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ANGOLA:
AN END TO THE
MERCENARIES'
MYTH

Raúl VALDES VIVO

In their incontinent advance toward final liberation, the peoples who have arisen and are wiping out crime, violations of human dignity and imperialist license, have exploded age-old lies used to subjugate and subdue — among them the much-touted superiority of western civilization and the concept of white supremacy.

Africa, exploited for centuries, has shattered many of these myths in the course of its painful process of liberation and the Angolan epic has written "finis" once and for all to that of the mercenaries — whose "invincibility" was already somewhat less than convincing. In view of the many recent examples of both home-grown and imported varieties who turned tail and ran when faced with the people's damnation. Remember: the final liberation of Viet Nam, that of Cambodia, the end of the attack on Playa Giron....

In Angola: an End to the Mercenaries' Myth. Raúl Valdés Vivó gives us an in-depth story of a group of mercenaries, told in their own words. The dregs of a society that is on its way out, they range from the self-exiled gunman's bodyguard — a professional killer who, like many of his cohorts, was a graduate of the war in Viet Nam — to unscrupulous go-getters who would do anything for a fast buck, considering it a lucky day when they could increase their take through the simple expedient of killing off unarmed "natives."

But in Angola, this myth came a cropper, for the heroic Angolan people were far from unarmed, and the mercenaries found they could no longer do as they wished with impunity. Their "easy money" turned out to be very hard to come by, indeed, and they had to pay for the murders they had committed — with payment exacted either on the field of battle or in a court demanding basic justice for the victims of these hired killers.

CHAPTER 3

A few dismal examples

Derek John Barker, from Birmingham, England, said the whole thing began when he was sitting in a pub. He was half drunk when a man he had never seen before, and whom he was sure he would never see again, came over and offered to buy him a drink.

"I was a bit surprised, but I must say I liked the idea. I was drinking away my last savings.... a few pounds or so. And all by myself, too. I didn't even have enough money for a cheap woman."

Out of the blue, the man asked him if he'd like to earn \$500 a fortnight.

"I thought he was kidding. I said what everybody says in a case like that. I said, 'Who am I supposed to kill?' Of course, I was kidding, too."

"You'll have to kill a few. It's that Angola business."

Derek John Barker went on to say that, once he had made sure that this was no drunkard's joke, he accepted the offer on the spot. For some reason or other, he said, he trusted the man.

The next day, after taking a good shower and dressed in his best suit, 'in case the meeting was with some top brass,' he went to the Tower Hotel, in an out-of-the-way, quiet

part of London, which he had some trouble locating. There, he went up to room 334, on the third floor, to which the unknown man had given him the key.

Since he had told the man that he had been in the paratroop corps of the Royal Air Force and had served in Cyprus, Kenya, and Germany from 1961 up until two years previously, when he was discharged because of a brawl, Barker thought that he would be jumping again.

"No. They told me all they needed was infantry. Something easy."

He was given a passport that was in order (he had taken the precaution of bringing along several photos of himself) and a card with the initials SAS (Security Advisory Services). The man who gave him these documents (an old, plump man, who never took his pipe out of his mouth and wore a striped T-shirt — the very image of an old ship's captain) told him to take great care of them. And, above all, to keep them from falling into the hands of the enemy, even though the enemy wasn't all that dangerous, because "those savages are lost. It's a question of hitting them hard."

On interrogating Barker, the two FAPLA members in charge of the official proceedings were intrigued by the fact that he mentioned a meeting with Holden Roberto on January 22, shortly after reaching the capital of Zaire. However, no matter how much the two comrades and then I, myself, tried to pump him, we didn't learn anything worthwhile about that meeting.

"It was a lunch affair.... It seems as if President Holden was trying to



¹ Unless otherwise indicated, English quotations are retranslated from the Spanish.

impress two US journalists who were with him: Robin Wright, a woman, and a man named...mmm...let's see...I can't remember. All I was interested in was choosing a good brand of whisky and getting it on the rocks."

According to Barker, the journalists asked a lot of questions, but he didn't pay any attention, because "the soldier who keeps his mouth shut is the one who gets promoted." He barely remembered that the two were on the flight to São Salvador that he and five other mercenaries were on. After that, he never saw them again.

If he had been recruited the way he said and he wasn't important in the "business," how come Holden invited him to lunch along with two journalists? Barker swore that everything had happened the way he said it had.

The story told by another John, John Nammock, was just as vague as Barker's: Nammock spoke in a monotone, and his voice was barely audible. The only interesting things were the idea that Callan had put into his head, that "the Cubans and FAPLA never took prisoners," and that a man by the name of Banks had met with him in the crypt of a church located near the St. George Club and that there were 200 other men present at that meeting.

Nammock knew by heart — and he scarcely forgot a single word on repeating it — the classified ad in the Financial Times which led to his going to Angola:

"Ex-military. Fancy a job overseas, training services division, good salary. Age between 24-47, phone Leeds 702354 and 605541, between 10-7 p.m." Unless my memory fails me, that's the way it went, more or less.

He was almost right. His only mistake was to say that the age limit was 47 instead of 45, and the last four numbers of the first telephone were in the wrong order. He said 702354 instead of 705423. This was verified later when checked against the paper in question.

Nammock's excellent memory seemed to fade away quickly when he was asked who might be behind the man named Banks and about the way the mercenaries treated the people in Angolan villages.

His only reaction was to stare into space, as if paralyzed by fear.

Another John, last name Lawlor, was also attracted by the ad. Two days after he read it, he got in touch by telephone and was told to come and see John Banks, whom he identified as one of the directors of SAS.²

Lawlor, a thin, freckled, extremely nervous 23-year-old, had been in the Navy for five years and had been in Cyprus and Malta.

"I used to work in a repair shop, but it was exhausting work. I couldn't get used to it. I much preferred being a guard in a security van — but that job didn't last long."

He said he knew nothing about politics, either in England or in Angola.

Another mercenary — from the United States — stuck to the same story as the others. Nothing out of the ordinary.

Gary Martin Acker was recruited in an "operation" carried out the length of the West Coast by Banks' counterparts in the United States: David Bufkin and James Scott. The former worked on his own, and the latter posed as an agent for Co-op for Soldiers of Fortune, a mysterious charity organization that had begun to pop up magically in a number of cities.

There was a difference, though, in the "material" these men were looking for. Bufkin seemed to be

interested in soldiers in general, regardless of their experience, all the way from paratroopers to Marines — Gary Martin Acker, for example. Scott, however, seemed to be more discriminating in his selection. His men had to meet the following requirements:

1. Be a Viet Nam veteran.
2. Be able to handle tanks or heavy machine guns or helicopters.

Obviously, Scott was not acting on his own; rather, he was the front man in a much more ambitious plan.

