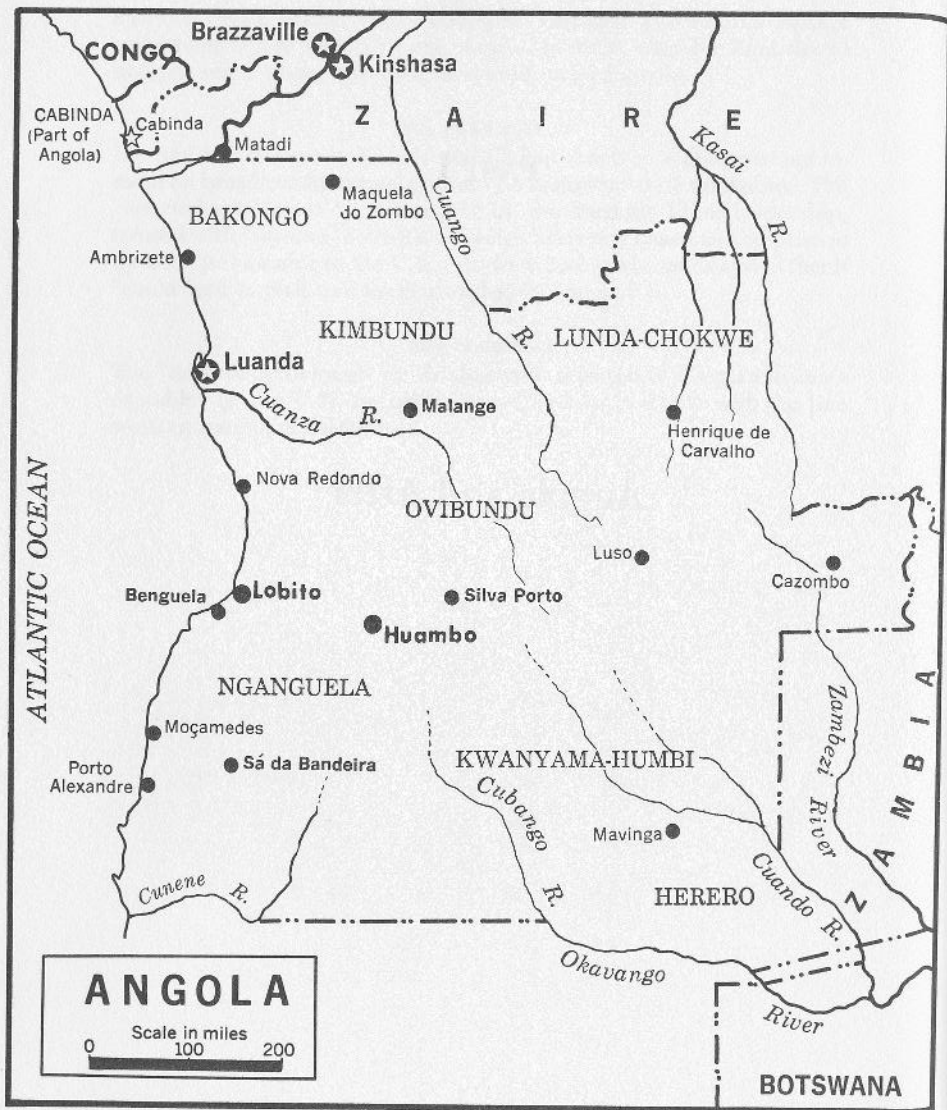


**PART I**

**Angola and After**



## I How It Started

How does a liberation struggle get off the ground these days when the most lethal weapons in the hands of the liberators are, at first, jungle knives, clubs, and stones? That was the question I put to Mendes de Carvalho, a tiny, merry black with twinkling, deep-set eyes in a face which ended in a pointed beard who, from his prison cell—and through a misunderstanding—had sparked off the first armed action in Angola. The date, February 4, 1961, is now celebrated as the start of Angola's armed struggle for independence from the Portuguese.

At the time that I met him, he started to answer my question by explaining that in the late 1950s there was rising discontent in all the Portuguese colonies, because the end of World War II, which had brought such great changes elsewhere in the world, promised nothing for those under Portuguese rule.

When we heard that Britain, France, Holland, and Belgium were preparing to give independence to their colonies—or that the colonized people were preparing to seize their independence—we said: "Why not us?" But how should we prepare our people for this? It was a question that many of us discussed. . . .

Not only in Luanda, but in Lisbon as well, a brilliant group of students from Portuguese Guinea, Mozambique, and Angola debated the same problem. Centered around Amílcar Cabral from Guinea, they included Agostinho Neto and Mario de Andrade from Angola and, later, Marcelino dos Santos from Mozambique. All had one common idea—to rid their peoples of 500 years of Portuguese rule. In the Portuguese colonies there were special problems, as Mendes de Carvalho explained:

They were different from those of other European countries. The old "divide and rule" device had been developed in a more subtle fashion. A white was considered superior to a mulatto, a mulatto superior to a black; and even blacks were divided into two categories, *assimilados*, who had to renounce their Africanism to get a minimum of education and escape what was virtually slave status, and inferior ordinary blacks—natives. This system even split families down the middle. A younger brother was oppressed by his older *assimilado* brother. In some areas the *assimilados* had to live separated by a few

hundred meters from the "native quarters" to prove they had acquired "civilized status." Under such conditions how could we develop the sense of unity vital for a national struggle? Such a movement had to be linked with the masses, but the people, from bitter experience, were highly suspicious of anyone trying to organize them.

We started forming sporting and cultural movements to have some common meeting ground. In the sense that the real aims were secret, these were clandestine movements. The most successful from an organizational and propaganda viewpoint was the Movement of Angolan Nurses.

At the period he was describing, Mendes de Carvalho, like Samora Machel, subsequently president of FRELIMO and then of Mozambique, was a male nurse. The importance of male nurses as a transmission belt for the national liberation struggles in Angola and Mozambique seems to have escaped the Portuguese authorities. Nursing was one profession to which male *assimilados* had relatively easy access and it was a well-paid one. With Aghostino Neto—in between prison terms—a practicing doctor in Luanda, it had other advantages, as Mendes de Carvalho pointed out:

There were other organizations of intellectuals who were more politically active, but because of this they were under PIDE [Portuguese Gestapo] surveillance. It was very difficult for them to move about. But in each administrative zone, province, and district, the local Portuguese administrator had the right to a nurse to look after his family. The same thing at every military post. Local Portuguese settlers and traders also came to the nurses with their health and family problems. Male nurses had freedom, and even a certain priority, of travel throughout the country. So it was decided to organize them for the liberation struggle.

At first, fairly innocuous circulars were sent out to the "Nurses Network" asking for financial contributions to aid "patriotic organizations." Those who responded favorably got a second circular of a more political nature—suggesting they organize politically. Within a short time nurses in Luanda and other urban areas were starting to distribute political literature. The central theme was independence.

A big boost in the early stages of organization was the conference of independent African states in the Ghanaian capital, Accra, in April, 1958. Mendes de Carvalho, as a member of the clandestine Angolan delegation, stopped off at Kinshasa and Brazzaville

on the way to organize Angolan exiles in those capitals. The Accra conference was the first of its kind. One of the resolutions adopted called on the colonial powers "to set definite dates for granting independence to their African colonies"; another denounced all forms of racial discrimination. This was a propaganda bonanza and the "Nurses' Network" worked overtime to get the good news to their rapidly growing circle of activists. Since the Portuguese had never bothered to learn the local language, a nurse could spread the word to a provisional governor's staff while he dealt with the great man's ingrown toenails or massaged his back. A mass propaganda campaign started on the basis of the Accra decisions to promote the idea that, first, Angolans had the right to independence, and second, they had good friends all over Africa—including governments—who felt the same way. The PIDE began to take notice.

Their agents started to follow some of us. On March 29, 1959, we sent a comrade to Kinshasa with propaganda material. He collected other material there but was arrested by PIDE agents at Luanda airport when he returned four days later. A few days later I and several other comrades were arrested. Then there were wholesale arrests of all persons suspected of any contact with us. It was tough, but on the other hand it was a major breakthrough.

The arrests caused indignation throughout Angola. The PIDE as usual had struck out blindly. The divisions between blacks and whites, mulattos and *assimilados* were much reduced because we were all hit. Progressives all over Europe started protesting the arrests. Portugal started to get worried about the effect on its international image.

The March arrests were followed by another wave in July; the three lists of names published bear out Mendes de Carvalho's remarks about all sections of the population being hit. Although Dr. Neto was not on the published lists, he was arrested in June, 1960, in his Luanda consulting room, and after three months in prison, was shipped off to the Cape Verde Islands. Villagers from Neto's home village of Bengo and the neighboring one of Icolo, who went to the district center of Catete to protest the arrests, were fired on by Portuguese troops. Thirty were killed and about two hundred wounded out of a crowd of about one thousand. The following day troops were dispatched to the two villages where

they killed or arrested everyone they could lay hands on, then burned down the villages. Mendes de Carvalho continued his account:

Members of our group were finally sentenced in December, 1960. As I was held to be the chief culprit, I was sentenced to thirteen years, the others getting from one to six years. When the sentences were announced, the comrades outside stepped up their political work—in Angola as well as in Lisbon. Then came the *Santa Maria* incident, which excited all our activists.<sup>1</sup> After all the arrests and terrible repression, our militants wanted action. I got word that plans were being made to attack the prison and the PIDE headquarters, but I did not know the date.

Among those who planned the attack was Antonio Lourenco, a tall, gaunt man with a polished dome of a head when I met him fifteen years later. Together with three other survivors of the attacking force—still banded together in what is known as the February Fourth Group—Antonio Lourenco explained what happened:

From 1958 onward our MPLA group started clandestine struggle, editing and distributing pamphlets, and mobilizing the masses. By 1960, Agostinho Neto had returned, and this inspired us, and our comrades inside the prison—they represented the majority of our activists by that time. But with the arrest of Neto after a few months, and the escalating repression, our group decided that no advance could be made through political struggle alone. We had to go over to armed struggle. We started to gather the most determined among the militants to carry out an armed coup. We originally planned it for January 28, 1961.

From other sources it is clear that the fixing of the date was influenced by the arrival in Luanda of a large number of journalists, who speculated that the *Santa Maria* was heading that way. From the time Captain Galvao and his men had seized the liner on January 23, they had played hide-and-seek with the navies of the world. On January 25, however, a U.S. Navy plane claimed to have spotted the vessel on a southerly course about one-third of the way across the Atlantic from the Caribbean, where the seizure had taken place, heading toward Angola. Hence the concentration

of journalists in Luanda. The publicity value of Captain Galvao's coup was not lost on those planning one of a different nature in Luanda. Eventually the U.S. Navy intervened and "persuaded" Galvao to turn about and head for Recife in Brazil. The timing of the attack on the prison thus lost its urgency, and perfection of preparations became more important, as Antonio Lourenco explained:

Altogether we were 3,128 men pledged to launch the attack. Our method was to buy the same sort of trousers, shirts, and shoes so it would be easy to recognize friends from foes. But we didn't have enough money left over for everyone to spend twenty-five *escudos* (roughly one U.S. dollar) for a machete. Those who could, bought them; others armed themselves with axes, clubs, and even stones.

Once we had the arms, we started training in the offensive and defensive use of machetes, axes, etc. We went on foot and in small groups to Cacuaco, twenty-two kilometers from Luanda, and trained there for eight days. On February 3, we heard some disturbing reports and decided our attack must be made the following day—so we returned to Luanda.

As to the origin of the disturbing reports, Mendes de Carvalho filled in the details. He had managed to set up communications with the outside world through the improbable combination of a sympathetic prison guard and a progressive priest. Such personalities, relatively rare but impressively courageous, proved to be a constant throughout the national liberation struggles in the Portuguese colonies. It explains why there are a sprinkling of Portuguese, or white Angolans, among the officers and ranks of the FAPLA, the military wing of the MPLA—often described as Cubans by Western journalists. De Carvalho described how the date for the attack was finally fixed:

On February 3, I managed to get a message out through the progressive priest, Neves Bendinha, to my younger brother asking him to come to the prison because I had a document I wanted to send to Lisbon. My brother misunderstood the message and thought that I was to be sent to Lisbon. He informed my wife and family—and other comrades. Everybody started to get excited. They thought we were all to be transferred to Lisbon, which could be like a death sentence. Our wives and families started preparing suitcases with food and clothes.

The PIDE couldn't understand what was going on. The whole town was in a state of confusion. Most of the taxis had been requisitioned by families and friends rushing to consult each other and decide what to do. The prison guards sent for me to ask what it was all about. I couldn't explain because I didn't know myself.

In the meantime the February Fourth Group had contacted their leader, Comandante Imperial Santana, who assigned specific targets to the various units—the São Paulo prison, where Mendes de Carvalho and the others were being held, the PIDE headquarters, military barracks, naval facilities, mail and telegraph and radio stations, etc. Comandante Paiva was charged with firing a rocket at midnight to signal the start of the attack. He fired it bang on midnight.

Our main aim was to free the political prisoners. After our first attack the guards fled—but they took the keys of the cells with them! We had no way of opening the doors. Our axes and machetes were useless to deal with the doors and iron grilles. The fiercest fighting was at the prison and the PIDE headquarters. It continued till about 5 A.M., by which time seven Portuguese guards had been killed. At 6 A.M., they brought up artillery and armored cars and our forces withdrew. We did not have a single wounded man. Although the situation was very tense and the Portuguese made a big display of heavy weapons our morale was high and we were determined to press on. It was in this spirit that we attacked again on February 11. But this time the PIDE and the armed forces were well prepared. We had the troops ahead of us and the PIDE behind, so we had lots of dead and wounded men.

By that time the authorities knew the rumor that the political prisoners were to be sent to Lisbon had caused the attack. In fact an uprising would have taken place anyway, but the rumor fixed the date. Mendes de Carvalho was accused of having given the signal. The only witness to the harmless message sent to his brother had been the sympathetic guard who was present when the priest telephoned. Unfortunately he had been killed in the attack. De Carvalho was further accused of having given instructions to kill the only witness to his story. He was threatened with public execution. But after days of torture and interrogation by the PIDE and prison police he and the other political prisoners were sent back to their prison cells to serve out their sentences

which, for Mendes de Carvalho, included eight years in the notorious Tarrafal "death camp" in the Cape Verde Islands. No prisoners were released and the Portuguese started a massive and savage manhunt:

A terrible wave of repression started all over the country. The Portuguese changed their tactics. Before, they arrested people and threw them into prison. Now they tortured and killed them. There were indiscriminate killings all over the country, one effect of which was to further forge national unity. Another effect was to convince the Angolan people that the only solution was generalized armed struggle. It was this spirit that led to the formation of the FAPLA [Angolan Peoples' Liberation Armed Forces] in February, 1962.

The ferocity of the Portuguese repression in 1961-62, which sent hundreds of thousands of Angolans fleeing into the Belgian Congo (later Zaire), was not only the result of the Luanda uprising. Perhaps it was inevitable anyway—the classical reaction of a colonial power when the colonized take up arms. But a tragic and appallingly convenient pretext was offered by the indiscriminate massacre of Portuguese settlers and their families, which started in the northern areas of Angola on March 15, 1961. (One of the main centers of these massacres was Maquela do Zombo, later to make world headlines as the scene of the execution of fourteen British mercenaries on the orders of their commander, "Colonel" Callan, in early February, 1976.)

The difference between the February Fourth uprising with its avowed aim of freeing political prisoners, and the March Fifteenth uprisings—both in that fateful year of 1961—is fundamental to an understanding of much that happened later in the Angolan independence struggle. One was politically motivated, the other was racist with tribalist overtones. Among the victims were many mulattos, *assimilados*, and Angolan women married to Portuguese, together with their children. A puzzling and tragic feature, from which Angola still suffers today, was the extermination by both the Portuguese and those that took part in the March Fifteenth uprising, of any Angolan who could read and write. On the part of the Portuguese such an act could be explained by their colonialist, racist logic. The mulattos and *assimilados* had used their privileged status to acquire modern ideas about indepen-

dence and even revolution! Certainly only a tiny minority had been infected by such dangerous ideas, but better to strike at many to stamp out the few! But why Angolans should strike down compatriots because they were literate was a more complex question. The incidents are well documented by many sources, including Western missionaries. It is freely testified to by survivors in the northern regions today and is a subject to which this author paid much attention in his travels in those areas.

Among the nationalist movements which proliferated in Angola in the mid-1950s, was UPNA (Union of the Peoples of North Angola) founded in July, 1956, by Barros Necaca and José Eduardo Pinnock. This movement had the very limited and separatist aim of restoring the ancient Kongo kingdom in the northwestern part of Angola, based on the Bakongo and Zombo tribes, with San Salvador as its capital. The claim, eloquently promoted at the U. S. State Department and UN headquarters by Necaca's Kinshasa-based nephew, Holden Roberto, was that the Kongo kingdom had been unjustly lumped together with the rest of Angola at the Congress of Berlin (1884-85) when the imperialist powers arbitrarily carved up Africa among them. Barros Necaca claimed he was a direct heir to the San Salvador throne. A formal plea to the UN Secretary-General in June, 1956, demanded a change in the name and status of the area as "an ex-independent territory having no treaty with Portugal."<sup>2</sup>

Thanks to the discreet advice of a U.S. State Department official that it could be difficult to stimulate much support for a revived Kongo kingdom, a view which was much more vigorously expressed when the subject was raised at the 1958 Accra conference, the idea was—at least temporarily—shelved. Shortly after the Accra conference, UPNA was dissolved in favor of UPA (Union of the Peoples of Angola) with Holden Roberto as its effective head. But although the change of name was intended to give the movement an all-Angolan flavor, it did not mean any change of tribalist and secessionist ideas, as subsequent events were to prove. Holden Roberto, at the time UPA was formed, had spent less than five of his thirty-seven years in Angola—the first year after his birth in San Salvador, three years as a pupil at a missionary primary school, and brief visits in 1940, 1951, and 1956. UPA had neither program nor ideology apart from an indiscriminate hatred for all things Portuguese. The movement first attract-

1961, when tribal bands armed with machetes and cutlasses simultaneously attacked homes and farmsteads, hacking to pieces men, women, and children. The first victims were whites but soon included African wives of Portuguese and their children, whatever their color. The killings quickly spread to mulattos, *as-similados*, and anyone who was literate. Five weeks after the attacks started, the official Portuguese press service, Lusitania Agency, announced that 267 persons, "mainly Europeans," had been killed and seventy-two were missing. Non-Europeans obviously did not count!

Paratroops and commandos were rushed to the spot; troop reinforcements were sent from Portugal and a wholesale and barbarous extermination of African Angolans started. Visiting the area fifteen years later, I found the horrors of those years, especially 1961-62, still fresh in people's minds. An oft-quoted figure is that of 20,000 Africans killed. According to UN statistics some 600,000 fled the country, most of them going to Zaire.

Why did the insurgents turn against the mulattos, the *as-similados*, and the literate? As part of the preparation for the March Fifteenth uprising, the UPA had sent so-called "prophets" into the northern areas. Among other tasks they had to persuade UPA followers that by wearing certain charms and keeping one's face toward the enemy, the latter's bullets would dissolve into water. Thus no reason to be afraid of the enemy's monopoly of firearms! A variant of this same myth was used three years later by warriors of Pierre Mulele, a follower of the murdered Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba, in the Simba uprising against Moïse Tshombe. They stormed into battle with spears and the war cry: "Mai Mulele! Mai Mulele!" (Water of Mulele) and were mowed down by the hundreds as the bullets of Tshombe's white mercenaries failed to dissolve into water. Portuguese journalists reporting on the March Fifteenth uprising in northern Angola described the attackers with "scarlet-painted faces . . . as if demon-possessed, dancing and singing, shouting that the bullets of the whites do not kill. . . ."

MPLA members and sympathizers with more experienced views of the realities of warfare tried to dissuade the UPA followers from believing such rubbish. In any case they were against the indiscriminate slaughter of whites. Point Three of the MPLA's

Minimum Program, adopted when the movement was founded, had stated among its aims:

To unite all political parties, all people's organizations, all the armed forces, all eminent personalities in the country, all religious organizations, all minorities, all ethnic groups, all social strata, and all Angolans, irrespective of political tendencies, economic circumstances, race, sex, age, and all Angolans living abroad.

When the UPA combatants were decimated by Portuguese bullets, the word was passed around that this was because MPLA skepticism had neutralized the protective spells. So the UPA machetes were turned against those who should have been their brothers-in-arms, leaving irreparable scars despite many initiatives by the MPLA and friendly African leaders to heal them.

Working in a government hospital in San Salvador at that time was Manuel Quarte, who later became a famous guerilla leader under the name of Comandante "Punza." At the time of the uprising he was part of the "Nurses' Network." When I met him, he was Commissioner of Uije city, a big, cheerful *assimilado* with powerful shoulders and a radiant smile. After the February Fourth uprising and the subsequent manhunt, he headed a group fleeing from Luanda, attempting to escape across the frontier into the Congo. They ran into a group of UPA combatants who were killing "whites, mulattos, *assimilados*, even their own people who had become Catholics. . . ." "Punza" explained that he escaped only because there were UPA people who disobeyed the official line and hid him. Another former member of the "Nurses' Network," Luis Felipe, in charge of refugee affairs at Uije when I met him, told of similar incidents. He was one of those who had done his best to debunk the idea of bulletproof spells and had narrowly escaped with his life.

A year after the March Fifteenth massacre, the UPA fused with another northern movement, the PDA (Angolan Democratic Party) which had been formerly known as the Aliazo (Alliance of the Zombo People) to form the FNLA (Angolan National Liberation Front). Nine days later the GRAE (Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile) was set up in Kinshasa with Holden Roberto as its president. The next move was to form ELNA (Angolan National Liberation Army) as opposed to the FAPLA.

Whatever else had been achieved at the cost of a staggering loss of Angolan lives, the February Fourth and March Fifteenth uprisings marked a historic point of no return in the fight for national liberation. The armed struggle was well and truly engaged. But the fact that it had been launched by two movements—later to be joined by a third—with widely differing aims and concepts, was to have tragic consequences.

## II Comandante Margoso's Story

Comandante Margoso Wafuakula is about as tough-looking a guerilla as I have ever come across. That includes some very tough ones—from the veterans of Vietnam and Laos to Palestinians along the Lebanon-Israel border, and from other wars in between. Short and stocky, with a dark-brown leathery face dominated by a broad, hooked nose that looks as if it had been smashed into his head, Margoso wears a permanent ironical, skeptical sort of ex-

pression, and it took some persuasion, including repeated perusal of my credentials, to start him talking. But it was worth the effort. His experiences explain much of the otherwise inexplicable in the Angolan liberation struggle. I met him in March, and again in July, 1976, in Holden Roberto's former stronghold of Carmona (now Uije, capital of the province of the same name). I knew that he had taken part in both the February Fourth and March Fifteenth actions; that he had subsequently been one of Holden Roberto's most efficient commanders but had later led a revolt against the FNLA leadership and had become one of the most valued MPLA commanders. How did it all come about?

Immediately after the February Fourth assault on the prison, my brother was killed. We had both taken part. We had played together in the Bravo football club, one of the few places where whites and mulattos got on well together. After they killed my brother, the PIDE turned their attentions to me. I was warned by friends to get out of Luanda. I went first to my father's home at Caxito, 40 kilometers to the north. A week later the PIDE started snooping around and I left for Nambuanguo, seventy-five miles northeast of Luanda where my mother's family lived. I didn't know that it was a stronghold of the UPA, nor did I know very much about the politics of the North. At the beginning of March people started coming from San Salvador and Zaire, speaking Kikongo [one of several names used to describe the language of the Bakongo people who lived on both sides of the Angola-Zaire frontier—W.B.]. They were from the UPA and started by demanding 250 *escudos* per head as "contributions to the patriotic independence struggle." They were fiercely hostile to the MPLA and I could not reveal that I was an MPLA supporter. On March 15, everything exploded. Whites, for the UPA, meant colonialists and colonialists meant whites. In our area they were all killed. Even women and children. This was absolutely contrary to what we had been taught by the MPLA. As I was one of the few who had had some guerilla training, I was elected to command a Youth Group of 400 young people to defend the area from Portuguese reprisals.

We fought well against the Portuguese forces sent to repress the uprising. For the first six months none of their troops dared enter the Nambuanguo-Dembos forest area. My father was a headman there and at the end of that first six months when the Portuguese started to make some headway, he and some other headmen got together and decided that I should be sent to Zaire to bring back arms and equipment for the MPLA forces. They had confidence in my

revolutionary experience and the results of the military activities of our Youth Group, which by then was known to be MPLA. Local people contributed 50,000 *escudos* to buy arms. In mid-August, 1961, with some other comrades, I set out on foot, reaching the Zaire frontier twelve days later. We got as far as Songololo—twelve miles inside Zaire—when we were arrested by the Congolese police. After a week in prison we were escorted to the UPA headquarters in Kinshasa. There we were very relieved to meet "Johnny" Eduardo Pinnock—a comrade-in-arms we thought—fighting like us against the Portuguese colonialists. But he cursed us, confiscated our 50,000 *escudos*, and had some of his men beat us up.

We quickly found that even to mention MPLA in Kinshasa was to risk being killed. After being held under close surveillance for two months—we could not walk a hundred yards from the barracks without being followed—Pinnock asked us if we really wanted to fight the Portuguese. Of course we did. On October 26, twenty-two of us were sent to Tunisia and after that to Rome, where we stayed one week. Holden Roberto and Jonas Savimbi were also there. Then we were sent back to Tunisia and received by officials from the Ministry of the Interior, who looked after us for another week. After that we went to the frontier area near Algeria, carrying out guerilla activities and military and political training.

It is necessary to interrupt this account of some unwritten history to explain matters of which Comandante Margoso and some other MPLA cadres are probably unaware even today. They form part of the extremely complex background to the Angolan revolution and related movements. Margoso, for instance, had no inkling as to why his group was sent to Rome for a week. In fact they were there to "prove" that Holden Roberto and the UPA were yearning for armed struggle and the MPLA was not! They were there to prove a point being pushed—erroneously in the view of many specialists on the subject—by the Martinique-born revolutionary theoretician, Frantz Fanon, that if general conditions existed for armed struggle, the main thing was to get it started. According to this theory, even without political preparations the masses would participate once the first shots were fired.

Fanon, for reasons which may be valid, was critical of orthodox Marxists in his native Martinique, whom he accused of following the then-current French Communist Party line of applying brakes to national liberation movements in the French colonies because such activities could prejudice the chances of the



party being elected to state power. Once that happened—or so the argument was said to run—the colonial question would be settled by constitutional means!

Armed struggle in Algeria was reaching its climax at the time of the February-March 1961 uprisings in Angola. Fanon, then in Algeria, saw the possibility of opening up a second front to take some of the heat off the Algerian FLN. He fervently believed that the main revolutionary force in a colonial country like Angola was the peasantry, but doubted that the MPLA leaders whom he met in Algeria agreed. According to some of his intimates at that period, he transferred his suspicions of Marxist intellectuals in Martinique to the MPLA intellectuals he met in Algeria and elsewhere, including the Marxist leader of the MPLA at that time, Viriato da Cruz. Because of this, he jumped to the conclusion that Holden Roberto—apparently skillful at grasping what others wanted to hear and giving them satisfaction if this was to his advantage—shared his views and was the only Angolan leader capable of waging armed struggle. The presence of Margoso and his group was the living proof!

At the Rome meeting, faced with opposing views, Fanon proposed that Algeria should also provide training facilities for MPLA guerillas. Amilcar Cabral, one of the founders of the MPLA, was mandated to go to Angola and return with the first group of such trainees. He came back empty-handed because the MPLA felt that the best training ground was under combat conditions on Angolan soil. For Fanon, however, this was one more proof that the MPLA was only a group of intellectuals without roots among the people or any stomach for armed struggle. In those days Fanon's opinions carried much weight with the leadership of the Algerian NLF, especially with Ben Bella.

After the cease-fire in Algeria in March, 1962, Margoso was sent first to Tunisia for a short course in military topography, following which he was sent back to Kinshasa:

There I met Holden Roberto again and he explained that the FNLA was now going to make an alliance with the MPLA. He had asked the Zaire president, Kasavubu, for a military training base, and this had been granted at Kinkuzu. On August 14, 1962, I was sent to this base, in barren country about twelve kilometers from the Zaire river. We had no uniforms, no weapons, and no conditions for training. We made a start by appealing to young Angolans in Zaire territory to

come to Kinkuzu and be trained for the national liberation struggle. Between August and December, 1962, about 3,000 young people were trained by us as well as was possible without any military equipment. When training was finished these young people were eager to get into action against the Portuguese. I told Holden Roberto: "These are good young fighters, ready to go into the maquis—but they have no equipment."

