

## APPEAL TO THE MEMBER STATES OF THE UN

It is a commonplace nowadays to say that African political awakening has committed the European powers to a programme of decolonization in Black Africa.

We are in an epoch which is witnessing the abandonment of the spirit of domination of one people by another.

The facts are there; they are irrefutable.

The national forces of Black Africa have altered the position of the colonial powers, who are forced to seek a solution to inter-racial conflicts in a discussion with representatives of the interests of the African peoples.

It is generally admitted that the wind of change which has seized the African continent constitutes in itself a source of new balances of power in our world; the only risk of violent conflict can come from anachronistic opposition to the legitimate aspirations of the African peoples, aspirations which are themselves in accordance with the spirit of the United Nations Charter.

Nevertheless the present rulers of Portugal have nothing but scorn for those British, French or Belgians whom they consider turncoats and hawkers of empires. For the Portuguese rulers intend to remain for ever masters of what for the last ten years they have called the 'overseas provinces'.

In fact it was only by the new Constitution of June 11, 1951, that Portugal, by a unilateral decision, integrated her colonies, which had been designated as such until that date.

Although the beginning of Article 133 stipulates: 'It is of the organic essence of the Portuguese Nation to carry out the historic function of colonizing\* the lands of the Discoveries under its sovereignty', Article 135 of the said constitution proclaims: 'The overseas provinces, as an integral part of the Portuguese State, are united among themselves and with the metropolis'.

It will be observed, not without surprise, that this decision, taken only some years before the admission of Portugal to the UN, was officially excused by the necessity of 'not wounding the ear of an international public opinion that was more and more anti-colonialist.'

It is scarcely imaginable that a backward and in certain respects retrogressive country like Portugal, where the illiteracy figure is as high as 44 per cent., still claims to accomplish 'a civilizing mission' in Africa and denies to the peoples of Cape Verde, of 'Portuguese' Guinea, of Sao Tome and Principe, and of Angola and Mozambique their right of self-determination.

\* Our emphasis.



What is even less imaginable is that the Portuguese representatives in the international organizations, on the orders of their government, have sought desperately since 1956 to protect Portugal from the obligations of Article 73 of the United Nations Charter by means of the legalistic trick cited above.

May we be permitted to recall here the preamble as well as the first paragraph of this article:

Members of the United Nations which have or assume responsibilities for the administration of territories whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government recognize the principle that the interests of the inhabitants of these territories are paramount, and accept as a sacred trust the obligation to promote to the utmost, within the system of international peace and security established by the present Charter, the well-being of the inhabitants of these territories, and, to this end:

(a) to ensure, with due respect for the culture of the peoples concerned, their political, economic, social and educational advancement, their just treatment, and their protection from abuses.....

Let us compare this text with reality.

Here are a few incontrovertible facts from the so-called provinces of 'Portuguese' Guinea, Angola and Mozambique, which we submit to the consideration of the Member States of the UN inasmuch as the Portuguese government gives them no information at all on this subject.

Special laws such as the Native Statute which affects some 99 per cent. of the population of these countries, and the Native Labour Code introduce, by their very titles, racial discrimination between the populations of the so-called metropolis and those of what is called 'overseas'.

According to the official definition, natives are in law 'persons of black race or their descendants born or living in Guinea, Angola and Mozambique who still possess neither the qualification nor the personal and social habits required for the integral application of the public and private law of Portuguese citizens' (From the Statute of Portuguese Natives of the Provinces of Guinea, Angola and Mozambique, article 2).

Portuguese law does not permit to natives living in the framework of tribal organization anything but the usufruct of lands strictly necessary for their settlement and for their culture.

A system of forced labour accompanied by methods inherited from slavery continues to be practised at the expense of native populations sold by the administrative authorities to European farmers and companies.



Some years ago the price of each forced worker varied between 1,000 and 1,200 escudos.

Following the revelations of Basil Davidson on forced labour in Angola, those of John Gunther are no less conclusive:

"The worst thing about Portuguese Africa is forced labour. Not only does this exist; the Portuguese authorities admit that it exists, say that it is necessary and even a 'good thing' for its victims, and condone it. . . . It is not quite - but almost - a form of slavery. The man becomes a chattel.

The system works more or less like this. An up-country planter informs the government that he will be needing so many men, and these are provided for him by the local Chefe do Posto, or district officer. Native recruiters go out into the villages, and collect the necessary number of men, who are then turned over to the planter. But the planter, to be sure of getting the recruits he needs, usually has to pay off the Chefe do Posto, if this gentleman happens to be corrupt. The normal pay-off is ten times the contract labourer's wages for six months. Nothing more vicious can be imagined". (Inside Africa, London, 1955, page 572).

