

# THE GROWTH OF NATIONALISM IN ANGOLA

By Mario De Andrade

TODAY the peoples of the neutral world are making history in their turn. They are creating a new balance in international relations and provoking world-wide reactions. It has now become commonplace, therefore, to observe that everything that happens in the neutral world is of interest and concern to men all over the globe.

Angola, which such a short time ago was unknown to the international public, a country which few people could find on the map, has made its entry on the great stage of history once and for all. This is a fact contemporaneous with the outbreak of armed conflict in that part of the world.

My intention is not to deal with the programme which the political parties have set themselves, nor the tactics employed to intensify the armed combat. My task is to place this vast movement for national freedom in its general context, to endeavour to point historical references, and to describe the various demonstrations which made possible and even precipitated the conflict now taking place in Angola.

The fight for national freedoms in Africa shows certain special characteristics, owing to the colonial context in which it is placed. All the facts of this struggle for African independence and dignity could in fact not be properly analysed without taking into account the nature of the colonialist regime in the country concerned.

In the case of the growth of the nationalist movement in a Portuguese colony, attention must be called to the two main factors which gravely hindered its successful progress. In the first place, there is the isolation imposed by the colonial system and the character of the institutions which have prevailed in Portugal for 33 years, which cast Angola amongst the most sombre and silent areas of Africa. Secrecy

constituted the second, continually present factor for political organisations which the colonial administration deprived of any possibility of contact with the people.

It may be said that by and large, events taking place on the Africa continent, involving colonial powers such as France, Belgium and England, obstructed one by one the course of events in the Portuguese colonies. At the same time, the Salazar regime was perfecting a propaganda and humbug machine intended to give currency to the theory of territorial integration and spiritual assimilation.

The Portuguese colonies are thus the only areas of Africa where the present-day political struggle has never assumed a legal character. In other words, never since the thirties has Angola, for example, seen any kind of public contact between the masses and a party machine or its leader. The emergence of the leader in the rebellion is in fact a phenomenon which appears at a late stage in the growth of Angolese nationalism. Under cover of the electoral campaigns for the presidency of the Portuguese Republic there were of course speeches, sometimes violent, by some Angolese tribe taking advantage of the situation to register a protest against the wretched living conditions of the masses. This was the case in the 1948 electoral campaign, but it was an isolated episode and not a constant feature of open political activity, organized into a party and defying the colonial administration.

This is why the Portuguese authorities were for a long time the only voice to speak to the world of their colonial policy. This spectacular outbreak of Angolese nationalism, taking the form of armed rebellion, has shown up the meaninglessness of the propaganda put out by the Portuguese Government. We recall the arguments put forward by the theorists of Portuguese colonization or Gilberto Freyre, the Brazilian

sociologist, to the effect that national feeling could never blossom in the "overseas provinces". Racial brotherhood, the understanding of the colonizer, the five centuries of co-existence by White and Negro communities in Angola must of necessity, according to them cancel out or avoid the consequences of African nationalism in this country.

The reality which must be faced sheds doubt on these kinds of arguments. Nevertheless, official circles in Lisbon claim that nationalist activity is the work of foreigners or Angolese groups who have emigrated to the former Belgian or French Congos.

The course taken by the Angolese freedom movement is sufficiently convincing and gives the lie to these accusations. Let us retrace its stages.

Among the problems facing the Portuguese liberal monarchy in about 1856 was the effective occupation of the colonies. This occupation was to be speeded up, in the light of the decisions of the Berlin Conference. Military campaigns then took place, during which Portuguese troops suffered bitter and numerous defeats before the fierce resistance of the African population in Angola.

The exact nature of this resistance may be illustrated by an example—the war waged by the peoples of Dembos, whose refusal to submit was looked upon by Portuguese historians as a *shame for the nation*. Fifteen successive expeditions were necessary to achieve the "pacification" of a region which numbered 55,792 inhabitants in 1916. From exactly 1872 onwards, the people of Dembos once more took up the fight against the Portuguese army, rising against the colonial administration which practised numerous abuses in the levying of taxes and exploited the small trade. Between 1872 and 1907, the Portuguese could achieve no positive result of their attempts to set up military posts.

A big expedition, the famous column of 1907, under the command of Captain Joao de Almeida and twenty times larger than previous contingents, was utterly annihilated by the nationalist forces. The same fate befell the expeditions of 1909, 1913 and 1918. Finally,

in October 1919, the Portuguese, using Angolese from other regions and soldiers from Mozambique, emerged for the time being victorious over national resistance in the region of Dembos.