To all appearances, Gary Martin Acker first tried to enroll through Scott, and when he was rejected he enlisted through Bufkin. One way or another, both men were linked to the FNLA — that is, with the northern front. (An intensive recruiting campaign was also carried out by a number of "recruiting centers" for the Savimbi southern front. Acker recalled one set up with a great deal of publicity by Larry Mitchell, a black Viet Nam veteran. Acker tried to enlist in this center, but Mitchell, a black racist acting under orders, was taking on blacks only, preferably if they came from among the Cuban counterrevolutionary exiles. Mitchell's organization is called the Afro-American Technical Assistance to Angola. It is not known yet whether he did or did not send a large number of men to Angola.)

The statements made by Acker, whose home address is 2342 Cork Circle, Sacramento, California, verified the fact that Bufkin was offering pay of \$1200 a month and that, by November 25, he was carrying out the recruiting publicly. It was on that day that Acker read the ad in a local paper.

The course followed by the former Marine was California-New York-Paris-Kinshasa. In New York he was joined by Argentine-born Grillo

— who was to become the head of the group — and five other veterans.

Gary Martin Acker had held the

rank of Corporal in Japan and the Philippines after serving for five and a half months in Viet Nam, where he had an opportunity to use his experience to the hilt in dealing with the drug addicts in the US Army.

"The number of drug addicts was greater than the number of our casualties."

Reticent and taciturn, refusing to smoke even though — according to his fellow men — he was an inveterate smoker, Acker also refused to answer any questions related to his ideas, feelings, or reasons for going back to war in a territory which, as he admitted, he had to locate with the aid of a map in a dictionary, against people who had nothing to do with him or his country.

He had no qualms, however, about making derogatory remarks about the Africans under Holden whom he was supposed to train in the handling of mines — using, he said, Chinese nondetectable anti-tank mines.

"There were some 400 of them," he said, "but every time they heard an explosion, even from our own guns, they'd yell 'FAPLA!' and take to their heels. I asked my superior officer to complain to General Garcia, administration officer for the FNLA, but he, too, was scared out of his wits."

In contrast to Acker and the others, Malcolm McIntyre, a Scotsman from Perth, talked about himself all the time, trying his very best to prove that he had been a medic and nothing else. He said the form Callan gave him to fill out would prove it. He added that he had filled out another form, also applying for a job as medic, in room 312 of the Park Court Hotel, in London.

He said not a word about the war, or about the other mercenaries.

As for Holden Roberto, "Who was he?"

¹ Quoted in the original text in English.

² The other directors apparently are Leslie Askin, who trafficks in arms, and Frank Peren, former commander of the British Royal Navy. Banks himself was a paratrooper in the British Army.

He said he was almost pleased to have been taken prisoner, because "I came here as a medic only to find they didn't even have a hospital."

When he was told by one of the FAPLA officers that his own comrades in arms had said they had seen him throwing hand grenades, McIntyre bowed his head and broke into tears.

Michael Wiseman, in turn, considers himself "a fool." What makes him say that?

"Me and a friend of mine used to take old cars apart and sell the parts that were still in good condition. I was making good money that way. I was my own boss, and I could give my kids things that I couldn't even dream of when I was out of work. Until I was stupid enough to leave all that."

Why not "ambitious enough"?

And what about scruples?

Wiseman may not be able to tell the difference, but taking people apart is not the same as taking old cars apart — even though the people are "natives."

Wiseman didn't say a word about that. "I hope my friend is still going on with the business. If I ever have the chance to go back, I'll never leave it. Not for anything in the world."

CHAPTER 9

As he told it

Now, let's take a look at Callan's version of the same event. He wrote this on his own initiative and asked that it be included in his file. I present it here exactly as he set it down:

"Then they told me to go to Maquela, because Dampa [sic] had fallen into the hands of the enemy. At that time, I had only ten English soldiers directing action on the front all the time. We had been there nearly two weeks, patrolling constantly to keep ourselves informed on where the enemy was all the

time, always on the alert. If the enemy had known how weak we were, they would have won in a single night: the men were nervous and tired (not those who were professionals). Holden Roberto had told us that more men were coming and that I should hold firm no matter what, and every man on the front was anxious over the arrival of those men so as to leave the border and go on the offensive for a change.

"They arrived two days later.

After a meal, a cup of tea, and a rest, they were formed up outside our recently constructed headquarters in Maquela. After rapidly taking stock of them all, I found two old gents in their 50s. I asked how many years' service they had, which was around 20 to 22 years each, and which battalions they'd been in and a couple of other details, just routine procedure so as to have some idea of their capabilities. I told them I was glad to have them and glad about their past experience, and I put them in charge of the others, both were Sergeant Majors, very capable men. I told the rest of the men I was happy to have them in my company and frankly I began to establish rules and regulations and iron discipline, and emphasized the point that I made to them that from then on I didn't want to hear that they were mercenaries and that they were a part of a disciplined unit, and discipline was more important there because the temptations were greater. I also emphasized that, since there wasn't any gallows where we were, any man found guilty of breaking the code of discipline with the same rules as the British Army, any man who broke those rules (and I put a lot of emphasis on this) would be shot. I asked if anybody didn't accept this form of discipline, he should leave right away. Nobody moved.

"After this I touched on where the enemy was, our present strategy, what type of equipment the enemy had, how small a force we were, and I explained that I intended to



go against the tanks and the kind of antitank I intended to use, e.g., a small Killer Group penetrating deep behind the enemy lines. As soon as I finished my outlined plan of action, they started whispering among themselves.

"Then I started asking each man what battalion he'd been in and what work he'd done in it, so as to learn what their capabilities were. At this point it all started coming out, they began telling me they hadn't known we'd be going against the enemy so soon, and especially against tanks and that they didn't want anything to do with it. I asked them what they were doing here then, and they looked at me angrily and said they'd thought it would be different.

"I placed all those who didn't want to go to the front on one side and those that wanted to on the other.

"At this point, a soldier brought me a message from President Holden Roberto saying the enemy was breaking through the front at Tomboco on one flank and asking if I could go right there to stop them.

"I told the men what the message said, and asked for 20 men and a 106-mm anti-tank gun to be ready to move off that minute; the men who didn't want to fight would have to wait here and make themselves useful until I returned from Tomboco, before they could go off wherever they wanted. Before leaving, I ordered my RSM¹ to go behind the tanks with the rest of the men, there were around 20 of them, because, if they got closer to Maquila and didn't meet any resistance they'd be able to break through to our position which was what they were already doing.

"It took me five hours to get to São Salvador because it had rained the night before and it was very

hard going. On reaching São Salvador, I found that the situation wasn't as bad as I'd imagined and that somebody in Tomboco had panicked a bit and that had made the situation worse than it really was. I turned my small force of 20 men back from São Salvador for the march back to Maquila.

"Some 20 kilometers from Maquila, I came across some English soldiers and they told me briefly that Maquila had been taken and that there was a force of 20 tanks and a lot of infantry there. I went on a bit more and found that all of them were in a small town.

