



EDUCATION — A VITAL GOAL

When the MPLA launched armed struggle thirteen years ago, it also embarked on the arduous and vital task of wiping out the illiteracy inherited from five centuries of colonialism. Knowing that education would be one of the battlefronts demanding the greatest concentration of efforts, from the very earliest years of the struggle the MPLA sought to draw up study programmes, launch large-scale literacy campaigns and create the minimum conditions for establishing institutions of revolutionary education to meet our most urgent needs.

In proportion as liberated areas were created by the MPLA, schools were opened in which teaching methods were not confined to the use of manuals and textbooks, but were based chiefly on direct observation of nature, the study and interpretation of politico-social realities, involvement in agricultural work, gymnastics, singing, etc. This is how the first contact with schools took place.

Taking into account our own specific conditions and studying the experience of other revolutionary countries, we managed to overcome some of the difficulties arising out of differing social levels, different languages, lack of teaching material and lack of schools providing the minimum facilities for profitable study.

Basing our education on our people's experience and directing it specifically towards the broad masses of the people exploited by the colonial system—the workers and peasants — we have been able to make considerable progress, qualitatively, both in fighting illiteracy and in creating true revolutionary consciousness.

Today there are six school centres providing political education for our young pioneers. On the Northern Front, construction work is nearing completion on a technical training Institute for our militants.

In addition to the school centres, plans are under way to establish auxiliary schools directly under the administrative and pedagogical direction of these centres.

Campaigns against illiteracy are proceeding in the liberated areas, and apart from these campaigns there is all the collective work done in production, where the ideological aspects and the political line laid down by our movement are carefully studied and interpreted by the broad masses of the people in our country.

Nevertheless, growing demands are created by the advance of our struggle, giving rise to further needs, such as more school material, new schools, equipment, means of transport, foodstuffs, boarding school equipment, etc., and only the solidarity with the Angolan people's just struggle shown by support committees and friendly countries can help us to meet these needs.

OMA ACTIVITIES ABROAD

OMA attended the All-African Youth Festival in Tunis and the Youth Festival in Berlin as part of a large MPLA Youth (JMPLA) delegation. Our cultural performances, which included revolutionary theatre, poetry reading and songs and dances from the liberated areas of Angola, were warmly applauded by all the participants. In Berlin, people cheered with enthusiasm when our comrades paraded through the streets in their uniforms with the MPLA flag, the flag of the future independent Angola.

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The Organisation of Angolan Women, OMA, was invited to attend the 7th Congress of the Albanian Women's Union, which was held in Skohdra from 11 to 15 June 1973.

Our delegate was greatly impressed by the way Albanian women are participating in all spheres of life in their country. We can see that they are advancing with giant strides towards the true emancipation of women, without at the same time failing to be good mothers and wives and also creating an atmosphere conducive to happiness in their homes. They expressed full solidarity with our national liberation struggle and OMA was given a warm welcome as representing a people who have been fighting for thirteen years, arms in hand, to put an end to the nefarious colonial system. After reading her speech, our delegate, Comrade Ruth Neto, presented a number of gifts, statuettes made by Angolan craftsmen, MPLA pennants and OMA scarves and badges. OMA was interviewed by Radio Tirana.

Long live solidarity among all women in the world!

UNITED WE WILL WIN!

OPEN LETTER TO ALL OUR
FRIENDS THE WORLD OVER

Dear friends,

The atrocities committed by the Portuguese colonialists are increasing with the MPLA's victories. Infuriated at not being able to destroy our forces—since the people's will is indomitable the brutalised colonialists are committing the most dreadful crimes against our people. There have been innumerable massacres of peaceful Angolan people whose only crime is their unconditional support for the valiant MPLA. They have razed whole villages with napalm and destroyed crops with herbicides, trying to reduce our people to starvation and dislodge them from the liberated areas.

A few months ago the President of the MPLA sent a telegram to the United Nations Secretary General denouncing the criminal use of herbicides, requesting that Portugal be condemned before the world and asking that our people be aided.

Towards the end of July in London, a former Portuguese airforce officer in Angola, Jose Ervedosa, denounced the crimes committed by the Portuguese colonial army, some of which, as an airforce officer, he was forced to witness.

Here is a press cutting from a British paper on yet another of the many massacres perpetrated by the Portuguese colonialists.