Angolese nationalism thus takes its origin from the wars waged by the peoples of the interior against the domination of Portuguese troops, along with the struggles fought by the country's publicists and intellectuals, during the years before Salazar came to power. At the time when the military occupation was being completed, the Portuguese forces were used to literally wipe out the traditional chiefs and destroy the tribal structure, so that direct domination could be better imposed.

The administrative occupation begun in 1922 was accompanied by the expropriation of land and property and the imposition of a "sovereignty" tax, along with the system of forced labour. During this period the last stirrings of popular resistance were registered by the armed revolts which broke out in several parts of the country between 1924 and 1939. Angolese considered to be assimilated and resident in urban areas organised another type of struggle at the same time. These nuclei of assimilated citizens, mostly officials, business employees, small land-owners, artisans and workers, used the press and regional associations to carry out political action denouncing the robbery and plundering of the colonists. The struggle was bitter at the time. Several African publicists were eventually condemned to lose their political and civil rights, even to be deported.

Salazar's arrival in power was to deal a deathblow to all political agitation in Angola. It must be noted, however, that certain African associations were founded in 1929, in particular *La Liga Nacional Africana* (L.N.A.) and the *Gremio Africano* later named the *Associação Reginal Dos Naturais De Angola* (Anangola) whose aim was principally the achieving of better economic and social conditions by means of legal pressure.

With the gradual growth in the number of settlers and the increasingly tight control by the Portuguese

over all areas of life in Angola, most of the members of these association realized the impossibility of conducting a successful open fight against the colonial administration by way of reforms. These associations were the scene of divisions and contradictions amongst those of our parents' generation, placed in a historical situation which demanded a radical change in the methods hitherto employed in the fight against colonial domination. So it was that a minority group of Angolese in favour of the assertion of legal claims sought support from the colonial administration, which in turn made use of these candidates to commit treason and to deepen division amongst the Angolese.

Others, however, advocated a consistent political activity joining up with the so-called native populace. They suggested two ways of carrying this out; either the organisations should admit as members Angolese who enjoyed no political or civil rights, or else they should extend their field of social, cultural and political action to the mass of the people.

#### DEVELOPMENTS

A state of crisis prevailed in the leadership, particularly within the L.N.A. The minority which opposed all association with the masses abandoned the fight. The Portuguese authorities, taking advantage of the crisis, managed to place agents of the political police force in these associations by the use of corruption and moral and material pressure, and finally replaced the elected leaders by administrative commissions appointed by the Governor-General of the Colony. The older generations gradually lost hope in the successful outcome of the struggle against the Portuguese colonial administration.

A new phase in the history of the Angolese nationalist movement was to open just after the end of the Second World War. In about 1948, young Angolese living in Luanda thought over the old political experiences in the light of the new situation in their own day and made a noisy entrance on the public stage. These young people began by making use of legal associations to work

out activities destined for the African population at large, trying in this way to bridge the gap between the so-called "civilized" Angolese and the "natives".

A campaign against illiteracy was organised and young talents gave a nationalist meaning to works of art. Angolese youth, to the tune of the new ideas abroad in the world, conveyed in its works, above all in literature, a new message crystallizing national feeling. Cultural magazines and papers shaped political awareness. The colonial administration lost no time in putting a stop to this agitation by the young Angolese in the forefront of the legal battle. Only one course remained open to those struggling for the national awakening of the populace — the organisation of secret political activities.

From that time onwards, Angolese political movements were to come into being and develop in an atmosphere of police terror. Serious studies, on the international situation as well as the nature of fascism, were written in Angola and spread throughout the country by a group of young towns-people who put forward the idea of the urgent necessity for the creation of secret nationalist organisations.

The *Partido Da Luta Unida Dos Africanos De Angola* (P.L.U.A.) was soon set up in 1953. And in December 1956 the leaders of the P.L.U.A. and other organisations appealing in a manifesto for the formation of a vast front, founded the *Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola* (MPLA). After a brief analysis of the methods used to impose imperialism on the African peoples, the manifesto reviews the main features of Portuguese colonial domination in Angola on the political, economic, social and cultural planes.