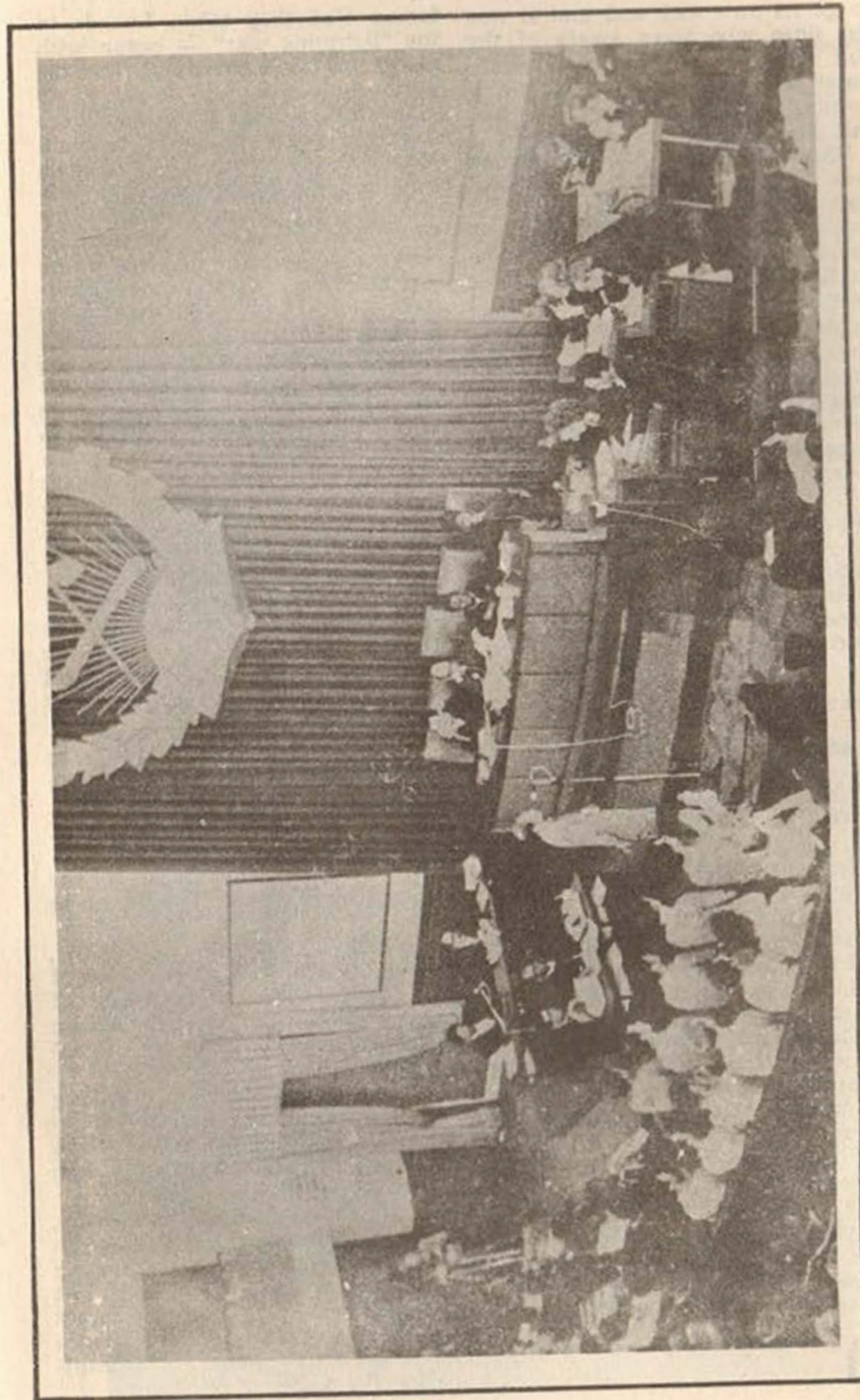
"It was exactly 2:00 in the morning, and, if the enemy should decide to move, which wasn't likely, we could hear him coming, that's why I deployed my forces in a defensive position and waited for daybreak.

"The next day I sent a small patrol out ahead to go into Maquila, and found out that the enemy was forming ranks, and perhaps it'd find out what'd happened to the rest of my company.

"I decided I'd find a good defensive position, dig trenches, use dynamite to clear a small stretch, and wait for the enemy. Around 2:00 in the afternoon we saw a jeep coming toward us. I had a look through the binoculars and recognized the RSM and some of my men.

"He told me there wasn't any enemy in Maquila and that the men who were getting lined up were his own men. I called all the men together, and we went to Maquila and when we arrived the rest of my company was there. I immediately began investigating to find out just what had happened while I'd been away.

"It appeared that one section of the men in the RSM's group had gone back to get food and had simply taken off. They were the men who hadn't wanted to go to the front with anti-tank grenades and the live FMs. I was carrying out my investigation when the two Sergeant Majors told me the group had met and was planning a mutiny so as



¹ Regimental Sergeant Major.

to go its own way and that it was the ones who were aware of the full meaning of the word 'mercenary' and liked it who were conspiring. The Sergeant Majors told me all this.

"At this point, I had hoped they would have understood the seriousness of the situation they were in and its grave consequences. So I asked once more if they had come to fight, five stepped forward, the rest stayed where they were. I explained that in the British Army the sentence for desertion and mutiny was death by hanging and that here they would be shot. To them, this was a joke, I could see from their faces that they thought it was all a tremendous joke.

"I killed the ringleader of the group, and the rest were taken for the same end by other men in my company."

So read Callan's handwritten, signed declaration, dated March 14, 1976.

CHAPTER 11

A good plan, but . . .

Why Callan?

Why white mercenaries in Angola?

The answers have their roots in many already determined situations. Other paths had already failed. The patriotism of the Angolan people and the internationalism of the revolutionary peoples had closed off all other roads.

The internal counterrevolutionary forces — those of Holden and Savimbi — had already arrived at the point at which they, alone, could not contain — far less beat! — the MPLA, which had blown up into a cyclone.

It was already possible to see the cracking of the South African racist

forces. Had they taken Luanda in the "lightning war" — begun with nearly 150 tanks advancing from the southern border at a speed of 50 kilometers a day, until they were stopped short, that is — they could have turned the capital of Angola into the tomb of the People's Republic and a new Jerusalem under the most brutal enemy occupation. However, when this plan had to be cast aside because of the counterattacks of FAPLA, it was impossible to assign the regular South African troops the mission of fighting on the various fronts of the million-square-kilometer territory. They were forced into ignominious retreat to the south (Cunene) and then, when faced with FAPLA encirclement and worldwide condemnation, to subject Namibia.

It was a question of "save what ye may," with not a minute to lose.

The fact that soldiers eager for action — white mercenaries, that is — were used also stemmed from the myth that enveloped them; they had had the last word in Africa many times.