Holden Roberto contacted the Algerians who sent a batch of old weapons used in their own struggle. We divided them up, split up our forces into units, each unit under one of the commanders who had been trained in Algeria, and took up positions on the Angolan side of the frontier, gradually pushing south from there. We came down into the Dembos forest area again but the atmosphere there was quite different from when I had left. Most of those who were UPA before had now joined the MPLA. I tried to keep my forces away from theirs and only attack the Portuguese. While I never spoke out against the MPLA at political meetings, I could also not display my real feelings because of my previous experiences with Holden Roberto, Pinnock, and some of the other leaders. We settled down to guerilla warfare, ambushing enemy convoys. One of our best successes was blowing up an enemy supply train in April, 1964. But we never received supplies or anything else from Holden Roberto and by mid-1965 we were running desperately short of equipment while the Portuguese were pressing us very heavily. I asked to go back to Zaire to get fresh supplies. This was agreed. I was very angry when I met Holden Roberto and told him frankly of our difficulties due to total lack of support from the base. He promised he would raise some heavier equipment and told me to go to the Kinkuzu headquarters and wait.

While I was sitting on my backside at Kinkuzu, a delegation arrived from the maquis asking for uniforms and weapons. Roberto sent them also to Kinkuzu, where we exchanged experiences.

The exchanges between Margoso, a man of blunt tongue and peppery temper, and Holden Roberto were apparently brutally frank. But things had developed favorably on the international front for Roberto. For a while, President Ben Bella, who had excellent personal relations with Mario de Andrade, one of the founder members of the MPLA, and its representative in Algiers, recognized both the MPLA and the FNLA as legitimate Angolan national liberation movements. Later when Zaire recognized only the FNLA-UPA, Ben Bella, intent on being on the winning side in his African policies, decided to give unconditional support to

Holden Roberto. President Ahmed Sékou Touré of Guinea went even further and took Holden Roberto and the GRAE under his personal sponsorship, something he was to regret bitterly years later. The upshot was that in July, 1963, GRAE was recognized by the Liberation Committee of the newly formed Organization of African Unity (OAU) as the sole Angolan independence movement. A major victory for Holden Roberto and a major defeat for the MPLA!

Once Holden Roberto had secured the recognition of the GRAE by the OAU, he seriously set about the attempted extermination of the MPLA and any waverers within the FNLA who opposed this new policy. Comandante Margoso makes this clear in the next part of his account:

While we were waiting, with everyone terribly demoralized, at the Kinkuzu base, demanding arms to get into action against the Portuguese, Holden Roberto persuaded Mobutu to get weapons from Tunisia. Tunisia sent some, but Mobutu grabbed them all for his own war against Mulele. Eventually we scraped together some weapons. I was nominated commander of the First Military Region [which covered the whole of the area between Luanda and the Zaire frontier, the only place where FNLA forces had any activity—W.B.] and we crossed the frontier again on December 18, 1966. We got to the Ambriz river on December 24, but it was in flood and we couldn't cross it. We had to stay there for twenty-four days until the waters receded—eating grass when we ran out of food. Finally we got across and pushed south again. When we got to a point north of the Dembos—Nambuanguo area, we found that all the fighting was between MPLA and FNLA forces, and local FNLA commanders told me their instructions were to concentrate all efforts on wiping out the FAPLA.

There it was. Instead of fighting the common enemy, Angolans were killing Angolans. Because of this constant fighting, I could not push through to where I was supposed to set up my headquarters without clashing with the MPLA. Eventually I set up my operational base in the Bulapipa forest in Uije province.

Once we got the base organized, local FNLA commanders started sending me MPLA prisoners to be executed. I was the one who had to decide which were to be executed. My reply was the only possible one: "These men are MPLA. Therefore they are Angolans. You ask me to kill them? No! Bring me Portuguese—I will kill them. Not Angolans."

The years dragged on and we did little against the Portuguese. But the prisoners sent to be executed accumulated until I had over 400 of them. By all I had seen, I knew that it was only the MPLA who were fighting the Portuguese colonialists. So I armed the 400 prisoners and they turned out to be my best fighters. But there was a "trustee" of Holden Roberto, Pedro Vida, responsible for the Nova Caipemba area [also in Uije province centered about fifty kilometers northwest of the provincial capital—W.B.], who sent a letter back to Holden Roberto to the effect that not only was I refusing to execute MPLA prisoners, but I was using them on the battlefield. By then they were really my best shock troops, many of them with fourth-grade education. I realized that they were not only needed on the battlefield against the Portuguese, but also later as teachers for our children. In the latter part of 1968, a Swiss journalist was brought into our territory and with his escort was a letter ordering me to return to Kinshasa.

The origin of the visit of journalist Pierre-Pascal Rossi, in Margoso's view, which may or may not be correct, was that throughout 1967 and 1968, the MPLA had been pressing its views ever more insistently on the OAU's Liberation Committee. Word was beginning to get through that, as Margoso had discovered, it was only the MPLA that was fighting the liberation struggle. There was also documentary evidence that Holden Roberto had given orders that all MPLA cadres remaining in Zaire were to be exterminated. The MPLA was pressing for the OAU to send in a mission to inquire into the real facts of the situation. There was a meeting of the OAU scheduled for September, 1968, and all the signs indicated that the MPLA request would be granted. (As indeed it was!) Holden Roberto wanted to plant some favorable reports in the press first. Therefore the visit of Pierre-Pascal Rossi was arranged—without his necessarily being informed of the reason. He reported having walked for seventeen days through mainly unpopulated countryside, until he entered the area where Margoso had his headquarters, an area stretching in a triangle with its base centered on Bembe in Uije province, about one hundred kilometers northwest of the provincial capital, and its apex at Nambuanguo. He told of a meeting with Margoso, "who claimed to have a total of about 1,800 guerillas."<sup>1</sup> Margoso said his instructions were to make everything sound and look as impressive as possible. He gave the total number of FNLA soldiers in the field as about 10,000. Holden Roberto was claiming 30,000 "fully-

trained soldiers" in the field by that time. It was agreed to send an OAU observer mission, but Margoso says they only got as far as Songololo, where they were told officially to wait for guides. The guides never did turn up and despite being liberally plied with palm wine and other drinks, the mission returned to report very unfavorably on the FNLA. Margoso in the meantime had started back to Kinshasa:

It was the rainy reason and the going was slow. I set out on December 29, 1968, and did not get to Kimpangu [just across the Zaire frontier from Maquela do Zombo—W. B.] until January 25, 1969. I sent a telegram to Holden Roberto asking for transport. I was not alone—I had brought some of the MPLA comrades to prove that they were willing to cooperate with us in the anti-colonialist struggle.

Holden Roberto sent a Mercedes car, with the Assistant Chief-of-Staff, Sengele Norberto. I dropped the MPLA comrades off at a place where my mother was living, because Norberto's attitude toward them was very hostile. When we got to Holden Roberto's headquarters, it was reported that I had brought MPLA people and left them at my mother's house. Holden Roberto didn't react to that and only said that I had better have a rest. January and February I spent with my wife, expecting to be convoked at any time. On March 27, Roberto sent a jeep to bring me to his headquarters and there he informed me that I was under arrest. "You are a ruffian," he said, but he didn't explain why I was being arrested. "One ruffian and another makes a ruffian and a half," I replied as I was put under guard. There was an FNLA council meeting a few days later at which it was decided I should be executed for having brought MPLA members into Angola and leaving them in my mother's house. (By that time they were safely across the river in Brazzaville!) The jeep was fueled up and I was to be taken to a frontier area and shot. Holden Roberto wanted it done quickly before anyone outside would know. But while the jeep was being prepared, someone in his headquarters leaked the news and very soon there was a big crowd demonstrating. Some of them—including a man with a gun—pushed their way into Holden Roberto's office and demanded that I be freed.

In the end it was decided that I should be tried. The idea was to prove that I was an agent of the MPLA. But there was no proof. Holden Roberto's Minister for Information spoke up for me. "If there has been any real fighting in northern Angola since 1967," he said, "this is because of Margoso. Who captured Portuguese prisoners? Margoso. That's why the OAU continues to support us. I don't agree to his being killed." That saved me.

Later I was put in solitary confinement for one year, in a cell at the Kinkuzu base. No visits, no letters. From my cell I wrote a letter to Holden Roberto asking whether I was going to be left to die only because I had served the Angolan people.

When Margoso was released, he was seriously ill with hemorrhoids and it was due only to the intervention of Holden Roberto's brother, Dr. Sebastian Roberto, that he was hospitalized and, after lengthy medical treatment, gradually regained his health. By 1971, he was rehabilitated—physically as well as politically—by the FNLA. He was sent back to Kinkuzu as deputy chief-of-staff of the FNLA armed forces.

There was the same state of demoralization. Officers and men only wanted arms and a chance to get into the fight. On September 13, 1971, after having contacted men and officers, I held a meeting at which I told them the true state of affairs. Holden Roberto was not interested in fighting the Portuguese, but only in exterminating the MPLA—in Angolans fighting Angolans. I was able to convince them through my own experiences. The decision was taken to convoke Holden Roberto to the base. As soon as he entered he was to be shot. But two officers from Roberto's home town, San Salvador, Donda Afonso and Matir, tipped him off and said: "If you come bring plenty of force."

Holden Roberto came on October 14—together with the Zaire armed forces. The latter immediately encircled the base. Roberto had with him "Johnny" Eduardo Pinnock, Pedro Viola, Luis Angles, and some others. When the meeting started, we denounced the miserable conditions inside Angola. No uniforms, no arms, no real combat against the colonialists. Roberto shouted back: "You people have been corrupted by the Communists. I don't want to talk to you anymore. I will go back and talk with President Mobutu. You can send your officers to talk with the President."

The soldiers shouted back? "No! Our officers won't leave the camp. If Mobutu wants to talk with us, he can come here. We are Angolans. We know what's going on in Angola. If Mobutu wants to know, he should come here."

Holden Roberto got into his car and drove back to Kinshasa. From that moment we severed all relations with him and hauled down the FNLA flag. We contacted some refugees in the frontier area and got them to go into Angola and explain about the situation at Kinkuzu. Our supplies were cut off, but local people sent in fish and rice and we ate better than at any time under Holden Roberto. A

local doctor gave us free medical aid. Mobutu and Roberto saw we were doing quite well without them, so they sent in some truckloads of food. We seized both trucks and drivers and held them.

On November 26, [1971], Holden Roberto and some top Zaire officers arrived by helicopter. Roberto's idea was to try to divide the officers from the men. Everyone was in a very angry mood. Stones were thrown at Roberto; he was spat at while the Zaire officers looked on open-mouthed. We spoke in Kikongo dialect and in French so they could understand. The only point that Roberto tried to make was that the officers should go and talk things over with Mobutu. The troops said: "You're not going to take our officers. You'll only kill them."

Eventually five of us agreed to go. The Chief-of-Staff, Eugenio Jaime Agosto, the Deputy Chief-of-Staff, Elias Fernando Pia do Amaral Cruzeiro, Regimental Commander, Benito Manuel Fernando Fernandez, myself as Adjutant to the Chief-of-Staff and the adviser to the headquarters staff. We met with Mobutu at 9 A.M. on November 26, together with Holden Roberto and four top Zaire staff officers.

Mobutu wanted to know what was behind the revolt. We said: "We have no food, no weapons, no uniforms, no medical aid. Everyone wants to fight the colonialists but we are cooped up in a prison. Reports sent back to Holden Roberto are simply ignored."

Mobutu looked straight at Roberto and said: "This is simply a lack of organization. You understand—I don't want Angolan blood shed in my country."

He decided to give us two small trucks and two jeeps so that the Kinkuzu staff could maintain liaison with our bases inside Angola. He gave us some money to buy essential medical supplies and sent us back to Kinkuzu in a helicopter. When we reported back everyone agreed that we must stick to our positions. One of the officers who had betrayed our original plan was shot. The other escaped with a bullet in his leg. Holden Roberto took this as the final proof that we had really rebelled and set out to crush us. With the three chiefs of the Zaire armed forces, he worked out a plan which was approved by Mobutu on March 17, 1972, the day after he returned from a visit to Switzerland.

When we saw four jet fighters circling overhead early on March 18 we knew what we were in for. We had prepared statements for the local and international press and sent two messengers to deliver them. But they were caught and executed. Word then came of sixty armored cars moving toward the camp and I advised all the officers to withdraw to positions from which we could cross over to Brazzaville. They didn't agree and thought the display of force was only to

improve Roberto's bargaining position. We had already buried our arms—pledging they were for use only against the Portuguese.

The planes made low passes and it seemed obvious they wanted us to fire on them so they could have the pretext to open up on us. I withdrew to a position about one kilometer south of the base. Behind the armored cars were artillery pieces drawn by trucks. But there was no fighting. Some shells were fired, then the troops moved in and arrested all forty-five officers. Most of them were brought back only two months later—to be executed by firing squads in front of their men. The others were burned to death in an electric oven in the Binza suburb of Kinshasa.

Roberto had completely decapitated his armed forces. The entire professional officer corps had been liquidated. The reserve troops were completely demoralized. There were no more instructors to train replacements for the latter. It was because of this that Holden Roberto turned to China for instructors.

Specialists on the Angolan liberation struggle—including Basil Davidson, by far the best informed among them—agree with Margoso that the FNLA forces never recovered from the Kinkuzu revolt. And it will be seen that Margoso did his best to ensure this! That this was the reason for the dispatch of Chinese instructors is obviously Comandante Margoso's own opinion. But certainly Holden Roberto was forced to look elsewhere for support. At that time Chinese instructors were helping to train FRELIMO guerillas in Tanzania. It is generally believed that President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania interceded for the same help to be extended to the FNLA. Mobutu had made a first visit to Peking in January, 1973—and was received by Chairman Mao Tse-tung. Holden Roberto soon followed in Mobutu's footsteps and secured a promise of 250 Chinese instructors, who started arriving in Zaire in mid-1973.

Margoso had not yet finished with the Kinkuzu affair. Although he must have been the most wanted man in Zaire at the time, he remained on the Zaire side of the frontier for almost six months. Together with another MPLA cadre, Margoso crossed over to Brazzaville on September 5, 1972. This was precisely the date of the OAU meeting in Kampala (Uganda). Margoso and his companion sent a document explaining the situation with Holden Roberto and the FNLA and the highlights of what had happened at Kinkuzu. According to Margoso:

Roberto's delegation was headed by "Johnny" Eduardo Pinnock and N'Gola Kabango [later the FNLA's nominee as Minister of the Interior in the three-movement Transitional Government—W.B.]. When they saw the letter we had circulated, they abandoned the meeting and returned to Kinshasa.

Margoso remained in Brazzaville for almost one year, by which time he had withdrawn some 2,000 of the original 2,600 soldiers from the Kinkuzu base, bringing them across the Zaire river in groups of twenty to thirty at a time.

Most of the other 600 had left the base to get jobs in Kinshasa. With those that came across the river, we crossed the Congo-Brazzaville border into Cabinda province, the MPLA Second Military Region, where we activated the struggle again.

Here Comandante Margoso contributed to the defeat of foreign-backed secessionist attempts in oil-rich Cabinda province. Subsequently he was transferred back to his home battleground in the First Military Region—but this time as Commander of FAPLA forces. With his knowledge of the terrain—and his contacts with the FNLA forces—he played an invaluable role there. One of the important tasks assigned to him just prior to my first meeting with him was dealing with the white mercenaries—mostly British—and the regular troops of the Zaire army which had formerly occupied many key centers in the north.

### III Holden Roberto

The following extract from a *New York Times* article by Leslie Gelb was read into the U.S. *Congressional (Senate) Record* of October 28, 1975, by Senator Edward Kennedy:

The CIA cash-funneling operations in Portugal were said to have revived dormant but traditional connections between the agency and anti-Communist West European socialist and labor movements. And the operation in Angola, the sources said, led to the reactivation of Holden Roberto, head of the FNLA, the man chosen in 1962 by President John F. Kennedy and the CIA to forge a link between the U.S. and the indigenous groups that were expected to drive Portugal from Angola one day. . . .

It is worth noting that Leslie Gelb cited "four official sources in Washington" as the basis for his information and that the story was not officially denied. It continued:

The sources said that from 1962 to about 1969, the CIA supplied Mr. Roberto with money and arms, but to little avail. At that point he was deactivated and put on a "retainer."

Mr. Roberto was reactivated this spring, according to these sources, at about the time it became clear that the then Communist-leaning government in Portugal ordered its armed forces in Angola to give active support to the Soviet-backed Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola headed by Agostinho Neto.

But the sources said that CIA operatives and American diplomats judged that U.S. support should also be thrown behind Jonas Savimbi, the leader of the UNITA.

It could not be learned whether Chinese and American officials had ever discussed or sought to coordinate their efforts against Mr. Neto. What was learned was that American funds were being used to buy arms for both Mr. Roberto and Mr. Savimbi, and that the Chinese were providing military advisers for Mr. Roberto and perhaps for Mr. Savimbi as well.

It could not be learned whether any CIA operatives were also acting as military advisers.

At stake in Angola, besides the enlargement of Soviet influence, is a region deemed rich in copper, industrial diamonds, and oil. Of particular interest to the United States and to President Mobutu, the sources said, is Cabinda, an oil-rich area bordering on Zaire and separated from Angola by the Congo river. There, the sources re-

lated, the Gulf Oil Corporation continued to pump over 100,000 barrels a day. The sources said that Mr. Mobutu would like to annex Cabinda in the likely event of a Communist take-over in Angola. . . .

Leslie Gelb also quoted "authoritative sources" for the information that the CIA maintained its largest African station in Zaire. This revelation from one of America's most responsible journalists in one of the country's most highly responsible newspapers came as no surprise. No more did a follow-up news item in the *New York Times* of December 20, 1975, revealing that since 1961, Holden Roberto had been receiving a salary of \$10,000 a month to supply information to the CIA and that the "Forty Committee," presided over by Henry Kissinger, had supplied Roberto with \$300,000 to help him in his struggle with the MPLA. Some months later, the report stated, important sums of money were given to Jonas Savimbi, funneled through Zambia and Zaire.

My mind went back to a conversation in Algiers in mid-1963 with a professor of physics, Aquino de Braganza, whom most specialists consider one of the best-informed minds on everything concerned with the national liberation struggles in the Portuguese colonies. A Portuguese-Goan of Indian origin—his real name is Desai—he studied physics at the University of Grenoble where his closest friend was Marcelino dos Santos, a founder member of both the MPLA and FRELIMO and now Vice-President of Mozambique. Aquino de Braganza has been closely associated with all national liberation movements in the former Portuguese colonies. He helped set up the World Conference on Nationalist Movements in the Portuguese Empire which later developed into CONCP, the very important Conference of Nationalist Organizations of the Portuguese Colonies. An intimate friend of Agostinho Neto, Samora Machel, and the late Amilcar Cabral, he now directs the Institute of African Studies in Maputo. At our meeting in Algiers, Aquino de Braganza told me some of the basic facts of what was going on in Portugal's African colonies. He mentioned names which till then had meant nothing to me—Cabral, Neto, Andrade, Holden Roberto, personalities I might encounter in Algiers. "Be careful of Holden Roberto," he said. "I know for a fact that he is a CIA agent." It meant little to me at the time, and in fact I met none of them in Algiers. Cutting short my visit I returned to Southeast Asia to make my first visit into the liberated zones of South Vietnam.

In the summer of 1976, however, I sought out Aquino de Braganza in Maputo to ask why he had been so certain in September, 1963, that Holden Roberto was a CIA agent, and how he had been recruited.

Because I knew the man who arranged it. He even boasted about it to me—he took me for a friend. He was one of the right-hand men of Irving Brown of the International Department of the AFL [American Federation of Labor, the International Department of which had long previously been listed as a CIA-subsidized organization—W.B.] His name is Carlos Kassel, an anti-Castro Cuban who had worked for the dictator Trujillo in Santo Domingo and was later placed by Irving Brown in the ILO [International Organization of Labor] headquarters in Geneva.

The first contacts with Holden Roberto were made in 1960, when John Kennedy was preparing an African policy in view of the great surge for independence that was sweeping the whole of the continent. Roberto was recommended as his "man in Angola." The first move was made through American Protestant missionaries in Kinshasa [then Leopoldville—W.B.] Most active in the affair at that time was a certain George Hauser. The deal was clinched in 1962, through Ahmed Tlili, the general-secretary of the Tunisian Trade Unions and Carlos Kassel. After it was finalized, Kassel strutted around in Algiers as a full-fledged leader of the FNLA. The CIA by then had established a solid bridgehead within the FNLA.

Confirmation of this came from an unusual source. Jonas Savimbi, an *assimilado* from the powerful Ovimbundu tribal grouping centered at Silva Porto (Bié) in central Angola, educated in political science at the University of Lausanne, had decided to throw in his lot with the FNLA. He had hoped for a leadership position, but had settled for the post of foreign minister in Holden Roberto's GRAE government in exile. He resigned in a spectacular fashion in July, 1964, during an OAU meeting in Cairo. The reasons he gave added up to the accusation that the FNLA was nothing but Holden Roberto who was "flagrantly tribalist." He portrayed a picture of the Kinkuzu training base not very different from that described to me by Comandante Margoso twelve years later. Above all he complained that the FNLA was in the hands of "neocolonialists" and "notorious agents of imperialism." He named Carlos Kassel, "a militant anti-Castroist"—Savimbi had always presented himself as a great admirer of Castro and for a

time could count Che Guevara among his supporters—a certain Bernhard Manhertz, an American who had served in South Vietnam and now directed FNLA military affairs, and another American named Mr. Muller, who had been a public relations officer for the anti-Lumumbist government of Cyrille Adoula in Zaire, and who Savimbi claimed was a personal adviser to Holden Roberto. Savimbi repeated these charges in much greater detail in a letter dated October 18, 1964, to the magazine *Remarques Congolaises et Africaines* which was published in their issue of November 25, 1964.<sup>1</sup>

The letter was in reply to an article in a previous issue, signed D.D.D., attacking Savimbi because of his desertion from the FNLA. Savimbi started his reply by pointing out that the initials D.D.D. stood for Diop Djibril Demba, a cousin of Holden Roberto who was employed at the GRAE Ministry of Information. His letter was divided into five headings: American imperialism inside the UPA and GRAE, the unity of Angolan nationalist movements, the so-called “democratization” within the UPA and GRAE, the reasons for the military setbacks, and “my position regarding Angolan nationalism.” Under the first heading, he dealt with Holden Roberto:

The political career of Holden Roberto started in 1959 with his departure for the United States, where he made numerous friends. After his return to the Congo in July, 1960, he became friends with Messrs. Kandolo, Nondaka, and Mobutu—just those who handed Lumumba over to Tshombe in 1961. Kandolo, who handed over Patrice Lumumba’s documents to American spies, is the one who later defended Holden Roberto when he was accused of having been linked to Patrice Lumumba. It is paradoxical that the same hand which killed the patriot Lumumba should protect Holden Roberto—without any reason to do so!

The UPA and GRAE have always enjoyed unconditional support from the Adoula government, of which Messrs. Kandolo, Nondaka, Albert N’Delé, and Mobutu were the pillars. The pro-Americanism of the Adoula government was no secret for anyone.

The American government has always been interested in trying to impose Holden Roberto on the Angolan people as leader. During a month’s stay in New York at the end of 1961, I noticed that the Americans were determined to push for Holden Roberto as the leader and in case of a setback in this, then to use him as a buffer between divided Angolan nationalists. . . .

It is hard to avoid the suspicion that Savimbi was piqued that Roberto seemed to be “the chosen one,” when he would gladly have undertaken that role himself. That he was inordinately ambitious and chafed at having to play second fiddle to anyone became very clear later on. His account continues:

It was in this spirit that Holden Roberto, among other things, engaged Carlos Kassel, a militant anti-Castroist. Kassel worked in Tunisia, alongside Ahmed Tlili, then General Secretary of the Tunisian Trade Unions, who passed him on to Holden Roberto as his adviser on trade union affairs. Carlos Kassel succeeded in setting up the LGTA [General League of Angolan Workers] in 1962, which in no way represented the Angolan proletariat. The LGTA then became allied to the ICFTU, thus facilitating powerful material support from the AFL-CIO in the U.S.A., of which Irving Brown was one of the directors in contact with Holden Roberto. This aid went directly to the UPA-FNLA. Carlos Kassel carried out several missions in the name of GRAE, notably that of its adviser to the GRAE mission in Algiers, alongside “Johnny” Eduardo Pinnock.

When the visit of Fidel Castro to Algiers was announced last year, Kassel was asked to leave and since then he has maintained his job in Leopoldville (Kinshasa).

Among other evidence of Holden Roberto surrounding himself with Americans, Savimbi cites him having hired as a personal adviser Professor John Marcum, director of the African program at Lincoln University, as well as some of the other names mentioned earlier—Manhertz (from April 1964 to head of ELNA) and Muller (also as personal adviser, and refers to Muller’s help in setting up an Angolan section in the U.S. Embassy at Kinshasa). He remarks also that Roberto sent eleven Angolans to Israel for counterespionage training, using them later to set up his own personal security unit. In concluding this section of his letter, Savimbi makes an admirable statement which only shows his own later activities in a more inexplicable light:

The experience inside the movement, a profound knowledge of the behavior of individuals, and the materialist analysis of revolutions have all convinced me that no progress is possible with individuals whose allegiance is to the Americans; who can have no other logistics base but Leopoldville in the hands of neocolonialists and notorious agents of imperialism. With such a situation how can one take seriously Holden Roberto’s declarations on the eve of his visits to Moscow and Peking?

Yet Holden Roberto had made statements which seemed to place him among the staunchest anti-imperialist leaders and at least some people in high places seem to have been impressed!

On the question of the unity of the nationalist movements, Savimbi writes briefly that he had sent letters to both the MPLA and the UPA in February, 1961, stating that he would not join either movement until unity had been achieved between them. He referred to various meetings, conferences which had all failed to bring this about. Finally, he had joined the UPA at the end of 1961, as he estimated they had the best chance of waging armed struggle on a national scale. Under the heading of the third question of "democracy" within the UPA-GRAE leadership, Savimbi lists the twenty-one members of the Executive Committee of UPA and their origins. Twelve were from San Salvador; six—including Holden Roberto—were close relatives; nineteen were from the Bakongo regions of Angola's extreme northwest. "For your information," Savimbi writes, "here are the names of the five main tribal groupings which make up Angola, in order of importance: Ovimbundu, Kimbundu, Bakongo, Lunda-Kioko-Tchokué, and Ganguela. It is obvious that tribalism must not be exploited by leaders, for it is the whole people that must make the revolution. The flagrant tribalism of Holden Roberto is demonstrated by those who make up his government."

On the question of the reasons for the military setbacks, Savimbi used his heavy artillery:

I will start by recalling that President Ben Bella in September, 1963, sent a hundred tons of arms to GRAE. Since then no one has heard of any stepping up of armed struggle in the interior of the country. A revolution is not a mechanical act which depends exclusively on outside aid. Our analysis of the dismantling of the ELNA, and the end of its military activities, leads us to these conclusions:

- (1) Holden Roberto's collusion with the American imperialists who placed Bernhard Manhertz at the head of the Liberation Army.
- (2) American infiltration into the maquis which formerly existed. I cite the arrest in his headquarters of Comandante Antoine Muandazi by Portuguese troops a few days after he had given an interview to an American journalist, Lloyd Garrison.
- (3) Total lack of political work in the army which is nothing but a personal propaganda instrument of Holden Roberto. I cite the example of photos taken at the Kinkuzu base by American journalists and

distributed to the Western press with great success. I also cite the case of the twenty-five soldiers sent to Tunisia in 1962 [Margoso had said twenty-two—W.B.] to be trained with the Algerian Liberation army and of whom only five were not Bakongo and only ten had completed primary education, the others being illiterate. Later it was these who constituted the general staff of the Angolan National Liberation Army [ELNA].

(4) Introduction of a mercenary spirit among the soldiers, paying their wages only when they return to Leopoldville after a sally into Angola. This is one of the mistakes which has led them to fear pushing too far into the interior and not being able to return to collect their pay. It is because of this that they hang around the Congo-Angolan frontier, becoming a frontier army. I cite the example of the mission sent at the end of 1962, with the consent of the Adoula government and the United Nations command—which supplied the transport, arms, and money—in order to attack the Benguela railway and thus end the Katanga secessionist movement, because the arms Tshombe was getting passed along this Angolan railway.