"We are humiliated as individuals and as a people," the manifesto states in particular, denouncing the new trend of Portuguese colonial policy based on attempts at the genocide of the Angolese people, the subjection of the masses to forced labour, detribalization, the lack of health provisions and the terrible rate of infant mortality. In these last years, adds the manifesto,

Portuguese colonialist oppression has been increasing in gravity due to the arrival in Angola (through the agency of Portuguese colonialists) of *dominating capital, monopolies and international trusts*.

Faced with such a situation, it invites the Angolese people to organize and strive on all fronts and in all conditions "for the liquidation of Portuguese colonialism, so that Angola may become an independent state and a democratic government may be set up, a coalition government comprising all the forces which have fought Portuguese colonialism.

However, Portuguese colonialism will not fall without a fierce fight. Thus there is only one way to the freedom of the Angolese people: *revolutionary struggle*.

But this struggle will achieve its objectives only by forming a single front of all the anti-imperialist forces in Angola, taking into account political opinions or philosophical tendencies only in the formation of the largest popular freedom movement in Angola. The movement will constitute the sum total of the activities of all Angolese organizations."

These are the ideas which spread to the inhabitants of the entire country. Peasants, workmen, officials, intellectuals and religious personalities gave their support to the propaganda of the M.P.L.A. Still more organisations were created, among them the Movement for the National Independence Party of Angola (M.I.N.A.) in 1958, which later merged with the M.P.L.A.

Among the nationalist tendencies which appeared in circles of emigrants in the Congo, we must first of all mention Simão Toco's messianic movement. Born in Angola in 1917, the religious leader had emigrated to the Leopoldville area of the Congo and there he founded and developed the organization known by his name. This movement, whose main aim was expressed in the practice of peaceful civil disobedience of the laws of the colonial administration, had a large following in Angola. Expelled from the Congo, Simão Toco returned to his native land and the Portuguese authorities took repressive

measures against him and his followers even to their deportation to the concentration camp of Bahia dos Tigres. Now he is employed as assistant to the light-house keeper at Porto Alexandre.

Various groups, based sometimes on ethnic and cultural, sometimes on regional affinities, gave rise, in the Leopoldville and Brazzaville areas of the Congo, to associations which were first of all founded on friendship and mutual aid and which later became veritable Angolese nationalist movements, helped by the course of political events in these regions. We would cite among others the *Union das Populações do Norte de Angola* which in 1958 became the Union of the Peoples of Angola (U.P.A.), the alliance of the Nationals of the Cabinda Enclave (A.R.E.C.), now the Movement for the Liberation of the Cabinda Enclave (M.L.E.C. and the Alliance of the Zombo Nationals Aliazio).

### FEATURES OF ACTIVITY

To connect all this with the course of events within the country, it is important to indicate the main features of the national movements' activity in Angola after 1956. Determined to act in the face of an unstable political situation where definite signs of nationalist unrest could be observed, the national police responsible for the defence of the state (P.I.D.E.) was set up in the Colony, at the beginning of 1957. The hunt for Angolese nationalists then took on a new character and was methodically organised. The first Secretary-General of the MPLA, Vriato Cruz, had to take flight at this time and sought asylum in Europe.

The year 1958 was especially conspicuous for great political activity. By way of pamphlets, plans of action and proclamations of the anti-colonialist struggle and through secret centres of instruction, the unrest amongst the Angolese masses continued to grow and worry the Portuguese. The population of Luanda will long recall Easter Sunday of 1959 as a tragic date in the annals of Angolese nationalism, for it was on March 29th of that year that the P.I.D.E. un-

leashed on the African masses a spectacular terror operation: imprisonment for those suspected of participating in political movements, followed by acts of violence against the peaceful population.

Under the heading of the defence of "overseas provinces" the Under-Secretary of State for Air presided over the installation of the Angolese Air Force in the town of Luanda on 26th April, 1959. The ceremony consisted of a demonstration of the destructive power of military weapons. Reports in the Luanda press were delirious. The *Comercio de Angola*, for example, which devoted almost an entire edition to the demonstration, began by calling all these war flights 'Angola's first Air Force Festival'. It headed its article: Moved and enthusiastic, a mighty mass of the people numbering more than 100,000 watched the Air Force Display. The parachutists were then given a great ovation, as they filed past at the airport. . . The attacks using napalm bombs, like the sharp machine-gun fire at the targets, just seemed to be a crushing show of force. . . Yet it is obvious that these operations would take place in just this way on a battle-field, the authorities having made it quite clear that this was the way they would fight if they had to put down an anti-colonialist rebellion, or rather, the day they decided to crush, by anticipating them, the people's attempts at rebellion against colonialism.

