

Portuguese Colonies:

Front of Solidarity Against Reaction

With the fundamental objective of clarifying for European public opinion the aid that the member governments of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) give Portugal against the revolutionary movement in its African colonies, the Summit Conference of Support for the Struggle of the Portuguese Colonies will take place in Rome on June 27, 28, and 29.

The agenda for this world forum, which will also be devoted to the mobilization of the forces of the peoples of the Portuguese colonies in solidarity with the struggle, were outlined at a Preparatory Conference recently held in the Italian capital at which the Executive Secretariat of OSPAAAL was represented.

We have interviewed Augusto Matos, representative of the Conference of Nationalist Organizations of the Portuguese Colonies (CONCP) to the Executive Secretariat of OSPAAAL concerning the development of the preparatory meeting and the organizational aspects for the coming World Conference.

Asked about the background that led to calling the Preparatory Conference this past January, Matos explained first of all that Portugal opposes the revolutionary struggle in its colonies with the military aid that it receives from the governments of Western Europe joined in that aggressive bloc.

He continued by saying that, as a consequence, the preparatory meeting is preparing for the Summit Conference of next June, which will establish in various European countries, Committees of Support for the Struggle of the Portuguese Colonies which, among other tasks, should promote the consciousness of the peoples of these countries with respect to the significance of NATO's war aid to Portugal and put an end to this collaboration.

In another part of the interview, Matos indicated that one of the high points of the meeting in January in the Italian capital was the reading of the appeal in which the Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO), the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), and the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) urged the solidarity of all progressive forces in the world with the liberation movement in the Portuguese colonies as a response to the imperialist alliance for the oppression and exploitation of these African territories.

He added that, at this meeting an International Preparatory Committee was formed, charged with the preparations for the coming Summit Conference of Support for the Struggle of the Portuguese Colonies and with broadening the participation of international and national organizations which, for one reason or another, were not represented at the January conference. These organizations can participate in the meeting of the International Preparatory Committee which will be held in April.

In response to another question concerning the preparations for the Summit Conference, the CONCP representative to the Executive Secretariat of OSPAAAL, said that this initiative has been received with great enthusiasm in the countries of Western Europe and that representatives of the liberation movement of the Portuguese Colonies are traveling through the European countries to mobilize the peoples for the world forum in June.

Following is the text of the appeal issued by FRELIMO, MPLA, and PAIGC at the Preparatory Conference of Support for the Struggle of the Portuguese Colonies.

APPEAL

Nine years ago the Angolese patriots of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola fired the first shots against the prisons of Luanda, thereby raising the liberation struggle in the Portuguese colonies to a new level.

While in the rest of Africa, the colonial system, condemned by world opinion and historic evolution, was at the point of falling apart, the Portuguese Government intensified the policy of repression, domination, and obscurantism practiced for centuries, and thus definitively closed off all possibility for peaceful evolution toward independence.

The appeal to international public opinion, the denunciation of Portuguese colonialism clearly expressed by international institutions such as the United Nations Organization, the direct and repeated appeals to the Portuguese Government, did not succeed in putting an end to the colonial situation. The launching of the armed struggle for liberation of the peoples of Angola, Guinea Bissao, the Cape Verde Islands and Mozambique, became the only historically possible way to our liberation.

Therefore, our people took up arms and by this means converted themselves into the executors of their own destiny and agents of their own liberation. Today very extensive regions in Angola, Guinea Bissao, and Mozambique are freed of colonial domination and the people have recovered the exercise of their sovereignty. National reconstruction action is taking place throughout these regions through programs of education, public health, economic reorganization, and is giving the population of these regions the possibility of participating for the first time in decades in the building of national society. The armed struggle for liberation is being extended every day to wider areas and is thus opposing in a radical form the Portuguese colonial presence in our countries.

The battle for our liberty and our independence is closely linked to the cause of liberty.

In the first place it is linked to the cause of the Zimbabwe and Namibia peoples, oppressed as we by the racist and fascist coalition established between Portugal and Rhodesia for the purpose of maintaining this entire meridional region of Africa in a perpetual state of exploitation and slavery. But our struggle also takes on international

dimensions due to the broad support that Portugal receives from some Western powers. Our struggle permits us to establish more clearly each day that the Portuguese Government would not be able to carry on the colonial war on three fronts without the massive aid in arms and every type of military equipment, without the political, financial, and diplomatic support given it by certain Western powers and particularly the NATO member countries. This solidarity in the oppression and exploitation of the colonies calls for the solidarity of free men and of all the progressive forces in the world. In particular it calls for the solidarity of the peoples whose governments are moral and material supporters of the fascist Portuguese regime and its colonial policy.

In this context, the mobilization of public opinion in the Western countries has become a task of primary importance to the development of our struggle. The Conference of Solidarity with the Peoples of the Portuguese Colonies and Southern Africa, which took place a year ago in Khartoum, had already permitted an expression of solidarity and friendship toward our struggle and our peoples.

At this moment the development of our struggle makes it necessary to hold a conference in Western Europe aimed at a very broad mobilization of world public opinion and the activating of a mass political movement capable of imposing a change of attitude and orientation on the governments that still support the colonial policy of the fascist Portuguese regime.

This conference would also have as its objective strengthening the mobilization of the forces of solidarity with the peoples of the colonies with a view to concrete support for the struggle and the rights of these people.

The preparatory meeting for this Conference which has just taken place in Rome without the support of the Italian political forces and trade unions, decided to hold the conference in Rome on June 27, 28, and 29 of this year.

We, the national liberation movements of the Portuguese colonies, the Mozambique Liberation Front, the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde, call on all individuals, parties, political organizations and trade unions, in summary, on all the forces of solidarity with the just struggle of the peoples of the Portuguese colonies, to participate in the International Conference of Support and to strengthen the expression of the profound relationship between the struggle of the peoples of the Portuguese colonies against co-

lonialism and the action of the peoples of Europe toward the promotion of justice and social progress.

We particularly invite all these forces to participate in cooperation with the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, in the information and mobilization that will precede the Conference, in order to guarantee its success.

We thus hope that this Conference will permit the evolution of a broad movement of solidarity which, through its action, will bring about the isolation of the Portuguese Government and a halt to the aid that some Western governments are giving it.

Here is a worthy form in which to support our battle, a historic contribution to our liberation.

Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO)
People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA)
African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde
(PAIGC)

Rome, January 22, 1970.