This mission included three Angolan [ELNA] army officers and returned two months after it left, having spent all its money in the frontier area without engaging in any military activity whatsoever. One of the three officers, Pirois, is today a member of the ELNA general staff.

Many of the points Savimbi was making were almost exactly those of Comandante Margoso, but seen from the opposite side of the frontier. The main difference was that the conclusions they drew were different, at least as interpreted by their actions. The fifth point which Savimbi made was perfectly valid—that a guerilla force must have the total support of the population in order to live and come to grips with the enemy.

This was a realistic assessment of the situation at that time and a correct dissection of the spurious nature of the UPA-FNLA and Holden Roberto's role and motives. Perhaps Jonas Savimbi was sincere in his criticism of Holden Roberto at that time and in his reasons for abandoning him. But how can his vehement denunciation of imperialism and neocolonialism and those who collaborated with them be squared later on, not only with his collaboration with Portugal, South Africa, and the United States, but with his renewed alliance with Holden Roberto against the MPLA?



#### IV Jonas Savimbi

Forty-eight hours after UNITA forces fled their main stronghold of Bié (formerly Silva Porto), I accompanied an official MPLA search team trying to discover what had happened to MPLA cadres arrested months earlier by UNITA. The missing included Joaquim Kapango, member of the MPLA's political bureau, and two members of the Huambo Provincial Administrative Committee. The prisons were empty when MPLA forces entered the city on February 12, 1976. After an hour of fruitless digging in the courtyard of Komarko prison in the city outskirts, the search team found nine freshly dug pits behind the squat, white-walled prison on the edge of a field of young maize. A human foot was sticking out of one of these. The grass around the pits was trampled flat and stained with blood. Lying on the ground were a half-dozen blood-stained iron bars, some with bits of human hair sticking to them.

As exhumation started, it quickly became clear that in the pits were the bodies of some hundred MPLA cadres known to have been detained in the Komarko prison. The still-fresh bodies had been thrown pell-mell into the pits, the sandy soil shoveled in on top of them. Toilet bowls in the washroom were covered with blood where the executioners had apparently tried to wash off the traces of what they had done before joining the headlong flight of UNITA forces from the city. When the body to which the foot belonged turned out to be that of a young woman whose face had been battered out of recognition, one of the search team muttered bitterly: "There is the true face of Savimbi." Savimbi had been in his Bié headquarters to the end. One of his final acts had been to go on the radio and order all inhabitants to flee because: "The MPLA are at this moment massacring every man, woman, and child in Huambo" [the former Novo Lisboa, the UNITA-FNLA capital, 165 kilometers to the west, liberated by MPLA-Cuban troops four days earlier—W.B.].

On the main street of Bié, an emaciated group of some twenty-five people were straggling along with a banner: "Welcome the glorious FAPLA. We are the survivors of the Bié Angola Police Corps Training School." I spoke with twenty-four-year-old Domingo Antonio Neto, emaciated and in rags. He explained that the Transitional Government, formed of all three movements plus the Portuguese under the terms of the Alvor Agreement of

January, 1975,<sup>1</sup> had agreed to set up several such schools for training a national police force for service after the departure of the Portuguese. Each of the three movements contributed an equal number of trainees and others were selected from the local population. The Bié school had 720 trainees.

When UNITA and the FNLA joined forces against the MPLA, they drafted about one hundred each of their own nominees into their respective armed forces. The remainder were arrested as pro-MPLA, or suspected sympathizers, and jailed at a former Portuguese concentration camp at Capolo, about eighty kilometers from Bié. A few days previously, as MPLA forces got closer to Savimbi's headquarters city, they were taken out in batches of ten and twenty and shot, their bodies falling into, or being thrown into, the nearby Quequema river. Firing squads were unable to finish their work before the arrival of the MPLA-Cuban forces. Domingo and his little band were among about seventy-five survivors of the original 500-odd detainees.

In Huambo, there were similar stories as survivors limped back into the city. There were moving scenes as mothers and wives rushed to hurl themselves into the arms of sons and husbands recognized from afar, many of them survivors of UNITA prisons and death squads. Others collapsed on learning from survivors the fate of those they had hoped to welcome. One thin wreck of a man, Pedro Fancones, told me of the daily executions at a prison where he was held just three miles from Huambo until a few hours before UNITA officers fled the city on February 8. As at the Komarko prison, victims were beaten to death. When the officers fled, UNITA prison guards told those still alive that they could go. Fancones said he was one of a dozen survivors from 110 prisoners who had fled in different directions from the looting UNITA troops. He considered himself lucky to limp home with nothing worse than a bullet in his foot.

Huambo, incidentally, was a ghost city. There had been warnings broadcast by a top UNITA officer that Savimbi would send planes to raze Huambo to the ground and, in any case, anyone found in the city would be massacred by the MPLA.

The executions could only have taken place on this scale—something like 10,000 in the Bié-Huambo area was the official estimate once all reports had been collated—on Savimbi's direct orders. But was that his "true face"? It certainly was not his only

face. Many who should be good judges of character, including Che Guevara, recommended him to their friends as sincere, intelligent, a true revolutionary and a patriotic Angolan, a natural leader, and other such eulogistic terms. And perhaps he was at the beginning. He certainly gained the confidence of many anti-imperialist African leaders. But so did Holden Roberto! Those I have met who knew him personally agree on one thing—that at first Savimbi wanted to fight for Angolan independence, but he vacillated from the beginning as to which group to join.

Aquino de Braganza, for one, was convinced that after Savimbi's break with Holden Roberto, he decided to have his own tribal and clan base. This was made easy for him by some pressure groups inside Portugal and elsewhere, interested above all in keeping open the vital Benguela railway, which linked Angola's Atlantic ports of Lobito and Benguela with Mozambique's Indian Ocean ports of Beira and Maputo (formerly Lourenço Marques). It was the sole means—in those days—of getting Zambian copper and the mineral wealth of Katanga (Zaire) to the sea and onto the world markets. The Benguela railway runs through the heartland of Savimbi's own tribal group, the Ovimbundu. The center of the Ovimbundu is Bié, Savimbi's birthplace. When the "specter" of independence for Angola loomed over the horizon, Portuguese and other international interests were eager to ensure that the Angolan section of the Benguela railway and the regions known to possess rich mineral resources would remain in "friendly" hands.

In any case, and for whatever reason, Jonas Savimbi formed his own UNITA (Union for the Total Independence of Angola) movement in March, 1966. In a reference to the founding of UNITA in his most informative book on the Angolan national liberation struggle, Basil Davidson comments:

This group was the first to profit from Zambia's October, 1964, independence. Savimbi was able to collect UPA supporters among refugees in western Zambia and send some of them into eastern Angola in 1966-67. These eventually raised a number of actions against the Portuguese, including an attack on the frontier town of Teixeira de Sousa, on the Katanga border; but these actions were marked by what appears to have been a very inadequate political preparation and an even less adequate supply of arms. Sporadic operations seem to have occurred after that, whether in northern Moxico or, as claimed, in eastern Bié, but on a small scale.

In October, 1969, a UN survey noted: ". . . there has been no mention of UNITA in the Portuguese military bulletins since 1968," while reports by Finnish, Italian, West German, and OAU observers in eastern districts, as well as those of the present writer, were unanimous in concluding that UNITA had become, by 1970, little more than another distracting sideshow. Its bulletins in Western Europe continued to make large claims which were increasingly hard to believe; often they were impossible to believe. . . .<sup>2</sup>

Lucio Lara said that the first armed action by FALA, UNITA's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola, took place on December 25, 1966 and that it was a disaster with heavy FALA losses. After that, Lucio Lara, veteran MPLA leader and secretary-general of the MPLA's Central Committee, said: "There was practically no military activity except to prevent our troops from operating in what Savimbi claimed was 'his' territory."

Again one can not do better than quote Basil Davidson to illustrate the significance of the operational reports which Lucio Lara was to quote from:

Supplies flow in from the Indian Ocean. Or rather, they do not *flow* in—a word suggesting ease and regularity of motion; they are delivered from across the seas in sudden and erratic bursts, their precise contents seldom known in advance, often unexpected, sometimes practically useless. Boxed or baled, they arrive in such trucks as can be found and kept on the road. They are driven day and night from the Indian Ocean, discreetly, even secretly, by men with needful papers and few words for the curious. MPLA transport crews perform extraordinary feats of physical and moral endurance. Until late in 1969, the whole two thousand miles and more of road will be entirely bad; then the eastern Zambian sector will be tarred, afterward the Tanzanian sector, afterward again the fearful western Zambian sector, where the road, till then, will often be a trail deep in sand.

Zambia remains a transit country; here the MPLA have no facilities for training or long-term logistics. Supplies have to go through as quickly as they can be taken. The taking is a long affair of jagged nerves and small disasters. Trucks break down far from help; weeks will pass before they can be rescued. Rivers must be crossed on ferries; sometimes these ferries are little more than rafts of timber built for walking folk and rural carts, platforms that lumber from one bank to the other in a slewing motion that gives no guarantee of safe

arrival. When the rains are down, these rivers swell into moving lakes that suck at anything they can catch. . . .<sup>3</sup>

Comandante "Punza" illustrated what happened if MPLA units tried to transit through Zaire with supplies which reached Brazzaville the "hard way" but which could conceivably reach the place where they were needed by a "softer way":

I was with quite a big group of well-trained cadres. We were well-equipped and were known as the "Bomoko" squadron, on our way to link up with comrades who were isolated in the Malange area [an old MPLA base area, a little over 400 kilometers due east of Luanda—W.B.]. It was in late 1967. Everything went smoothly at first, but we were arrested by FNLA troops at Songolongo. All our supplies were confiscated; we were imprisoned for thirty days, then had to return to Brazzaville. After that it was decided that the group would have to return to the borders with Zambia, await supplies there and make another attempt to get through to Malanje from Zambia. In my case, it was decided I should go to Tanzania for further training.

From the Zambian border to Malanje was just about 1,000 kilometers, all of which had to be covered on foot, each man usually carrying arms for two and supplies for an indefinite future. If the war seemed to drag on interminably, it was due to such conditions. But if it wore down the resistance forces, it wore down the Portuguese even more. Like the drip-drop of water wearing away a stone, convoys of supply trucks grinding across stretches of sand, toiling up and down mountain tracks or up to their middles in mud and water; columns of men with seemingly impossible burdens on their backs plodding along through forests and swamps, pausing to do battle where they must, but inexorably pushing the struggle to where it hurt the enemy most, were eroding the morale of the Portuguese. And the savagery of the reaction of the fascist leadership in Portugal itself and those running the war on the spot only speeded up the demoralization process. This became clear only later when the revolt of the Armed Forces Movement exploded in Lisbon on April 25, 1974. But at any given moment for those engaged in the liberation struggle, for all but the stoutest of hearts, things must have looked almost impossibly difficult. Lucio Lara, with his lean, brown,

almost Vietnamese face—the similarity accentuated by his Ho Chi Minh-type beard and sensitive features—confirmed this. The situation-report cards in his hand spoke for themselves.

1968-69 were difficult years for us. It was essential to push ahead and establish bases in the more highly populated west. To do this we had to cross the Cuanza river which runs north-south and in Central Angola cuts the country in two. With great difficulty an advance column had pushed its way from the east—from bases in Zambia and with arms and supplies that had come from Tanzania—and reached the east bank of the Cuanza. That represented an effort of six months. As they crossed the Cuanza they were attacked by UNITA forces. There were quite fierce clashes and although they did not lose many men, by the time these attacks were beaten off, all the ammunition and supplies, transported so painfully for use against the Portuguese, were used up fighting those who should have been our comrades-in-arms. Had the advance group got through to the target areas, supplies would have been captured from the enemy. As it was, they had to turn round and march all the way back to the Zambian border and await fresh supplies for another attempt. One can say that a whole year of our revolution was lost by this.

He selected one of the white cards, covered in neat but tiny handwriting. (All the place names referred to are just east or west of the Cuanza river, at points about eighty kilometers east of Bié, except where otherwise mentioned.)

We have two sections. One is commanded by Comandante "Furioso,"<sup>4</sup> in the Umpolo region: four detachments each with twenty guerillas, but they were attacked by a counterrevolutionary group of about sixty men who had been hiding in a place called Zona, near the N'ginga river. In the suburbs of Quite, there is a sawmill of António de Figueiroso and inside the sawmill are about thirty Portuguese troops. We captured a Commander Chicolo there, sending him back to Cassemba [an MPLA base over 300 kilometers to the east—W.B.]. South of Lungubongo are 300 UNITA troops, who cooperate with the thirty Portuguese troops in the sawmill. Their main base is at Cuemba [145 kilometers to the east on the Benguela railway—W.B.]. Part of their force when they are on operations stays behind "to defend the area against Communist infiltration." The rest execute missions against our forces. Some of them were at Chimbandiango, others on the banks of the Lunga river. We expelled them from these two positions. They have two men for every weapon

and do everything to save ammunition. They do their training at Lungobungo. They have a force of three hundred, plus the local population. They attack us, so we attack them.

We had one man wounded when we wanted to cross the Cuanza south of Mutumbo. First of all we had to beat off the Portuguese. We were obliged to go still further south to try to cross in order to establish a bridgehead for the follow-up force. We established contact with the column which was following with the main arms and supplies, but Portuguese units attacked us before we could cross. We were obliged to exhaust the munitions that had taken one and a half months to bring, turn round, and march back.

This report referred to events in the early part of 1969. Later that year another column did succeed in crossing the Cuanza and pushing through, fighting both UNITA and Portuguese troops all the way to the Atlantic coast. But the nature of the obstacles that had to be overcome in forcing the gateway to the Atlantic was revealed on another of Lucio Lara's white cards. Again the FAPLA vanguard units had to fight UNITA and Portuguese forces at every decisive step in their western drive:

We attacked at Sanga [about 200 kilometers northwest of Bié and 180 kilometers due west of Novo Redondo on the Atlantic coast—W.B.] on September 21, 1969. UNITA forces attacked us on October 15, on the Couvala river; we lost the very good comrade Monoueilolo. They attacked again on January 1, at the M'bulu, a tributary of the Quito river. On January 15, they attacked us again at the M'bulu; we had one comrade wounded. On February 17, they attacked us at Samelil; one of our comrades was killed. On February 22, we counterattacked at Samuelene. We wounded some of them, but lost two comrades, Diku and Kambembe. On March 23, we were attacked at Kassampua, during which we lost two comrades. On April 17, we attacked them at the source of the Queimi and routed them, losing one comrade. The counterrevolutionaries have Portuguese arms, F.N. rifles, machine guns, and Portuguese hand grenades. They have no bazookas.

The report was dated April 30, 1970. It shows that about four months were lost in skirmishing between Angolans, which meant in effect that UNITA was doing in the Center-South exactly what the FNLA was doing in the North. Had UNITA really been fighting the Portuguese, Savimbi should have welcomed MPLA

reinforcements for a common struggle. The reason why he did not was made clear by some documents extracted from the PIDE archives by the then Captain Otelo Saraivo de Carvalho, the military architect of the "Captains' Coup" in Lisbon. Handed by him to Aquino de Braganza, these documents were published in the July 8, 1974, issue of *Afrique-Asie*. Professionally mistrustful of "secret documents," I was one of many journalists skeptical of the contents until I learned of their origin—for obvious reasons not revealed by *Afrique-Asie* at the time of publication. For Otelo de Carvalho, an honest officer with the courage of a lion, was one of those best placed to know that such documents existed and the truth of what they revealed. Two of his three African tours of duty had been in Angola, the first in 1961, the second in 1973. (In an interview shortly after the coup in which he had played such a decisive role, he told me of his deep disgust with what had been going on in Angola, especially in the years immediately preceding the Lisbon coup.)

The documents consisted of: a memorandum addressed by Savimbi to General Luz Cunha, Portuguese commander-in-chief in Angola, and General Bettencourt Rodriguez, commander of the Eastern Military Zone, dated September 26, 1972; a letter sent on October 25, by Savimbi to Lt. Colonel Ramires de Oliveira, chief of staff to General Rodriguez; Oliveira's reply to Savimbi, dated November 4; and another letter to Oliviera from Savimbi, dated November 7, 1972. The first Savimbi letter congratulates "their Excellencies" on the fourth anniversary of the accession to the premiership of Portugal of "his Excellency, Professor Marcelo Caetano" and congratulates also General Luz Cunha, "for his nomination to the high responsibility as commander-in-chief of the armed forces in Angola." After a long analysis of the dangers of a rapprochement between the MPLA-FNLA and the "annoying consequences of official recognition of the OAU by the United Nations," especially the fact that a UN delegation had "claimed to have visited Guiné-Bissau" (which it had indeed done in 1972) and that the same delegation "was planning to visit the liberated zones of the MPLA and FRELIMO," Savimbi makes a major statement of UNITA policy:

Our position is irreversible. We are no longer interested in either the OAU or today's Zambia and less still in any alliance with the MPLA.

If certain aspects of UNITA policy are still not sufficiently clear for the Angolan governmental authorities and the nation, there is one irrefutable fact: we have actively participated in weakening the MPLA in certain of the eastern regions. And we can not entertain any sort of illusions on any type of alliance whatsoever with the men whom we have fought against, and continue to fight against, without any letup. Whatever may be the intentions of the [Portuguese] government, we will never again be deluded into taking up arms against the authorities. We will use them till the end to force the MPLA one day to withdraw from the East.

Peace in the East, in our opinion, should take into account, among other things, the following factors:

(a) The weakening, up to the liquidation, of the MPLA forces in the interior of Angola. This task can perhaps best be carried out by the combined efforts of military and paramilitary forces together with those of UNITA.

(b) Liquidation of the MPLA camps in the frontier region between Angola and Zambia. That can easily be carried out by UNITA. . . . Our plans have already passed the preliminary stage.

(c) A campaign to discredit the MPLA. Our target for this is the OAU, at least as far as liberation movements are concerned. Once the MPLA is weakened, or liquidated, in the East, the road will be opened for much broader horizons for us.

We greatly thank you for the unofficial note from the Portuguese government of July 4, 1972. UNITA will try to reach agreement with the authorities of Moxico [the province in which the Portuguese Eastern Military Command had its headquarters at Luso—W.B.] to facilitate the transit of persons between the UNITA regions and the posts so that the local people do not run unnecessary risks. With documents recognized by both sides, the local people who will be returned to the posts can come and collect their food left in the forest, as long as they have not committed any reprehensible acts while they were in the forest. [This apparently refers to peasants whom the Portuguese authorities by that time were trying to herd into *aldeamentos*, "strategic hamlet"-type concentration camps, but who were allowed out to gather food in the forest.—W.B.]

Savimbi offered intelligence-gathering services to the two generals, proposing in exchange that UNITA forces be granted a non-attack transit corridor leading toward MPLA bases near the border between Angola's most southeastern province of Cuando-Cubanga and Zambia. As a sample of how advantageous such an arrangement could be, he listed a number of MPLA bases in that

area, with the exact number of men and types of arms in each. Hospital facilities were not omitted, as the following bit of intelligence shows:

There are other camps at Nguvu, with twenty guerillas armed with "PPxes" [apparently Soviet automatic arms] and hand grenades. This camp has also a field hospital under the responsibility of Dr. Eduardo dos Santos. [Eduardo dos Santos is one of the founder members of the MPLA—W.B.] On the Kalabo line toward the Cuando-Cubango frontier there are several camps; the best-known is that of Shikongo which has at least fifty elements armed with the usual arms used by the MPLA. It has a military instructor, a doctor and several nurses, a political commissar, three schoolteachers. This is where they are going to build a school with Danish aid. . . . We had the occasion to send into Shikongo some of our men disguised as MPLA members to take part in meetings organized by Daniel Chipenda,<sup>5</sup> or another MPLA leader. Daniel Chipenda had already left Shikongo, but a *métis* arrived there who, by the description, must be either Carreira or Jorge, but who they called "Diaquité." ["Carreira" refers to "Iko" Carreira, veteran guerilla leader and now Minister of Defense; "Jorge" refers to Paolo Jorge, now Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of Angola.—W.B.]

There is mention of a request from the two Portuguese commanders for guides to MPLA encampments. Savimbi agreed to provide them but only when a camp had been located, in which case he suggested "joint operations" to wipe it out. Finally, he had a few material requests—1,500 cartridges of 7.62 mm., and some cloth for camouflage uniforms, including "at least two uniforms of good and real camouflage cloth, one for me and one for Puna," (Miguel Nzau Puna, secretary-general of UNITA).

The most interesting portion of the much shorter, first letter to Lt. Colonel Ramires de Oliveira, apart from information as to MPLA military movements and a proposal to "infiltrate the First Congress of the MPLA . . . to know what is discussed and decided," is the disclosure that UNITA had a liaison unit permanently in contact with Oliveira's headquarters.

I have in my possession an OAU document which I consider of extreme importance. I have just received it. It deals in great detail with the supply of arms to the MPLA, as well as to other movements

active in the Portuguese territories; quality, quantity, finance, transport methods, etc. I think it is useful, in so far as it reflects the spirit that dominated that last meeting of African heads of state in Rabat last June. As soon as I have finished studying it I will send it *by the usual channels*. . . .

As to the possibility of a meeting with me, I have always been disposed to meet more responsible persons to discuss by word of mouth what I think and what the position is of the local and national authorities about what we are doing. But this meeting should be prepared *by our delegation*. . . . In any case I think that *our delegation* could, starting from the next meeting, bring concrete proposals as to the installation of a receiver-transmitter for us. I don't think I can fix the date for the next meeting, as several points of my memorandum are still being studied by the responsible local authorities. . . . [Emphasis added]

The reply of Oliveira also dealt with the questions raised by Savimbi in his memorandum to the two generals, which had been "duly studied and greatly appreciated," the view expressed "in its broad outlines coinciding with ours. . . ." In what amounted to a thirteen-point memorandum, Oliveira encouraged Savimbi in his espionage activities, confirmed that they were informed about the forthcoming MPLA congress, and that there was "a very special interest in infiltrating the latter to know what is discussed and decided." He rejected any permanent corridor in the region proposed by Savimbi, but said that temporary attack-free transit could be arranged through prior notification. He suggested that cooperation between UNITA forces and "our troops should be secretly strengthened." Oliveira proposed that a face-to-face meeting be arranged at which the following agenda would be discussed:

- (a) UNITA activities against the MPLA and FNLA-UPA in the interior of the national territory.
- (b) Activities of cells of UNITA militants in Zambia.
- (c) Utilization of the Luanguinga corridor by UNITA.
- (d) UNITA attacks on MPLA bases outside Angola (Zambia).
- (e) Installation of a transmitter-receiver at UNITA headquarters.
- (f) Aid requirements of the civilian population in the Lungubongo (UNITA-occupied) area.
- (g) Procedures to adopt for exchange of information.

The extent of tactical cooperation sought by Savimbi, but about which the Portuguese seemed suspicious, is revealed by the following passage dealing with Savimbi's request for the transit corridor and related matters. It is dealt with under Point Five of Oliveira's reply:

(5) The secret nature of these contacts unfortunately—but it is a drawback that must be accepted—causes certain inconveniences.

(a) One of these inconveniences consists in the impossibility of granting the authorization for the free use of the corridor situated between the Lufuta-Luanguinga and Luanguinga-Luvo rivers. On each occasion that this needs to be utilized, the [Portuguese] Command must be informed, so that our troops can be withdrawn from the region under some pretext for the necessary period. Outside that period, it will be impossible to ensure your security in the use of the corridor.

(b) In the same way, Zones 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, cannot be used without prior request or, in case of extreme necessity, immediate notification. UNITA carried out activities on October 12, against the UPA in Zone 1 and only informed us on October 21. It carried out another operation in Zone 2 which has only now been communicated to us. As these are zones into which our troops go frequently, sometimes with helicopters, the risks run by your troops are obvious. . . .

The first half of Savimbi's reply of November 7 consists of an obsequious apology because of a missed rendezvous with a doctor sent from Oliveira's headquarters to treat some heart and liver ailments from which Savimbi said he was suffering. He was too ill to go on foot, and being carried in a stretcher was not possible "because of the secret nature of our meetings." But he referred to Oliveira's letter of July 20, 1972, "No. 1,457/2 p 215,07, in which with all possible clarity it was stated that 'periodical medical aid will be provided by a military doctor who will travel by road with escort by arrangements with the wood merchants to a central point designated by you.'" (There is also frequent reference to the wood merchants who apparently maintained liaison between Savimbi's headquarters and one of the nearby Portuguese posts.)

Then follows a peculiar passage which suggests that the "reward" for what was clearly the deepest treachery to the Angolan independence struggle was that Savimbi's forces were transferred

from fertile regions to others where not only was it impossible for them to feed themselves, but they could move about only at the pleasure of the Portuguese military command!

The occupation of the sector which has been placed at our disposal will, in practice, depend on a greater tolerance by the authorities for the movement of our forces in Zone 1. This problem should be discussed with all the lucidity that the situation requires. . . . But I am disposed to follow your instructions while always presenting my own viewpoint. My own strategy is more adapted to the movement of small forces than the big units which their Excellencies have at their disposal.

Wherever UNITA has been stationed since my arrival in Angola, we have cultivated the local fields which has enabled us to fulfill our food needs without being a charge on the people. But when our groups are to be stationed in desert areas, it is frankly impossible for them to support themselves there, which leads to lack of discipline. The map of the areas allotted to UNITA has been drawn up taking into account the global strategy against subversion in the East rather than the contribution that UNITA could make to the struggle against the MPLA and UPA [FNLA]. I have accepted the situation and have not demanded anything more. . . .

The letter concludes by thanking "his Excellency, the General commanding the military zone, for his kindness in having authorized the repair of our machine gun. . . ." No mention is made of the face-to-face meeting or the agenda to be discussed.

At what point did Jonas Malheiro Savimbi become a traitor to the Angolan national liberation struggle and to the Angolan people? The tone of the communications cited in the above documents suggests that they started long before the earliest date—July, 1972—mentioned in the correspondence. Aquino de Braganza believes they started, at the latest, in 1970 when General Francisco da Costa Gomes was appointed commander-in-chief of Portuguese armed forces in Angola, bringing with him General Bethencourt Rodrigues as commander of the Eastern Front. De Braganza believes that Costa Gomes was not personally involved in the affair, but that Bethencourt Rodrigues, who was relieved from all military posts on April 25, 1974, was. But some "softening-up" had obviously gone on before. In his book former dictator Marcelo Caetano relates how he instructed Costa Gomes

to approach UNITA and that this was done by Bethencourt Rodrigues!<sup>6</sup>

Objectively, Jonas Savimbi was Portugal's man from the moment he founded UNITA, and actively so from the moment he launched armed struggle. It was no accident that he incorporated the band of green from the Portuguese national flag into that of UNITA, nor that he placed in its center the celebrated Portuguese national symbol—the cock rampant.

Armando Dembo, veteran FAPLA guerilla commander and political officer, from 1965, in Moxico district (now Angola's biggest province) where the military actions described on Lucio Lara's white cards took place, told me: "Savimbi's troops undertook no action whatsoever against the Portuguese. Only against us." Dembo—a powerfully built Angolan African, who was Provincial Commissioner of Moxico province when I met him in Luena (formerly Luso), the provincial capital, in November 1976—was speaking of the period starting in 1965, when he had been sent there to prepare the political ground for opening up the eastern front in the area. "The people were very cooperative," he said, "and by the time we were ready to start armed struggle, we had their total support. But we had to fight off UNITA attacks almost as often as those of the Portuguese." As he had been active in the area uninterruptedly from 1968 onward, Dembo obviously knew what he was talking about.

In the light of what is now known of Savimbi's long collaboration with the Portuguese colonialists, his switch to an alliance with the South African racists—which so shocked his left-wing supporters abroad—is seen to be a natural transition!

## V The Long March of Agostinho Neto

A socially timid man with a shy, almost apologetic smile, Dr. Agostinho Neto has that good "bedside manner" considered essential for a successful medical practitioner. If his exercise of the profession for which he was trained was brief—in terms of formal practice—it stood him in good stead in helping comrades in the jails and concentration camps and jungle battlefields through which he passed on the long march to final MPLA victory. The gentle smile and often hesitant speech conceal a dogged stubbornness of character and singleness of purpose which some of his admirers, and most of his detractors, claim make him impossibly withdrawn, aloof, stern, and inflexible. Other admirers argue that it was precisely these qualities that enabled Neto to drag the MPLA up to its feet again after what seemed to be irreparable defeats.