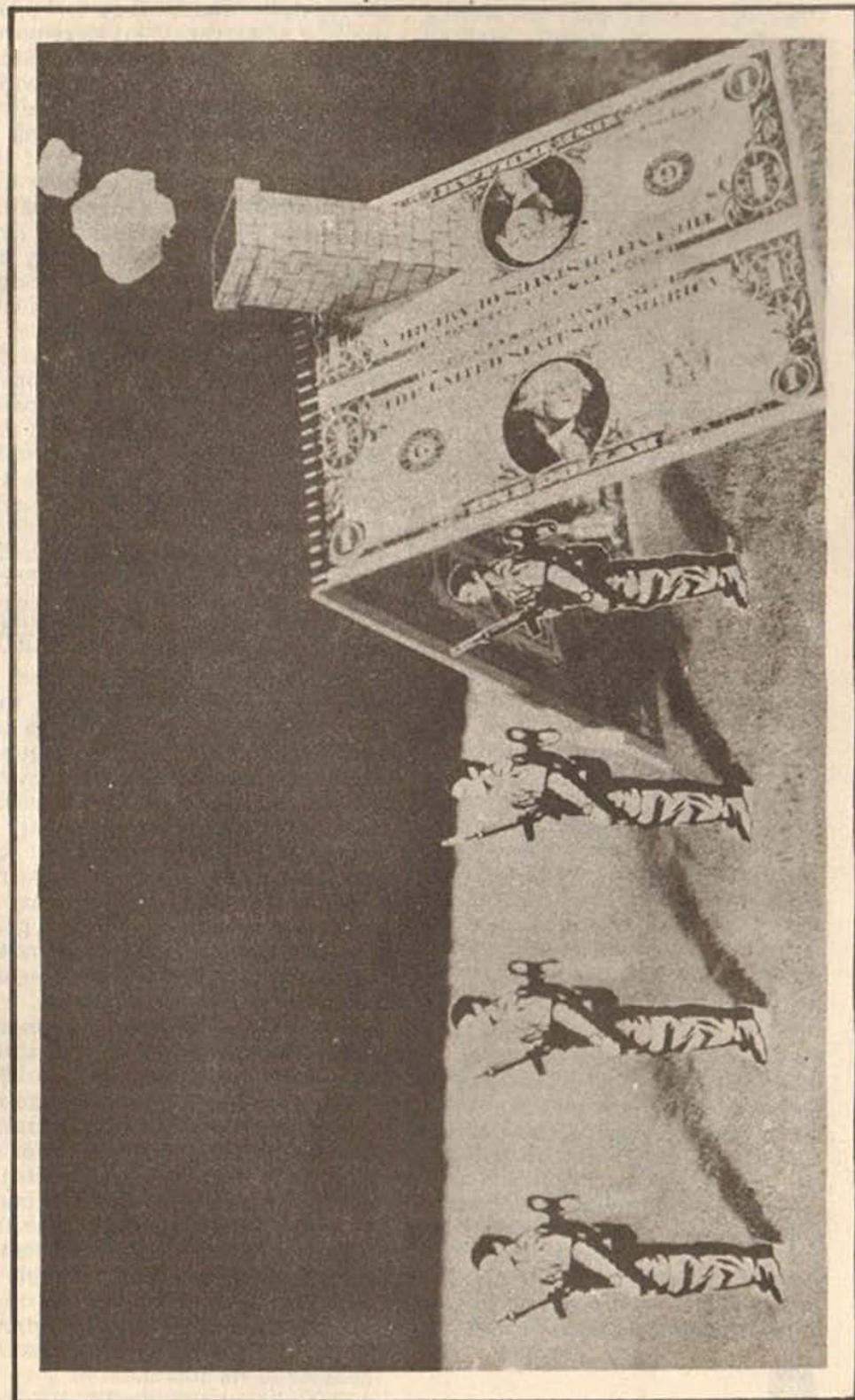
Moreover, as there's a limit now to the disdain that can be shown toward the international community, the use of mercenaries presented the possibility of alleging that they were not sent in response to the policy of any imperialist power as such.

This is why Callan, the individual, is who he is and why the Callans of this world, the phenomenon of mercenaries, are neocolonialism: covert slavery, intervention, and aggression.

Holden Roberto made a big thing of telling the press — a lot of publicity was all part of the game — that he hoped to gather "no fewer than 600 soldiers of fortune."

In the military field, documents, testimony, and events have shown that a guerrilla war on the reeling northern front was planned as a last resort to draw off the enemy forces before it was too late and, thus, to have a better chance of consolidating the southern front.

* One of these five was Kevin John Marchant. His account contradicts Callan's.



The operational plan of such a guerrilla war was craftily written up as a plan for the secession of the territories adjacent to neighboring Zaire and Zambia.

Something similar was planned for the southern front, should the right moment arrive. There were hundreds of mercenaries there already: Portuguese, who weren't going to take decolonization lying down.

In both cases, the plans included the creation of "sanctuaries" on foreign soil, near the Angolan border, from which men and matériel would be supplied to the counter-revolutionary guerrillas. In addition, arms and munitions would be planted in caches inside Angola. (FAPLA units are finding them by the hundreds of tons.)

Topographically, there was enough logic in the idea of combining "sanctuaries" and "hit-and-run" guerrilla actions. Both southern Mexico and the extensive Cuando Cubango district adjoining Zambia and Namibia have very thick forests, few roads, and wide rivers with strong currents — rivers that make the onlooker think of the sea. In the rainy season, the rivers swell to flood enormous areas. With this terrain in their favor, everything would seem to indicate that, even if they didn't manage to establish control anywhere in Angola itself, the enemies of the Angolan people would at least be able to set up multiple centers in this "no-man's-land."

In short, plans were drawn up for large-scale acts of aggression in the future, to follow immediate plans of disrupting the peaceful construction of a new society based on true justice and freedom.

A middle-range strategic objective consisted of taking over all the northern part of Luanda Province and southern Moxico, both of which are very rich in diamonds.

In order to achieve all the

above, there was no time to be lost in doing whatever might be required to hold onto the province of Santo Antonio do Zaire. There, the white mercenaries would be decisive.

But not they alone. According to the declarations of members of the FNLA who were taken prisoner and the testimony of the daughter of one of the FNLA commanders who lives in Ambrizete, Chinese military advisers urged that the two bridges over the M'bridge River, first line in the defenses of the province, be blown up. Considering that — in line with its global counterrevolutionary line — Maoism allied itself openly with imperialism, racism, and fascism against the Angolan Revolution, this is just as natural as the presence of an English Callan and a Yankee Gearhart among the white mercenaries. Didn't Peking go as far as trying to justify South African aggression before the UN Security Council — which even Washington hadn't dared to do?

On January 4, FAPLA and its staunch Cuban allies showed that, for them also, time was an important factor, by liberating Negage and Carmona, key points in the province of Vige, and so striking a crushing blow against the new strategy of the foreign interventionists and their lackeys.

The liberation of Carmona, in particular, was a key turning point. The ceiling, by then already cracked, started to cave in on Angola's enemies.

It was like placing the last shovelful of earth on the casket containing the initial delirious dream of a "lightning war," a human safari, a military parade to Luanda with Holden taking along invitations for the victory reception and puffed-up South African chiefs bringing women for the gala ball. Now they would have to beat a fast retreat.

Holden Roberto was through. He had more imagination for celebrating the victory than for winning it. The CIA was forced to resort to another of its creatures.

But what exactly for?

