

## INTERVIEW WITH THE MPLA DELEGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

With members of the SOUTHERN AFRICA COMMITTEE - October 18, 1975.

### MPLA

PAULO JORGE: Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Transitional Government  
LOUIS ALMEIDA: General Director of Information of the Transitional Government  
SAYDI MINGUS: Minister of Finance and Planning of the Transitional Government  
NOE SAUDE: Executive Commission of the National Union of Angolan Workers (UNTA)

Southern Africa Committee: Can you give a brief outline of the situation in Angola as it now stands?

Paulo Jorge: The situation in Angola since July, when the armed forces of the MPLA and the MPLA itself decided to launch the military offensive against the internal and external reactionary forces in Angola, can be characterized by the following: One is that Luanda, the capital, is under the entire control of the MPLA. The MPLA has the support of the Angolan people throughout the country and is now controlling 12 of the 16 provinces politically and militarily. This means that the FNLA is only in the two districts of Zaire and Uige in the north, near the border with Zaire, while UNITA is based in only the two provinces of Huambo and Bie in the central region. In a few areas there are occasional clashes, but the MPLA has predominant control. In Cabinda the MPLA has complete control.

The other aspect of the current situation in Angola which is important is the state of the transitional government. Since the departure of the FNLA and UNITA representatives from this body in late August 1975, the transitional government has been finally leading and governing the country. The posts previously held by the FNLA and UNITA have now been filled by others who were nominated by the Portuguese High Commission, the representative of the Portuguese government in Angola. The actual transitional government is composed of MPLA militants and sympathisers.

Given the current situation, we feel that on the 10th of November Portuguese sovereignty in Angola will come to an end. We intend on the 11th of November to assume our responsibilities, because the Angolan people believe that on the 11th of November Angola will be independent. Of course we know that there are many foreign powers which are interested in preventing this revolutionary process and preventing the MPLA from taking power. But we are very confident for the simple reason that we have the entire support of the Angolan people.

Southern Africa Committee: Can you tell us about the structure of the MPLA as an organization?

Paulo Jorge: The MPLA was founded in 1956. In the beginning it was a front formed by different organizations which had existed since 1953. The MPLA was founded as a response to and as an appeal for unity of all nationalist forces. During these years of the armed struggle, we have developed an organizational structure which in general outline consists of the Central Committee, and inside of which is the political bureau, the executive of the Central Committee. In addition we have several departments: the External Affairs Department, the Information Department, the National Reconstruction Department, the Mass Organization Department, and several others to deal with different aspects of our struggle and to build for the future of our country. There are also the mass organizations. We have the Angolan Women's Organization (OMA), the MPLA Youth Organization (JMPLA), the Pioneers' Organization (OPA) and also the Angolan Trade Union Association (UNTA). All these departments are linked with the Central Committee. The people are our base, the foundation and the focus of all our political activities. For this reason they are organized into what we call "peoples' committees," or what you might in English call district committees.

Southern Africa Committee: The MPLA has adopted the slogan of "people's power" and has organized people's committees and armed the people. Can you explain why the MPLA has chosen this course?

Paulo Jorge: During the armed struggle we have always tried to organize the people into popular organizations, for the MPLA is a people's movement. In the liberated areas, we tried to set up popular organizations to respond to the needs and aspirations of the local population. During the war we formed what were called Action Committees, whose role was to organize the population and to elect popular assemblies to deal with the political and administrative problems in the liberated areas. These action committees organized the people in the field of agriculture to work according to collective principles. They organized the medical services, the schools, and even what we call the people's shops in order to exchange the necessary and basic agricultural products and to provide some manufactured goods.

We fought 14 years with the principal aim of responding to the legitimate interests of the Angolan people, in particular, the most exploited -- the peasants and workers. And we feel we fought to have a country in which the Angolan people could express freely their needs. During these years the people obtained not only a national consciousness but also a political understanding of the role of the popular masses in the revolutionary process.

After the war of liberation, when we could work legally and openly in the towns, we were able to meet those people who during the war had been working underground through action committees to mobilize and politicize our people. When the decolonization process started, many Portuguese were against it. Especially in the shantytowns they opposed any discussion or actions against Portuguese colonialism. With the end of the war of liberation, people in different shantytowns started to react against this colonial attitude of the Portuguese and a spirit of unity and a unity of action against this attitude began to develop. As a result, people started to unify and to organize popular assemblies. From these popular assemblies, people's committees were elected to deal with the problems of the community in each shantytown surrounding the different towns in Angola. From these people's committees delegates or representatives were elected to join together with representatives of other people's committees into what we call the Co-ordinate Organ of the People's Committee.