There were plenty of examples of "one step forward, two steps back" during the fifteen years of armed struggle but there was also the inexorable push of the political and military front lines from the sparsely populated perimeter areas in the east into the heartland and finally to the vital Atlantic coast.

He is a poor public speaker who reads much better than he sounds—a drawback in a country where illiteracy is at least eighty-five percent and virtually one hundred percent in the areas where Neto did most of his work. Yet the flame of his innermost convictions burned brightly enough to inspire a dedicated group of men and women to follow him to the end. Like so many other illustrious revolutionary leaders—Mao Tse-tung and Ho Chi Minh, for example—Agostinho Neto is a poet. His language is economical, but his ideas come through sharp and clear. His closest comrades-in-arms say that he is an eloquent and convincing debater.

What makes people so stubborn? What turns them away from the prospect of a privileged life such as Agostinho Neto could easily have had as a medical practitioner in Lisbon or Luanda? It was a question to which the United States devoted much attention in Southeast Asia. Teams of psychologists and psychiatrists were sent to South Vietnam to interrogate "Vietcong" prisoners and establish what motivated them. According to the distinguished Dr. Erich Wulff, who served years in a West German hospital unit in Danang and listened to many tape recordings of the interroga-

tions, they almost invariably started with: "What were your relations with your mother," proceeding to whether the subject ever masturbated and if so: "What did you think about at that time?" The astounded Dr. Wulff dryly remarked: "Had they asked the prisoner what his relations were with the local landlord, or what he thought about when American planes napalmed his village, the replies might have been more conclusive."<sup>1</sup> The results of this research in Vietnam proving inconclusive, the United States then dispatched an international team of anthropologists to Thailand to discover what there might be in the racial, physical, and cultural background of a Thai peasant or Meo tribesman that could possibly make him a "Communist"—the only term acceptable to the CIA and Pentagon for anyone who resorted to armed struggle against "authority."

Agostinho Neto's first brush with "authority" was in 1951 when, as a medical student in Lisbon, he showed too much interest in a presidential election in which an Admiral Quintao Meirales dared to oppose the dictator Salazar. When it became clear that the election was to be rigged without even an impartial check on the counting of votes, Quintao Meirales withdrew. Historically, his withdrawal was less important than the fact that a young Angolan medical student received his first lesson in the impossibility of changing the fascist regime and therefore—and even more so—changing the fascist-colonial overlordship in his native land by legal, constitutional means. Active in a students' organization imprudently supporting the opposition candidate, Neto was picked up by the PIDE and jailed for a few weeks as a warning that even privileged blacks, such as *assimilados*, had no right to take part in politics.

Together with a small group of like-minded nationalists from the Portuguese African colonies—Amilcar Cabral of Guiné-Bissau and Mário de Andrade, an Angolan poet and literary critic, among the most outstanding of them—Neto helped to set up in Lisbon a Center of African Studies aimed at combating a condition to which they themselves had succumbed—de-Africanization. Intellectually they revolted against the concept of the *assimilado*, the legal act by which they renounced their Africanism and in Portuguese eyes lost their status of "savage" and became "civilized" in the terminology of the colonizers. By awakening national consciousness, these outstanding pioneers of the independence movements



in the Portuguese colonies had taken the first steps toward creating national liberation movements. They were conscious of the need to close the gap between themselves and the illiterate masses and to re-Africanize themselves. Although their strivings were at first expressed in cultural forms, the seeds of the future militant movements germinated in their poetry and prose, inevitably assuming more political undertones. The Portuguese were not unaware of this and soon closed down the Center of African Studies.

By the time the MPLA was formed in Leopoldville in December, 1956—with Amilcar Cabral as one of the founder members—Neto was again in jail. Arrested for political activities in February, 1955, while still a medical student, Neto was released in June, 1957, by which time the MPLA was six months old. In late 1959 he returned to Luanda and set up practice as a doctor, only to be arrested a few months later—in June, 1960—to be eventually shipped off to the Tarrafal concentration camp in the Cape Verde Islands, and still later to prison in Lisbon.

In the meantime a fresh crop of students was absorbing progressive and nationalist ideas in Lisbon. They included Lucio Lara, later to become general secretary of the MPLA's Central Committee, Eduardo dos Santos, first foreign minister of the People's Republic, and Déolinda Rodrigues de Almeida, an outstanding women's leader who died of torture and ill-treatment in a Zaire prison, a victim of the Zaire-Holden Roberto persecution of all MPLA cadres who fell into their hands. In Lisbon and for those who were in the prisons and concentration camps, the only political support the young nationalists received was from the harshly persecuted and clandestine Portuguese Communist Party. And even these furtive and spasmodic contacts caused some problems. Speaking of that period (the early 1960s) Lucio Lara responded to my question as to whether the struggle in Vietnam had any influence on their own movement:

Yes. A very positive influence. We had a similar problem when we started to organize. We found, as had the Vietnamese comrades, that even the most revolutionary forces in the Metropole do not always understand the needs of the militants in the colonies. In 1959, when the Portuguese started arresting our leadership in Luanda, it was we students who had to continue the struggle. In 1959-60, we were much influenced by everything we could learn about the Vietnamese struggle. . . .

(At that point in our conversation, he produced a battered, dog-eared copy of *North of the 17th Parallel*, my first book on Vietnam, published in Hanoi in 1955, many of its pages with lines underscored in pencil—and asked for an autograph!)

The Portuguese Communist Party wanted us to join them, as the French Communist Party had wanted the Algerians to join them—which we knew about. But we said: "No. Our problems are different. We must be independent as the Vietnamese comrades remained independent." Later the Portuguese comrades agreed that we had been right. They never wavered in their support for us.

A constant of the MPLA struggle, already referred to several times, was the terrible handicap of the denial of base and supply facilities in Zaire. This led to many initiatives by the MPLA to come to terms with the FNLA. There were many discussions and several agreements were signed—including one which because of MPLA concessions provoked the revolt of some of its leading members. But none of these agreements ever went into effect because, as only became clear much later, Holden Roberto had become a CIA agent less than one year after the launching of armed struggle. Late in 1962, Neto, having escaped from jail, turned up in Leopoldville and tried once again to achieve some sort of operational unity with the FNLA but it was impossible for reasons which Neto could not know about at that time. Even that staunch MPLA supporter, Basil Davidson, admits that in the year which followed Neto's reappearance on the scene, he thought the MPLA was finished. Writing in *West Africa* magazine (December 14, 1963) he commented: "Initially the more influential of the two big nationalist movements, the MPLA has fractured, split, and reduced itself to a nullity. With Holden Roberto's UPA steadily gathering strength and allies, the MPLA has ceased to count." Quoting this article in his great classic on the Angolan liberation struggle, Davidson writes: "The judgment was my own . . . and it was singularly wrong. But that is what things looked like at the time."<sup>2</sup>

Neto and the rest of the MPLA leadership had been expelled from Leopoldville by that time, their bases closed down, stocks of arms seized, numerous cadres arrested and killed. For months prior to their expulsion in November, 1963, they had been perse-

cuted and harassed by the government of Cyrille Adoula, with Holden Roberto instigating the total destruction of the MPLA. In August, 1963, however, there was a ray of unexpected light. After three days of stormy demonstrations in Brazzaville, the reactionary government of Abbé Fulbert Youlou in Congo-Brazzaville was overthrown and replaced by that of the relatively enlightened Alphonse Massemba-Débat. A feature of the independence struggles in Africa has been that newly independent countries have placed facilities and sanctuaries at the disposal of neighboring peoples still fighting for their national liberation. Thus Algeria's National Liberation Front had found political sanctuary in Cairo and later training and base facilities in neighboring Morocco and Tunisia and, once having achieved its own independence, Algeria was generous in according political bases and training facilities for the liberation movements of the Portuguese colonies, among others.

Now, in its hour of need, the MPLA leadership also found sanctuary across the frontier from what is now Zaire, in Congo-Brazzaville which, together with Zaire, has a common border with Angola's vital Cabinda province. In Brazzaville, Neto, Lucio Lara, and a few other stout hearts among the MPLA leaders started rebuilding from the wreckage left by the 1961 decapitation of the Luanda leadership and the treason of Holden Roberto and his immediate protectors, the Kasavubu-Adoula regime in the former Belgian Congo.

There were further favorable developments on the African scene. The independent republics of Tanganyika and Zanzibar were united in the single progressive state of Tanzania in April, 1964. Shortly afterward, Neto received permission from the staunch anti-imperialist president, Julius Nyerere, to open a MPLA bureau in the capital and port city of Dar es Salaam. For years to come it was to be the main point of entry for FAPLA military supplies from the Soviet Union, China, and other socialist countries. Later that same year, in October, Zambia received its independence and despite some initial difficulties due to president Kenneth Kaunda's visceral anti-Communism and his belief that the MPLA was a "Communist" movement, the way was opened for supplies to transit across Zambia from Dar es Salaam to Angola's eastern frontier areas.

But if things at the end of 1963 looked hopeless to so ex-

perienced an observer as Basil Davidson—who had been with Tito's partisans in Yugoslavia in World War II—they must have seemed even more hopeless to many of those fighting inside the country. Especially to those in the First Military Region, the survivors of the 1961 massacres, who were still battling in the Dembos forest north of Luanda. Repeated attempts to get arms and supplies to them from the North had been blocked. Without any outside support, they fought off attacks by FNLA and Portuguese troops, ambushing the latter's convoys to get arms and supplies, disrupting communications, and forcing the Portuguese to disperse their forces. They were entirely on their own for five years before the first FAPLA relief column, in July, 1966, battered its way through from the east, each man carrying weapons and supplies for two.

A decisive landmark of the liberation struggle was the "Cadres' Conference" in Brazzaville in January, 1964—just two months after the arrival of Neto and the rest of the available MPLA leadership. It was an extremely frank and critical session of as many cadres as could be mustered. Past mistakes and shortcomings were mercilessly analyzed and criticized and a new course was charted for stepping up armed struggle in a more organized and realistic way. One of the major decisions was to use the new possibilities opened up by the Congo-Brazzaville sanctuaries to create a Second Military Region in Cabinda province. For a start this meant mobilizing nationalist elements there for the political work which the MPLA, like the Vietnamese, recognized was the essential precondition for armed struggle. The "Cadres' Conference" was the watershed between isolated, heroic insurrectionary activities and planned, revolutionary armed struggle on a national scale. It marks the start of the dogged, step-by-step thrusts forward which were so much a reflection of Neto's own character—the refusal to admit the permanent nature of reversals or that there were any obstacles that could not be surmounted.

Following the opening of the Second Military Region in Cabinda in 1964, a third front was opened in Moxico on March 18, 1966, when a convoy of Portuguese trucks was halted by a tree across the road near the village of Kakweje, about two-thirds of the way between the provincial capital and the Zambian border. It was an ambush and the Portuguese realized to their cost that a new front had been opened up. This took place after a year's careful

political preparation directed by Armando Dembo. "They vaguely knew we were around," Dembo was to tell me later,

but they didn't know where. The motorized patrol was looking for traces of us, but they thought the tree across the road was an accident. Our ambushing party had just seven weapons—but plenty more after that first action. By the time the Portuguese realized we were there in force, the province had been split up into six operational zones—from A to F. Zones were split up into sectors and sectors into groups. Each new sector was opened up only after careful political preparation.

In January, 1968, the MPLA transferred its headquarters into the liberated areas and five months later, on May 8, 1968, the Fourth Military Region was opened up by armed action in Luanda province, adjoining Moxico to the north. The Portuguese reply was to launch a strong offensive, backed up by intensive air bombardment, against all known bases and liberated villages in Moxico province. "At one point we were intensively bombed for twenty days on end," Armando Dembo recalled, "but we took very few losses. Four dead and seven wounded, including civilians."

These were the country's most sparsely populated provinces, with a density of less than four inhabitants per square kilometer. Although it strained the muscles and staying power of the guerillas and their back-up supply forces to the utmost, it also put a heavy strain on the Portuguese armed forces and their logistics services. Patiently the MPLA organizations in groups, sectors, zones, and military regions were consolidated and preparations were made to make of each consolidated area a jumping-off point for the next target.

Although the necessity of advancing across those impossibly long supply lines from the Indian Ocean toward the Atlantic and establishing the main base areas in the most sparsely populated areas of the country was a terrible handicap for the MPLA guerilla forces, it also had its positive side and may even provide a lesson for those advocates of urban guerilla warfare who argue that small rural communities spread over large areas cannot provide a secure base for guerilla activities. Obviously factors of terrain, topography, and natural cover are of essential importance, but political preparation has proven to be the decisive factor. The accident of

adverse circumstances in Angola, however, favored the full deployment of what Vo Nguyen Giap, Vietnam's greatest exponent of "people's war" considered vital to success—namely to catch the adversary in the contradiction between concentrating his forces to deal decisive military blows at the guerillas forces, or dispersing his forces to defend territory. Also the gradual encirclement of the urban centers by the countryside. By the time the MPLA was gradually pushing its spearhead political units across the Cuenza river to open up the Fifth Military Region in Bié province, where the population density was about fifteen per square kilometer, in the second half of 1969, the Portuguese forces were severely overextended. They were kept off balance by the explosion of widely separated fronts which they could not afford, militarily, to ignore. The MPLA picked up strength as it advanced into the enemy's natural centers of strength—the urban centers where it had its garrisons, police, and espionage systems. Its facilities for exploiting this built-in corruption were infinite—had that been the main battlefield.

As the relation of forces changed in favor of the MPLA on the internal front, there were international repercussions. The truth gradually dawned on even those OAU member states which had been sincere supporters of the FNLA and its government in exile (GRAE) that it was only the MPLA which was solidly implanted inside the country and waging an unyielding struggle against the Portuguese. In addition, the fact that it was only the MPLA which was represented in CONCP together with the PAIGC of Guiné-Bissau and Mozambique's FRELIMO, the recognized national liberation movements of the latter two countries, weighed heavily with the progressive member states of the OAU. Recognition of GRAE was finally withdrawn by the OAU at its Addis Ababa summit meeting in June, 1971, and the MPLA was recognized as the legitimate national liberation movement. By this time the FAPLA guerillas had advanced close enough to the Atlantic seaboard for MPLA Action Committees to step up their activities in their old strongholds of Luanda, Benguela, and other major urban centers. Military activities close to the real centers of Portuguese power meant a heavy demand on supplies and, once again, a big effort was made to come to terms with the FNLA, this time through the government of Sese Seko Mubutu, who had seized power in Zaire in 1975. There were strong pressures on Agostinho

Neto from OAU member states to patch up differences and form a united fighting front with the FNLA, an aim which the MPLA leadership heartily supported. Lucio Lara explained to me how these efforts developed:

In fact, we started a campaign accusing the Zaire government of sabotaging our struggle against the Portuguese. Mobutu, who wanted to preserve an anticolonial posture, was rather sensitive to this but it was difficult for him to give us transit facilities because of Holden Roberto. Eventually he said he would agree, but only if the MPLA and FNLA got together. Of course we wanted this. After a number of exchanges Holden Roberto came to Brazzaville in August, 1972, and negotiated an agreement with delegates from Zaire, Zambia, Tanzania, and Congo-Brazzaville which provided for a MPLA delegation to go to Kinshasa in December of that year to sign the agreement. Our delegation went and in an extraordinary effort to achieve unity, on December 13, 1972, President Neto signed an agreement with Holden Roberto to merge our two movements and set up a "Supreme Council for the Liberation of Angola" with Holden Roberto as president and Agostinho Neto accepting the post of vice-president, but retaining for the MPLA the right to handle military affairs.

It was a surprisingly conciliatory gesture at that time, especially as Neto conceded responsibility for administering the liberated zones, propaganda, and diplomatic representation abroad to Holden Roberto. It was the most spectacular of many efforts made by Neto in the name of national unity—but it was to cost him dearly. In fact the "Supreme Council" never functioned. Lucio Lara explained why:

When we studied the draft agreement, it was clear that Mobutu had been manipulated by Portugal through some of the parties to the Brazzaville negotiations. While we were prepared to make many concessions of form to get unity, we could not sacrifice principles. We suggested that, as the overall agreement had been negotiated without the presence of the directly interested parties, there should now be direct negotiations on the details and implementation of the "unity" agreement. This was agreed. The first direct MPLA-FNLA meeting on implementation took place in Kinshasa in February, 1973, and talks continued throughout February and March. The stumbling block was the categorical refusal of the FNLA delegation to

include any reference to "armed struggle" in the final agreement. As the intensification of armed struggle was central to everything, our talks reached an impasse. Our delegation left—with two members remaining to maintain liaison—and we raised the reason for the impasse at the May, 1973, meeting of the OAU at Addis Ababa. The OAU accepted our position. Mobutu promptly arrested our two liaison officers as "spies" and things went from bad to worse.

Using Neto's concessions to Holden Roberto as a pretext, one of the MPLA leaders, Daniel Chipenda, broke with the Neto leadership. Like Jonas Savimbi, Chipenda was of the Ovimbundu tribal grouping of the Center-South, the largest—with an estimated two million adherents—single group in the country. At times a contender for the tribal leadership, Chipenda took with him in his anti-MPLA "Eastern Revolt" group many commanders and fighting men in the Mbunda southeastern regions near the frontier with Zambia. Despite the pretext of Neto's over-generous concessions to the FNLA, many observers interpreted the Chipenda defection as having been maneuvered by Zambia's leadership, who were eternally suspicious of the MPLA's ideological orientation. In any case it was a heavy price for Neto to pay for a completely fruitless attempt at reconciliation with the FNLA. But, as with Vietnam's delicate balancing act with China and the Soviet Union at the most critical moment of its national liberation struggle, Neto had to contend with pressures from even his closest supporters within the OAU, and give evidence—sometimes against his better judgment—that it was not the MPLA which was responsible for lack of unity. Lucio Lara, always in the center of the decision-making storms, commented:

It was a very difficult time for us. We were attacked from all sides. For having made too many concessions. For not having made enough. For a time, even Congo-Brazzaville was against us. It did not last for long and President Nguoubi soon resumed his all-out support for us. But at the moment it hurt.<sup>3</sup>

If it was a difficult time for the MPLA and a period of enormous strain on the Neto leadership, it was an even more critical moment for the colonial-fascist regime in Lisbon. The MPLA thrust into the heavily populated centers of the Atlantic seaboard, together with the advance of the PAIGC in Guiné-

Bissau and of FRELIMO in Mozambique shook the regime to its foundations. The bankruptcy of the hopelessly outmoded colonial empire was exposed with brutal clarity. Even some of Portugal's European allies—especially where social-democrat governments were in power—recoiled from having to justify to their electorates attempts to prop up such a tottering edifice. And the cost of attempts to sweep back the tides of change—even with NATO-financed brooms—was clearly beyond the capacity of Portugal.

Through total control over information the regime could conceal the real situation from the people at home and abroad, but the truth could obviously not be concealed from the troops on the spot. Demoralization set in at all levels. There were barbarous massacres by leading fascist commanders, battlefield desertions (partly in revolt at the massacres, partly because of the hopelessness of the military situation) and massive departures of men of military age from Portugal itself to avoid the call-up. The press in Lisbon continued to issue "victory" communiqués and statistics of "terrorists" wiped out, but the real word came back through the discreet "killed in action" notices and the accounts of wounded and survivors.

## VI April 25 and the Alvor Conference

Three days after the April 25 coup which ended half a century of fascism in Portugal, I asked a young artillery captain participant what had pushed him and his comrades into such a risky and perilous adventure. (He must remain anonymous because in those early days it was a breach of discipline for anyone but an authorized Armed Forces Movement spokesman to talk to the press. And under Portugal's new military president, General António Ramalho Eanes, breaches of discipline—even old ones—are sternly punished.) His reply was as follows:

Once the armed independence struggles started in Africa, soldiering became a dirty and dangerous affair—a low-prestige profession. The military academy was no longer stuffed with the sons of the rich upper class. Because of battlefield losses and draft-dodging there was a real shortage of officers, and of candidates for the military academy. Entrance standards were lowered—even sons of the lower middle class were welcomed. Because social standards were lowered a big class differentiation developed between the captains—even some majors—and more junior officers, and the colonels and generals. This meant that in the Overseas Territories the junior and medium-grade officers began to feel considerable sympathy for those waging their independence struggles as well as a feeling of hopelessness as to any chances of a Portuguese victory.

In an attempt to stimulate interest in a military career, in July, 1973, the Caetano government offered any university graduate six months of militia-type training in Portugal followed by commissions with privileges and pay on the same scale as those who had done several tours of duty in Africa. This proved to be the stone that upset Caetano's applecart! A conspiratorial meeting of about 150 officers took place on September 12, 1973, in a house on the outskirts of the lovely old town of Evora, some hundred miles almost due east of Lisbon. They included the artillery officer:

The September 12 meeting was to protest against the idea that youngsters with six months home training could be promoted over the heads of those with four and more years of training and overseas service. Apart from anything else, this would have a terrible effect on the battlefield. We mainly discussed the new decree, but also the

deterioration of the military situation in Africa. We elected a committee from the different branches of the armed services to bring pressure on the Caetano government to withdraw the decree.

At that time we had no thought of making a coup. There was no unified political viewpoint. We were naïve, thinking it was enough to point out the injustice and the government would correct it. We wanted the decree repealed and the standing of career officers safeguarded. Our leverage, we felt, was that the government needed us, but we also recognized the dangers. The PIDE was bound to be informed. But with the wars going so badly we felt that if our movement was united enough the government would not dare to arrest us. . . . We continued to meet secretly, always in different places. At the beginning we did not know each other's viewpoints. Because of built-in loyalties, there were those who reported everything discussed, back to the Ministry of Defense. The minister became worried and started some shadow-boxing. A document was circulated setting forth all the great things that the government had done to improve the lot of the armed forces. We were all supposed to sign this, but refused. This was the first act of open defiance.

As members were posted overseas, the movement was exported with them. To Guiné-Bissau—where Captain Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho was very active—to Angola and Mozambique. Discussion groups started there at the same level. It was the captains, as company commanders in the field, who were taking the greatest losses in Africa. So it was natural that they should be most active in discussing and clarifying the situation.

The reaction of Caetano to the alarm signals he was getting was very typical of the man and the system. Things were changed in form but not content. Even the PIDE (International Police for State Security) was changed into the DGS (Directorate of General Security), but the men and methods remained the same. Salazar's "National Union" party became the "People's National Action" party, but the leadership and fascist policies remained unchanged. A civilian, Dr. Joaquim Moreira da Silva Cunha replaced General Alberto Viama Rebelo as Defense Minister, but the offending decree remained in force. A new post, Minister for the Army, was created, with a General Alberto de Andrade e Silva in charge. His solution was to give a small pay hike to the lower officers and sergeants. The artillery officer commented:

This may have impressed some of the sergeants, but it was too late to have any effect on the captains. The discussions had gone far beyond

the repeal of the July decree by this time. The whole question of the African wars had been posed and, in the light of that, the nature of the regime at home. Beyond that, we had discussed the war in Vietnam, the role of the United States in global politics—the whole world situation.<sup>1</sup> We were getting more ideologically motivated. In these discussions and analyses, those with the most logical answers were those most listened to. . . .

The new Minister for the Army knew what the captains were up to and that the discussions had taken on a specific political character, and he was not the only senior officer to know of this. On December 20 [1973] the Spanish prime minister, Admiral Carrero Blanco was assassinated. Caetano went to Madrid for the funeral. General Kaulza de Arriaga,<sup>2</sup> former military commander in Mozambique, who knew about our discussions, approached us and offered his services to head a coup while Caetano was away in Madrid. We refused. A rightist military putsch aimed at prosecuting the wars in Africa more efficiently was the last thing we wanted. Not only that, but one of our officers [it was Captain Carlos dos Santos Fabiao, later chief of staff of the post-coup Portuguese armed forces—W.B.] stood up in the military academy and denounced Kaulza de Arriaga's move. But by January, 1974, we were unanimous that the fascist regime itself had to be changed and, given its nature, this could be done only by a military coup. . . .

We came to this decision reluctantly. In 1969, when Caetano replaced Salazar as prime minister, we had some hopes that he would change things . . . but he had turned into a jellyfish and would have to be overthrown. A much smaller committee was elected to replace the original *ad hoc* one and it was entrusted specifically with the task of organizing a coup. The new committee was given full powers to plan whatever action it considered most effective. By this time we knew that all telephone conversations between members of what had already become the Armed Forces Movement were tapped by the DGS. Communications from then on were by personal contacts, the wives of AFM members often acting as couriers. And, although the new committee was smaller, it was more representative as far as units were concerned and it covered all of Portugal.

In the meantime another incident had added fuel to the flames. There had been student troubles at Coimbra University, the country's oldest and most prestigious school. These were partly in protest at the undemocratic nature of the October 28, 1973, National Assembly elections and vaguely at the continued prosecution of the war. The most militant of the student leaders

were punished by being drafted into the military academy. While some officers secretly welcomed the injection of radical and ideologically motivated students as reinforcements to the movement, the general feeling was resentment that the armed forces and the military academy were regarded by the government as some kind of penal institution. It was the final straw which apparently persuaded a few waverers that direct action was the only way out. The coup planning committee was divided into two parts: a military subcommittee to work out the tactical planning for the coup and coordinate military action between the various branches of the armed forces, and a political subcommittee to draw up a political program. Captain Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho was in charge of the military subcommittee; Major Melo Antunes was in charge of drafting the political program. What specifically motivated them? It was an obvious question at my first meeting with Otelo de Carvalho. He replied as follows:

I spent three tours of duty in Africa. Two in Angola, one in Guiné-Bissau. For me and many of my comrades, an anti-colonial consciousness was formed during such tours of duty. Why were we fighting? Why were our comrades dying? Why were African patriots being massacred? For the big Portuguese monopolies. So they could keep their hands on the raw materials and exploit the cheap labor of the Africans. So that the privileges of the rich settlers could be maintained.

In my first tour of duty we worked off some of our frustrations by trying to help the population by building roads, schools, hospitals, sanitation works. . . . But by my second tour, I understood this was all useless. To really bring happiness to the Angolan people their country had to be returned to them. We were involved in an unjust war. I first went to Angola in 1961. The officers and sergeants used to whip up morale by urging troops into battle with such slogans as: "Angola Is Ours!" . . . "Save the Motherland!" and other jingoistic appeals. When I returned in 1965, the atmosphere had changed completely. There were still not many desertions at that time, but you couldn't whip up enthusiasm any longer with the old slogans. From then on things went from bad to worse because all the junior officers and lower ranks understood that it was an unjust war.

By 1973, at the end of my last tour of duty, in Guiné-Bissau, the hope of the officers' corps was that we could hold on and create conditions for the government to find a political solution. But the inefficiency and immobility of the government was terrifying. That is

why we decided the only way to end the war was to end the regime. And that is why I agreed to play a leading role.

Born in Mozambique, Otelo de Carvalho comes from a relatively modest background. Certainly the daily injustices meted out to the Africans helped condition Otelo's feelings as to the unjust nature of the war. Melo Antunes, however, comes from an extremely rich patrician Lisbon family, yet his reaction to my question as to how he got involved in such a hazardous adventure, which might easily have cost him the rest of his life in prison, was very similar to Otelo's. There seemed no objective reason why he should have thrown in his lot with the conspirators. He came close to admitting this:

My development was perhaps not typical for the others. As a student, I was somewhat autodidactic, delving into things beyond the requirements of my formal studies. Although I was in the literary faculty at the university, I became very interested in social and political problems. I went into the army only because this was a family tradition. Soldiering did not stop me from thinking, or exercising the critical faculty which I had developed toward things in general.

But during my fifteen years in the army, I found it impossible to exert any criticism either against the army or the regime. Still, I maintained contact with my left-wing friends and was active when this was practicable. I read everything I could lay hands on and tried to prepare myself for when the time was ripe. The formation of the Armed Forces Movement provided the occasion.

When I asked whether there was anything particularly decisive that pushed him to play the role he did, Melo Antunes said:

My three terms of service in Angola—two years each—made the strongest contribution to my real understanding of the colonial question. Those experiences defined my attitude toward colonialism and the fascist regime. Reality comes from practice. Practice in the army—as in other fields—taught me reality. And in all those years of military service I never lost my critical faculty—although exerting it was another matter.

I thought I would try constitutional means. In the elections of 1969, I wanted to stand as a candidate of the CDE opposition.<sup>3</sup> After all, there were officers in the National Assembly representing the

fascist National Union Party—why not officers for the legal opposition movement? I was a captain at the time. The authorities made me withdraw my candidacy. I was subject to military discipline and had to stand down. Systematic persecution followed—continual transfers and other punishment. This was decisive in proving to me that other means had to be found to change the regime. When the Armed Forces Movement was formed, it was obvious that this was the instrument for those “other means.”