After consulting with experts from several general staffs. Callan, it would seem, drew up a plan for the defense of northern Angola, built around the line between Damba and Maquela do Zombo. This plan was primarily aimed at hanging onto the city of Santo Antonio do Zaire, which controls the mouth of the Zaire River and is an ideal spot for sending in supplies by air and sea. For the former, it has a 2200-meter airstrip; and, for the latter, a magnificent deep-water Atlantic port.

From this place, it would also be possible to control not only the Zaire River — a decisive position — but also the entire southern flank of the thin spit of land in Zaire that borders on the southern part of the Angolan enclave of Cabinda. It was the protection of this flank that determined the blowing up of the two bridges over the M'bridge River, 60 kilometers south of the Zaire River.

Callan understood that he ought to deploy some forces in the area between the two rivers, and he assigned this task to the new battalion of Holden Roberto's "natives" and the reinforcements — also "natives" — that an emissary from Savimbi had promised to send in a secret meeting held in Kinshasa.

"Colonel" Callan and his white mercenaries would cover the main position (between Damba and Maquela do Zombo).

It had also been foreseen that the best tactical solution would be to carry out irregular actions along with the defense of advantageous positions (blockade), depending on the lack of communication brought about by the blowing up of bridges and the large-scale use of mined accesses and fields.

As for logistics, Callan's bases would be in São Salvador, where abundant stores of Chinese and US weapons were located.

Most of the combat equipment — T-54 tanks, multiple rocket launchers, 122-mm howitzers, 75-mm cannon, mortars, 127-mm anti-aircraft machine guns and rifles —

had come from Peking (the last shipments made just prior to the disaster).

M-1 and M-2 rifles; Law M-72 antitank rocket launchers; 106-mm recoilless guns; M-79 grenade launchers; and 60-, 81-, and 106.7-mm mortars had been sent from the United States.

Antipersonnel and antitank mines had been obtained in France. And to the above must be added Panhart combat cars, which are actually self-propelled cannon able to attain speeds of 100 kilometers an hour; the AML-60, with 60-mm mortars, and the AML-90, with 90-mm cannon. The turrets on these vehicles make them look like light tanks.

Recalling — with more fantasy than truth — great exploits in Malaysia, Callan preached active defense as the method of struggle: that is, to attack the enemy in order to hold onto one's position. As may be deduced from the testimony of various prisoners and captured documents, his auxiliary operation was to be that of infiltrating troops from Zaire through Massau and putting the pressure on Sanza Pombo, in the FAPLA rear.

A good plan — on paper.

But was it really drawn up that way?

Many things — including Callan's own words as I heard them — back up these conjectures.

However, there's room for argument as to what the enemy was going to do if the MPLA liberated all of Angola.

Below, we transcribe what was asked of Callan in this regard. What goes counter to his other statements shouldn't surprise anybody and doesn't make the document any the less interesting.

In the shaky handwriting of a schoolchild who hasn't yet reached the fifth grade, Callan wrote:

"I never was in any meeting or actually discussed the theme of future plans of action if Angola should

fall into the hands of the MPLA, with anyone, at any level. The reason is that I personally think that there are no such plans and that if such plans exist they must be impossible to realize.

"The only plan that I remember, for what would happen if Angola should fall, was between two ministers and that was a discussion after the fall of Carmona. This conversation was based on if they lost more ground they would have to go to the jungle and fight with guerrilla tactics because that is what all their troops could do; their soldiers didn't have any notion at all of conventional warfare.

"If they decide to wage guerrilla warfare as a war campaign along the border with Zaire, they'd be fighting for a lost cause. First, they have to come up with a rear guard to provide them with the materials needed for the war, they'll see that it's very difficult. Second, to win in a guerrilla war, you have to have the people of the country in which you're going to carry out the operation, on your side. And all I've learned about the MPLA from my limited experience shows that they have a sense of belonging and unity which make them stick by their cause, something I've never seen on the FNLA side, because its leaders only look out for themselves and their pockets, not the people.

"If any such plans existed I never knew anything about them. For the reasons I've mentioned above, any action by the FNLA would be a mistake."

What happened, apart from the plans?

How did the "native" auxiliary force and the white mercenary force come a cropper?

The "native" force, raised hastily, fell not so much in combat but rather as a result of the progressive decomposition of the FNLA — an instrument built up by the CIA over more than a decade, whose horrible

crimes run from the burning of entire villages and the cold-blooded murder of women and children to cannibalism (human viscera were found in the refrigerator of an FNLA "minister").

John Barker, one of the white mercenaries who gave a slapdash training course to the new "native" mercenaries, stated that Holden gave him 200 men for three companies and that, after three weeks, desertions had so decimated their ranks that there were only enough for half a platoon, which was beaten by FAPLA in its very first clash.

The foreign mercenary force, too, began to be demoralized as soon as it saw that the Angolan patriots had modern Soviet weapons and were being supported by their Cuban allies, who had been called in by President Neto to defend, along with the freedom of Angola, that of Africa as a whole and that of all peoples standing up to imperialism.

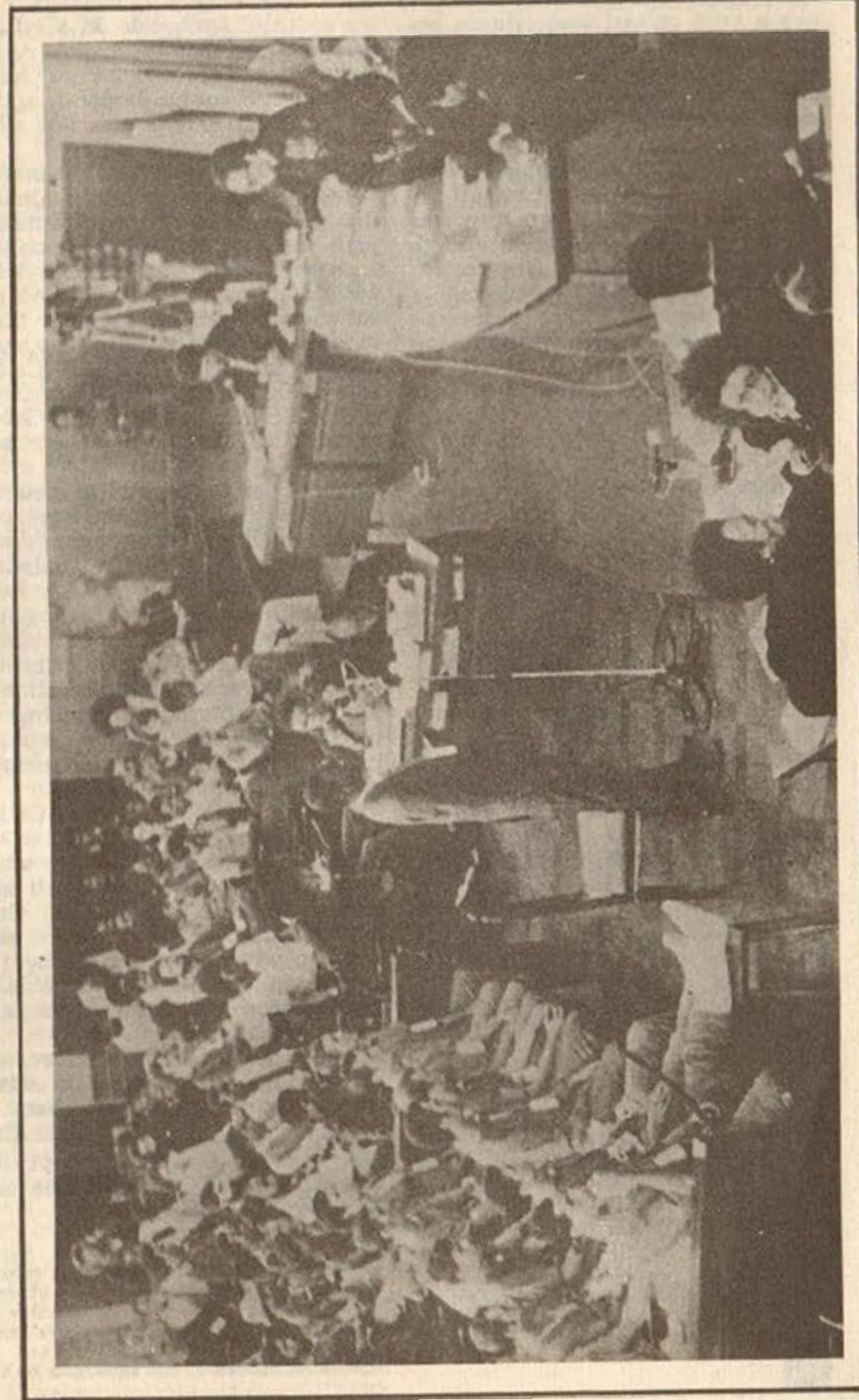
The 14 mercenaries who refused to go to the front and asked to be left in the areas where the "natives" were being trained reflect the degree of demoralization among the paid killers.