We are trying to establish a structure based on democratic principles in which the popular masses can express their needs. The sentiments of the people can now reach the Central Committee of the MPLA through this structure and in this way the Central Committee can know what the people want them to do. We are a people's movement; we feel the Angolan people have the right to participate fully in all areas of development in our country -- political, economic, social or cultural. We feel that this conception of people's power corresponds to the wish for participation by the people in all aspects of our revolutionary process. We believe that the future Angolan government must take into consideration the needs and the interests of our people. And this is the reason why the MPLA as a people's movement immediately identified with these legitimate aspirations. We hope in the future we can indeed build a popular republic in Angola.

You asked why the Angolan people are armed. The Angolan people are armed to some extent in order to forward our revolutionary process. Many foreign powers or imperialist powers will not support this revolutionary process; in fact we believe the imperialist powers will do their best

to prevent it. We have decided to give arms to our people, and we have also declared a generalized popular resistance, a people's resistance, to be able to act or react to any maneuvers from the imperialist powers designed to stop the forward movement of our revolutionary struggle.

Southern Africa Committee: The other side of this is what do you see as the difference between the MPLA and FNLA?

Paulo Jorge: You see, the first difference is we believe the FNLA is not a liberation movement. And FNLA is not responding to the interests of the Angolan people. FNLA has links with the imperialist powers, like the United States. We cannot accept a liberation movement having links with those forces which are oppressing people. Also, FNLA is not a liberation movement because it too is oppressing the people. After the 25th of April, the strategy of the FNLA was to take power by violence. Using violence is the only way for the FNLA to gain power because it has no popular support. The policy of FNLA is not a response to the needs and interests of the exploited masses, the peasants and workers. The policy of FNLA is based on tribalism, racism and regionalism, and the MPLA has always been opposed to this kind of madness.

The main point concerns the attitude and efforts of the FNLA towards the liberation of our people. We must not forget that during the armed struggle FNLA was always based in Kinshasa. It only made attacks or raids or ambushes in order to have documentation to present to international conferences like the OAU. A problem for FNLA is that it does not have the respect or the support of the people because of its tribalist and racialist position. For instance, recently the FNLA delegate declared before the Africa group of the United Nations that MPLA has many coloured people and assimilados, and is responding to the Portuguese bourgeois class in order to dominate and exploit the indigenous people. Because they have such a racist conception of MPLA, the MPLA cannot work with the FNLA group. In July we started to destroy the bases of the FNLA in Luanda, because we saw many atrocities committed by FNLA troops against our people.

Southern Africa Committee: Some people have claimed that the aid the MPLA gets from the Soviet Union compromises its independence.

Paulo Jorge: You see, when we started the armed struggle, we needed aid. It was not normal to ask for help from the imperialist countries, because the imperialist countries were helping our enemy, the Portuguese regime. Then we asked the democratic and progressive forces all over the world to help us in the armed struggle for the independence of Angola. We then observed some of the international press speaking of a liaison or ties between the MPLA and the Soviet Union, saying that because we were receiving material support from the Soviet Union we would automatically be under their domination. We would like to point out very clearly that the MPLA is not a communist organization; MPLA is not a Marxist organization; the MPLA is clearly an Angolan movement, a nationalist and progressive movement. People who are attached to the idea that in the future we will be under the umbrella of the Soviet Union because we have received material assistance or political support from them forget the other socialist countries we receive aid from, forget the African countries and the national and international organizations which supported MPLA during the armed struggle. The MPLA has always had an independent policy towards



MPLA SUPPORTERS DEMONSTRATING WITH FLAG IN LUANDA

any power or superpower or any bloc in the world. Even in our program we visualize following a policy of non-alignment. We can assure you that we have fought for 14 years for the complete independence of the Angolan people, not to be under the umbrella of another power or another country. This is an essential point of our policy. The Angolan people will be the master of their own destiny. This is a very important point I would like to underline.

Southern Africa Committee; There has been talk of either the UN or OAU coming into Angola and I was wondering if you could comment on that and what you think will happen after November 11th?

Luis Almeida; First of all you see we must emphasize that there will be no OAU or United Nations intervention in Angola. We don't want these international organizations to interfere. Of course, the Portuguese are saying very often that if on the 11th of November they don't find united movements, they will give the question of independence to the United Nations. This is the Portuguese point of view; it is not our point of view. On November 11th there will be independence come what may. The MPLA has already said -- the president of MPLA has already said -- that come what may Angola will be independent. The MPLA will proclaim independence on the 11th of November. As far as we are concerned, the United Nations can play a role in assisting us after independence. Regarding the OAU, it is in the same position. There is a so-called reconciliation committee

of the OAU. This commission has been in Angola for several days. They intend on behalf of some countries to form what they call a united front for the independence date. The MPLA has already said there is no way to reconcile what is irreconcilable. What is important for Angola is not to look for such a front between one liberation movement and organizations which are no longer liberation organizations, like UNITA and FNLA. What is important for Angola is to support the people there who want to be independent under the leadership of the MPLA. What the OAU has to see is that there is one united people in Angola who want their own independence and not, as the OAU has said, reconciliation.

Southern Africa: President Mobutu has been quoted as saying something about a referendum in Cabinda about its future relations with Angola. Can you comment on that?

