude is easily understood, when one takes in account the obstinacy and lack of realism of the Portuguese colonial policy. In other words, the reaction of the Portuguese administration and the permanence of the old colonial blemishes: forced labour, illiteracy, economic and social misery and racial discrimination, have impelled the Angolan nationalists to revolutionize their position. The native population did not feel itself concerned with the few measures of social promotion which the colonial power introduced from time to time in the country, such as, the nomination in 1953 of two representatives of "native interests" to the Legislative Council of the colony.

In fact, the so-called "representatives of the natives" found themselves unable to supply solutions to the problems of the African population.

3. The native born organizations have always kept their complete independence from the parties of the "metropole". They were far from being their subsidiaries.

4. Two important tendencies have become apparent within Angolan nationalism: an interior tendency represented by the MPLA, another one that could be called the "Boundary Continuation" (including Congo Leopoldville and Brazzaville). Generally speaking, until most recently, there has been a co-ordination of all these tendencies, interrupted by the imprisonments of 1959. The acceleration of the formation of Angolan independence today depends on a new alliance of these two tendencies.

Such are some of the characteristics of Angolan nationalism. Finally, it is appropriate to mention the role played by the Angolan nationalism in the awakening and formation of the national awareness of other Portuguese colonies. The Conference of Casablanca, on April 18th, 1961, marked the materialization of all efforts undertaken by the nationalists of Angola to assemble all forces opposed to Portuguese colonialism in Africa. Direct Action as an effective means for overthrowing the colonial system, has become the principal factor of all the nationalist organizations of the Portuguese colonies, under the inspiration of the Angolan nationalists.

(MPLA DOCUMENT)