The murder of the 14 mercenaries in cold blood and Callan's cry of "Here, the law is a bullet," when he shot one of his men in the head, were the catalysts of a process of total decay in people who were rotten to the core, the product of an equally rotten system.

Here we have a white mercenary, his hand out, his empty head waiting to be filled with visions of blacks stumbling through their own blood; a man who cringes in fear before his superior officer and before the enemy.

The order "Kill, or I'll kill you" may very well move a paid killer to shoot — but this doesn't mean that he's ready to die.

The 30-year-long myth of the white mercenaries, arriving by the legion or emerging suddenly from nowhere as vast armies, was destroyed in a matter of three weeks, and neocolonialism lost one of its



sharp fangs. Now, neocolonialism is like a wild animal that cringes before the blows of a whip handled by an expert tamer. It may be able to hire other mercenaries, but the secret of how to beat them is now known.

In a nutshell, what happened with Callan was that the news of his having murdered his own men was quickly made known abroad through deserters, who used it as a pretext for breaking their contracts — because they more than suspected that defeat was imminent. Since the scandal jeopardized the arrival of new contingents already under contract, the CIA issued orders to Holden Roberto to make it known over Radio Kinshasa, on February 1, that the "Colonel" had been dismissed, along with his Lieutenant, Sammy Copeland, and that he would be court-martialed.

On the same day, Radio Kinshasa announced that the General Staff of the ENLA, the FNLA's military force, had named Major Mayn McRoblnson and Peter McAleese (no rank was mentioned) as the new chiefs of the white mercenaries.

On February 9, in an evident attempt to keep the criminal maniac's British citizenship a secret and to encourage the flow of mercenaries, the BBC of London, in its 7:30 a.m. broadcast, reported as follows: "We have news that the leader of the FNLA, Holden Roberto, issued orders for the imprisonment and court-martialing of the commander (a Greek), but it has been confirmed that the latter escaped into the jungle."

Some of the captured mercenaries say that Callan — he hasn't confirmed this yet — learned about his dismissal and pending trial over Radio Kinshasa and that this led him to think of a commando-type action in the FAPLA rear so as to regain his prestige with his master and maintain his post.

Callan's luck ran out at 18:00

hours on February 1, somewhere to the south of Quibocolo, in a village a little larger than the typical Angolan *zenzala* of six to eight mud huts.

He carried out his desperate action — but the outcome was not what was expected.

Callan ordered that 20 mercenaries be taken in four British Range Rovers and a French armored personnel carrier to the position chosen by him. The vehicles were withdrawn as soon as the men got out so as to make it easier for them to keep under cover. The men were divided into two groups, Callan employing the classic military tactic of the US Army: the Killer Group and the Reconnaissance and Support Group.

The Killer Group was to mount a surprise attack on the enemy column, which the second group was to locate. That column was advancing northward from Damba with the objective of consolidating the great victory FAPLA had obtained the day before in Quibocolo and the surrounding area: the annihilation of a furious counterattack launched by mercenary forces, killing 19, wounding 16, and destroying the enemy's main means of combat.

It was midmorning when Callan became aware of the presence of the FAPLA column, and that was when he placed his men in ambush and waited for dusk. He thought that, with a rainy day, an overcast sky, and the advantages offered by the terrain, his forces would be able to carry out a successful attack and escape unharmed.

The target he chose, therefore, was a part of the column made up of two jeeps and, a little farther back, a truck. Opening up with cross fire, the mercenaries killed two of the occupants of the first vehicle and wounded two others.¹

¹ When one of these two — by then recovered from his wounds — presented himself before Callan, the mercenary said it was impossible that anyone could have outlived the attack, and, if anyone had, it should be blamed on the cowardice of his

Drunk on his initial victory, Callan couldn't resist the temptation of using his rocket launchers against the truck, which had speeded up when its occupants heard the machine-gun fire. Callan opened up.

The explosion that ensued — according to the prisoners, still terrified at the thought of it — was like a volcanic eruption followed by tremendous spurts of detonations in a phantasmagoria of sparks, like fireworks, that lasted for 20 minutes.

The truck had been transporting a variety of projectiles and explosives.

The shock wave killed three mercenaries, and shrapnel from the grenades wounded Callan in the back and one leg. Meanwhile, almost all the attackers were stunned by the terrible blast of air. FAPLA combatants immediately began to arrive on the scene, and they wiped out almost all the members of the Killer Group and many of those in the other group, who were panic-stricken and started to run helter-skelter, going against their very objective of getting away from the area as quickly as possible.

Even so, in the general confusion, Callan was sufficiently quick-witted to have four of his henchmen carry him away from the spot. They took him to a hut, left him there, and then took off into the jungle when they found that patriotic forces were approaching.

On February 5 Callan was arrested, and the fugitives were captured two weeks later. The peasants kept on looking until they tracked them down.

The peasants went out, armed only with their hatred for the crimes the mercenaries had committed, and combed the area until they located them. For 14 days, with nothing to eat but mangos, the mercenaries tried in vain to reach the Zaire River. One of them, Colin Clifford Evans, was captured naked as he tried to swim across the river.

