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THE PRESIDENT OF THE

M.P.L.A.

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Dr. Agostinho NETO  
President of the M.P.L.A.

Message delivered by Dr. NETO  
after his evasion from Portu-  
gal, in July 1962.

É um momento inesquecível este, em que contanto com o Continente Africano, onde se vive uma luta diária contra o colonialismo e o neo-colonialismo.

É-me extremamente grato endereçar aos Combatentes Nacionalistas pela libertação das Colónias portuguesas, em especial aos Combatentes de Angola, da Guiné e da Guiné-Bissau, ao Saara Ocidental, fronteiras de luta, liberto dos cuidados do governo fascista português e ora reunido para a batalha contra o colonialismo.

Porém gostaria homenagear os combatentes, mortos no campo de batalha ou nos prisões, os encarcerados, os exilados, e dar um voto geral aos militantes, de sobre luta pela emancipação dos povos africanos sob domínio português. Sobre o futuro, tenho senti de a esperança crescente em fim que se aproxima a passos gigantesca, desta guerra contra a opressão e a exploração.

As condições urgentes da vossa vitória são a Unidade e a determinação firme de, pelos meios necessários, eliminar o jugo estrangeiro dos vossos países. Essas condições, sendo o objetivo dos movimentos reunidos na CONCP, são a melhor garantia dessa mesma vitória.

Assim aliados na guerra contra a barbárie colonialista, entre os quais estão os progressistas portugueses, as organizações democráticas de todo o mundo, a cujo esforço e solidariedade se deve a minha libertação de cárcere, estado o abraço fraternal, consciente de que a luta contra a exploração de homem pelo homem em qualquer parte do mundo, contribui de uma maneira directa para a vossa libertação.

Julho de 1962 Agostinho Neto

This is an unforgettable moment for me, returning to the African Continent, which is living through a day-to-day struggle against colonialism and neo-colonialism.

I have great pleasure in conveying to the Nationalist Movement for the Liberation of the Portuguese Colonies, and especially to the Movements in Angola, Guinea and Mozambique, the fraternal greetings of a companion in the struggle just freed from the prisons of the fascist Portuguese government and now recuperating for the fight against colonialism.

I pay the most heartfelt tribute to the fighters killed on the battlefields and in prisons, to the prisoners, the exiles and as a whole, to all the militants in the noble struggle for the emancipation of the African nations under Portuguese domination. I have felt their growing hope for the rapidly approaching end of this war against oppression and exploitation.

The urgent preconditions for our victory are Unity and firm determination to eliminate the foreign yoke from our countries by whatever means are necessary. These preconditions, which are the objectives of the Movements grouped within the CONCP, are the best guarantee of our Victory.

To our allies in the war against colonialist barbarism, among whom it counts Portuguese progressives and democratic organizations throughout the world to whose efforts I owe my release. I extend a fraternal embrace, conscious that the struggle against the exploitation of man by man anywhere in the world is a direct contribution to our liberation.

July 1962-

AGOSTINHO NETO

Dr. ANTONIO AGOSTINHO NETO was born on 17 September 1922 in Icolo e Bengo, a region near Luanda. He had a rather difficult childhood, as has been reflected in many of his revolutionary poems. Comrade Neto's father was a Protestant pastor and, like so many other Angolan families, the family was poor and numerous. But Comrade Neto was a hard-working and persevering pupil and was therefore able to complete his secondary school studies. He then spent three years (1944-47) working in the Luanda Health Services to help his family.

A good nationalist, Comrade Neto had already started to participate in nationalist activities during this period, although they were still very limited at that time.

Recognising his intelligence, a few compatriots and friends decided to assist him in pursuing his studies and they paid for him to go to Portugal. In 1947, therefore, Comrade Neto went to Portugal to study medicine, first in the town of Coimbra, where he spent three years, and then at the University of Lisbon, where he completed his course. An American Methodist Church Organisation decided later to grant him a scholarship. Comrade Neto not only studied in Portugal, but he also wrote revolutionary poems, some of which have become world famous, and he

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pursued his activities as an Angolan nationalist.

Alarmed at Comrade Neto's nationalist activities, the PIDE arrested him for the first time in 1952 and he spent three months in the Caxias prison, near Lisbon. He was released because there was not sufficient evidence to try him. But even when he was a prisoner, Comrade Neto did not stop his revolutionary work. After his release, Comrade Neto resumed his revolutionary life and the PIDE arrested him again in 1955. This was the second time. He was put in the Porto prison. Tried by the Plenary Tribunal in Porto, he was sentenced to eighteen months of reformatory prison, it having been proved that he had attended a youth meeting as representative of the youth in the Portuguese Colonies. He was restored to freedom in 1957, after twenty-eight months of imprisonment, since the colonialists had kept him in prison for ten months before the trial was held. Many progressive people in different countries, who knew and respected Comrade Neto as an Angolan leader, had protested against the PIDE's imprisonment of our comrade. After his release, he went on with his studies and also with his nationalist activities, although the PIDE agents were not aware of this.

Comrade Neto had carried on with his medical studies even during the time he spent in prison. Finally, in 1958, our comrade finished his studies with a doctorate in medicine. That same year he married a young anti-fascist Portuguese girl. The PIDE prevented him from returning to our country. Only in 1959 did the Portuguese colonialists autho-

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rise his return and he went back with wife and son. In Luanda, Comrade NETO worked as a doctor among our people, and all the time he carried on with his revolutionary work as President of the MPLA organisation inside Angola.

The PIDE persecuted Comrade NETO, but the MPLA activities continued. Then the PIDE arrested our comrade yet another time, in Jun 1960. But the Angolan people were already aware that we were all going to have to drive the Portuguese colonialists out of our country. The people of Icolo e Bengo demonstrated against the imprisonment of Comrade NETO. The colonialist police attacked the people, killing 30 and wounding 200 of our compatriots in Icolo e Bengo. This event has gone down in our history as the MASSACRE DE' ICOLO E BENG0.

It was dangerous for the Portuguese to keep the President of the MPLA in ANGOLA, since the people might have attacked the colonialists's prison. So, out of fear, the Portuguese deported our comrade to the island of Cape Verde (another Portuguese colony in Africa). He was first deported to the island of Santo Antão and then to the island of Santiago for a year. All this time he continued to exercise his profession as a doctor. His wife was his constant companion during this period of exile. At this time he was made Honorary President of the MPLA.

He never stopped his political activities and so he was arrested for the fourth time, in the town of Praia, on the island of Santiago, and immediately to Lisbon where, after

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six months of solitary confinement, he was released. Once again he had not to be freed for lack of evidence. The PIDE intended to confine him to restricted residence in Lisbon.

But the Angolan revolutionaries are much cleverer than the Portuguese colonialists and the MPLA organised a plan for Comrade Neto to get out of Lisbon. In 1962, Comrade Neto escaped the clutches of the PIDE assassins with his wife and two children.

AT THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE MPLA HELD IN 1962 THE PEOPLE ELECTED COMRADE NETO PRESIDENT OF THE MPLA. TODAY HE IS THE FOREMOST LEADER OF OUR REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT, THE MPLA, AND THE BELOVED LEADER OF THE ANGOLAN PEOPLE.