In view of the attitudes of officers like Otelo de Carvalho and Melo Antunes, it was not surprising that the AFM program stipulated, among other points, that there must be: “Recognition of the principle that the solution to the wars overseas is political and not military; conditions must be created for a frank and open debate at the national level of all the overseas problems aimed at a new policy that will lead to peace.” Nor was it surprising that it was these two officers who played a key role in thwarting the schemes of the first post-coup president, General Antonio Sebastiao Ribeiro de Spínola, to sabotage the decolonialization process. (In this, Spínola was ably supported by the then foreign minister, Socialist Party leader, Mário Soares.) It was only after the decolonialization negotiations were taken out of the hands of Soares and entrusted to Melo Antunes that things really started to move.

If the London negotiations on Guiné-Bissau which started on May 25, 1974—one month to the day after the coup—had an atmosphere of complete unreality, those on Angola, at the resort town of Alvor on Portugal’s southern coast, were marked by a business-like practicality which provided for Portugal’s withdrawal from by far its richest African colony. The Alvor Agreement (January 15, 1975) was the high-water mark of the AFM pledge to accord independence to the African colonies. I was present at both the London and Alvor conferences, and it was impossible not to note the difference in style between a delegation headed by Mário Soares, with right-wing Palma Carlos as prime minister, and that headed by Melo Antunes, with the progressive Vasco Gonçalves as prime minister. From the London conference, I reported:

This is a conference of apparent good will and the atmosphere seems good. But the Guiné-Bissau delegation is far more conscious of the historic nature of the talks here than the Portuguese delegation.

Soares is mandated to negotiate a military cease-fire and discuss a form of “self-determination” to be decided by a referendum. The mandate of Major Pires of the PAIGC (African Party for the Independence of Guiné-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands) is to get an agreement which will be a model for those later to be concluded between Portugal and its southern African colonies of Mozambique and Angola. Also to get Portugal’s new government to see that “self-determination” and “referendum” in this context are old-fashioned terms which have lost their meaning.

It is a replay of the old record that has been heard from Panmunjom in 1951 . . . of the side in the wrong wanting a purely military disengagement to get its troops out of an untenable situation, while the other side wants an overall, lasting political-military settlement. . . .

Mário Soares had told a group of us in Lisbon on the eve of his departure for London that he expected to sign an agreement within two days. He returned to Lisbon for consultations on the fourth day of the talks without any agreement. After two days in Lisbon he returned to London, where the meeting was adjourned after two more days of fruitless talks. “‘Self-determination’ would have sounded wonderful in 1945,” Major Pires told me.

“But not in 1974. We have been recognized as an independent state by nearly ninety countries. We have observer status at the United Nations. Over two-thirds of our country is solidly liberated. Why should we discuss Portugal supervising our “self-determination”? Our people have already “determined” what they want. Full and total independence with no strings attached.

But that was part of the unreality within which Spínola and Soares dictated that “decolonialization” should be negotiated. A further meeting between Mário Soares and Major Pires in Algiers in mid-June got nowhere. It was the same situation with Mozambique. Despite the public and well-photographed heartiness with which Soares greeted Samora Machel at the opening session of “decolonialization” talks on June 5, 1974, the talks immediately bogged down and were adjourned the following day. A brief communiqué noted that “both sides recognized that the establishment of a cease-fire depends on prior global agreement related to fundamental political principles.” Which indicates that what most interested Soares was a cease-fire, whereas Samora Machel had



reaffirmed the position that he had outlined in a speech three days before the talks started: "It is not the contents of independence that we are going to discuss with the Portuguese. Independence is our inalienable right. We intend to discuss the transfer of powers."

Some of the most militant officers in the AFM by this time (mid-June) were muttering doubts as to their choice of Spínola as president and were wondering aloud whether they might have to start all over again. On June 7, Spínola made a speech in Lisbon which sounded like an obituary for the Armed Forces Movement. "It is impossible to exaggerate the debt of gratitude the country owes to those valiant workers of the Movement of April 25. Now that its task has ended, let me express the appreciation of the nation to all those who acted without pressures or conformism in the higher interests of the community. . . ." You've done a great job, lads, now back to the barracks, was the sense. The captains, however, were far from feeling that their "task was ended." Above all, it had not ended on that key issue of decolonialization—the only way to end the African wars.

On July 5, Premier Palma Carlos issued an ultimatum: either he must be granted far wider powers or he would resign. The extended powers would include authority to hold presidential elections within three months to confirm Spínola as the head of a presidential-type regime; postponement of the elections to a Constituent Assembly scheduled to be held by March 31, 1975, until November 1976; and authority for the prime minister to choose his cabinet without reference to the president—all three clear violations of the AFM program. After an all-night session on July 8-9, the State Council, comprised of seven members of the ruling junta set up after the April 25 coup, seven members of the Coordinating Committee of the AFM, and seven citizens of "recognized merit," turned down the Palma Carlos ultimatum. Only three of the twenty-one members supported him. So he resigned. Three of his supporters in the cabinet went with him, including a Spínola protégé, Lt. Colonel Firmino Miguel. Two days later, most of Lisbon's morning and evening papers announced that the president had chosen Firmino Miguel as the new premier. But on July 12, it was announced that the new prime minister was Colonel Vasco dos Santos Gonçalves, which meant that the Armed Forces Movement was digging in its heels: Fir-

mino Miguel had never been associated with it, whereas Vasco Gonçalves had lent it his full support from the moment of its existence.

Things on the decolonialization front moved swiftly from that moment on. On July 17, a small "rectification" to the Constitution appeared in the *Government Gazette* recognizing that people in the Overseas Territories had the right to "self-determination *with all its consequences*." (Emphasis added.) A few days later, at the demand of the AFM leadership, President Spínola declared that the "consequences" included the "right to political independence to be proclaimed in terms and on dates to be agreed. . . ." In the new cabinet, Melo Antunes was appointed Minister without Portfolio charged with Decolonialization, among other tasks. New talks were held with Guiné-Bissau in mid-August and on August 26 complete agreement was announced in Algiers on the terms of independence. On September 10, 1974, Portugal recognized *de facto* Guiné-Bissau as a sovereign and independent country and, as a good will gesture, sponsored the admission of the new republic to the United Nations. There were parallel talks with the FRELIMO leadership, in which Otelo de Carvalho joined Melo Antunes and Mário Soares in trying to get a reasonable and realistic settlement. After one of these sessions, which took place in the Zambian capital of Lusaka, Otelo told me how he had accompanied Mário Soares to the Belem presidential palace in Lisbon to report to Spínola. He had asserted with typical soldierly bluntness that there was only one thing to do—accept the FRELIMO proposals "which seem to me to be the only correct and possible ones" if Portugal wanted to withdraw with her "head high." But Spínola was furious and threatened to ask President Nixon to send American troops to Mozambique. With Soares a glum but silent onlooker, Otelo objected that Nixon would not be interested in a Vietnamization of the war in Mozambique. Spínola retorted that if Nixon refused, South Africa was sure to oblige.

Otelo published this version in an interview with the weekly *Portugalia* on December 12, 1974. Spínola issued a communiqué denying he had said any such thing, but Otelo stuck to his version, noting the curious silence of Mário Soares on the whole affair. At a press conference on December 31, a spokesman for the Coordinating Committee of the AFM, replying to a question about the Spínola denial, said: "We have no doubts whatsoever as to the

veracity of the statement made by Brigadier Otelio Saraiva de Carvalho, as the matter was known to the Coordinating Committee at the time it occurred. . . .”

Despite Spínola's active opposition, and the spinelessness of Soares, an agreement was reached on September 7 for a gradual transfer of powers so that complete independence would be achieved by June 25, 1975—the thirteenth anniversary of the founding of FRELIMO. “The independent state of Mozambique,” states the agreement, “will exercise complete sovereignty in the internal and external domain, establishing political institutions and choosing the social system which it considers in the best interests of the people.” Spínola's reaction, three days after the signing of the agreement, was a speech in Lisbon calling for a “silent majority” to assert itself against “totalitarian extremists working in the shadows.” Immediately after Spínola's September 10 speech, glossy, expensively produced posters began to appear all over Portugal portraying a man's face, lips stitched together, exhorting “silent majority” support for Spínola and a “No” to “extremists.” The word was passed around that there would be a monster “Silent Majority” rally in the Lisbon *Pequeno Campo* bullring on September 28. Foreign journalists who followed up literature slipped under their hotel room doors, with invitations to contact the MFP (Portuguese Federalist Movement), received free tickets for a bullfight in the same arena on September 26. The tickets were handed out with a few words that something sensational could be expected and a nod and a wink to the effect that it would be something super-sensational. As the ostensible aim was to raise funds for the Returned Soldiers' Association, the bullfight was virtually an official event, with President Spínola and Prime Minister Gonçalves due to attend.

Spínola, who arrived first, was greeted with unusually enthusiastic applause and ecstatic cries of “Long live the President.” The first “sensation,” however, was when Gonçalves was greeted with boos, derogatory shouts against the Armed Forces Movement and cries of “Long live the Overseas Territories.” It turned out that large blocks of seats had been reserved for special groups. Foreign journalists, as the Lisbon press noted next day, were not the only ones to have been offered free tickets! Little notice was given to the bullfight, attention being focused on an energetic discussion between Spínola and an obviously angry Gonçalves.

What was gnawing at Spínola's vitals was the specter of Angola, with all its oil, diamonds, coffee, and other riches going the way Guiné-Bissau and Mozambique had gone. The only way to halt the trend was to get rid of Gonçalves and send the Armed Forces Movement back to the barracks. While the bullfight and argument between president and prime minister continued, word was passed around that after the event was over there would be an attack against the headquarters of the Communist Party, only a few hundred yards away from the *Pequeno Campo*. By the time the “Silent Majority” activists started streaming toward the Communist Party headquarters, however, the way was blocked by hastily assembled pro-Communist militants. Members of some of the organized groups from the bullring suddenly appeared in helmets, with iron bars and even an occasional knife and pistol in their hands. There was a short sharp clash in which the knives and pistols were flourished with threats that they would be used “later.” The iron bars were wielded, but the attackers were easily beaten off. All this was just a full-dress rehearsal for what was planned for the “Silent Majority” rally two days later.

The left-wing parties—for once the Communists and Socialists were on the same side—demanded the rally be banned. They were backed by the civilian governor of Lisbon who pointed out that such a rally was “unauthorized.” Spínola insisted, in the name of “freedom of expression,” that it be held. The Armed Forces Movement at first held a “neutral” position, but leaders of the left-wing parties produced evidence of arms entering the country from Spain and of plans to infiltrate commando groups into the capital as “participants” in the rally.

After the *Pequeno Campo* incident, the AFM leadership began to prick up its ears, especially when on September 27, virtually the entire Lisbon press demanded that the rally be banned. Throughout that day barricades and checkpoints were set up all over the country—especially at the approaches to Lisbon. The trade unions responded to the “Ban the Rally” appeal. Engineers halted their Lisbon-bound trains, drivers stopped the buses which were to transport tens of thousands of people, mostly from the politically backward areas of the country, provided with free tickets to converge on the Lisbon bullring.

Activists from the Communist and Socialist parties and the MDP (Portuguese Democratic Movement, which originally

grouped the Communist, Socialist and Progressive Catholic movements, but from which the Socialists later withdrew) went to the barricades and checkpoints and were later joined by local units of the armed forces, on instructions from the AFM leadership. Patient explanations were given as to why people were being turned back and cars searched for arms. That such vigilance was justified was shown by the search of a hearse on its way to Lisbon. Despite the protests of the driver and his companion, activists at the barricade even opened the coffin. It was found to contain machine guns and bazookas. There were many similar discoveries. Such arms were handed over by the controllers to the AFM representatives who, in most cases, handed them back to the activists.

It was by far the most dramatic moment since April 25. And not only at the barricades. A cabinet meeting which started at the São Bento governmental palace late on the evening of the 27th, and at which a majority demanded the banning of the rally, was transferred to São Belem, the presidential palace, with Spínola instead of Gonçalves presiding. Otelo (by then Brigadier Otelo de Carvalho and deputy head of the newly created nation's security forces, COPCON, popularly known as the anti-coup command) was also convoked to the presidential palace. He later described the atmosphere as he walked in:

Around two o'clock on the morning of the 28th, I was summoned to Belem Palace to find everyone in a state of great tension. An atmosphere you could cut with a knife. . . . I was aware that the grave problem of the moment was that of setting up the barricades and how to dismantle them as soon as possible. The fact was that despite tremendous discussions no one had turned up with a solution. I was called in to the council chamber, where I found General Spínola deeply shaken and in a state of great excitement. Prime Minister Vasco Gonçalves was also there and I learned later that he had been attacked and insulted by those elements of the Junta of National Salvation [the seven-member ruling body, headed by Spínola—W.B.] who were later purged. I also learned later that when they started to insult him, he wanted to leave the palace, reacting violently against an order to resign, to quit his post.

To his great astonishment, Otelo de Carvalho found that he, like Vasco Gonçalves, was virtually under arrest. He had left his

COPCON headquarters, saying he would be back in forty-five minutes at most. With the country on the verge of civil war and the effective commander of its security forces under detention, together with the prime minister, it was obvious that flashpoint was being reached. (The titular head of COPCON was General Francisco da Costa Gomes, but as he was concurrently chief of staff of the armed forces, Otelo de Carvalho was the operational head.)

At a certain point, the fact of my being detained at Belem Palace started to worry my comrades whose units were in a state of alert. . . . An hour went by, a second hour, and then every minute telephone calls started to pour into Belem Palace, all of them asking for me. I started then to centralize my command post there where I was, especially for those units which were the most excited. Anxiety grew like a snowball. Calls poured in from all over the country—from Porto, Coimbra, Caldas da Rainha, from the navy and air force—calls that took on an ever more alarmed note—asking what was going on? Had I been arrested? If not when would I be returning to headquarters? There were units which wanted to march on Belem—even against my orders—because they noticed that I wasn't speaking freely over the telephone. It was clear to them that I was under constraint. In fact there was always an officer from the president's staff at my side at the telephone. I spoke mainly in monosyllables: yes, no, okay, I'm all right, no problems. But tensions continued to build up.

News reached the palace, via the radio of a mobile detachment of the Republican Guards [a very reactionary urban security unit which was a hangover from the fascist regime, still in being despite left-wing demands that it be deactivated—W.B.] that two artillery units from the [leftist-commanded] Light Artillery Regiment were moving on Belem. There was then a counterorder from the palace to reinforce its defenses with a squadron from the Seventh Cavalry Regiment. . . .

All these events led me at one point to turn to General Costa Gomes and say: "General, things are in such a state that I'm afraid my comrades start to believe that I really am arrested. The best thing would be for me to return straight away to COPCON while you stay here commanding the forces. You set up your headquarters here; I will send you a senior officer to maintain liaison with COPCON, while I return to quiet down our people there."

Costa Gomes agreed, but when Otelo started to leave the palace an officer from the president's staff prevented him on some

vague pretext that his presence was still needed. He started to leave a second time and was again prevented. This time Spinola's choice for prime minister, Firmino Miguel, intervened to explain: "I'll tell you something that nobody else has the guts to say: President Spinola summoned you here in order to detain you." Otelo replied that he would not be responsible for the consequences. The telephone calls continued to pour in. At one point, with Otelo's COPCON chief of staff on the line, Spinola stepped up to the telephone and said: "Otelo is right alongside me. He has not been arrested. We are working in close cooperation. He is perfectly all right."

In the end it was agreed that Otelo should leave for COPCON together with Spinola and his entourage, plus Costa Gomes and his staff. When most of them were already in their cars, Otelo was summoned again by Spinola who informed him that he would not go personally to COPCON, but that he should convince the COPCON headquarters staff that everything was "all right" and they had the complete confidence of Spinola.

Spinola, in fact, was the first to crack. In the meantime he had been issuing all sorts of orders for units to move. But the units demanded that the orders come from Otelo. Spinola had also issued arbitrary orders that no newspapers should appear on the 28th, while the radio continued to broadcast a presidential communiqué to the effect that the rally would go ahead as planned. Instead of confirmation that units loyal to him—so he thought to himself—were marching to his defense, the palace was bombarded with calls from units wanting to rush to the rescue of Otelo de Carvalho, who personified the Armed Forces Movement. The true relation of forces in the country at that time was revealed by those telephone calls early on the morning of the 28th, and by the determination of those manning the barricades.

At midday on the 28th, a communiqué was issued in Spinola's name canceling the rally. By mid-afternoon a communiqué was issued by the MDP with a first list of those arrested in what was proven to be a well-organized plot to seize power. Apart from the notorious General Kaulza de Arriaga, there were two other well-known fascist generals, Pereira de Castro and Barbieri Cardoso, plus a dozen lower-ranking officers. Civilians included a son of Caetano and a member of the Champalimaud family—the country's second biggest monopoly grouping. The following day it was

announced that nineteen members of the Espirito Santo family—the third biggest monopoly and owners of the bank of the same name—had fled to Madrid. In the small hours of that fateful Saturday morning a COPCON unit—acting on a tip-off—had raided the headquarters of the MAP (Portuguese Action Movement), one of the innumerable small parties operating under a "nationalist center" label. In a room on the first floor they found—and arrested—seven men, one with a rifle mounted with a telescopic sight. He turned out to be a qualified sharpshooter. A small pane in a window which overlooked the residence of Vasco Gonçalves had been broken sufficiently to give a clear view of the prime minister's movements around his home, well within range of the rifle. Apart from other arms there were copies of a MAP manifesto warning of the threat which the present situation posed "to Portuguese permanent values and traditions." By detaining Vasco Gonçalves during those hours when his movements would normally have brought him within range of what the Lisbon press referred to as the "Dallas rifle," President Spinola probably unwittingly saved the prime minister's life!

At eleven o'clock on Monday morning, September 30, Spinola appeared on television to announce his resignation as president in a tough, defiant speech obviously aimed at further encouragement for the "silent majority." One of the original "captains" who was standing by my side at a television set commented: "He was never really with us. He joined the movement in order to cancel it out. As a military technician he knew he couldn't win. But he couldn't bring himself—and much less the social-economic forces he really represented—to accept decolonialization on the only possible basis: total independence."

Just how serious the coup attempt had been was apparent when COPCON forces raided the headquarters of the Federalist Movement (which had changed its name to Progress Party just prior to September 28) on Avenida Infante Santo, in the very heart of Lisbon. It turned out to be a military-political headquarters and arsenal. Apart from a certain quantity of arms seized on the spot, there was an inventory of others ordered from abroad. Some of them were later found in caches inside the country. These included fifty 60 mm. mortars and five thousand mortar shells; fifty bazookas with incendiary, armor-piercing and explosive rockets; two hundred light automatics with 100,000 rounds of ammunition;

nine hundred hand grenades of various types; one hundred Mauser and other type pistols; cartridge belts and magazines to equip two thousand men; two hundred Molotov cocktails and chemical equipment, on the spot, for thousands more. The headquarters section included sophisticated equipment supplied by ITT (International Telephone and Telegraph Company of sad notoriety during the Chilean coup, and owners of Lisbon's Sheraton hotel) for intercepting telephone and radio communications; maps of strategic nerve centers of Lisbon and other cities; duplicated extracts from a book which set out the step-by-step preparation and execution of the anti-Allende coup in Chile; lists of Portuguese to be summarily executed and others to be arrested and concentrated for investigation in the Lisbon football stadium and bullring à la Chile!

Costa Gomes replaced Spínola as president, Vasco Gonçalves was reconfirmed in his post as prime minister, Otelo de Carvalho became the titular head of COPCON. Three right-wing members of the military junta were dismissed; Firmino Miguel was removed from his post as Defense Minister as was the Monarchist, Sanches Osorio, from his post as Minister of Social Communications (Information). (It was ironic, to say the least, that it was Mário Soares, as prime minister, who restored Firmino Miguel as Minister of Defense in his first cabinet, announced on July 23, 1976.)

In looking back and scratching below the surface of those first six months of AFM power, one finds—despite everything that was written in the Western press at the time—that the central issue was always that of the dismemberment of Portugal's colonial empire. While the press went on about conflict of personalities, Gonçalves's authoritarianism, Communist take-over of the trade unions, freedom of the press, "political pluralism," and whatever, the main question being passionately discussed at cabinet meetings and other behind-the-scenes debates was always the pros and cons of an honest and sincere decolonialization policy. And if the July crisis paved the way for the independence of Guiné-Bissau and Mozambique, the September crisis paved the way for that of Angola—the bitterest pill that Portuguese reaction was forced to swallow.

With many of the leading opponents of decolonialization in Portugal itself in jail, and others like Spínola neutralized, ardent

decolonializers like Melo Antunes, Otelo de Carvalho and the "Red Admiral," Rosa de Coutinho, worked hard to harmonize the views of the three proclaimed national liberation movements, the MPLA, FNLA, and UNITA. Leaders of neighboring countries and members of the OAU also did their best to bring about what turned out to be an unnatural alliance among the three, or at least get them to agree on a common negotiating position solid enough to secure a Portuguese withdrawal from Angola.

Thus it was that on January 17, 1975, the three Angolan leaders affixed their signatures, alongside those of the three Portuguese ministers responsible for the decolonialization process, to a document which provided for independence for Angola by November 11 of that same year. It was a moving and solemn ceremony, reflecting the thoughts of Portuguese and Angolan leaders alike that there were almost certainly stormy waters to be navigated before what was an excellent agreement on paper would become reality.

The difference between the atmosphere at the Alvor Conference and the other decolonialization conferences I had attended was that there was sincerity and good will on the part of those representing the colonial power toward the former colony. There was no tricky corporation-lawyer approach, no attempt to cheat "the natives." The traditional "divide and rule" formula had been transformed into a "unite and be free" counsel to the three movements, with the Portuguese negotiators playing a major role in bringing the rivals sufficiently close together to speed up production of the final document of Angolan independence. History will accord due merit to Prime Minister Vasco Gonçalves for his courage and stubborn integrity on that vital and emotion-charged issue of decolonialization, as embodied in the Alvor Accord. But it was his unyielding stand on this issue, together with his equally firm decisions later on nationalizing the banks and major monopolies and presiding over the expropriation of the great estates of the absentee landlords in the Alentejo, which earned him the bitter, unforgiving hatred of reaction at home and abroad. The intensity of the campaign later waged against him, especially in certain sections of the Western press enraged at the prospects of multinational interests falling into black hands in Africa and "red" hands in Portugal itself, subsequently led to a fatal split within the AFM leadership. First Melo Antunes, then Otelo de Carvalho,

joined with those demanding the ouster of Gonçalves, something both of them later were to regret bitterly. It must be recorded that Mário Soares, with the backing of Western Europe's Social Democrats, played a leading role, in the name of "democracy" and "plurality," in dragging Gonçalves down and thereby wrecking the progressive leadership of the Armed Forces Movement. But among the things which the successors to the four governments presided over by Vasco Gonçalves were *not* able to do was to put the former Portuguese empire together again. Not only did Gonçalves preside over the dissolution of that empire, he also blocked very serious attempts to impose neocolonialist solutions aimed at keeping the wealth—especially that of Angola—in multinational and Portuguese monopoly hands.

## VII The Portuguese Exit

The delegations of FNLA, MPLA, and UNITA, led by their respective presidents, Mr. Holden Roberto, Dr. Agostinho Neto, and Dr. Jonas Savimbi, met at State House, Mombasa, Republic of Kenya from January 3 to 5, 1975, thanks to the good will and availability of the government of the Republic of Kenya.

The meeting evolved in an atmosphere of mutual and perfect understanding. As a result the delegations found a common political platform in the light of the negotiations with the Portuguese government for the formation of a Transitional Government which will lead Angola to independence. The three delegations analyzed all problems related to the decolonialization process and to the future sovereign state of Angola.

The delegations agreed on a common political platform which includes, among other questions, those related to the formation of the Transitional Government, to the question of the armed forces in Angola and to the creation and installation of future institutions. Within the same spirit of understanding and unity, the three liberation movements decided that from now on they will cooperate in all spheres and especially on that of decolonialization for the defense of the territorial integrity as well as for the national reconstruction. . . .

So stated the splendid "Final Communiqué" of the three presidents which made the Alvor Conference and speedy agreement with the Portuguese possible. Prior to this—and subsequent to it—such "understanding and unity" had been distinguished by its absence. As an example, less than two months after the "Captains' Coup," Jonas Savimbi had declared a unilateral cease-fire—on June 17, 1974. The MPLA leadership was in a state of deep crisis. In addition to the "Eastern Revolt" of Daniel Chipenda, a group of highly influential intellectuals—nineteen in all—headed by Mário de Andrade and his brother, the Reverend Joaquim da Rocha Pinto de Andrade, launched from Brazzaville in May, 1974, an "Active Revolt" faction directed at what they called Agostinho Neto's "presidentialism." They criticized the MPLA-FNLA agreement on setting up the "Supreme Council of the Revolution," with Holden Roberto as president, although by that time it was clear this was devoid of any practical significance. This defection had little influence on the military situation since the "Active Revolt" members had not been "active" on the battlefield, but it greatly complicated matters on the international front, as did Chipenda's defection. (In 1973, the Soviet Union had switched its support from Neto to Chipenda, switching back again only after learning, and warning Neto of Chipenda's plans to assassinate him. These dissensions led to various OAU mediation attempts which objectively weakened the military struggle more than the defections themselves. Speaking of the period immediately after the "Captains' Coup," Lucio Lara said:

The local Portuguese military authorities used the FNLA and UNITA to try to destroy us, counting on the MPLA having been mortally weakened by internal dissensions. The FNLA and UNITA made their separate and unilateral cease-fires and concentrated their efforts with the Portuguese forces to do just this. But despite the Chipenda military defection, the vast majority of the rank and file in the Mbunda zone remained loyal to us and we were solid on the ground in all our liberated areas. We beat off attacks on all fronts because no one on the enemy side had much stomach for the battlefield by then. One day our headquarters radio operator was twirling the knobs of a set freshly captured from the Portuguese. By chance he raised the Portuguese military headquarters in Lisbon. "Who's that?" came the query. "The enemy," replied our operator once he realized who was on the line. "Which enemy?" By then we were alerted. "The MPLA." "Hang on" came the reply. Both sides were quick to exploit this unexpected contact. Lisbon suggested an immediate meeting, but President Neto was in no hurry. Then Rosa Coutinho came on the line and a rendezvous site was fixed for three weeks later.

Thus, on October 21, 1974, a cease-fire agreement was signed by Agostinho Neto on behalf of the MPLA and naval Captain Leonel Gomes Cardoso on behalf of the Portuguese armed forces, and that stage of the armed struggle came to an end. Lucio Lara noted that during the negotiations the Portuguese side was "interested in projecting UNITA and tried to impress us with the need for coming to terms with Savimbi."

It was on the basis of the three cease-fire agreements that delegations from the FNLA, UNITA, and the MPLA arrived in Luanda in November, 1974. The MPLA delegation was greeted by the greatest mass demonstration the capital had ever seen. But while the MPLA arrived without troops or weapons, the FNLA brought in substantial quantities of both. As part of the Alvor Agreement, each of the three movements was to contribute 8,000 of its troops which, together with 24,000 Portuguese troops, would form a mixed force of 48,000 troops, surplus Portuguese troops to be withdrawn between October 1, 1975, and February 29, 1976. Three representatives of each of the movements, presided over by the Portuguese High Commissioner, would act as a ten-member National Defense Commission. This never worked. Regular forces of the Zaire army, plus Zaire-based regular FNLA troops which had taken no part in the national liberation struggle

invaded Angola in the north in March, 1975, first occupying Ambriz, a coastal town 150 miles south of the Zaire border, then Carmona (now Uije, capital of the province of that name) and other key points in the northern areas. This released reinforcements for the FNLA troops already in Luanda and these started pressure and provocations to try to drive the MPLA delegation out of the city.

According to Comandante "Juju," spokesman for the general staff of the FAPLA at the time, we discussed the situation (March, 1976), and whose version was confirmed by countless residents who were in Luanda at the time:

It was after troops of the Zaire army invaded the North with continuous armed provocations against our cadres that some of our troops entered Luanda. During March, there were three or four incidents every day. We made cease-fire agreements but each was followed by an escalation of the attacks. On March 23, there was a heavy attack against MPLA headquarters installations at Cazenga and Vila Alice in the outskirts. The following day FNLA gunmen rounded up over fifty MPLA cadres and members, took them off in trucks and machine-gunned them to death at Kifangondo, about twenty kilometers to the north of the capital. At the end of the month the FNLA brought into Luanda a motorized column comprising five hundred troops. . . .