"At night, we were afraid that the wild animals would eat us up. Thank

God we didn't come across any of them. And, during the day, we were afraid that the Africans would find us, because we thought we'd never come out of it alive."

Armed only with clubs and their own fists — but always showing respect for the lives of the vanquished, a characteristic of those belonging to the MPLA and something which gives them dignity — a group of ragged but courageous peasants captured the mercenaries.

CHAPTER 12

I already knew him

I knew very well who Callan was even before I had him in front of me and talked with him under the almond tree in the patio of the PIDE prison — the living tomb for generations of revolutionaries, the scaffold for countless numbers of them. Today, the prisoners are the counterrevolutionaries and foreign white mercenaries.

Ufolo and Kisuelra,¹ the two FAPLA officers now questioning the hired killers, were both beaten, tortured with sadistic refinement, and humiliated by the Portuguese colonialists.

This prison is, moreover, a place to be seen by all the friends of Angola. The revolution was born here. It is Angola's Moncada Garrison:

At dawn on February 4, 1961, the prison was stormed by men who had seized some weapons in an attack on a police jeep a few minutes earlier but who were mostly armed with machetes. The constant rebellion of the prisoners, who had the support of more than one Portuguese policeman with anticolonialist views, and the rumor that they were to be deported sparked the operation. Another factor that influenced the timing of the operation was that

¹ In Kumbundo, these two war names mean Freedom and Avenger.

about 20 foreign journalists were in Luanda. They had come as a result of the rumor — which later proved to be false — that Henrique Galvão, former colonial official who had escaped from jail in Portugal and whose repute dated back to 1947, when he denounced the practice of slave labor in Angola, was heading for Luanda with the Portuguese ship he had seized in the Atlantic: the famous Santa Maria. Their presence would assure international publicity for the operation.

However, the ship didn't come, and the simultaneous attacks on the PIDE prison and on other prisons failed.

Needless to say, the reprisals were of Nazi dimensions: some 30 000 Angolians were assassinated in the streets of Luanda, in hamlets in Caxito and all over the country. Machine-gunned, burned with napalm, run over by bulldozers (whole groups were bound and laid out along the road)...

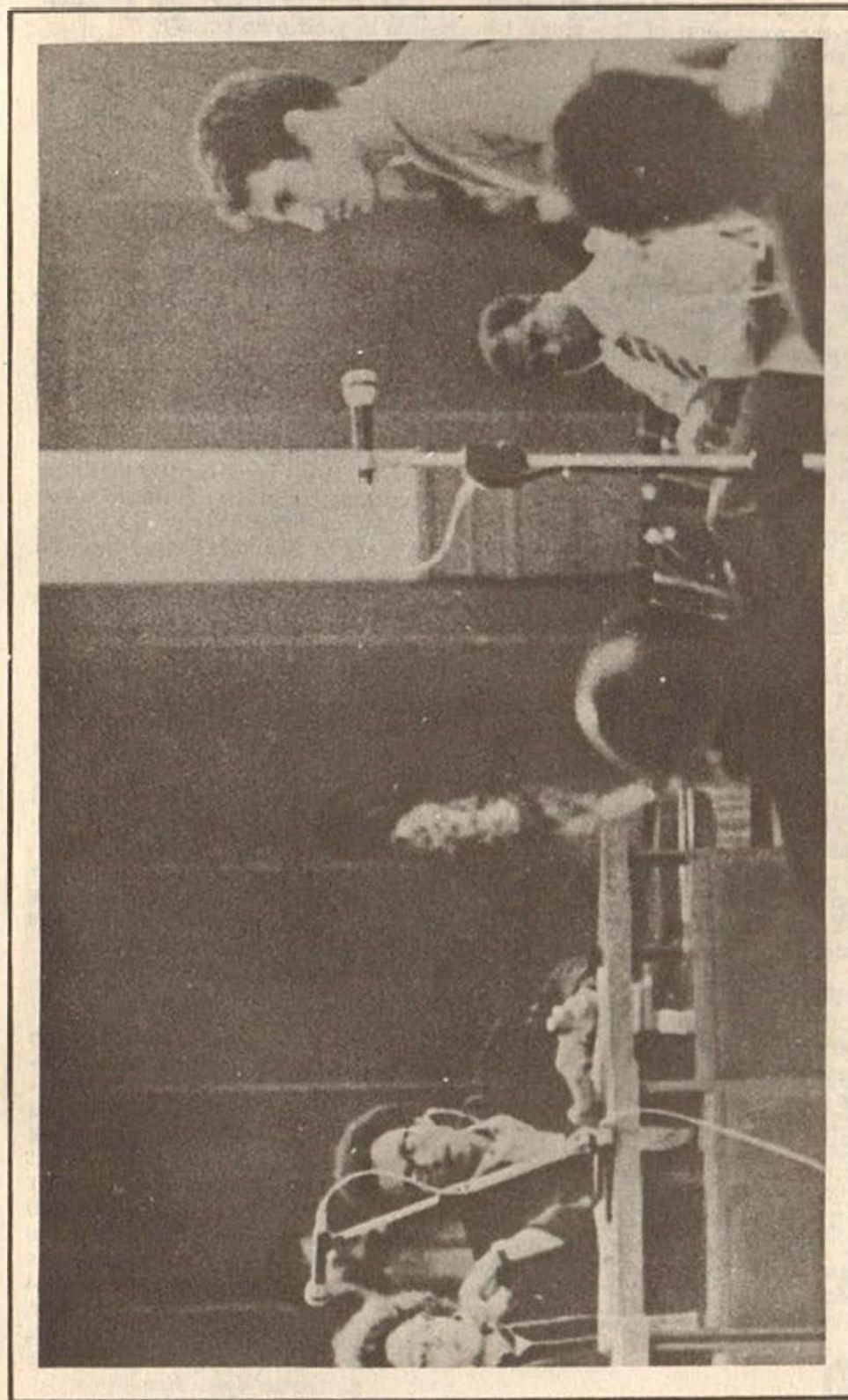
I repeat, I knew Callan before I actually saw him. I came to know him through his guards, who are the exact opposite of him and whose voices echoed back in the silence inside those walls — walls that are a clear example of the Arabian influence on Portuguese architecture in Angola. In the background could be heard the birds chirping away as they flew from branch to branch in the almond trees. Those who are familiar with the exceptional warmth-heartedness of the people of Angola will realize that there was no trace of hatred in their lilting voices as they spoke to me.

"Callan's real name, so he says, is Costas Georgiou, of Greek-Cypriot birth. British citizen. Since 1962 he has lived at 9 Brunswick Street, London.