First phase: parachute jumps (it should be noted that the first parachutist to touch the ground was the Catholic chaplain who had come with the Air Force from Lisbon.

Second phase: napalm bombs (100-pounders) and machine-gun fire.

Little and athletic, with German tread—the colonialist press enthusiastically reported—the soldiers amazed the European population and several observers apparently had only one desire: that all of it should not simply be an exercise.

Other demonstrations of this kind were organized in the southern regions of Angola—Nova-Lisboa, Sa de Bandeira, Lobito and Benguela. The Colonial Deputy for Mosambique at the Portuguese National

Assembly called in his turn for the installation of military forces in this colony on the eastern coast. The Governor-General, for his part, greeting the war flights as the 'first Air Force Festival' in a Portuguese colony, declared: "In our day, peace is possible only when states have at their disposal sufficient forces to withstand the threats of agitators and trouble-makers, usually inspired by Communism of the heavily-disguised type. Our country is not being defended if it has no protective military covering; in every corner of Portuguese territory, wherever it may be, land, sea and air troops must be there at hand and vigilant, to prevent men giving in to greed or false ideas".

He went even further than this: "These troops must be morally strong so as to resist the various kinds of propaganda aimed at undermining them, for we know that the 'army' is the main obstacle to the spread of propaganda". We live in the age of tracts... which consider the army as a troublesome enemy. The pamphlet has also appeared in Angola, as was expected.

A new warning was given. In the town of Luanda alone, more than 150 people were imprisoned during the month of July 1959. The police arrested the intellectual and nationalist leader of the M.P.L.A., Ilidio Machado, while he was holidaying in Lisbon.

### "TRIAL OF THE 50"

After these numerous arrests, the P.I.D.E. prepared for the trial of 57 people (50 Angolese and 7 Europeans). The "Trial of the 50" was presented by the Portuguese political police as a vast plot organised inside Angola. The trial was split into three parts. The first involved 15 Angolese (one of them living at Pointe-Noire), a Ghanaian, an American Negro and a Cuban Negro; the second concerned seven Portuguese and the third, 32 Angolese nationalists, of whom 20 were detained at Luanda and 12 lived in the Congo, Brazil, Europe and elsewhere. The accused came from widely-differing social groups: there were officials, business employ-

ees, nurses, workmen, intellectuals and students.

The "Trial of the 50" showed the proportions to which the struggle for independence in Angola had grown and demonstrated the organising abilities of the nationalist movements. By reading the record of the trial, I came to realise that the Angolese national movement was at a cross-roads which would lead to a completely new turning on the one hand by the systematizing of secret activity, and on the other by the setting-up of a united freedom front. Had it not been for the network of the P.I.D.E. which was then in operation, the course of political events in Angola would today present a more consistent character. All the nationalist forces were attempting to join up and work together.

These trials opened towards the end of 1959, but the date for the verdict, originally fixed for March 7, 1960, was postponed several times.

In August, 1960, with the aim of throwing the real leaders of the Angolan national struggle into confusion, the P.I.D.E. issued the courts with an order to try the seven Portuguese, under the accusation of having distributed secret tracts calling for the Colony's independence. They were condemned to terms of imprisonment ranging from three months to three years and to the loss of political rights for fifteen years. Lisbon's Supreme Court of Justice, after a reconsideration of their trial, raised the imprisonment to a minimum of five years.

On the 5th December of the same year, the Luanda Military Tribunal began a mockery of a trial of twenty Angolese nationalists who aligned themselves with the M.P.L.A. and other political formation. During the course of this trial, all kinds of irregularities were committed: the lawyers were not authorised to consult the proceedings, nor to visit their clients, nor even to hear the witnesses for the defence. The accused, conscious of their responsibilities as nationalist fighters, claimed that a foreign court had no right to try them.

Ostensibly because of this attitude, the large majority of the Portuguese lawyers abandoned the defence of these nationalists for reasons of... patriotism. Only Counsellors Almeida Valadas and Maria da Carmo courageously continued to ensure the defence. The P.I.D.E. immediately made a charge against the two lawyers: On the 21st December, the court condemned the twenty Angolese patriots to terms of imprisonment ranging from three to ten years and the confiscation of political rights for fifteen years.