Allegation of Angola village atrocity

By PETER NIESEWAND

Guardian (U.K.) July 14, '73

An allegation of another Portuguese massacre of African civilians — this time in the West coast territory of Angola — was made yesterday by a 34-year-old Angolan, Mr Bernardino Sequeira. He said he was an eye-witness to the killing of about 30 men, women, and children. The incident, he said, took place in 1967 about 190 miles east of the capital, Luanda.

Mr Sequeira is a member of the guerrilla organisation, the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola), and at present is a post-graduate student at Birmingham University.

"In 1967, I was teaching at a secondary school in an Angolan town called Vila Salazar. One day—I cannot remember the exact date but it was during the rainy season—I was going with a friend through the countryside north-west of the town when we noticed some smoke.

"When we came close, we

saw two Alouette helicopters at a small African village, and about 20 Portuguese commandos in camouflage kit."

He continued: "It did not take much time for the soldiers to line up the whole village and then they forced them to start digging a hole. When this was finished, they ordered the people to stand by the grave and the soldiers opened up on them with machine guns.

"There were about 30 people—it was a very small village—including some women and children. I was so shocked that I did not count exactly how many there were, but there were even some babies strapped to their mothers' backs. They were put in a tight group and fell down into the grave. The troops went to the side of the pit and opened fire down on to the people.

"When they had finished, they covered the grave with sand, and burnt the huts. The place was completely destroyed. Nobody was left alive in the village. Then the troops got into their helicopters and left."

Finding that it is impotent to destroy the Angolan people's vanguard, Portugal's fascist government is resorting to the most heinous crimes. Dignity and sense of honour mean nothing to that criminal government. It is selling off our country so as to be able to continue this war which is already making even Caetano's partners very uneasy! Portugal itself is a semi-colony, but with medieval pride, while the earth runs with blood it is braying to the four winds about the defence of the West and of its colonial empire.

But the Angolan people will not stop their glorious march forward. This is shown by the most recent war communiques, from which we reproduce the following extracts.

On 2 June, an infantry unit of our armed forces encircled a marine unit, Special Detachment No. 10, which was proceeding along the road between the Chilembe Barracks and Lumbala in 4 Vehicles. All the vehicles were destroyed and the enemy suffered heavy casualties, among them 12 dead who were identified as follows:—

Private Daniel Palmeira de Souza Machado, born in Robert Williams, Caala, on 7 January 1955; Marine Viriato Sebastiao Lampreia Neves, born in Salvada, Beja, Portugal, on 26 July 1949, SPM 8296; Marine recruit Mario de Souza Neves, born in Portugal on 13 July 1949; Mario Lamas, a native of Feira, Aveiro, Portugal, Private 543/70, SPM 8296; Marine Joaquim Antonio Ramos Trindade, born in Ciladas, Evora, Portugal, on 23 February 1953, SPM 8296; Private Paulo Alfino, born in Nova Gaia, Portugal, on 10 April 1949, SPM 3746; Marine recruit Jose Antonio Caetano Placido, No. 1192/70, born in Arraiolos, Portugal, on 8 October 1949, SPM 8296; Marine recruit Antonio Joaquim da Silva, No. 720/70, born in Terrugem, Elvas, Portugal, on 1 December 1949; Marine Vasco Branco Morais Cachao, born in Chaves, Portugal, SPM 8296; Marine Inacio Martinho Aurelio, born in Seixal, Portugal, on 14 September 1939, SPM 6900; Marine Helder Manuel Pereira de Souza, born in Valenca do Minho, Portugal, on 21 March 1950, SPM 3376; an unidentified marine.

Our forces captured a large number of confidential documents and plans for future operations. The following material was also captured: 4 G3 automatic rifles, 1 MG 42 machine-gun, numerous G3 magazines thousands of 7.62 calibre shells, assorted military equipment: boots, uniforms, belts, badges, caps, etc. Watches, transistor radios, food. Our forces suffered no losses.

On 30 June, an enemy vehicle hit a mine laid by MPLA guerrillas on the road from Gago Coutinho to Mussuma and was completely destroyed. The enemy suffered 6 dead (among them a commander) and 1 wounded.

On 28 May, our guerrillas operating in Zone F, Fifth Politico-Military Region, attacked a police station near the Matia strategic hamlet, inflicting heavy losses on the enemy. Our forces captured a large quantity of equipment, including 14 radio transmitting sets.