"If we were to describe him in a single word, it would be this: fake. A fake through and through. He goes all out to take on the personality he doesn't have. He was no more

than a Sergeant in the paratroop forces, and the first thing he did when he became commander of the mercenaries was to proclaim himself 'Colonel.' When he was captured, he tried to make believe he was a doctor, assuming the identity of a man who is very likely one of the 'brains' behind the whole mercenary operation: Dr. Bedford. He said that he was Dr. Bedford, the director of a hospital in São Salvador (this was Bedford's cover — a garrison was located there), and that he had come to visit one of his father's old friends. He mentioned the name of a man who must have been one of Bedford's best friends: the banker Carlos Ferreira, one of the most reactionary men during the colonial period. It would seem that Callan hoped that Ferreira would be questioned and that he would pull strings in the world on his behalf. When he had no alternative but to admit he was Callan, he still kept lying, always trying to pretend that he was as innocent as a lamb. When he was questioned — taking advantage of the fact that we are revolutionaries, truly civilized people, and do not beat or even insult prisoners, as you have seen for yourself — Callan only acknowledged what he could no longer continue to deny in view of the irrefutable evidence. When he finally admitted to being a mercenary, he denied being a commander. When this was demonstrated, he denied having given the order to assassinate 14 of his own men, and, when he finally acknowledged this, he denied having shot the spokesman of the dissatisfied group once in the head and twice in the back. But when he confessed to this in writing — after we had cited to him the names of many witnesses whom we also have in detention — he took on a magnanimous air, claiming he had been generous in having had them shot rather than hanged, as is customary in England with soldiers who refuse to fight!

"Callan is a fake who knows no bounds. He said he had asked his men to leave him behind and save



themselves when he'd been wounded after the explosion of the truck he had fired on. In actual fact, he had forced them — at gunpoint and through the very terror he instilled in his subordinates, even when wounded — to carry him for a day and a half to the house where we captured him. He still denies having spent three and a half years in jail for having robbed a post office in England; he swore that he had never served time for a common crime."

"Colonel" Callan soon confirmed the view of his captors: his fakery showed through.

The following is a part of our conversation:

"Why did you become a mercenary?"

"I was unemployed. There are about a million unemployed in England now. One million four hundred thousand. The pound sterling has fallen so much it's not worth a scrap."

"How much were you paid?"

"A hundred and fifty pounds a week."

"What would you have done if the MPLA paid double that amount?"

"Gone over to the MPLA."

"Then you have no political ideas."

"None in the least. I'm a hundred percent apolitical."

"You are only interested in money?"

"Well... no... Erase what I said before, I beg you. Erase it or we won't go on talking... That last about the money. It makes me seem like an animal."

"Then you do have political ideas. Since money doesn't motivate you, your convictions do. Is that it?"

"No. I told you I'm apolitical."

"Then what is it?"

"I don't fight for money or for ideas. I fight because I'm a soldier. I don't have any other trade. You have to like your work. don't you?"

"Does that include killing working people in your own country?"

"Soldiers have to use arms."

At another point in the conversation, when he learned from one of the FAPLA officers that there had been a lull in the fighting for several weeks, Callan rubbed his hands in glee and said, "The war's about to end! When I get out I'll tell my adventures. It'll be a best-seller."

"But what about the accounts that have to be squared in England?"

"The 14 also came to kill. They weren't angels. It wasn't my intention, but I freed Angola of them. That's a fact. They wanted to kill in the villages and not fight at the front... It is also a fact that I knew everything Holden Roberto was thinking of doing. I know the northern front by heart. If I were free, I'd be able to remember all the spots where large arms caches were hidden for Holden's guerrillas..."

(Callan spoke to me of those who "wanted to kill in the villages." But I didn't have to wait long before I obtained more explicit reports on the role played by this maniac of a killer in Angola.)

From London an international news agency provided more information about the outrages, thefts, and other crimes committed by the "soldiers of fortune" hired by the CIA and the responsibility of the self-styled "Colonel Callan."

The dispatch reads as follows:

Peter McAleese, one of the British mercenaries who participated in the defeated venture against Angola, who returned to England last week from Zaire, declared that Costas Georgiou (Callan) directed the massacre of 160 Angolans in a village near the northern town of Maquela do Zombo. McAleese said that Callan reached the village, told all the men to line up, and then ordered the mercenaries to open fire.²

Ufalo had warned me that Callan did all he could to avoid giving concrete information about his having served in the British forces stationed in Cyprus, his place of birth; Borneo; Malaysia; and Northern Ireland (having started off denying it all, of course). I asked him about this on several occasions, but he didn't say anything concrete. Only the following:

"In Cyprus, I never harmed anybody. You must write that down. Anyone who does bad things in the place where he was born is a savage animal."

However, Callan had forgotten dates, names of bases, and other details regarding the island where he was born.

How did Callan come to be Callan?

Without going into the past — which one day will become known and is not too difficult to imagine — his Angola venture began in the Zambeze Club, one of the many bars-cum-brothels, smelly and always smoky, seemingly in imitation of the thick smog of the streets of the larger London of the poor.

He had been attracted to the Zambeze Club by an irresistible magnet: a classified ad which appeared for

two consecutive days not only in the *Daily Telegraph* but also in the respectable *Financial Times*, which speaks for the interests of those at the highest level in the smaller London of the rich.

After looking him over suspiciously, like an officer inspecting the troops, a waiter directed him to a man at a table somewhat removed from the center of the room and the lamps: a perfect observation point. Callan quickly agreed with John Banks on a price, but the final contract was to take a couple of days. Banks obviously needed time to check Callan's story.

Even though we do not know the details (this was the pre-Angola period), we can deduce that Callan was already what he is now from the comment John Banks made when he heard about the killing of the mercenaries:

"Callan is a capable military leader, but he is cruel and sadistic."

The investigation clearly satisfied Banks, who was a man who knew what he wanted. His all-powerful OK was placed beside the signature of this tall, thin man with actor's eyes, slightly sleepy looking, opening wide to give his remarks — at times emphatic, at times pitiful — an air of sincerity and compassion.

That same day John Banks also gave the OK to three other veterans with a similar history: Peter McAleese, Sammy Copeland, and Nick Hall. Shortly afterward he also OK'd Charles Cristadellus, who was related to Callan and a first cousin of Ronna, his girlfriend.

It's not for nothing that one of the mercenaries who is being held prisoner, one who seems to have known Callan long before Angola, should sum up his view of his chief — whom he thought dead — in a manner very much like that of the chief's chief, John Banks: "The Colonel," said McIntyre, "had great worth as a military leader but was undeniably a criminal maniac."

² Two eyewitnesses, Luis Cândido Cordeiro and Vasco Arnaldo Guimarães de Castro, both photographers for Luanda newspapers, have submitted new evidence to those drawing up the indictment in the case against the mercenaries. Cordeiro said he saw (their faces even, through the telescopic lens of his camera) Portuguese, French, Chinese, and Zairean mercenaries in different parts of the northern front in January of this year. In the hamlet of Barra do Dande he hid at a distance of only 40 meters from some 20 mercenaries and saw them order FNLA soldiers who — with the active participation of the foreigners in many cases — then began the systematic destruction of homes in which people had been shackled or tied. Guimarães said he saw a white commander of an FNLA group called FUNGUTA in the Samba Cajú area (near Carmona) open fire on several old people who refused to follow the FNLA troops in their retreat. He also saw the man machine-gun cattle.