

1966 - UNITA WAS BORN

DIFFICULTIES

(Interview with President Savinbi
by Mike Marshment)

Mr. President, You resigned your post as Foreign Secretary of GRAE in 1964 leaving the Party at the same time and, in 1966 you formed UNITA. Could you please tell me the reasons for your resignation from UPA and the events leading to the founding of UNITA ?

The reasons why I left UPA in 1964 were mainly political. There were no personal reason or personal antagonism. When it was realized that the struggle inside the country was not developing and the methods used were not those really wanted inside the country, we tried to speak to UPA and tried to convince soldiers and others colleagues in the GRAE and central committee, but found no response. Consequently, the situation became impossible because we could not believe in what we were doing. We were compelled by circumstances to resign in order to do better for our own people. As a result I resigned as Secretary General of the Party and Minister of Foreign Affairs in July 1964 whilst in Cairo during the Summit Conference of the OUA. It was thought, that we were just to criticise others and to leave the Party and GRAE without doing anything constructive, our attitude would be interpreted as opportunism, or just as a struggle for power. What we wanted was something practical inside the country in order to show our former colleagues in UPA and GRAE that we were not co-operating with the Portuguese advance to struggle for freedom in Angola. Our first step was to go to Brazzaville and to find some accomodation with MPLA. It was unfortunate, on going through and studying the activities of the party of MPLA in Prazzaville, we realized that even less was being done than with UPA. We were not convinced that it would be correct to join MPLA. From that point onward we started a move to form a new party. However we didn't want this party to be a duplication or a multiplication as so often happens in Africa, but we wanted to present to Angolans, Africans and to the world a new experience and a new approach to the struggle itself. I considered the mistake that other parties and ourselves were making was, in effect, that the armed struggle inside the country was not conducted by experience people ; in fact by the leaders themselves. So, then I went to African countries (I can mention their names because there is not secret). I went to UAR, to Tanzania to ask for training because it seemed obvious that the question of Angola was first and foremost a question of Africa; therefore I was compelled to seek support from Africa itself. Unfortunately I couldn't get any positive response from the African countries. From there I started my journey to Eastern European countries where I visited Eastern Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and

2) The UNITA shall join African Organisations and the African Organisations which truly fight against Colonialism, Imperialism and Neo-Colonialism.

and U.S.S.R. My first approach was to those countries that were very sympathetic to the African struggle. I wished to approach them first to see if there was any possibility of help. Unfortunately for us they were not as interested as we were in new experiences in Angola, but were only interested in recruiting new members for MPLA. As couldn't be convinced by their attitude, I withdrew. It was then that we contacted the Chinese and subsequently went to China. From there I found real understanding, because, the Chinese knew what was correct, but they told me frankly that they could not trust me because they didn't know me - after all I had been a Minister for Foreign Affairs in the UPA government, which at the time, was accused of being pro American. In spite of the fact that they had said that they couldn't trust me, they proposed to train some of our men, and to give them support. This they did. Today, however only three of these who were trained in China, remain in the struggle; Some have been arrested and other have left the party etc. From then on I decided that one could not move about lobbying African countries for support but must try to be in the homeland; also to understand the problems as they exist at home. This is why, from the very beginnings of our Party, the aim, the goal, the line that we set forth was to RETURN HOME. In the early stages few colleagues succeeded in entering the country and organise the people. We believe that the leaders didn't understand the difficulties and hardships of their own people in the struggle. Fortunately some colleagues who came in 1965 succeeded in setting up branches. Later, in Muangai, one of the smaller towns in Angola, a congress was held in March 1966 when UNITA was created. In any event, the policy of the party was clear; LEADERS MUST RETURN HOME and fight alongside the people. They must understand, in loco, the problems that the people are facing, and should not stay abroad sending "second class" fighters to face the Portuguese. This is the background of the creation of UNITA. The armed struggle inside the country was not conducted by experience people, not by leaders themselves. This was a mistake.