By this time, UNITA had joined forces with the FNLA, the latter having taken advantage of the withdrawal, passivity, or tacit support of the Portuguese to take over many towns in the Center-South, aided by armed Portuguese vigilante groups from the local settlers. On the eve of May Day, the pro-MPLA trade union headquarters had been attacked in Luanda. Despite further cease-fires, fighting continued throughout June and the first days of July. On July 9, a funeral procession for an MPLA woman cadre, Lilia Celina, was attacked with heavy machine-gun fire from the nearby FNLA headquarters. This was the last straw. On July 12, in an organized mass action directed by MPLA militants, the FNLA headquarters was destroyed. After three days of bitter skirmishes, the FNLA-UNITA forces were driven from the capital. That was the end of the Transitional Government and the start of what the MPLA leadership considers the "Second War of Resistance."

While content to defend the capital from repeated FNLA attempts to recapture it, the FAPLA launched a vigorous offensive to retake former MPLA strongholds farther south, control of which had been shared with FNLA-UNITA forces of the Transitional Government.

Confirmation of this admittedly MPLA version of events in Luanda during the period described comes from two well-known—and by no means pro-MPLA—British journalist specialists on southern Africa, Colin Legum and Tony Hodges, in a booklet published in 1976. In the section entitled “How the MPLA Won,” Hodges writes:

In the early months of 1975, the FNLA was acutely conscious of its political weakness in the country, above all in MPLA-dominated Luanda. The Front's support (until the fusion with Chipenda's forces) was concentrated almost exclusively among the northern Bakongo, half of whom were living abroad in refugee settlements in Zaire. The FNLA tried to overcome this unfavorable relation of forces, particularly in the strategic capital area, by setting up a well-financed political apparatus and sending in well-armed contingents of its armed wing, the ELNA, into Luanda and other important centers. With funds supplied by Zaire and the U.S. the FNLA bought up the country's major means of communications, acquiring a TV station and the leading daily newspaper. . . . More important, the FNLA began to move large numbers of heavily armed ELNA troops from its base camps in Zaire into Angola, including hostile Luanda. On a simple level, the FNLA had a distinct advantage over its rivals at this time. While the MPLA had built up a relatively small guerilla army of about 6,000 soldiers (UNITA had an even smaller guerilla force of, at most, 1,000), FNLA had trained a regular army of about 15,000 troops in its Zairean camps. In addition, it was well supplied with arms, having received 450 tons of Chinese arms in 1974, and it had the assistance of 125 Chinese military instructors. . . . Indicative of the FNLA's military buildup in Luanda was the arrival of a motorized column of 500 ELNA troops on March 30.<sup>1</sup>

The FNLA made desperate attempts to retake Luanda and on July 21, Holden Roberto announced he was personally taking charge of ELNA troops to lead them into the capital—his first entry into Angola in fourteen years! By then it was claimed that Holden Roberto had 17,000 troops under his command. They were halted at the gates of the capital on August 8. By that time the

numerically inferior and more lightly armed FAPLA, in bitter battles from Luanda all the way back east to the Zambian border, had ejected ELNA troops and forced them to withdraw to whatever base areas they held in the northwest. The strength and vitality and the popular support they enjoyed is demonstrated by the fact that while defending the capital and cleaning the ELNA troops out of all those areas they had occupied as participants in the three-movement Transitional Government, they also chased UNITA out of a whole string of vital towns and positions in the south. On August 21, Savimbi formally “declared war” on the MPLA, arresting all MPLA cadres, members, and suspected sympathizers the UNITA police could find. Within a few weeks, UNITA had been driven out of such key cities as Lobito, the headquarters of the Benguela railway on the coast 400 miles south of Luanda; from Pereira de Eca, another 500 miles to the south near the Namibia border; from Luso, 400 miles to the east of Lobito on the Benguela railway. This could only be accomplished through the strength and popular backing of the local MPLA action committees and groups backed by guerilla units.

It cannot be emphasized strongly enough that this was done exclusively by MPLA's own combat units. There were some Cuban military advisers, as there had been for years past with a number of African national liberation movements. There was virtually no military transport, no artillery. Some military supplies had arrived from the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Algeria between March and June. But by all accounts—except that of Dr. Kissinger—these were light arms suitable for the guerilla-type units which was all the FAPLA had at that time. Savimbi's reaction was to turn to South Africa for help. By early August, vanguard South African units had entered Angola from Namibia and occupied Calueque and Namacunde, twenty-four and eight miles, respectively, inside Angola. The pretext was that they were there to protect hydroelectric installations at Ruacana on the Cunene river. In the booklet referred to above, Colin Legum, in the section headed “Foreign Intervention,” states that: “The South African army, as is now known, was no stranger to the Angolan terrain; the Portuguese had allowed them to send in their forces up to a depth of 200 miles to root out SWAPO guerillas and to study Angola's guerilla operations.”<sup>2</sup>

In a document published by the UNITA information office in



December, 1975, Savimbi reported that South African troops had invaded Angola in July, 1975, defeating both MPLA and UNITA attempts to block them, and the Manchester *Guardian* quotes South African Defense Minister Pieter Botha as telling Parliament that "from July 14, 1975, to January 23, 1976," twenty-nine South African troops had been killed in action in Angola and fourteen in "accidents."<sup>3</sup> On August 12, the South African government officially informed the Portuguese government that because Portugal seemed incapable of protecting South African workers at the Ruacana hydroelectric installations, South Africa had sent in a small force to Calueque to protect them. The chronology of all this is important in view of Kissinger's strenuous efforts to persuade a U.S. Senate investigating committee that South African troops entered Angola only after the arrival of massive numbers of Cuban combat troops. The only foreign troops in Angola at the time of the massive FNLA and UNITA defeats were those from Zaire, South Africa, and elements of the Spinoist fascist ELP (Portuguese Liberation Army, originally formed in Spain for the overthrow of the Gonçalves government). FAPLA Comandante Farrusco was in charge of guerilla groups on the southern border. We met in Sa da Bandeira a few days after the South Africans were forced to withdraw.

I was an eyewitness from the time the South Africans, with support from UNITA, the FNLA-Chipenda faction, and ELP forces started to invade our country at Calueque. This was at the beginning of August, 1975. The enemy knew we were weak there, which is one of the reasons they picked it as the invasion point. When the first group arrived, their slogan was "FNLA-UNITA-Chipenda!" With their armored cars and artillery, there was little we could do but observe and report back. They started their drive north on October 23. When they arrived here at Sa da Bandeira [now Lubango] I saw how they started to massacre the population. About two hundred, including women and children, were killed in the first days. Chipenda, who came from South Africa, brought with him members of the BRJ [Brigade of Revolutionary Youth, indoctrinated along the lines of the Hitler Youth] and these were used to identify MPLA members or sympathizers. Denunciation by the BRJ was the equivalent of the death sentence. When I was doing resistance work in Vila Ariago [about twenty-five miles south of Lubango] I saw the ELP, protected by South African troops, kill twenty-seven cattle-people [a semi-

nomad pastoral people living in Southern Angola, vaguely related to the Hottentots—W.B.]. They just herded them into a freight car, shunted it down the line a few hundred yards, machine-gunned them and threw the bodies into the river. An acquaintance of mine, who thought they must be queuing up for work, joined the queue and was also thrown in and shot. There are hundreds of witnesses to such massacres.

Carlos Mangas, a tall young Angolan of Portuguese parents, a schoolteacher from Benguela, happened to be on his way to Lubango airport on the second day of the South African drive north. With him was the Angolan pilot of a light plane waiting at the airport to take them back to Benguela, the pilot's Swiss wife, who had just returned from leaving their three children in Lisbon, and an Angolan chauffeur.

We pulled onto the side of the road when we saw a column of armored cars coming. We saw a machine gun swing round as one of the cars passed. The next thing was a terrible burst of fire. My three companions were killed immediately. I was blown out of the car with a bullet through my hand and lay alongside the others as if also dead. I lay there for three hours until the column and following troops passed. Meanwhile I swallowed my MPLA membership card and threw away an MPLA emblem that I wore round my neck. Then some infantry came by. One of them threw a grenade at the car and although it landed on the opposite side from where I was lying, I instinctively reacted. One of them, an Angolan, shouted: "That bastard's still alive," and he pointed his gun. But it only clicked. Some South Africans who were setting up a mortar position nearby came over to see what was happening. As I am white and speak good English, we could converse. I said I was a school inspector and had just been checking up on schools in the region. An officer scribbled out a note and told me to go on to a medical station at the airport and get my wounds fixed up. By now I had grenade fragments in my left side and leg. At the medical station my wounds were dressed. Everybody was quite friendly and I was told I'd be put on a supply plane to Johannesburg next day and from there flown to Portugal.

But next morning the whole atmosphere had changed. When I asked about a plane an officer snarled, "There's no place for FAPLA commanders in South Africa." It seems that during the night I had been denounced by a BRJ spy. I was beaten up around the face and knee-kicked in the stomach and then submitted to electrical torture under the supervision of a South African major. Electrodes were

fitted into my ears and current generated through a hand-operated set. "We are South African volunteers," said the major. "We have come to fight Communism. We will never let Communism get a foothold in southern Africa." They had discovered that my spectacles were made in Benguela and the major wanted to know where the military positions around Benguela were. "Where are the Cubans?" There was a special device which projected what I think must have been a photo taken from a space satellite onto the ground, with an exact scale in meters, and he asked me to identify positions. In between the torture treatments I gave what I believed were the most misleading answers. After the interrogation was over I was held at the dressing station for several days and saw huge unmarked transport planes landing several times a day and unloading military supplies. . . .

Carlos Mangas—who had given a false name—was later transferred to a hospital where he met Farrusco, who had been picked up in civilian clothes with a bullet in his lung. Taking advantage of a brawl among the hospital guards when UNITA expelled the FNLA-Chipenda faction from Lubango, they both escaped. On November 3, ten days after occupying Lubango, the South African column, together with ELP troops, arrived within three miles of the center of Benguela, about two hundred miles to the north.

Comandante Augusta Rosa, a big full-bearded white Angolan born in Mozambique of Portuguese parents, took up the story. Part of the column had sped west from Lubango to Serpa Pinto (now Menongue), the terminal point of the Moçamedes railway, 350 kilometers due west from Lubango.

A column of eighty South African armored cars and one company—about 120 men—of ELP troops attacked the Benguela airport on November 5. We started hitting back immediately, as we had tried to harass them in the outskirts. But we had no weapons to match theirs. They occupied the airport and by the night of the 5th we were completely encircled. There were about 600 South African troops, three to each of the the armored cars, the rest artillery, infantry, and other support troops. We had lost seven of our original ten companies in that area, mostly in clashes with ELP and Portuguese vigilantes in the Huambo area to the west. We fought our way out of the encirclement on the night of the 5th and withdrew toward Novo Redondo, 120 miles north of Benguela. There we made a determined

stand four miles south of the city. After eight hours of continuous bombardment, during which we took heavy losses, we withdrew to the banks of the Queve river, seventeen kilometers to the northwest. There we made a last stand. Most of our men were wiped out—even a few who wanted to surrender were shot down to the last man. But the stand there gave us time to dynamite the bridge over the Queve and this was a serious blow to the South Africans.

The destruction of the bridge over the Queve was a most decisive action, carried out by Comandante Rosa and a small group of specialists. The South Africans were obliged to withdraw and make a long deviation, gaining valuable time, or the FAPLA to consolidate their defenses around the capital. The South Africans had suffered far higher losses than expected and their timetable was seriously upset. The very heroic and costly delaying action from the Angola-Namibia frontier to the Queve river was fought exclusively by FAPLA guerillas and greatly contributed to shattering the master strategy of the South Africa-UNITA-Chipenda forces advancing on Luanda from the south and the Zaire-FNLA forces advancing from the north. Their maximum objective was that the north-south columns would link up in Luanda before November 11 so that the Portuguese would hand over independence to an UNITA-FNLA coalition. The minimum was that the Zaire-FNLA column would occupy the Luanda water-pumping station at Kifangondo 18 kilometres north of the capital and the South African-UNITA-Chipenda-FNLA faction would occupy the Cambambe hydroelectric station which was the main supplier of electricity to Luanda, about 200 kilometres southeast of the capital. Thus, even if the MPLA still controlled the capital on November 11, the city would be completely paralyzed—without water or electricity—and the Portuguese could not hand over independence to "one faction" under such conditions. Lucio Lara described to me the situation in the capital during those crucial days:

On November 6, with the South Africans advancing north of Benguela, the Portuguese high commissioner, Admiral Leonel Cardoso, called on our leadership. He was very worried about the situation due to "MPLA obstinacy," as he put it. "You are in great danger. All forces in Angola are against you." But the Portuguese had never warned us that Zaire forces had invaded Angola months previously as

had South African forces. We pointed this out. He replied: "UNITA and the FNLA have powerful forces at their disposal. They will crush you." He urged us to come to terms with them. We refused. On the morning of November 7, we stopped the first Zaire-FNLA attack, at the Bengo river, just 18 kilometres north of Luanda. In the afternoon we had a visit from Rear Admiral Victor Crespo heading the Ministry of Coordination, formerly Minister of the Colonies]. He had just come from Huambo where he had seen Savimbi's second-in-command, Nzau Puna [UNITA's secretary-general]. It was a very dramatic moment, especially as we knew that a second Zaire attack would be coming very soon. "It's your last chance," said Crespo. "You must come to terms with UNITA." We asked how he could suggest such a thing when Savimbi had brought in South African troops which were already pushing north from Benguela. Crespo put his head in his hands: "But they are very strong. I was today in Nova Lisboa [Huambo]. They said they were ready to make an alliance with the Devil if necessary! You must settle with them." "No, never!" we replied. "You will be crushed," he insisted. "The MPLA will never be crushed. Perhaps we ourselves will be liquidated, but the MPLA will never be crushed. Angola will never be crushed." Crespo left.

A few days earlier we had prepared to declare independence on the 7th. The text was ready. The enemy advance had been so swift and they had such superior strength of arms that some thought the defense of the capital was impossible without outside aid. It was quite possible that we would no longer be in the capital on the night of November 10-11. But there were other considerations. The 7th was the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution and for us to choose the same date might be misunderstood. Also the 11th had been the date set by the Alvor Agreement for the transfer of powers. We reversed the original decision and decided to defend the capital, come what may. We decided to appeal for outside help, but only as a sovereign, independent state and from our own capital. From the 7th onward Portuguese forces and part of the Portuguese population inside Luanda became very aggressive and provocative. Anti-MPLA banners suddenly appeared and the situation was very tense.

Cuban advisers had certainly been informed of the original decision to declare independence on the 7th and immediately ask for stepped-up Cuban aid, proposals urged by Cubans on the spot and with which Fidel Castro was entirely in accord. This explains why on November 7, before the People's Republic was officially proclaimed, the first eighty-two Cuban combat troops left Havana

on an ancient Bristol-Britannia, bound for Angola, as the result of a decision taken by the Cuban leadership two days earlier. They were part of a reinforced battalion of 650 special forces to be ferried into Angola within the following thirteen days. Comandante "Juju" described what was happening in Luanda in the meantime as follows:

The all-out assault that we had been expecting began on the morning of November 10. It started at 6 A.M. from a point ten kilometers north of Kifangondo, with Holden Roberto and the Zairean general in charge to supervise the operation. A column started to move down the sixteen miles of road that lead to Luanda. It was spearheaded by nine French-made Panhard armored cars. These were followed by forty-eight truckloads of troops. There were about one thousand Zairean troops divided into two battalions, one reinforced company of Portuguese commandos, forty Portuguese sappers, about one hundred FNLA troops, and ten South Africans—replacing French mercenaries who had failed to show up—to handle a 130 mm. artillery piece and a couple of 122 mm. mortars. The armored cars, with the motorized troops following on behind, moved two hundred yards at a time, stopped, raked the surrounding area with machine-gun fire, then moved on again. At 11 A.M., they entered our field of fire. There were two surprises awaiting them. First, after their November 7 attack, we had blown up the bridge over the Bengo river. Second, we had just received some Soviet *Katyusha* multiple rocket launchers. When most of the column was within range the *Katyushas* opened up. There was terrible panic. The noise and streaks of fire were terrifying enough. Several armored cars and trucks, packed up tight at the destroyed bridge, were knocked out in the first lightning salvos, others as they tried to turn around or reverse and speed back out of range. Those that survived never stopped until they got to Porto Quipiri, their advance base about 15 kilometers back along the road to Caxito [about 50 kilometers north of Kifangondo where the column had been stopped and the Zaire-FNLA main logistics base—W.B.]. Unfortunately we had no means of crossing the Bengo river and following up our victory. It took us about twelve days to rig up a bridge and follow them back to Caxito, which we captured on November 22 almost without a fight.

In the area around Porto Quipiri we captured hundreds of tons of valuable equipment, scattered around on both sides of the road. They had forced the local population to load it onto trucks for their advance, but there was no one to help them during their retreat. Some of the attackers, at least, had no idea what had hit them when

the *Katyushas* opened up. We found a note scrawled on the wall of one of the Porto Quipiri arms storehouses: "We're pulling out. The Russians are using atom bombs."

Thus neither maximum nor minimum objectives of the anti-MPLA forces were attained. The northern column did succeed in putting the Kifangondo pumping station out of order by artillery fire and Luanda was without water for a couple of days before the damage was repaired. But the southern column was blocked on the southern bank of the Queve river, 240 kilometers short of their minimum target of Dondo and the Camambe hydroelectric station and 400 kilometers short of their maximum target—Luanda. There was no alternative on the afternoon of November 10, 1975, but for the Portuguese to lower their flags over Luanda for the last time and for High Commissioner Admiral Leonel Cardoso, his staff, and remaining troops to step aboard a frigate and steam out of Luanda harbor, marking the formal end of almost 500 years of Portuguese rule in Angola.

Angolan independence and the establishment of the People's Republic of Angola was formally proclaimed at midnight on November 10. In a moving ceremony, the flag of the new republic was hoisted by Comandante Imperial Santana, who had led the uprising in Luanda nearly fifteen years earlier and who had miraculously survived the attack, the terrible repression which immediately followed, and the arduous years of liberation struggle. In the small hours of the morning of the 11th, Lucio Lara, as General Secretary of the MPLA's Central Committee, invested Agostinho Neto as President of the People's Republic. In his inaugural speech, President Neto accused the FNLA and UNITA of having systematically sabotaged the Alvor Agreement and reproached the Portuguese for their "constant disregard" of the agreement and, among other things, "for the fact that it has systematically remained silent over the invasion of our country by regular armies and mercenary forces."

Twenty-four hours later at Ambriz, about 170 kilometers north of Luanda, the disembarkation port for the hapless invasion force which was licking its wounds at Caxito, Holden Roberto proclaimed the independence of the "People's Democratic Republic of Angola." On November 12, Holden Roberto and Jonas Savimbi announced the formation of a "Joint National Council for

the Revolution" with its headquarters at Huambo, as the provisional governing organ of the "People's Democratic Republic." Giving his version of the liberation struggle which had led to the exit of the Portuguese, Holden Roberto warned the Angolan people to be vigilant against the designs of "Soviet social imperialism." Referring to the countries on whom he was counting for immediate recognition, he continued:

All these friends—Zaire, the People's Republic of China, Tunisia, the Central African Republic, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Cameroon, Liberia, Uganda, Kenya, Togo, Ghana, Lesotho, and other African and Asian states—all these truly friendly countries which know that we are neither acrobats nor utopians but simply proud nationalists who are attached to the proud realities of our country—these brothers and friends should know that we are convinced that we can always count on the warmth of their affection. . . .

It was a valiant, but vain, effort. While the People's Republic was immediately recognized by some thirty countries—including such unlikely ones as Brazil—the "Democratic People's Republic" was neither then, nor later, recognized by a single country—not even by Zaire or South Africa!

## VIII Enter the Cubans

What are Cubans? It was a question I put to Nicolás Guillén in the summer of 1976 in Havana. A short, stocky man with a massive head and a brown, humorous face, he is Cuba's outstanding national poet and one of the most prestigious writers in Latin America. "We are a nation of mulattos like me," he said.

When the Spanish colonizers came to Cuba, the native population was very weak numerically and culturally, living in the Stone Age. They were quickly exterminated. Cuba was discovered by Columbus in 1492. The Spanish conquest started in 1511 and within forty years there was scarcely one of the original population left. But the Spaniards who came had no taste for hard work. They needed African labor for their farms. They had already acquired a taste for slaves in Spain. From 1517 onward large numbers of slaves were imported, continuing until 1880. Official statistics give a figure of some 800,000, but in reality it ran into millions. Apart from official imports, there was a huge black market by which the slaves were smuggled in.

Cubans are almost exclusively a mix of Spaniards and Africans, descendants of the original conquerors and their African slaves. The mixture took place over a period of centuries. Spanish culture started to merge with African culture, with African culture extremely important.

Guillén, who is still young and full of energy at seventy-four, has been president of the Union of Cuban Writers and Artists since 1961. I asked him how he evaluated a recent description by Fidel Castro of Cuba as a *Latin-African*, and not a *Latin-American*, country.

It is absolutely correct. Fidel was referring to this merger of two races, two cultures. Our music, our dance, our food, our temperament, everything, is based on the fusion of these two cultures. It is the basis for all my poetry. There has been a long process of the merger of the two races, but not in isolation from the process of the formation of our nation. Today we never speak of Africa in the abstract. The reality is that Africa is comprised of many different nations, peoples speaking different languages and with different characteristics. But we are especially conscious of those parts of Africa from which so many of our ancestors came. Angola is one of

them. Very many slaves were brought to Cuba from Angola, also to Brazil and other Caribbean islands. It is in the Caribbean that the racial and cultural influence of Africans is strongest because in bigger countries like the U.S.A., Brazil, and Canada, the colonizers could not completely wipe out the local population. In the Caribbean it was relatively easy to destroy the indigenous population to get their land and replace them with slave labor for the colonizers' plantations. That is why black influence is strong, almost total in some places.

He produced a photo of himself with Agostinho Neto, taken during a secret visit by Neto to Cuba in 1966. The two great poets were sitting at the same table in the headquarters of the Union of Writers and Artists where we sat now to discuss Angola. Affectionate smiles played on both their faces.

What better symbol that we are Cuban-African, Latin-African! Because of our antecedents we have great sympathy for Spain and for Africa. These are the two forces which decided the character and way of thinking of the Cuban people. During the Spanish Civil War, many thousands of Cubans went to fight—many of them to die—with the Republicans. Spain is the country of our white ancestors, just as Angola is one of those of our black ancestors. It is part of the roots of our life. Sympathy for the Angolan resistance struggle is part of our revolutionary nature, as was also our sympathy for the Spanish Republicans and for the Vietnamese and others fighting wars of national liberation. But it is also because Angola is part of us. It is the great pride of our people that we are able to do something for one of the lands of our ancestors.

Don't forget that we are also indebted to the newly freed slaves who fought side by side with Cubans in our own war of independence from the Spaniards.

One did not have to be long in Cuba to realize that there was a great feeling of pride that Cuba was helping the Angolan "brothers" or "comrades," according to whom one spoke. When word got around at an inland rest resort where I was having a brief holiday that I had recently been in Angola, people gathered around to ask how the Cubans were doing. There were broad smiles when I praised the modesty of the Cuban troops and their popularity among the Angolan people.

One of the first public references to historical people's links between Cuba and Angola was on March 11, 1976, when Oscar

Oramas, Cuba's ambassador to Angola, presented his credentials to President Neto:

If Cuban blood was spilled to liberate Angola we do not forget that African blood was also spilled in other lands struggling for their independence. In fact African slaves, our brothers, fought with arms in hand for the liberation of Cuba. Africa was the gateway for our nationality, for our culture, for our psychology; and constitutes a fundamental factor of our nationhood. It was for this reason that Comandante Fidel Castro said we are a Latin-African country.

At the time that Oscar Oramas presented his credentials it was still a secret that "Che," with Castro's support, headed two hundred Cuban guerillas in training and fighting alongside the forces of the post-Lumumbist National Revolutionary Council, headed by Gaston Soumialot in the former Belgian Congo against the forces of Moise Tshombe and the swashbuckling white mercenaries of Major "Mad" Mike Hoare. As in Angola, it was only after counterrevolutionary forces intervened from the outside to crush revolutionary forces, that Cuba sent combat troops to the rescue.

A large proportion of the Cuban troops who came to Angola were black. As the nondescript uniforms of the FAPLA were gradually replaced by standardized Cuban jungle greens, it was impossible for an outsider to distinguish between Cuban and Angolan blacks. (As indeed it was very difficult to distinguish the white Angolans of Portuguese origin who had thrown in their lot with the FAPLA from white Cubans.)

November 5, 1975, when the decision was taken to send in Cuban combat troops, was the 132nd anniversary of one of the numerous slave uprisings in Cuba. On that occasion the leader of the uprising was a woman known as Black Carlota, a worker at the Triunvirato sugar mill in Matanzas province. With a machete as her only weapon, she had led her fellow workers in revolt. Who in 1843 could have imagined the manner in which her death would be revenged? It was in keeping with the temperament of Castro that he gave the name "Operation Carlota" to the military rescue mission in Angola. It was typical also that Castro escorted the commanders of the "first eighty-two" in his own jeep to the steps of the plane that was to take them on their long and hazardous flight from Havana to Luanda.

No objective observer would contest the fact that, within a month of having expelled the FNLA and UNITA from Luanda, the MPLA controlled twelve out of Angola's sixteen provincial capitals—which meant they controlled the provinces as well. This they had done entirely by their own efforts. There were Cuban military instructors—238 was the precise figure I heard—whose main task it was to teach the use of modern, shoulder-fired weapons to which the MPLA had access after supply by sea became possible in early 1975. There is no question that if the FAPLA had bridging equipment they would have pursued and destroyed the greater part of the Zaire column which drove toward Luanda on November 10 and would have captured Caxito by their own efforts much earlier than November 22. Because they were hopelessly outclassed in firepower, the FAPLA had to resort to passive defense measures such as dynamiting bridges. But with Cuban help on the way, Castro cabled to advise no more destruction of bridges—it would only hamper pursuit of the enemy. (When the pursuit got under way, it was the South African and Zaire troops who were blowing up bridges in their flights to the south and north respectively.) It is highly probable that when they arrived on November 9, the "first eighty-two" were rushed to the front-line positions on the Bengo river to handle the *Katyushas* which dispersed the Zaire motorized column advancing on the capital the following morning. But the airlift of the full reinforced special forces battalion was only completed on November 20. It was quickly reinforced by an artillery regiment and a motorized battalion which left Havana on November 9. After considerable U.S. naval and air harassment, the three transport vessels dropped anchor in Luanda harbor on November 27. Then followed intensive preparations to push the South African and Zaire invaders back and deal the *coup de grace* to the forces of the FNLA, UNITA, ELP, and the Portuguese vigilantes. Among the first tasks was the repair of thirteen bridges, north and south of Luanda, within twenty days of the arrival of the airlifted battalion. There was a crash program for training FAPLA specialized units to handle the equipment the Cubans had brought with them, which was far in excess of what their own troops needed. Plans were worked out with the FAPLA general staff for integrated and coordinated operations

There had been a very great numerical expansion of the

FAPLA from the moment the MPLA had been able to enter the urban centers within the framework of the Alvor Agreement. Young people flocked to the colors faster than they could be trained and armed. But, as I had witnessed in Vietnam, revolutionary conviction and enthusiasm provide remarkable shortcuts in mastering the techniques to push ahead with the revolution and, in the final analysis, to save one's life in combat. "Courage" is the watchword, "but courage with intelligence." Fight to win, not to die.

The combination of a battle-tempered hard core of FAPLA troops, greatly reinforced by new recruits who had been through a crash training program under Cuban instructors, Cuban armored and artillery units to outgun and outpace the South Africans, and clandestine MPLA Action Committees in every town occupied by the invaders paved the way for the counteroffensive launched by the MPLA in December, 1975, and January, 1976. Cuban armor and artillery were used almost exclusively against the South Africans still halted on the Queve river in the south, short of their targets of Porto Amboim, Gabela, and Quibala. In the north, the counteroffensive was carried out almost exclusively by the FAPLA, using a few tanks, transport, and heavy weapons brought in by the Cubans, with some Cuban specialist units. Carmona (Uije) was liberated on January 4; the big airbase at Negage, 25 miles to the east, on January 5; and Ambriz, on January 12. As the Zaire-FNLA forces depended on supplies flown in to Negage, or shipped by sea to Ambriz, these were disastrous losses. It was after the loss of Carmona—the Zaire occupying troops fleeing in panic when they realized they were almost surrounded and that FNLA troops supposed to be guarding the approaches were nonexistent—that the Zaire units pulled back nonstop across the border into their own country. It was at this point that British and other mercenaries were hurriedly flown out to try to stop a complete collapse on the northern front.