That same day MPLA guerrillas attacked airborne enemy troops from the Menongue post. The enemy sustained heavy losses.

On 16 June, an airborne company of Portuguese colonialist troops from the Menongue post entered a minefield and suffered many losses. Continuing their march, the company fell into another ambush in which they suffered further losses. Attempting to beat a retreat, they entered another minefield and were completely wiped out.

Dear friends, although we live in a war climate, with all the suffering inherent in a struggle, we are preparing our people for the free Angola of tomorrow, and although war hardens our hearts it does not make them arid. We cultivate in ourselves friendship, appreciation and gratitude towards all those who are helping us at this difficult time, comradeship and love of beauty.

We sometimes feel that there can be nothing more wonderful on earth than peace and friendship among all peoples.

In order to win the peace we so long for, we are forced to wage war!

And we are building. The Angolan youth of today is not that of thirteen years ago, before the start of the armed struggle. Our books, our schools, our Centres of Revolutionary Instruction, our art forms—poetry, painting, music, sculpture and so on—all bear the stamp of our desire for a free and decent life.

In its despair, Portugal is attempting reforms which convince no one. We saw how the people boycotted the fake elections, when the colonialists gave Angola the pompous title of 'state', but where the deputies are almost all Portuguese, including the Governor-General, who comes directly under the central government in Portugal!

Dear friends, we are very much in need of your solidarity. If all women's organisations were to make the liberation of Angola their immediate goal, and we were to fight a joint campaign to this end, we are certain that this would bring our independence much nearer.

LONG LIVE THE SOLIDARITY OF ALL THE WOMEN IN THE WORLD!

UNITED WE WILL WIN!

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Money donations can be sent to the following address:

MPLA—OMA
National Bank of Commerce
Bank House Branch
P.O. Box 9031
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Gifts in kind can be sent to:
Organisation of Angolan Women
P.O. Box 20604
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

DEOLINDA CENTRE

Work never stops on the construction of the Deolinda Centre! It is progressing bit by bit, although with some difficulties which can only be overcome by a united and determined people. Despite the fact that we do not as yet have all the facilities required to build permanent structures for our centre, our people are putting up a small centre of a rudimentary kind with their skillful hands. The huts, with walls made of local materials roofed with grass, have been very nicely laid out. The Deolinda Centre therefore exists in embryonic form.

This is how the big building projects which serve our people start to take shape in the MPLA. All our schools and hospitals were initially rough structures which provided somewhat precarious conditions but were still able to operate in a relatively productive way.

OMA has started its activities at our centre. Showing tremendous enthusiasm, it has already conscientiously embarked upon such activities as a literacy campaign, sewing classes, frequent ideological sessions, work to explain the machinations of imperialism, and collective agricultural work in the very good fields near the centre.

We are well aware, however, that a lot remains to be done. Not only do we lack the means to build a permanent centre, but we need material to equip the schools, classrooms, nursery and manual work room. We are short of vehicles, food, agricultural implements, and so on. And we are counting on more help from friendly organisations to enable our centre to operate under better conditions.

Our objectives have been clearly laid down. We therefore look to the future of our centre with confidence, convinced that out of it will come Angolan women properly prepared for the tasks of our Revolution. And because our work is for the benefit of the Angolan people as a whole, and reflects their needs, we feel sure that we will be understood and helped by all the progressive forces in the world.

We shall be grateful for all donations.

INTERVIEW WITH AN OMA MILITANT

Maria Simao Paim is a long-standing member of the Organisation of Angolan Women who took part in an attack on the Karipande Barracks and also in an ambush in which she gave proof of considerable courage. She is now working in the MPLA's Auto Section. She is 31 years old, married and has one daughter.

Q. Comrade Maria Paim, we should like you to answer a few questions for our OMA Bulletin, although we know that your duties give you little spare time.

A. With great pleasure, comrades. I am glad to do it, because I know that through our little interview we can tell other women in the world of our sacrifices and aspirations, and also of our certainty that if we unite our forces we can put an end to Portuguese colonialism.

Q. When did you join the MPLA?

A. I joined the MPLA in 1962, when I was in Nambuagongo, our country's First Politico-Military Region.

Q. Why did you join the MPLA?

A. I came to the MPLA because people said that its leaders were seriously struggling for the independence of Angola. The prisons were filled with MPLA militants and the word was going from mouth to mouth that Dr. Agostinho Neto had been deported to the Cape Verde Islands. The people knew that this was the fifth time he had been arrested for political activities, for wanting our country's independence.