The natives have the right only to the most rudimentary education. On the basis of the Missionary Agreement signed between Portugal and the Holy See, May 7, 1940, native education was entrusted entirely to Catholic missions. Nevertheless the Portuguese government by the same agreement insisted that 'teaching should follow the doctrinal orientation established by the Portuguese political Constitution' and that it should be 'ruled by the plans and programmes adopted by the governments of these colonies'; that these 'plans and programmes having as their aim the perfect nationalization (in the sense of Portugalization, of course) and moralization of the natives', it 'falls to the government, through the intermediary of the education services of the respective colony, to indicate what technical knowledge should in each region be dispensed by preference to the natives'; that 'in the schools, teaching and the employment of the Portuguese language should be obligatory.'

The figures for illiteracy in these countries surpass 99 per cent.

Finally, it is not surprising that the natives have not, even theoretically, the right to participate in public life and to direct the affairs of their respective countries.

And even the progress of assimilation of which the Portuguese authorities are so proud is laughable:

After five centuries of 'civilizing mission', the number of black people considered to be Portuguese citizens and officially designated civilized is scarcely higher than 0.3 per cent.



The example of Mozambique, according to official figures of the last general census, is sufficiently convincing:

<u>Total Population</u>	<u>Civilized or developed population</u>	<u>Uncivilized or undeveloped population</u>
White 48,213	48,213	0
Yellow 1,613	1,613	0
Indian 12,630	12,630	0
Mulatto 25,149	25,149	0
Black <u>5,651,306</u>	<u>4,349</u>	<u>5,646,957</u>
Total 5,738,911	91,954	5,646,957

It is laid down by the Portuguese administration that any white person is, as such, civilized, while any non-white person, not following the ways of life of Europeans is not civilized. The illiterate white is 'civilized', but the Moslem Guinean from a Koranic school is uncivilized.

The percentage of civilized blacks in 'Portuguese' Guinea was, according to the last general census, in the order of 0.29 per cent. - 1,478 in a population of 503,935 inhabitants.

It should be added that among the 2,263 civilized whites of 'Portuguese' Guinea, 541 were illiterate while all the 1,478 blacks could read and write.

The peoples of these countries are not recognized as having any right to elect their own organs of local administration.

It is evident that the pretended 'Portuguese overseas provinces' and especially 'Portuguese' Guinea, Angola and Mozambique correspond to the criteria defining a colony, and even more so to those defining non-autonomous territories.

This is why the obligation laid on Member States of the United Nations by paragraph (e) of article 73 of the Charter 'to transmit regularly to the Secretary General for information purposes, subject to such limitations as security and constitutional considerations may require, statistical and other information of a technical nature relating to economic, social and educational conditions in the territories for which they are respectively responsible other than those territories to which Chapters XII and XIII apply' troubles the conscience of the Portuguese colonizers. And this is why they abusively take shelter behind the conditional phrase in this paragraph: 'subject to such limitation as security and constitutional considerations may require', as an excuse not to give any information.

We have shown that the facts give the lie to the Portuguese UN delegates' thesis according to which 'the constitutional statute of the overseas provinces is absolutely the same as that for the Metropolis'. Let us see.



Against the colonial truth Portugal erects a mystique, against realities a constitutional dogma. This is medieval casuistry.

That Portugal is politically a unitary state - regardless of the geographic situation of her 'provinces' and that 'all parts of her territories are independent with the Nation' - such are affirmations which run counter to every known interpretation of the concept of a 'nation'. Only persons who are blind, self-seeking or of bad faith can prove a national identity (other than in the statements contained in the articles of the Portuguese constitution) between the inhabitants of the provinces of Portugal and the Bantus of Angola.

Besides, the Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola has already drawn the attention of international opinion to the war preparations of the Portuguese government in Angola (see the communique attached).

In consequence the MPLA considers:

1. That under cover of constitutional laws the present rulers of Portugal are violating the spirit of the United Nations Charter and offending against the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man. They do not in their acts recognise the primacy of the interests of the indigenous peoples of Africa over those of the Portuguese minority.

2. To maintain their political, social and economic privileges, these leaders do not hesitate to have recourse to methods of massive extermination against populations who only demand their natural and inalienable rights. It is quite clear that such an attitude can have grave consequences, of a kind that will endanger international peace and security. This danger is especially serious in Angola.

It is our duty to draw to the attention of the international organization the repercussions that bloody events in Angola cannot fail to have in this region of Africa, where peace is already threatened by apartheid in the Union of South Africa, not to mention events in the Congo. It seems to us that the complications that have developed in the Congo should, while there is still time, serve as a warning of perhaps even more serious dramas in Angola.

In view of the national awakening of the Angolan people that is canalized into necessarily clandestine political activity, we are of the opinion that it would now be appropriate to invite Portugal to recognize the right to self-determination of the Angolan people as well as that of all the peoples at present under Portuguese domination.

In the hope of seeing a peaceful settlement of the conflicts that arise between the African peoples and the Portuguese colonial administration, the MPLA calls on the Member States of the UN to:

1. Consider the 'Portuguese overseas provinces' as non-autonomous territories and hence to oblige Portugal to satisfy all the requirements of article 73;



2. Taking into account the danger of war which weighs particularly heavily on Angola, the question of the territories under Portuguese domination should be put on the agenda of the Fifteenth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Guided by the principles of Afro-Asian solidarity we issue a special and pressing appeal to the Afro-Asian States which are members of the United Nations to exert all their endeavours to this end.