On the southern front, the counteroffensive got under way in the third week of January. The eastern anchors of the South African defense line, the towns of Cela and Santa Comba, were taken on January 21, the western anchor at Novo Redondo on January 24; and after that South African armored and artillery units started speeding south considerably faster than they had advanced, blowing up all bridges behind them. On February 8,

Huambo, the capital of the FNLA-UNITA "Democratic People's Republic" was abandoned in a retreat to the UNITA stronghold at Bié, 160 kilometres to the east. It was taken by FAPLA-Cuban forces four days later. After having consistently denied that there were any South African troops in Angola—until some South African prisoners were presented to the press in Luanda on December 16, 1975—Defense Minister Pieter Botha announced on February 3, 1976, that South African troops had withdrawn to the border areas and that some 4,000 to 5,000 were patrolling a "buffer zone" to a depth of 60 kilometres on the Angolan side of the frontier with Namibia.

Jonas Savimbi tacitly admitted defeat on February 12 by announcing that UNITA forces would revert to guerilla warfare and on February 24 Holden Roberto made a similar announcement on behalf of the FNLA. A decisive factor in this was not only the fact that their military strength rested almost entirely on that of South Africa and Zaire, which had respectively withdrawn their forces, but that the OAU on February 11 had recognized the MPLA's People's Republic of Angola as the sole government and admitted it to full membership.

Having played a decisive role in a shortcut to the end of the war and an MPLA victory, above all by expelling the South Africans, what were the Cubans to do next? Certainly they were not all going to pack their bags and return home because South Africa had pulled back its troops to the Namibian side of the frontier by the end of March, 1976. At the Conakry summit meeting between Fidel Castro and the presidents of Angola, Guinea, and Guiné-Bissau (March 14-15), it was agreed between Castro and Agostinho Neto that Cuba would withdraw part of its military forces, but would continue an accelerated training program for building up a modern Angolan army and provide various other types of aid. (The very insistence with which Henry Kissinger was demanding a total withdrawal of Cuban forces aroused suspicions of impending attempts at "destabilization.")

While fighting was still continuing in the southern frontier regions, civilian Cuban medical teams started arriving, their places in the transport planes being taken by departing military personnel. In a remarkably short time, a fully equipped Cuban hospital with seven doctors and an appropriate number of nurses and service personnel was set up in fifteen of Angola's sixteen

provinces. As the total number of doctors left in Angola after the mass Portuguese withdrawal was sixty-eight—with more than half of them in Luanda—this was no mean contribution. And no small sacrifice from a country which is itself short of public-health personnel.

By the end of 1976, Cuba was training some 6,500 Angolans—500 of them in Cuba, the rest in Angola—to become doctors, engineers, schoolteachers, specialists in sugar and coffee production, transport, bridge-building, housing construction, public-health work, various branches of industry, agriculture, and fishing. The Cuban experience in fighting illiteracy was also placed at the disposal of the Angolan government. Angolan slaves had been used to promote the Spanish plantation economy in Cuba just as, after they could no longer be exported abroad, the Portuguese used them to promote a colonial Portuguese plantation economy in Angola. Sugar and coffee were essential products in both countries. It was the same with cattle. But an independent Cuba had advanced by leaps and bounds in scientific and technological developments. It was natural for the Cuba of Fidel Castro to use its experience to shorten the road to economic development in Angola in all those areas in which it had expertise. And it was not just a question of passing on scientific and technological know-how. Cuban troops were out in the fields alongside Angolan volunteer workers on weekends and holidays to cut sugarcane, pick coffee, help with the rice harvest, and in general to extend a helping hand at all levels.

At the MPLA Congress which opened in Luanda on December 4, 1977, President Neto paid a special tribute to Cuban specialists and technicians. "Cuba did not merely supply equipment, which we could not have used at that time . . . but hundreds of civilian technical experts came to help . . ." Referring to the almost total lack of technicians after the Portuguese withdrawal, Neto said that about 3,500 Cuban technicians and skilled workers came to Angola during 1977. He referred specifically to the rehabilitation of the sugar industry—both production and refining—which would have been impossible without Cuban help. 250 Cuban specialists worked in the Coffee Institute and on the plantations. Cuban doctors and public health workers carried out over one million consultations and 16,000 surgical operations in the first nine months of 1977. About 500 Angolan transport workers

had graduated in Cuban-run technical courses and Cubans temporarily provided crews for Angola's modest coastal merchant fleet.

On the question of Cuban troops in Angola, Fidel Castro told visiting U.S. Congressmen (Frederick W. Richmond, Democrat of Brooklyn and Richard Nolan, Democrat of Minnesota) on December 5, 1977, that Cuba had withdrawn about 60 per cent of its forces following the victory over the South African and Zaire troops at the beginning of 1976. But following the Katangan invasion of the Shaba province of Zaire, which Neto regarded as a provocation to get Angola involved in a shooting war with Zaire and foreign powers supporting that country, Cuba had been asked to send some of its troops back. As this period—April-May 1977—coincided with a South African build-up on the Namibia-Angolan border, Cuban reinforcements were sent.

"If we had continued to withdraw at that point," Castro said, "Angola would have been invaded by Zaire and South Africa. This has not happened, and the Cuban presence in Angola is the reason." (1) Ann Crittenden in the *New York Times*, December 7, 1977. (1)

South African armored cars did make an incursion into Angola on August 27, 1977, at a point close to where the original invasion had taken place just two years earlier. They withdrew after a sharp clash with FAPLA forces. In his talk with the U.S. Congressmen, Castro made it very clear he had no intention of buying American friendship at the expense of that of Angola. Commenting on the view inherited by the U.S. State Department from the days of Henry Kissinger, that only Cuban willingness to withdraw from Angola could lead to a normalization of relations with the United States, Castro remarked that Cuba's relations with Africa grew out of the American-imposed blockade of Cuba's trade with Latin America: "How can we be asked now to destroy those links? If we were to negotiate this with the United States, it would destroy our relations with Angola. No country that respects itself could do that."

A Cuban exit does not seem likely in the foreseeable future!



## IX The Kissinger Version

As an example of trying to fool U.S. lawmakers on questions of peace or war, it is difficult to surpass Henry Kissinger's testimony at the hearings of the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on African Affairs regarding "U.S. Involvement in Civil War in Angola" (January 29-February 6, 1976). For a Harvard Ph.D. it was a lamentable performance; for a Secretary of State it bordered on the impeachable. Before a court of law, perjury could possibly have been invoked. To the credit of the Subcommittee, Kissinger's considerable eloquence and brilliance of argument fell, if not on exactly deaf ears, at least on those sharpened by such deceits as the Tonkin Gulf Resolution and by other denials of reprehensible activities in which U.S. involvement was later proved. Kissinger had long been a master of turning the truth upside down and getting away with it. His testimony was permeated with contempt for the intelligence and knowledge of the Subcommittee members. Witness, for instance, his version of the development of the national liberation struggle in Angola and the U.S. attitude toward it:

In 1961, the United States declared its support for self-determination in Portugal's African territories. At the time the National Front for the Liberation of Angola, FNLA, was a leading force in the struggle for independence. [In fact the FNLA was formed on March 28, 1962] Looking to the future, we sought to develop a relationship with the FNLA through providing it with financial, nonmilitary assistance. The U.S.S.R. had already established links with the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, MPLA, through the Portuguese Communist Party. The MPLA began military action against the Portuguese in the mid-1960s. The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, UNITA, an offshoot of the FNLA, also began to fight in the late 1960s. Although these various uncoordinated insurgency efforts caused considerable difficulties for Portugal, they posed no serious military threat to the dominance of Portuguese military forces in Angola.

However, the overthrow of the Portuguese government in April, 1974, and the growing strength of the Portuguese Communist Party apparently convinced Moscow that a revolutionary situation was developing in Angola. The Soviet Union began to exploit this situation in the fall of 1971 through the shipment of arms and equipment to the MPLA. The United States at the same time re-

ceived requests for support from other Angolan elements but turned them down. . . .

This might have gone down with primary-school students who never bothered to read the newspapers. Kissinger would never have even tried to get away with such gibberish at Harvard. How could he expect to get away with it before a Senate subcommittee? It is a measure of his contempt for the U.S. legislative process that he attempted it. The importance of the hearings, incidentally, was that it represented an attempt by Kissinger to reverse Congressional decisions taken a few weeks earlier to halt all U.S. aid, overt and covert, which might risk U.S. involvement in the Angolan war.

It was obvious from Kissinger's testimony before the Subcommittee that he was enraged that Congressional action had blocked the process of the United States moving into Southern Africa. It is difficult to imagine more misinformation (to use a polite term) packed into such a short space and at such a high level than that contained in the two paragraphs quoted above.

Perhaps there is some obscure verbal confirmation that the United States in 1961 supported "self-determination in Portugal's African territories." In practice, within the framework of NATO, the United States provided the necessary material support for Portugal to wage its war of suppressing such self-determination. Talk of a "relationship with the FNLA through providing it with financial, nonmilitary assistance" is merely a euphemism to cover up the fact that the CIA had bought up Holden Roberto as the "U.S. man in Angola"—although in fact he was in Kinshasa. The attempt to equate the buying up of Holden Roberto with any aid the Soviet Union was giving the MPLA at that time—and it is doubtful that there was any at all—is dishonest to say the least, and that this was done through the Portuguese Communist Party is nonsense. The MPLA had rejected that sort of relationship with the Portuguese Communist Party and Kissinger offered not a shred of evidence to the contrary.

The following sentence, that the MPLA "began military actions against the Portuguese in the mid-1960s," is an offense to anyone who has studied the public record of events. At the latest, MPLA military actions began on February 4, 1961. This is a matter of fact, recorded in any reference book worthy of the name dealing

with that period. The next sentence describing UNITA as an "offshoot of the FNLA" would also be disputed by most students of the Angolan national liberation struggle. It is true that Jonas Savimbi had been the FNLA "foreign minister" and had broken with Holden Roberto. But to describe UNITA as an offshoot of the FNLA is a shoddy bit of scholarship unworthy of anyone with Kissinger's academic qualifications. What he was clearly trying to do, by falsifying dates and distorting events, was to place the FNLA, the MPLA, and UNITA on a more or less equal footing, with a slight edge for the FNLA as the pioneer resistance movement, therefore qualifying for United States backing.

The next passage can be qualified as political chicanery. That it should have been practiced at such a high level—the second highest in the land—merits special attention. It is on a par with Watergate or the Tonkin Gulf Resolution for duplicity. The various "uncoordinated insurgency" efforts (note that the FNLA as a "leading force in the struggle for independence" had been downgraded before the end of the sentence to an "insurgent") "posed no serious military threat to the dominance of the Portuguese military forces in Angola." It was the "overthrow of the Portuguese government in April, 1974, and the growing strength of the Portuguese Communist Party" which "apparently convinced Moscow that a revolutionary situation was developing in Angola. . . ." Here Kissinger really outdid himself. The mind boggles at the fact that he actually went on record with such evidence of intellectual and political dishonesty. The "Captains' Coup" was the cause and not the result of the national liberation movements in Angola and the other Portuguese colonies! The evidence of every participant in the April 25 coup in Portugal from Spinola down, whatever their ideological options, was that a change at the top was necessary because of the military bankruptcy of fascist Portugal's situation in the African colonies. It is nothing short of incredible that Kissinger, alone of all world statesmen, should have tried to prove the opposite. To sum up his original thesis: The Soviet Union, through the Portuguese Communist Party, staged a coup in Portugal, then inspired the Portuguese colonies to stage a revolt in Angola supported by Moscow! He continued in the same vein:

It is no coincidence that major violence [in Luanda] broke out in March, 1975, when large shipments of Soviet arms began to arrive—thousands of infantry weapons, machine guns, bazookas, and rockets. On March 23, the first of repeated military clashes between the MPLA and FNLA occurred. They increased in frequency in April, May, and June, when deliveries of Communist arms and equipment, including mortars and armored vehicles, escalated by air and sea. In May, the MPLA forced the FNLA out of the areas north and east of Luanda and, in June, took effective control of Cabinda. . . .

This too is sheer dishonesty. The version of these events described in an earlier chapter was confirmed by documents of the Portuguese authorities in Luanda at the time. There were "repeated military clashes" from March onward, but the initiative was exclusively that of the FNLA. Evidence of this may be found in a document signed by twelve Portuguese doctors from the Portuguese military hospital in Luanda, on March 28, 1975, and submitted to the Portuguese high commissioner. As they were also integrated into the armed forces, subject to military discipline, it was clear that only exceptional circumstances could have moved them to act:

We, the undersigned, military doctors of the Portuguese army, while in the service of the Luanda Military Hospital, on March 28, 1975: (1) Were present at the arrival at this hospital, and rendered first aid to scores of people wounded by firearms, the majority of them civilians. (2) From all the victims we collected identical evidence, namely: (a) They were people of diverse origins and ethnic backgrounds, of whom the number at the beginning exceeded one hundred and who had been arrested at various points on the public thoroughfares of Luanda on March 22 and 23 by elements of the ELNA. (b) They had been accused of belonging to the MPLA or of having taken part in disorders between the civilian population and the ELNA; they were incarcerated in the ELNA Information Center and then transferred to the Sao Pedro de Barra fortress.\* (c) From there they were transferred to places in the region of Caxito, where summary executions took place. (d) Some of the victims who were shot down remained where they fell but had survived and could later make good their escape. In face of the gravity of what we have set forth, and of the ample evidence of genocide being perpetrated against the civilian population of Luanda, of which this report is

perhaps only one example, we request an urgent and rigorous inquiry into these events, and the adoption of more energetic measures, before such acts of Nazi bestiality become generalized and institutionalized within a climate of fascist terror.<sup>3</sup>

One can obviously excuse Dr. Kissinger for not having been aware of this particular document and the details to which it refers. But whichever of his hats he was wearing at the time, he was morally, politically, and professionally—especially as an academic—bound to check the facts and report accordingly to the Senate subcommittee. As it turned out he was only interested in deceiving the members for his own devious purposes.

Regarding Cabinda, nobody should have been better informed than Henry Kissinger. The Cabinda Enclave, separated from the rest of Angola by a broad strip of Zaire, has the good fortune—or misfortune according to how things go—to be rich in oil, exploited by the Gulf Oil Corporation of the United States. Within two months of the “Captains’ Coup,” Nixon had a mysterious *tête-à-tête* with Spinola in the Azores. Following a historic speech by Spinola on July 27, 1974, in which he was forced by the progressive elements then at the head of the Armed Forces Movement to state the principle of complete independence for the African colonies or “territories,” there was a meeting at Sal, in the Cape Verde Islands between Spinola and President Mobutu of Zaire. Accompanying Mobutu were two of the most trusted aides of Holden Roberto, Vaal Neto (later Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Huambo-based Democratic People’s Republic of Angola) and N’Gola Kabangu, FNLA Minister of the Interior in the three-movement Transitional Government, Minister of Industry and Energy in the Huambo-based government,

According to details later revealed in the Lisbon press, an eight-point secret agreement was signed: (1) Spinola would support Holden Roberto. (2) Cabinda would be ceded to Zaire. (3) Spinola would place at the disposal of Mobutu an Angolan team loyal to himself. (4) Cabinda would be handed over to another team, dependent on Mobutu and Spinola but which would be directed by FLEC—the artificially inspired Cabinda secessionist movement. (5) Support by Spinola for Mobutu’s concept of a Zaire-Angola-Cabinda Federation of which Mobutu would be president and Holden Roberto vice-president. (6) Help by Mobutu in mobilizing some other African heads of state to pro-

mote the image of Spinola and his associates in Portugal as “genuine anti-colonialists of a new type.” (7) A guarantee that Portuguese and multinational companies operating in Portugal could freely exploit, for a minimum of twenty years, the natural resources of Angola, Cabinda, and Zaire. (8) Aid by Mobutu for Portugal to “recuperate” Mozambique and Guiné-Bissau, not only by help in provoking *coups d’état* and assassinations but by the infiltration of mercenaries and the corruption of certain cadres of the PAIGC and FRELIMO.

It is hard to believe that such an exponent of “destabilization” as Henry Kissinger was unaware of this compact. History has proved over and over again that oil is always mixed with blood. In securing the Cabinda Enclave, the MPLA—well aware of Mobutu’s designs on the area—was defending Angola’s patrimony against all comers. As early as November 10, 1974, fifty commandos of Zaire’s “Special Forces” under the command of a notorious French mercenary, Jean Kay, and supported by some local armed members of the FLEC, had tried to stage a coup. Two Portuguese sentries were killed. Portuguese troops were flown in from Luanda five days later, the coup attempt put down, and Jean Kay arrested. It was not the only attempt at a French-backed takeover. On July 25, 1975, a Paris-based secessionist group headed by a certain N’Zita Henrique Tiago announced that it had set up a “Provisional Revolutionary Government” for Cabinda. Six days later, the head of the rival FLEC, Luis Ranque Franque, announced from his Kinshasa headquarters that henceforth Cabinda was an “independent territory.” Happily, despite Henry Kissinger’s regrets, Cabinda was firmly in MPLA hands, having been one of their strongholds from the early days of armed struggle. The MPLA leadership was determined that Cabinda should not become another Katanga or Biafra, the scene of another secessionist war in which outside powers fought for the right to exploit the area’s natural resources.

The Kissinger version continues:

In August, intelligence reports indicated the presence of Soviet and Cuban military advisers, trainers, and troops, including the first Cuban combat troops. If statements by Cuban leaders [which Kissinger did not quote] are to be believed, a large Cuban military training program began in Angola in June, and Cuban advisers were there before then. By September, the MPLA offensive had forced

UNITA out of several major central and southern Angolan cities.

In early September, the poorly equipped UNITA forces turned in desperation to South Africa for assistance against the MPLA, which was overrunning UNITA's ethnic areas in the south. South Africa responded by sending in military equipment, and some military personnel—without consultation with the United States.

The UNITA forces launched a successful counteroffensive which swept the MPLA out of the southern and most of the central part of Angola.

In October massive increases in Soviet and Cuban military assistance began to arrive. More Cuban troops were ferried to Angola. Cuba inaugurated its own airlift of troops in late October. And the MPLA declared itself the government of Angola, in violation of the Alvor Accord.

Kissinger seemed incapable of getting anything straight—even dates available from a perusal of the daily press. And if one source of information is discredited more than another in the Western world, it is U.S. "intelligence sources." Such sources were capable of reporting a nonexistent naval clash between North Vietnamese patrol boats and American destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin, in August, 1964. But with the most sophisticated gadgetry of detection that the world has ever known they were incapable of discovering the approach of at least one battalion-sized "Vietcong" unit around each of 140 cities, towns, and U.S. bases, or a company of commandos around the U.S. embassy on the eve of the 1968 Têt offensive in South Vietnam! About the only fact which stands up in the previous four paragraphs from Kissinger's testimony is that "Cuban advisers were there before then" (June, 1975). Everything else is wrong—in context, in chronology of events, in facts, in interpretation.

If one takes the last point of the fourth paragraph first, Kissinger might have mentioned that on August 29, 1975, Portugal formally declared the Alvor Agreement *null and void* and dissolved the Transitional Government. It was on this basis that Portugal decided on the total withdrawal of its forces by November 11, 1975, instead of the phased withdrawal under the terms of the Alvor Agreement, by the end of February, 1976. There was no Alvor Agreement left when the MPLA set up the People's Republic on November 11, 1975, or the FNLA-UNITA set up the Democratic People's Republic on November 12, 1975. A Secre-

tary of State is surely supposed to know about such matters! The UNITA "successful counteroffensive" was simply the famous "drive north" of the South African column of armored cars and artillery units, with more Portuguese ELP troops than UNITA, which put UNITA in charge of many southern and center towns and cities, but by no means "swept the MPLA out of the southern and most of the central part of Angola." Curious also that Kissinger thought it necessary to mention that the South African dispatch of military equipment and "some military personnel" was done without consultation with the United States. In a famous interview which the Senior Editor of *Newsweek*, Arnaud de Borchgrave, had with the South African prime minister, Balthazar Johannes Vorster (see *Newsweek*, May 17, 1976), the following exchange took place:

*De Borchgrave:* Would it be accurate to say that the U.S. solicited South Africa's help to turn the tide against Russians and Cubans in Angola last fall?

*Vorster:* I do not want to comment on that. The U.S. government can speak for itself. I am sure you will appreciate that I cannot violate the confidentiality of government-to-government communications. But if you are making the statement, I won't deny it.

*De Borchgrave:* Would it also be accurate to say that you received a green light from Kissinger for a military operation in Angola and that at least six moderate black African presidents had given you their blessings for the same operation?

*Vorster:* If you say that of your own accord, I will not call you a liar.

True, Vorster later denied the statement and De Borchgrave was banned "for life" from visiting South Africa. De Borchgrave threatened to sue Vorster for libel and the "ban for life" was suddenly cancelled. De Borchgrave, an old acquaintance from several wars, personally confirmed to me that his version was accurate and I believe he is too much of a professional to make an error on such a crucial question. The implication is that Kissinger gave Vorster the green light but Congressional action a few weeks later switched it to red, which is the color that the faces of Kissinger and Vorster must have assumed when they realized the decision was irrevocable.

The reference to the MPLA having overrun UNITA's "ethnic areas in the South" also requires some analysis. Especially as it was backed up by Kissinger under questioning. He maintained

UNITA had by far the greatest popular support. This was supported by one of those splendid maps the Pentagon was so expert in producing to prove the war was being won in Vietnam, or to prove any other point the Pentagon wanted to make. Such a map was produced at the hearings by the Deputy-Secretary of Defense, Robert Ellsworth, and is included in the published record. It shows certain shaded areas as those under MPLA control. These include Cabinda, and then a stretch running from Ambrizete down to Novo Redondo on the west coast more or less extending east straight across Angola to the Zaire border. A much bigger area stretching to the border with Namibia in the south and Zambia in the west was classified as UNITA-controlled territory, the area to the north of the shaded area up to the frontiers with Zaire was said to be FNLA-controlled.

The map and what it was intended to prove amounted to a monumental exercise in deception. The Pentagon—and Kissinger—seemed to have accepted that the three movements were tribal-based, true enough as far as the FNLA and UNITA were concerned but not in relation to the MPLA. The map very roughly represented the distribution of the three main ethnic groups. Various figures have been given as to their respective size and one can take Colin Legum's figures<sup>5</sup> as being roughly correct, at least in their proportions. Seven hundred thousand Bakongo in the north; two million Ovimbundu in the south, and one and a half million Mbundu in the north-central region. It was this ethnic map which was presented by Ellsworth to back up Kissinger's arguments on the proportionate political influence of the three movements. But the MPLA was never tribal-based. It had all-Angolan solid roots all over the country and from the moment of its foundation had fought against tribalism, racism, and regionalism. It is true that Holden Roberto belonged to the Bakongo and Jonas Savimbi to the Ovimbundu, but to suggest they were accepted as the sole leaders of those tribal groupings, or that there were not all-Angolan aspirations among the Bakongo, the Ovimbundu, and the Mbundu was sheer nonsense.

The reference by Kissinger to the "first Cuban combat troops" arriving in August, 1975, is also unfounded and as it is based on U.S. "intelligence sources" it can be discarded. It was presumably thrown in because of the evidence that South African troops had entered southern Angola in late July and early August.

During three visits to Angola and extensive travels starting in February, 1976, I never heard any evidence of the presence of Cuban combat troops before the arrival of "the first eighty-two" on November 9, 1975. Nor could one find any evidence of Kissinger's assertion at the hearings that, at the time the OAU held its emergency session on January 13, 1976, the FNLA-UNITA forces "still controlled about seventy per cent of the territory and seventy per cent of the population."

For eloquence and a sense of "morality," it was hard to fault Dr. Kissinger's performance:

The United States must make it clear that Angola sets no precedent; this type of action will not be tolerated elsewhere. This must be demonstrated by both the Executive and the Congress in our national interests and in the interests of world peace.

To the Soviet Union and Cuba, the administration says: We will continue to make our case to the American public. We will not tolerate wanton disregard for the interests of others and for the cause of world peace. To the American people, the administration says that the time has come to set aside self-accusation and division. Our own country's safety and the progress of mankind depend crucially upon a united and determined America. Today, as throughout 200 years, the world looks to us to stand up for what is right.

By virtue of our strength and values we are leaders in defense of freedom. Without us there can be neither security nor progress. . . .

The published record makes no mention of any "amens" at this point although Kissinger seems to have thought they were called for. Perhaps some of the Senators had irreverent thoughts that every dictator from Thailand to Chile knew he could count on U.S. executive support in any emergency. Certainly the more perceptive of the Senators would know that an international public opinion poll as to whether the United States was seen as the global champion of freedom and progress would not sustain Kissinger's claim!

## X The Nito Alves Coup Attempt

At 4:30 A.M. on May 27, 1977, Luanda residents were awakened by machine-gun fire and the sound of exploding grenades from the direction of the city's Sau Paulo prison. Almost immediately afterward, small-arms fire was heard from the vicinity of the government radio station, which soon started broadcasting exhortations, in the name of its "Action Committee," for everyone to hasten to a "mass demonstration" in front of the People's Palace, where President Neto and Prime Minister Nascimento had their offices. The only response within the next few hours was the arrival of a few dozen youths—obviously curious as to what was going on—in front of the palace. Nothing resembling a "mass demonstration." About 9 A.M., another broadcast was made, this time in the name of the Ward Committee of Sazimbanga, one of the poorest of Luanda's *museque* (literally, "sand slum") suburbs. For the perplexed Luanda residents and others within range of the capital's under-powered radio transmitters, this set the real tone for what was going on. It said in part:

In an emergency meeting to analyze the situation, the Sazimbanga Ward Committee decided on new revolutionary forms of struggle. The Neto government, using open cynicism, ordered the forces of repression to act against the revolution under the most criminal propaganda it has ever known. Nothing can save the revolution unless the people rise up. The FAPLA have joined the people's masses to bar the road to the alliance of right-wing and Maoist forces which have conspired against the victories of the people's revolution. . . .

Another broadcast urged all "those who have felt humiliated because of the color of your skin" to join the demonstration. How wise the MPLA leadership had been to wage a campaign against racism, tribalism, and regionalism of the FNLA and UNITA. The appeal to racism fell on deaf ears, but it pointed the finger at who was behind the whole affair—Nito Alves, former Minister of the Interior. No crowds gathered for the demonstration. On the contrary, people were staying indoors, awaiting some clarification of the situation. The streets were virtually deserted. By 11 A.M., the radio announced that various "corrupt ministers" had been arrested and would be executed in Revolution Square for "betraying the

confidence of the masses." Again gunfire was heard from the direction of the radio station, and toward midday radio listeners could hear a brief argument during a further exhortation, then the announcement: "*Radio Nacional* is with President Neto. Comrades, the Angolan radio is in the hands of the revolutionaries. The situation is normalized. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

What had been going on? A full reply to that involves many of the factors which have led to such tragic consequences in many of Africa's independence movements, especially after power had been won. After the Alvor Agreement, Nito Alves was sent into Luanda to prepare the arrival of the MPLA representation in the Transitional Government. He did his work well, but for himself as well as the MPLA. In creating the embryo People's Power organizations, he was exceeding MPLA instructions and setting up his own political power base. In distributing tens of thousands of weapons and never giving an account of to whom they had been distributed, he was giving muscle to that power base. At first Nito Alves had flirted with the self-styled Maoist group in Portugal, the MRPP (Movement for the Reconstruction of the Party of the Proletariat) and had supported parallel groups in Luanda, including the Amilcar Cabral Committees. Later, seeing that the wind was not blowing in that direction, he turned on them and was most zealous—once he became Minister of the Interior—in ensuring that they were suppressed and the ringleaders arrested. As he needed an outside power base—if not China, why not the Soviet Union? Heading the MPLA delegation to the 25th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party (February 24-March 5, 1976) there is no doubt that Nito Alves used the occasion to seek Soviet support. Whether he succeeded is another matter, but he acted as if he had. From about that time onward, he covertly, and in some cases almost overtly, set about challenging Neto's leadership of the MPLA.