At all events, the "Trial of the 50" constitutes the first official recognition of the existence of Angolese nationalist movements with precise claims and a network of inland communications; in short, a substantial country-wide organisation.

Here is the testimony of a young Congolese girl:

*"Our public and private life in Luanda had become more and more unbearable; we were watched at church, we were in danger at home and held up to ridicule at school. At every point our survival depended on the will of the Portuguese. Abuses against the defenceless natives were our 'daily bread'. I always had to carry my identity card with me to avoid being arrested in the street and sent somewhere servants were needed. I have often seen white officers whipping my country-women if they were not working hard enough under the burning March sun. We native women were often attacked in the street by white men, less often, however than we are by the Portuguese soldiers today. Every time the natives were ill-treated. I saw that there was always an outstanding black woman who dared to defy her tormentor. Such courage on the part of my illiterate sisters not only gave me strength but made me blush with shame for my cowardly silence and inertia in the face of so many acts of cruelty and injustice."*

At the beginning of 1956, I underwent a decisive experience: I travelled more than 1,500 miles with about fifty 'contratados' (slaves). All my life I have seen and

heard slaves around me, but this time these direct victims bore witness to what I was looking for. During the journey, my brothers sang a sad song in Kimbundu *telling how hard forced labour was, wondering when they would go home and why they had not died before. Their refrain was that things would change, must change one day.*

I saw some of them weeping as they sang.

Then we stopped in the village of one of these men who was to say goodbye to his wretched wife, his innocent son, his poor mother and his friends. The most heart-breaking moment was when his five-year-old son asked him when he was coming back. The father smiled bravely, took his son in his arms and said simply, "I don't know." This touching scene plunged us into deep silence, broken by the cry of the white driver ordering us "Vamos embora, rapaz" ("Come on"). The last tears and the last words were exchanged and the lorry drove off, leaving the village and its people behind, hidden in a cloud of dust and insecurity.

## INFLUENCES

The greatest influence on my life were parents, our happy family, my two teachers at Middle School, my seven years in the outback where I observed and experience difficult situations, and later, my contacts with some African students, especially an agriculturist and a Catholic priest. I still had two more years to go to finish my seven years of Secondary School when I had to leave and work for a year. On my way to work, I had to cross the slum area of Sambizanga where life for the natives is more unhealthy and extenuating than I had thought. These horrible conditions in which my poor people of Sambizanga lived led me to think about the possibilities of helping them to recover their human dignity, to change our country's situation and bring together the hundreds of my compatriots belonging to the secret nationalist movement, which was fighting for the freedom of our country.

The P.I.D.E. Portugal's secret police, was increasingly omnipresent and omniscient, and nationalists had to be very careful in their contacts with one another. However, I tried to get in touch with some active members of the secret movement, but being an adolescent I did not succeed at my first attempt. So I decided to organise something amongst my friends. I began by inviting several young people to tea with me, in turn, without telling my family. Then I asked some of my friends what they thought of our national situation. We all agreed that the Portuguese had already assumed too much power for themselves and that they must be checked, at least to the extent of giving us the right to breathe freely in our own country.

Some of these young people already belonged to the nationalist movement and others were encouraged to follow their example. Some of my guests perhaps talked about my tea-parties to their friends, because a member of the nationalist movement entrusted me with a difficult task. It seemed to me that my first contribution pleased my fellow-countrymen, who asked more and more for my collaboration. I was frankly grateful to be working instead of studying and in this way I was able to give more and more help. One day I was introduced to most of the leaders and some of them did not like the idea of an adolescent being mixed up in such serious affairs.

At first I was somewhat discouraged by this lack of trust, but I gradually managed to win their confidence and was subsequently accepted as a member. I could once again take up my studies, which proves that my nationalist activity was no obstacle to them.

In the meantime, the members of the nationalist group were conscious that the P.I.D.E. was following most of them everywhere they went. I was disturbed by the presence of a white agent of the P.I.D.E. who usually, stood at the corner of our house and who insulted me one day.

Nor shall I forget the evening when I was going home with some right beside me. I could scarcely breathe, but the car drove off again almost immediately. When I arrived home, there were police cars in front of the house. I rushed in, trying to hide the documents as best as I could and thinking that my time had come, but nothing happened. That same evening, very regretfully, I burnt the photos of our nationalist group. However, I still had some undeveloped films which, although compromising, I would not destroy. Missing supper and without a word to my parents, I went to look for a hiding-place for my treasures. In that way, if the P.I.D.E. came back again, they would not find anything dangerous.