On account of their colonial position, the African countries under the domination of Portugal will not be able to contribute to the enterprise of African unity.

We think that the cause of peace, freedom and understanding among the peoples will triumph.

For the Executive Committee of the Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola.

Mario de Andrada (President)                      Viriato Cruz (Secretary General)

Conakry, 13 September 1960

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### ANNEXES

## WAR PREPARATIONS OF THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT

### Statement

The recent independence of Congo, integrated in the general process of the decolonisation of the African Continent, has rendered the Portuguese colonialists desperate.

The fascists who dictate Portuguese colonial policy do not stop declaring that they mean to "remain forever masters of their overseas provinces".

To oppose the nationalist demands voiced by the clandestine movements in Angola, and particularly by the M. P. L. A., Portuguese Government has mobilised its army and repressive machinery under the name of "preventive military action". The Portuguese have multiplied their patrols and Air Force bases to defend Congo-Angolese and Rhodesian frontiers.

Important border-posts, such as Teixeira de Souza, Noqui, Maquela do Zombo and Macolo are fortified with military aerodromes of the most modern type.



Military authorities will shortly increase their strength in Angola to 60,000 men.

It is evident that Portuguese colonialism is carefully preparing for the extermination of the people of Angola.

We have already drawn attention to the criminal measures enforced in our country: systematic poisoning of food, arbitrary imprisonment of the negro population, intensification of the practice of forced labour, deportation to concentration camps.

Quite recently (News Agencies of 6th July have published it) Portuguese troops have carried out new expeditions in the localities of Luanda (capital of Angola) and in the suburbs. They indulged in brutalities and exactions against the population, set fire to houses and tortured women and children with their characteristic cruelty. Portuguese soldiers go to the extent of furiously breaking radio sets belonging to persons suspected of listening to the broadcasts from the Republic of Congo.

During the first half of June, the colonial authorities arrested 52 persons in Luanda, Lobito, Malango, Dalatando, among others the employees of Benguela railway.

On this occasion, a leader of the M.P.L.A. Agostinho Neto, doctor and poet, was arrested by the Director of the Luanda Gestapo (PIDE). Agostinho Neto was already in prison in Lisbon for two years and was sentenced by the Portuguese Courts in 1956 for "subversive activities" against Salazar's Fascist regime.

Then on 26th June, Fr. Pinto de Andrade, Doctor in Theology, Chancellor of the Archbishopric of Luanda, was imprisoned. He is a member of Executive Council of the African Society for Culture (S.A.C.).

Over 50 Angolan nationalists are in the Military Jail of Luanda, without trial, and who were arrested between March and August, 1959.

Such is the answer of a colonialism at bay to the statement just sent by the M.P.L.A. to the Portuguese Government.

Thus Portugal, a colonialist and retrograde nation par excellence, the most backward of Europe, aims at creating in Angola the climate of a new Algeria.

Conakry, 12 June 1960

For the Executive Committee of the Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola  
Viriato Cruz, Mario de Andrada.

Statement to the Portuguese Government by the M.P.L.A.

The Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola solemnly declare to the world that the Portuguese Government is now engaged in a policy of war and is making feverish preparations for it. For the last twenty years the Portuguese Government has done nothing else except to deny and to repress with utmost violence every expression of political, economic, social and cultural demands of the people of Angola.



Repeated statements by members of the Government clearly reveal that the Portuguese Government is determined to refuse to the people their fundamental human rights and to carry out an intense and systematic repression of Angolan patriots so as to create a favourable climate for a preventive war against the people of Angola.

The M.P.L.A. denounce these attempts to exterminate the people of Angola by colonial forces, and declare that they will oppose to it with all their resources, in accordance with the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The M.P.L.A., representing the people of Angola, demand an urgent liquidation of the Portuguese colonial rule in Angola by peaceful and democratic methods. For this, the Portuguese Government should immediately take the following measures:

- Solemnly accept the right of self-determination for the people of Angola.
- Grant unconditional amnesty to all political prisoners and release them from prison.
- Restore civil liberties, namely the legal right to form political parties, and establish solid guarantees for their effective exercise.
- Withdraw armed forces and dismantle all military bases in Angolan territory.
- Call for a round-table conference by the end of 1960 between representatives of all political parties of Angola and Portuguese Government to discuss a peaceful settlement of the colonial rule in Angola in the interests of both parties.

It is in the interests of the people of Angola, and, we believe, of the Portuguese people themselves to bring to an end the Portuguese colonial rule in Angola by peaceful and democratic means, by negotiations.

If the Portuguese Government disregards this statement and continues its present policy, the people of Angola and the M.P.L.A. warn the Portuguese Government that it alone will be responsible for the bloodshed that is bound to result from such a policy.

Conakry, 13 June 1960

For the Executive Committee of the Movimento Popular Libertacao de Angola  
Viriato Crux, Mario de Andrade, Lucio Lara.