Luis Almeida: Yes, why doesn't he also accept a referendum on Katanga? Mr. Mobutu is the last one who can give counsel or proposals. First he must make a referendum in Katanga, then afterward he can propose a referendum in Cabinda.

Southern Africa Committee: Can you comment on U.S. involvement in Angola and what you see as U.S. interests there.

Luis Almeida: We think that there is U.S. involvement in Angola directly and indirectly. Directly because as you know, U.S. newspapers have written that the CIA was helping both FNLA and UNITA. And I think in Congress there has been discussion of CIA involvement in Africa, and I think more will become known about this involvement in Angola. Indirectly, we think there is other involvement. There is a military treaty between Zaire and the United States through which American soldiers and American military assistance are being made available to Zaire. Under this treaty Americans have been supplying Zaire with weapons and with technical assistance.

The United States has been a member of NATO and in the past the United States government said they were not supporting or involved in the colonial wars Portugal was launching in Africa. They said that they were only helping Portugal under the umbrella of NATO. But Portugal didn't need this military help in Portugal; they needed it in Africa. We think that the support the Americans are giving to Zaire under this military treaty is going where Zaire thinks it must be used -- to Angola. So indirectly the Americans are deeply involved in Angola.

For some time we have gotten news of planes, airlifts, and particularly Skymasters bringing weapons to Angola. These planes have been coming from American bases in West Germany and they are landing in Carmona in the northern part of Angola. This is proof of American involvement in Angola. Of course, the American State Department has denied any such involvement, but these are facts.

Some pilots from civilian planes told us one month ago that they saw two American vessels in front of Ambriz harbor. They were discharging weapons. We believe that these American ships were there because there are some pictures.

There is another kind of American involvement in Angola -- the multinational companies, in particular the Cabinda Gulf Oil Company. They are supporting the secession of Cabinda from the motherland. This support has been given to FLEC, a separatist organization. FLEC is divided into two branches; one is supported by France, and the other, based in Kinshasa, is supported by the United States and receives assistance from the Cabinda Gulf Oil Company.

Southern Africa Committee: What is the possibility of reconciliation or working with UNITA now or after independence?

Paulo Jorge: UNITA is a creation of the fascist and colonialist Portuguese regime. There was close cooperation between the two armies, UNITA, and the Portuguese during the struggle. This collaboration between UNITA and the Portuguese army was to prevent the advance of the MPLA. During the clashes of this year, UNITA took a "neutral" position to pose as a moderate force. This attitude was based on both the political and military weakness of the organization. They also took this position to disguise the military agreement between UNITA and FNLA.

UNITA has ties and support from both Zaire and South Africa. It receives military support from both of these countries; for example, Savimbi's plane is a gift from Lonrho Enterprises of South Africa. In other words, it is a gift from South Africa. The ties UNITA has with the South African regime include links with South African authorities in Namibia. As of September 7, UNITA made a war declaration. Since then there have been no more UNITA contacts with the MPLA and there is no possibility of any reconciliation.

UNITA has four groups, a pro-MPLA faction, a pro-Portuguese faction, a pro-UNITA faction, and a pro-FNLA faction. The dominant one is the pro-FNLA faction, and is led by Savimbi. It is this group within UNITA from which the general leadership of the organization is drawn. This same faction is most strongly pro-South Africa and pro-American.

Southern Africa Committee: Do you have anything to add?

Paulo Jorge: We feel that during these next days before the proclamation of our independence, the imperialist powers are preparing an offensive in order to prevent the MPLA -- which means the Angolan people -- from taking power in Angola. We are aware that the United States of America and France are involved in this offensive against the MPLA. We remember that these particular countries some years ago were involved in a dirty war against the Vietnamese people. Both countries lost their war. These particular countries are forgetting the lesson of the war against the Vietnamese people; they are forgetting also that in Angola it is not a question of the MPLA, it is a question of the entire Angolan people. They are forgetting that all the Angolan people are involved in this revolutionary process. We know also that these two particular countries are putting a lot of pressure on the Portuguese government to halt our revolutionary process. But we as the MPLA are confident in our people. We are confident in the ability of our people to resist these foreign interferences in our problems.

What we wish for and know is that the Angolan problem can and must be solved by the Angolan people themselves. We say this because we know we will continue our struggle until the Angolan people are free, really free, really independent.

In this critical moment for the people of our country, we feel the democratic and progressive forces all over the world should launch an information campaign to tell people about these attempts against the right of the Angolan people to be free and independent and to denounce all the maneuvers by the foreign powers against the Angolan people. We believe also it is very important as support for the Angolan people to launch a campaign for funds in order to help our people. We feel that these kinds of campaigns can help us in the future because we are absolutely sure that the struggle will not come to an end on the 11th of November. We will continue to fight against the intervention of the imperialist powers as well as at the same time to engage in another important battle -- national reconstruction.