Q. Tell us something about your experiences in Angola after the war was launched on 4 February 1961, about the difficult situations you went through, how you had the courage to take up arms to confront the enemy, about your actual involvement in OMA and how you were organised inside Angola.

A. Well comrades, I will try to do as you ask, though there are experiences it is hard to describe. You know you have to face a situation if you want to survive and you have to find the means to defend yourself against the enemy. This explains why our people in the First Region carried on in the forests, not giving themselves up to the Portuguese colonialists and keeping a high morale, always on the alert.

I always told myself that one day I too would have to take up arms to avenge the many sons of our people who have fallen heroically on the battlefield. This is why I took part in battles, not for the last time I hope, making my contribution in that way.

After the war was launched I went into the Nambuagongo forests and stayed there until 1963. There was no Organisation of Angolan Women inside the country at that time, so our contribution was to prepare cassava meal, cook and wash the guerrillas' clothes.

I realised then that we needed a lot of things from abroad to face an enemy equipped with the most modern weapons supplied by NATO, and it was then that I left and went to contact the leaders, some of whom were abroad at that time.

In 1964 I was at the Cabinda border doing exactly the same work as in the First Politico-Military Region.

In 1968 I went to the Eastern Front, the Third Region. I underwent military training and took part in an ambush and then in an attack on Karipande Barracks.

Q. Did you feel proud to take part in combat?

A. Yes, very proud. My direct involvement in combat made me more than ever convinced that women can in fact do many things.

Q. Did you take part in combat solely as an MPLA militant or also as an OMA militant?

A. I did so as an MPLA militant and as an OMA militant who feels the domination of colonialism as well as men's domination over women.

This involvement in armed struggle showed me the extent of what we could do, and I spoke to the other comrades telling them what I felt. We could even fight for our country's liberation, arms in hand.

In the East we were organised in Sections which included several mixed groups of men and women. Apart from the specific tasks entrusted to the women's leader in the Section, OMA was given such common tasks as engaging in armed struggle.

We lacked many things inside — salt, food, clothing, milk and so on. We constantly prepare agricultural plots in different places, so that when the enemy destroy some there are always others. There is the constant danger of being bombed. But life goes on! We have schools for both children and adults. Anyone who knows something teaches someone else.

Q. Are you married? Where is your husband? Do you have any children?

A. Yes, I am married and I have a little girl of ten. My husband is a medical assistant and he is in the combat areas. Since 1970 he has been in the Fifth Politico-Military Region (Bié, the centre of our country), and he's standing firm there.

Q. What are you doing now?

A. I've learnt how to drive light and heavy vehicles and I've got my heavy vehicles driving licence. Since we need a lot of drivers here in the south of Angola, given that we have to cover 3,000 km from the port of Dar es Salaam to the border of our country, I wanted to be useful to the Angolan people and we OMA comrades must take an active part in the revolution.

Q. Do you think you are contributing towards the liberation of Angola and towards Angolan women enjoying their rights in free Angola?

- A. Yes, I think I am contributing to Angola's independence and to Angolan women freeing themselves from their complexes of the past. The MPLA and OMA show us that Angolan women can play an important role in the struggle for independence and in the reconstruction of our country. This is why I took part in combat and have now learnt how to drive trucks.
- Q. Do you still feel sure that our victory is certain and that the MPLA is the Angolan people's guide?
- A. Yes, I am absolutely sure that victory is certain, despite all the difficulties our MPLA is facing. The people have confidence in their vanguard movement, since it is like a torch which always illuminates the difficult paths of our struggle, leading us to resounding victories. Everything that Angola is in the world today is due the heroism of the MPLA militants.

The blood of the sons and daughters of our people who have fallen on the battlefield urges us onwards to final victory.

Victory is Certain!



Maria Simao Paim ready to go on a Mission.

SOLIDARITY WITH ANGOLA

From "DOCUMENTS AND INFORMATION" Published by the Secretariat of the Women's International Democratic Federation, we got the following news which we quote:

In response to the resolutions of the WIDF Bureau, the Union of Australian Women has issued a call to collect wool, needles, children's clothing and other articles to be sent to Angola, where the people are heroically combatting the Portuguese colonialists."