A case in point, of which I was an eyewitness, was during the trial in Luanda of thirteen British and American mercenaries. The MPLA leadership had decided that the trial must be held under the most impeccable conditions of judicial impartiality. It was not intended as just a punishment trial of the captured mercenaries, but as an exposure trial of the whole sordid business in the hope of getting international action to stop this practice once and for all. In so doing the Angolan government hoped to exercise an immediate

deterrent effect on the recruitment of mercenaries by the Smith regime in Zimbabwe and their use in Namibia and elsewhere. It was to this end that the government had invited legal experts from thirty-nine countries and representatives of the world press to observe and report on the trial. In the early stages, the opinion of the international legal observers and press was unanimous as to the admirable serenity and fairness of the proceedings. But suddenly there were street demonstrations with organized marching columns with banners demanding death for all the mercenaries. There was extensive radio coverage and also coverage in one of the capital's two daily newspapers, *Diario de Luanda*. Inquiries made by myself and other journalists showed that MPLA and UNTA (Trade Union) representatives tried to stop the demonstrations but were met with objections that these were people's "spontaneous" demonstrations and remarks such as "whose side are *you* on." They lasted just one day. Next morning, politically minded readers of the government-owned *Jornal de Luanda* understood what was going on when there was a front-page article stressing that Agostinho Neto was not only president of the Republic, but also commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

Another incident occurred when the people's prosecutor at the trial of the mercenaries, Manuel Rui Alves Monteiro, made his summation. The court was packed with people who had not previously attended the proceedings. They burst into cheers and wild applause when he demanded the death penalty for all thirteen accused. The street and court demonstrations did what they had been intended to do—cloud the atmosphere of judicial impartiality in which the trial was held and challenge the leadership of Agostinho Neto. It was no secret for any well-informed observer in Luanda that Nito Alves, as Minister of the Interior, was the guiding hand in both these incidents. A born opportunist with an obsession for power, he was appealing to racist emotions to enhance his own popularity. There is every reason to believe that, because of his manipulations of public opinion, the sentences passed on the mercenaries were severer than they would otherwise have been.

Whether Nito Alves believed he had Soviet support in all this cannot be known. He certainly did not have the support of the two Soviet legal experts at the trial. Leaving, like most of those on the International Commission of Inquiry on Mercenaries, before the

sentences were pronounced, the two Soviet members, Vladimir Kudriatsev and Aran Poltariak, took me aside before they got into their car for the airport and said: "We want to make it clear to you, and through you, to the world press, that in the event of any blanket death sentences, we, the Soviet representatives on the International Commission, are opposed to this. We uphold basic principles of international law—no punishment without a crime and individual sentences according to the degree of guilt." (Four of the thirteen were in fact executed.)

Nito Alves, however, fired another shot about the time of the Luanda trial. In late June, 1976, he made a long speech to mark the holding of the first election for People's Power Committees in Luanda. The speech was written by Edgar Vales, whose sister Cita Vales had been his mistress. Together with another brother, Edmond, these three white Angolans, born in Cabinda, formed a sort of inner and ultra-leftist advisory council to Nito Alves. Some parts of the speech, which I heard over the radio, would perhaps have been appropriate for a meeting celebrating the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution—for example, its detailed history as to how the Bolsheviks came to power. It also contained a blatant black-racist remark, written in, as we learned later, in his own handwriting by Nito Alves to the effect that racism will disappear in Angola on the day that the comrades sweeping the streets will be not only blacks but also whites and those of mixed race.

I later asked the Soviet Tass correspondent what he thought of the speech and he replied: "I don't know what was in it. My interpreter refused to translate." That Nito Alves courted the Soviet embassy was well known; one Soviet diplomat was recalled for having responded too openly to the courtship.

Obviously the activities of Nito Alves—and his aspirations—had not gone unnoticed by President Neto and top aides such as Lucio Lara, "Iko" Carreira, and others. There had been a meeting of the MPLA's Central Committee in October, 1976, at which a number of key decisions were made. The Ministry of the Interior was abolished in favor of a security body answerable directly to the MPLA and Nito Alves was dropped as a co-opted member of the Political Bureau but remained a member of the Central Committee. It was decided to appoint a "commission of inquiry" on "fractionalism," its effect as a "destabilizing influence" on the economic, political, and social life of the country, and to find out

who was responsible. The report on the results of the inquiry was to be presented by Comandante Saydi Mingas (Finance Minister) at a meeting of the Central Committee, at the Museum of the Revolution, at 10 A.M. on May 20, 1977. Fifteen minutes before it was due to start, President Neto changed the meeting place to Futungo de Belas, ten miles south of Luanda near his personal residence. Two members of the Central Committee, Nito Alves and José van Dunem, deputy to "Balakoff," political commissar of the FAPLA, protested at the last minute change. They had good reason to do so, as was learned later.

The scenario as defined by the chief plotters was somewhat similar to that enacted during the trial of the mercenaries. "Spontaneous" mass demonstrations outside the Museum of the Revolution against the government and MPLA leadership, for a start. Then armed units, faithful to Nito Alves and Van Dunem, called in first to encircle the demonstrators on the pretext of protecting the Central Committee, but in fact to isolate them from units loyal to the MPLA leadership. Then an ultimatum for the immediate dissolution of the Central Committee and Political Bureau. In case of refusal, the immediate arrest and execution of all members opposing the dissolution. Perhaps an offer for Neto and a few others to go into exile which they would certainly have refused.

The sudden change of meeting place upset these plans. There was just enough time to cancel those that had been made, but none to organize new ones. Nito Alves and José van Dunem could not do otherwise but attend the meeting. The report of Saydi Mingas was devastating. Alves and Van Dunem had succeeded in setting up a parallel organization to that of the MPLA, deliberately aimed at sabotaging the economy and causing mass discontent among the population and, by withholding their salaries and their rations, within the armed forces. To all complaints, their standard response was: "Complain to the whites and mestizos who run the government." (Agostinho Neto's wife is white, Lucio Lara and "Iko" Carreira are of mixed race.) After listening to the report there was no doubt in the minds of the overwhelming majority of the Central Committee members as to who the "fractionalists" were. There were demands ranging from expulsion of Nito Alves and José van Dunem from the Central Committee to their arrest and immediate trial. Nito Alves counterattacked by demanding that a thirteen-point "thesis" which he had prepared should be the

basis of the Central Committee discussion. This was refused because the meeting had been called to discuss the report of the Commission of Inquiry. But Alves was allowed to present his thirteen points, the last of which contained the essence of what all his activities had been about: "If there is any fractionalism within the MPLA," he said, "it is among you, the present leadership, that it is to be found. I am the incarnation of the revolution. History has reserved for me the role of carrying out the revolutionary process. The conditions which I demand are the only possible ones. Immediate resignation of the Political Bureau, suspension of the Central Committee and the appointment of a revolutionary political-military committee to assume the leadership of the country." Alves was thus demanding nothing less than the liquidation of the Neto leadership. A point of no return had been reached.

Neto, who had not intervened in the discussions, suspended the meeting at midday to hold private talks with Nito Alves and José van Dunem in a last-minute appeal for unity in the face of what he considered another impending attempt from outside to "destabilize" Angola. It was useless; the positions were irreconcilable. When the session resumed, Neto pointed out that the Central Committee had in its hands concrete evidence of the participation "of these comrades, if I can still call them 'comrades,' in a widespread conspiracy against the state, the government, and the MPLA." He called for their expulsion from the Central Committee. Alves and Van Dunem vigorously protested, claiming that the president's role should be restricted to that of an "arbiter between various tendencies," to which Neto replied that to limit himself to such a role would be "to abandon my fundamental prerogatives of leadership of the state, the MPLA, and the government."<sup>2</sup>

Alves argued that in any case the Central Committee only had the right to "suspend" and not to "exclude" and demanded that the session continue for at least another three days. This was refused, but it was agreed that a further session would be held the following morning. By that time there were street demonstrations in favor of the Neto leadership, with the main slogans: "Long Live the MPLA" and "Down with fractionalism." In a short meeting on the morning of May 21, the Central Committee voted overwhelmingly to expel Nito Alves and José van Dunem. On the afternoon of that same day, at a hastily assembled meeting at the Luanda sports



stadium, as reported by Sara Rodriguez, Neto took his case to the people of Luanda:

"Although the Alves-Van Dunem faction put on a revolutionary cloak, they were in fact helping the counterrevolutionaries by their splitting tactics and by their practice of operating secretly while refusing to debate questions openly. During our history we have several times seen that those who practice factionalism—evoking ideological or tribal, or even class issues—always end by allying themselves with our enemies. In order to fight the MPLA, any group must ally itself with some force. Since we have the support of all the progressive forces in the world, such a group will . . . end up allying itself with the reactionaries. . . ."

The factionalist tendency has also been accused of trying to gain support from the Soviet Union. The leading Angolan newspaper, *Jornal de Angola*, commented: "During a trip of a few days . . . Nito Alves tried to draw into his adventure a country with whom the MPLA has solid relations of friendship and international solidarity. The maneuver was well thought out. It is part of imperialism's technique to try to set revolutionaries in contradiction with each other."

A flood of crude pamphlets were circulated in Luanda in the past few weeks accusing the MPLA of "anti-Sovietism." At the May 21 meeting, President Neto replied: "There are no militants more faithful to the socialist cause than the traditional MPLA leadership—not for sentimental or subjective reasons. We know what the Soviet Union is," he said, recalling the Soviet Union's support for the MPLA in the difficult days of armed struggle.

Brushing aside the "anti-Soviet" charges, he noted ironically that: "Outside Angola they criticize us for being under Soviet guidance. They say it is the Soviet Union that is ruling Angola. These are lies. As long as this political leadership is ruling the country we will always defend our independence and our nonalignment. And if the Soviet ambassador comes to me with some difficult problem, the first thing I say is: 'Wait a few hours,' and as usual I consult with the Political Bureau to discuss whether or not we should accept proposals made to us. It is we who make the decisions. This is the fundamental principle of our independence. We do not accept orders from anybody, whoever they are." President Neto also refuted imperialist allegations that Angola is under Cuban control.

In Luanda, following house-to-house searches in some residential areas, arms caches have been found—though it is not yet certain whether these arms supplies were being hidden by factional elements or by other counterrevolutionaries. . . .<sup>3</sup>

The conspirators went ahead with their plans to stage an armed coup. Part of their activities was known to Neto and other MPLA leaders, but the depth and breadth of the plot was not known. When Simon Malley, editor of the authoritative Paris-based fortnightly *Afrique-Asie* asked why, even in view of what was known, they were not arrested, Neto replied that he had so often been accused of arbitrary acts in dealing with opposition and factionalist elements that he preferred the risk of letting things take their course. Let the enemies fully expose themselves before the public. Doubtless he was right, but the exposure of the lengths to which the Alves-Van Dunem group were prepared to go was to have tragic consequences.

Within half an hour of the first shots being fired at the Sao Paulo prison, the commander of Cuban troops in Angola was at Neto's side. He had already been in telex contact directly with Fidel Castro. "If you need any help you have our total support. Fidel's instructions!" Neto picked up the phone and called "Iko." "Great," was his reply. "But we have our 9th Armored Brigade which assures the defense of Luanda so it shouldn't be necessary." The Cuban commander remained at Neto's headquarters in case his services were needed. And as tangible evidence of the level of Cuban support, he announced that Fidel's brother, Raoul, Minister of Defense and Second Secretary of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party, was ready to leave immediately for Luanda if Neto so desired. Neto did so desire, and Raoul Castro was on his way within hours.<sup>4</sup>

What even the usually well-informed "Iko" did not know was that the commanding officers of the 9th Brigade were in cahoots with the plotters, as was the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, "Monstro Imortal." (I had always wondered what sort of personality would choose such a *nom de guerre*!) Nor was it known that "Bakaloff," Political Commissar of the armed forces, Pedro Fortunato, Commissioner of Luanda province, and David Aires M'achado, Minister of Trade, were among the ringleaders of the plot. (Participation of the latter explained why imported consumer goods were left to rot in storage depots while the shelves of the cooperative shops were empty of goods.)

The Sao Paulo prison was easily taken over and most of the prisoners, including nine supporters of Nito Alves, were freed. Oddly enough, the only ones not to take advantage of the situation

despite the exhortation of the "liberators" were some leaders of the "Active Revolt" and the nine white mercenaries, imprisoned there since their sentencing almost a year previously. The 9th Armored Brigade was the only major military unit to have its headquarters inside Luanda. Its commanding officer—loyal to Neto—was away on a military training course in North Korea; his replacement was with Nito Alves. It was the ten tanks and armored cars of the 9th Brigade which were used to seize the prison and radio station. They then took up positions around the presidential palace. How all this could happen was related by "Iko" to Simon Malley:

Immediately after the Central Committee decision of May 21, we knew that Nito Alves and José van Dunem would try something. They stopped living at their homes and moved from place to place for fear of being arrested. I set up radio patrols on the night of May 26. These kept me informed as to what was going on in the city. The "Nitists" were knocking on the doors of houses in the residential areas, asking people to turn out next day to demonstrate against the Central Committee and Political Bureau and to demand the reintegration into the Central Committee of Nito Alves and Van Dunem. We learned also that street barricades were being set up to prevent the MPLA leadership from moving from their residences in Miramar [a Luanda city district where most of the MPLA leadership—including Nito Alves and Van Dunem] to the presidential palace.

When the first shots were heard, around 4:30 A.M., we did not quite know how many military units were involved. Above all we had no idea that the 9th Armored Brigade was implicated. We always had confidence in this unit which had fought in the north against the FNLA and the Zaire troops and had behaved very well. I managed to get to the Defense Ministry about 5 A.M. where I found several of our military commanders. Each was charged with a mission to contact the various units and garrisons—to sound out the whole situation and determine what action should be taken. The Comandantes Bula and "Dangereux" from staff headquarters should go to the 9th Brigade garrison headquarters at Dos Dragoes. Meanwhile the brigade's deputy commander, Comandante Nguiana, had also gone there. He was received with a volley of shots. He escaped but did not succeed in warning the FAPLA Chief of Staff, Xietu, who was also on his way there together with Comandantes "Dangereux," Bula, and Nzaji [head of the FAPLA security services]. On the way, they met a tank of the 9th Brigade, coming from the residential areas.

Not knowing that this was an "enemy" tank, they followed it with their cars into the garrison courtyard.

The tank turret swiveled round immediately and threatened them with its cannon. They were forced to get out of their cars. Disarmed and heavily guarded, they were taken into the room of a young officer. Only Xietu, whose car was last in the convoy, managed to escape by threatening the troops who surrounded him with a grenade which he pulled out of his pocket. It was in the young officer's room that the Comandantes, Bula, "Dangereux," and Nzaji found the Minister of Finance, Saydi Mingas. Three other comrades—"Eurico," head of personnel at the Defense Ministry, Comandante Gato, the recently named Commander of the Port of Luanda, and the director of the Economic Affairs Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Garcia Neto, who had been arrested in the city—were also brought into the same room.<sup>5</sup> In all, there were about a hundred persons arrested at the barricades because they had documents indicating that they belonged to various government services.

In the meantime, "Iko" had received word from Helder Neto, one of the heads of the DISA (Internal Security Agency), that a tank had burst into the courtyard of the Sao Paulo prison. Shortly after came the word that Helder Neto had been killed, together with some prison guards; and that, apart from the nine Nito Alves activists, about thirty other FNLA, UNITA, and FLEC prisoners had been freed. His account continued:

When we understood that the 9th Armored Brigade and several units of the military police were involved in the conspiracy, intervention by tanks of the Presidential Guard and of the Reconnaissance Brigade of the army staff headquarters became absolutely indispensable.<sup>6</sup>

It was then found that communications with the headquarters of both the Presidential Guard, twenty kilometers north of Luanda at Cuaco, and the Reconnaissance Brigade in the southern outskirts of the city, had been cut. Comandante Onambwe rushed off by jeep to the Presidential Guard and put himself at the head of their eight tanks in a dash to the People's Palace where they joined forces with the seven armored cars of the Reconnaissance Brigade, which had already spearheaded the re-occupation of Sao Paulo prison and the radio station. There remained the key ques-

tion of the 9th Armored Brigade. It was known that some other army units had been tricked into reinforcing this unit but its real strength was an unknown factor. "Iko" recommended that President Neto accept the offer of Cuban help. Within minutes four Cuban tanks rumbled out of their garrison headquarters at Viana, about twenty kilometers south of Luanda. At this moment Cita Vales, who was together with Van Dunem in a temporary headquarters near Viana, wrote in her diary: "All is lost. The Cubans are moving."

The Cuban tanks met up with those of the Presidential Guard and the armored cars of the Reconnaissance Brigade at the radio station. The combined force then set out for the Headquarters of the 9th Armored Brigade. Onambwe, acting on direct instructions from Neto, gave the mutineers just twenty minutes to free the prisoners, lay down their arms, and "unconditionally surrender." The twenty minutes proved to be too long. While most of the prisoners were being released, the six most important ones were removed to a house in Sazimbanga. Their hands tied behind their backs with nylon cord, they were machine-gunned, their bodies then placed in two cars, gasoline poured over them and the two cars set alight. Miraculously, Gato was left for dead on the floor of the bathroom where the machine-gunning took place and was found by the crew of an armored car which raced to the spot once it was found that the main hostages were missing. He testified that some of his comrades were still alive when they were carried to the cars and burned to death.

By 1:30 P.M. on May 27, just nine hours after it had started, the coup attempt had been crushed. The commanders of the 9th Armored Brigade, the only real muscle on which Nito Alves counted, had accepted the ultimatum. The public had not responded to the plotters' exhortations for mass demonstrations. Had they done so, Agostinho Neto and other MPLA leaders would have suffered the same fate as Finance Minister Saydi Mingas, Garcia Neto, "Eurico," and the others. By the time it was over, however, about two hundred people had lost their lives, almost all of them in opposing the plotters.

Among those captured immediately after the showdown with the 9th Armored Brigade, was Pedro Fortunato. He gave some very frank testimony to a preliminary Commission of Inquiry set up immediately after order was restored—but while the main

plotters were still at large. Extracts of testimony given to the commission were published in the *Jornal de Angola*. Thus, in summarized form, Fortunato explained as follows:

Once the projected demonstration had reached the People's Palace, a "delegation" would have gone forward and arrested the president. At that moment, Alves was to have read a proclamation over the national radio announcing the new regime had taken over.

Had more than a couple of hundred people shown up, or had the army sided with the plotters, [Monstro] Imortal was to have followed up the proclamation by arresting and "eliminating" government leaders. Among those scheduled for elimination, according to Fortunato, were MPLA Secretary-General Lucio Lara, Minister of Defense "Iko" Carreira, Comandante Onambwe (who took part in recapturing the radio station), Comandante Nzaji (who was murdered May 27 when he tried to negotiate with the plotters on behalf of the government), Comandante Ludy, head of state security, and Comandante Xietu, chief of the army general staff headquarters. President Neto, he said, was to have been arrested but allowed to leave the country in exile—although other evidence indicates the popular physician-poet-political leader was to have been assassinated.

Additional witnesses testified that the murder plans were more widespread. According to conspirator Domingos Francisco, who had the task of providing arms and ammunition for the coup attempt, "the meetings [to plan the take-over] began eight months ago on my farm. They were to prepare a *coup d'état* in order to eliminate the MPLA. There was to be physical elimination of all the members of the Central Committee, of the president and all members so they could take over the government. On May 26, I was contacted by Major Bage and told the operation was to take place the following day, and that the government had been appointed. Alves was to be president, Van Dunem prime minister, Imortal minister of defense and "Bakaloff," chief of staff of the armed forces. We were trying to finish with the MPLA. . . ."

Some accounts in the Western press made it appear that it was Cuban military intervention that was decisive in saving the situation for the Neto leadership. But while it was of enormous importance that Castro immediately announced total support and Neto knew he had this powerful card up his sleeve, it was not the four Cuban tanks that caused the collapse of the Alves-Van Dunem plot. It was the lack of any popular support. Had tens of

thousands of people swarmed into the square before the presidential palace demanding a change of government and MPLA leadership, the position of Neto—and the Cubans—would have been very difficult. But not even the two hundred which the plotters had set as the minimum to justify the arrest of President Neto turned up. Nito Alves and his co-plotters had completely misjudged their support at every level, displaying an almost infantile naïvete which is often a distinguishing mark of an ultra-leftist mentality that has moved so far around the political spectrum that it merges with that of the ultra-right.

After the Cuban tanks moved and the radio had already started denouncing the plotters, Cita Vales sent a message to a contact of Nito Alves, planted within the secretariat of President Neto: "It is absolutely necessary that you immediately contact the Soviet embassy and convince them to help us flee the country by any possible means. . . ." The message was intercepted and Cita Vales, together with José van Dunem—who had succeeded Nito Alves as her lover—were among those arrested in the first few days. There is no evidence of the Soviet embassy having lifted a finger to help any of the plotters.

From captured documents, avowals of those first to be arrested among the chief plotters and the conversations which Simon Malley had with Agostinho Neto, Lucio Lara, "Iko" Carreira, and others, it became clear that Alves-Van Dunem—"Bakaloff" had adopted an "all things to all men" policy. They had set up three distinct contact teams to approach the socialist camp, the Western world, and certain African states. They had a different "sales talk" for each. For the socialist world the "line" was to the effect that the Neto leadership was preparing a "turn to the right" and the policy of "nonalignment was a cover for setting up a social-democratic type regime." The new leadership would ensure the closest relations with the Soviet Union, offer air and naval bases and guarantee that the Soviet Union would have a privileged position in the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres in Angola. President Neto, Lucio Lara, and "Iko" Carreira were accused of having organized the invasion of the Shaba region of southern Zaire by the former Katangan "gendarmes."<sup>8</sup>

To the Western world, the assigned contact team offered the withdrawal of all Cubans within eighteen months of Nito Alves-José van Dunem taking over and the repudiation of all agreements

with the Soviet Union. To ensure some "scare support" the story was spread that NATO was about to place Angola within COM-ECON (the East European equivalent of the Common Market) and that the FAPLA was training commando groups for intervention in Namibia, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zambia and preparing to send a force of between 15,000 and 20,000 troops to fight in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) and South Africa.

To frighten the Arab world, there were stories of "Zionist" advisers in the Angolan security services and a strong rumor that Neto was about to allow the Soviet Union to set up three major military bases in Angola in exchange for sixty million dollars annually, and so on. There was an infinite variety of concoctions to cater for every suspicion. In some cases it worked and there is evidence of considerable sums of money being placed at the disposal of the plotters. Support from outside however was more easily organized than that from inside.

The fundamental error that was to cost the lives of Nito Alves and all the chief plotters was to have underestimated the political maturity of the people, especially those of the capital who had been through so many trials by fire. From February 4, 1961, to May 27, 1977, much blood had been spilt in the streets of Luanda in an attempt to wipe out the leadership of the MPLA. Nito Alves was strong and could rally popular support only when the people believed he was acting as a loyal supporter of Agostinho Neto and the leadership which had proved capable of leading the Angolan people through an impossibly difficult national liberation struggle. The people of Luanda had seen with their own eyes that leadership stand up to the Portuguese; deal with the FNLA and UNITA when they went on the rampage inside Luanda. Who was Nito Alves in comparison? Doubtless the results of his organizational work in preparing for the triumphal arrival for the MPLA in Luanda in November, 1975, went to his head. But the people had not turned out for Nito Alves. They were there to render homage to Agostinho Neto and other veteran leaders of the MPLA.

Alves and his supporters also overlooked the extent to which racist and tribalist concepts had given way to national concepts during the prolonged military-political struggle, accompanied from the beginning by a conscious effort of the MPLA leadership to promote all-Angolan sentiments. The appeals to rally to the putschists' banner on the basis of black racism fell flat. As did also

Nito Alves's belief that by having the heavy weapons of the 9th Armored Brigade and a few prestigious commanders at his disposal, rank and file supporters of the MPLA would rally to his side. Doubtless he would have had outside support had he been able to prove successful. But in just nine hours it was all over. All that remained was to round up the ringleaders.

Nothing could be more symbolic of the lack of popular support than the manner of the capture of Nito Alves himself. He dared not seek shelter in the Luanda *museques*, although it was there that he had always claimed he had massive support. He fled to the forests north of the capital. Hiding by day and moving by night, fearing to ask anyone for help, he slowly made his way back to his home district of Piri in Uije province, not far from the Zaire border.

To an old woman squatting over a cooking fire in the tiny hamlet of Velho Eduardo (Old Edward), he introduced himself by his real name, Alves Bernado Baptisto, "son of Mario Joao and Bernardo Pango. . ." He begged for food saying that he and his companion had eaten nothing for fourteen days. On the pretext of fetching a chicken, the woman contacted Velho Eduardo, whose son Adao Eduardo set off at full speed to contact the forward headquarters of none other than Comandante Margoso (see Chapter Two). Alves had narrowly escaped capture by Margoso's men a week previously by abandoning his vehicle under a volley of fire and plunging into the forest. Margoso had sworn to bring him "alive or dead" to Luanda.

The old woman, Joaquina N'Gongo, returned to the hut without a chicken but she grilled some bananas and served them with *funji*—flour ground from manioc roots and cooked with water, the staple diet of most Angolans, followed by coffee. The three then lay down to sleep. Joaquina related what happened:

"I heard the noise of a motor. From my bed I could see Nito Alves coming closer, closer—trying to hide the pistol in his hand. I pretended to be asleep. When he got to the foot of the bed I threw off the blanket so that it landed over his head. There are troops . . . Troops are coming . . .' he yelled. 'It's only my brother coming from Luanda,' I replied.

"I got up and reached for the door which he hid behind as I opened it. It was only half-opened when he fled, the others behind

him. The FAPLA opened fire. I thought he was dead, but no. The bullets whizzed past without hitting him . . ."<sup>9</sup>

For a while it seemed that Nito Alves had made good his escape again. But by daybreak the entire people had turned out to support Comandante Margoso and his men. From Piri and neighboring Quibaxe and other villages they came bearing whatever weapons they had—mainly the fearsome *machete*. As if hunting some dangerous animal they advanced in long lines combing the forest tree by tree, bush by bush, clump by clump of vegetation. Finally they found the would-be president of Angola hiding up a baobab tree. Margoso's men had to protect him from the local people who were demanding summary justice. The fact that he had plotted to decapitate the entire leadership of the MPLA and was responsible for the brutal murder of some of the most popular veterans of the liberation struggle had turned his closest relatives and neighbors against him. But Margoso's men brought him back to Luanda where he was tried before a military tribunal and executed by firing squad.

No defeat could have been more total. Lack of support in the initial uprising, failure to find refuge in the Luanda *museque* which was supposed to be his main power base, hunted down like a wild beast in his own home district. The whole episode proved once more that people's support is not an abstract, demagogic term. It is a living reality without which neither the Angolan, nor the Vietnamese, nor any other national liberation movements could have survived. But to have faith in this requires a rare quality of leadership, strong nerves and continuing renewal of the people's faith in that leadership.

The Nito Alves coup attempt ended one more dramatic phase of the Long March of the Angolan revolution. "Bakaloff," the last of the ringleaders to be captured, was rounded up a few months after Nito Alves and was also executed. That none of them could find a corner of the country in which to hide speaks for itself.

It would be unrealistic to think that the crushing of the Nito Alves coup attempt meant that the MPLA leadership could lean back and relax. The oft-repeated slogan: *A Luta Continua* (The Struggle Continues) remains valid.

FNLA-Zaire forces can still make commando raids across the

northern frontier to wipe out a village or destroy some economic objectives. The UNITA forces are still active in the Center-South and along the Namibian border.<sup>10</sup> The timing of the coup attempt was related to the MPLA Congress, which opened on December 4, 1977, but which was originally scheduled for much earlier. It was postponed because of the coup attempt. This was the Congress which was to decide on the formation of a Marxist-Leninist Party and elect the leadership of that Party. Alves had hoped to maneuver within the MPLA Central Committee to ensure his own leadership before the Congress took place. But his expulsion, together with that of José van Dunem, from the MPLA Central Committee ended that possibility.

At the December Congress, it was decided to set up a Marxist Party of Labor from the most active MPLA militants—drawing largely on the Action Committees which had long fulfilled the role of Communist Party cells. A 45-member Central Committee was elected and it in turn elected an 11-member Political Bureau, headed by Agostinho Neto. It included all those on the Nito Alves list for execution: Lucio Lara, “Iko” Carreira, Lopo do Nascimento, José Eduardo dos Santos, Carlos Rocha and others. The Party of Labor is charged with playing a vanguard role in building a socialist society in Angola based on the country’s traditions and concrete conditions.