The next day, when I was listening to the news on Radio Brazzaville, a friend from the nationalist group arrived, asking me what that white man wanted who was at my window and who ran away as soon as she came in. My one relief was that all the documents had been burnt or hidden.

In spite of everything, we went on working and talking with our brothers and sisters about our movement whose aim was to proclaim our rights and fight abuses and injustice. Being for most of the time the only person who could reassure myself, I was nevertheless very much afraid of what might happen to my friends and I never told them about my experiences with the P.I.D.E. and still less did I tell my family, to avoid creating any more anxiety.

Then I gained a scholarship to go and study abroad. It was a very bad moment to leave my defenceless people at the mercy of the Portuguese, and particularly my companions in the nationalist movement. A farewell party was given in my honour and a P.I.D.E. agent in disguise turned up, pretending to be looking for a friend in our gathering, but we were all wise to his trick.

Two days later, in January 1959, I left Ludna with a heavy heart. A month later, most of my compa-

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nions were arrested. Even today they are in a Portuguese prison, struggling between life and death. One is still a mystery to me; how and why was it that the P.I.D.E. let me leave Angola after watching me so closely?

With the myth of the total support of the Portuguese nation by the 'Angolese natives' shaken to its foundations, the political movements that wished to convey at an international level the reality of Angolese nationalism found their task considerably easier. Elsewhere, nationalists from various Portuguese colonies in Africa started at the end of 1957 to study the best way of supporting the struggle within their respective countries. They intended to work first of all for the concerted action of freedom movements in the Portuguese colonies.

A first front called the Anti-Colonialist Movement (M.A.C.) was set up in Europe through the action of the militants of the M.P.A., the African Party of the Independence of Guinea (P.A.I.) and nationalists of Mozambique, Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe. At the time of the Second Conference of the African Peoples, in January 1960, the M.P.L.A. and the P.A.I. of Guinea set up the African Revolutionary Front for the Independence of the Portuguese Colonies (F.R.A.I.M.) and the M.A.C. was dissolved. The F.R.A.I.M. in turn disappeared, when the Conference of Nationalist Organisations in the Portuguese Colonies was held. It was during this 'African Year' that the Angolese nationalist movements secured the support necessary for the setting-up of permanent external bureaux accredited to the governments of independent African countries.

~ We know the Portuguese reaction, on the eve of the proclamation of the Congo's (Leopoldville) independence; in the guise of a preventive military action, the colonial power increased patrols and aerial forces

to protect Angola's frontiers. Going farther than torture and exactions against the population, the police arrested political leaders and Angolese personalities such as Dr. Agostinho Neto and Father Joaquim Pinto de Andrade.

In a declaration dated 13th June, 1960, the M.P.L.A. stated that it would take as a first sign of a rejection of the use of force by the Portuguese Government the speedy and effective act of "immediate recognition of the Angolese people's right to self-determination, the granting of political liberties and the summoning of a round table conference, to last till the end of 1960, consisting of representatives of all the Angolese political parties and of the Portuguese Government, who would discuss the peaceful solution of the colonial problem in Angola".

The position of the M.P.L.A. and other nationalist organisations in Angola were clear, at a time when everything pointed to a readiness on the part of the Salazar Government to quell in a blood-bath any nationalist rising, by hastening it on if necessary. Instead of a discussion of the conflict opposing us to the colonial administration, we have only seen the Portuguese Government strengthening the machine of repression in our country and massacring the populace. In November 1960, 29 political prisoners, most of them natives of Cabinda, were summarily executed in a prison courtyard.

Urgent appeals came to us from the interior of Angola: the mass of the people were making insistent demands for organized plans of self-defence. In the face of the large-scale suppression of pressure by the Angolese masses, the M.P.L.A. in agreement with other organizations in the Portuguese colonies, notably the African Party for Independence (of so-called Portuguese Guinea) and the Goa Political Convention, held a press conference at the House of Commons in London on 6th December, 1960, and defined its attitude in the face of Portuguese obstinacy. We reaffirmed that the Portuguese Government, instead of considering the proposals for a peaceful solution of the colonial

issue, intensified its preparations for starting a war. Salazar's Government left only one alternative to nationalist movements in the Portuguese colonies—recourse to direct action, we declared.

The Portuguese did not hesitate to show by their declarations and by concrete measures that they intended to pursue their classic method of exploitation and to fight in order to remain sole masters in our countries.

The people of Luanda had long intended to free the leaders of the M.P.L.A. and other nationalists imprisoned there. The climate of terror reigning in the country and the national consciousness of the mass of the people explain the gesture of our fighters and their boldness in attacking military and civil prisons in Luanda at the beginning of last February. Our forecast that the Portuguese Government, persisting in the maintenance of its domination and its age-long system of oppression, would, by the force of events, drive the mass of the Angolese people to direct action, was confirmed.

### REVOLUTIONARY CONSCIOUSNESS

The circumstances preceding the attack on the prisons reveal the level of revolutionary consciousness possessed by the Angolese patriots. It was because of their political maturity that they took advantage of the presence of numerous journalist in Angola, who had come to wait for the projected arrival of the ship "Santa Maria", to better inform world opinion.

The pistols used in the attack on the night of 4th February did not come from the Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia, but rather from the hands of Portuguese policemen during a previous attack by M.P.L.A. fighters on the police jeeps which generally patrol the Negro quarters on the out-skirts of Luanda. But these attacks, in spite of the suicidal character which they may have assumed at first sight, reflected the Angolese situation at national and international level. The significance of the attacks on military and civil prisons in the capital of Angola no longer needs demonstration, for it was from this one courageous action that the vast

movement of popular insurrection spread through the entire country and insecurity took hold of the body and soul of the Portuguese colonist.

Neither did the forces of repression fail to draw a lesson from these events, according to the means at their disposal. On 5th February, after an act of provocation during the burial of some Portuguese soldiers killed by our fighters, they proceeded that same day to massacre 3,000 Angolese patriots.

Events which the international public knows little about happened likewise during the month of February. From Luanda, several nationalists, who had participated in the attacks mentioned above, and who had escaped Portuguese repression, reached the districts to the east of the capital. In Baixa de Cassange, in the Malange district, they organized the plantation workers into a revolt against the abusive practices of the agricultural company known as Cottonang. The attacks were directed at the premises of European traders, the official residence of the regional government and a Catholic mission.

Few White were killed, however. Here also the Portuguese forces reacted brutally: villages were bombed and according to some sources, there were 10,000 casualties amongst the Angolese population. Mr. Monteiro, a native of the Cape Verde Islands and Governor of the Melange District, held an enquiry on the spot and sent a report to the Central Government on the methods of coercion used by the Cottonang Company and tracts written in Kimbundu which stated the Angolese people's refusal to cultivate cotton against their will. The colonial company of course proved to be in the right and Mr. Monteiro was relieved of his post.

### Conclusion :

Such is the path taken by the nationalist movement in Angola, the claims it lodged and the reactions of the colonial administration. I have tried to trace the main stages in the growth of a national consciousness in Angola, whilst rising above the partisan struggles of the present time. This is why I stopped at the events of 15th March, which

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constitute a new chapter in the history of Angolese nationalism.

The freedom struggle first of all took on the appearance of resistance to Portuguese military occupation and annexation of territory. Up to the time when Salazar came to power, the nationalists could still use forms of legal combat, but their claims found less response on the international level; the last thirty years, when Angolese nationalism has stood up to the most merciless regime of colonial exploitation Africa has ever known, represent the great age of secret struggle. During this period, the Angolese people have accumulated sources of energy and have acquired a store of courage and alliances outside the country. All this has allowed the successful launching of armed combat.

Certain conclusions must be drawn, at this stage of the enquiry, concerning the characteristics of Angolese nationalism:

1. It is a case of suppressed nationalism, which has developed in a climate of particular secrecy. The impossibility for the nationalists to set up the organization at the level of the rural masses, in the first place, meant that it was above all the urban masses and in particular its elites who were reached by party propaganda. In any case, the colonial administration preserved social divisions and created a gap between the Angolese who were looked upon as "natives" and those considered to be "civilised". Most of the secret organisations adopted the group as the foundation of their structure, the real cell for the defence of the African community's interests.

2. Simão Toko's messianic movement had advocated civil disobedience, but the Angolese national movement may be said to have assumed a revolutionary character from the beginning by reason of its claims. That is to say, in their tracts the parties demanded the overthrow of the colonial system itself rather than improvement of the colonised people's lot. This attitude is easily understandable when one considers the obstinacy and lack of realism of Portuguese colonial policy.