

Jacques Roy was born in Kirkland Lake, Ontario, in 1943. He graduated from Lakehead University with a B.Sc. in Engineering, and worked for a year and a half as a programs engineer for Bell Canada Ltd. in Montreal. In 1968 he joined CUSO, went to Tanzania, slipped across into Angola, and worked with the M.P.L.A. for a year and a half as a radio technician. He returned to Canada to publicize the liberation struggle which has been going on in Angola since the fifties, and is now on his way back to Angola.

GAZETTE: What is the MPLA?
ROY: M.P.L.A. is the Portuguese abbreviation for the Movimento Popular para a Libertacao de Angola, the popular movement for the liberation of Angola. It had its origin in 1956 as an underground movement and was that way until 1961. After 5 years as an underground movement, on the 4th of February, 1961, they went to the hills — they overran a police station, stole a few guns, and hit it for northern Luanda and then the Cabinda and then the eastern region where we lived.

GAZETTE: Why did you join MPLA, and what did you do in it?

ROY: The whole southern African situation is very much like Southeast Asia, that is in terms of war and national liberation, people wanting to determine their own future, but not having the political power to do so. Angola is a very rich country. The people of Angola are not poor because they want to be poor, they're poor because they don't have the political and military means to determine their own future because Angola is run as an overseas province. The Governor-General of Angola is appointed in Lisbon. In fact, there are 126 seats in the Portuguese legislature, 7 of which represent Angola. Two of them are black. There are 5 million blacks and 300,000 whites in Angola.

I began to see Angola, Mozambique, Rhodesia, South-west Africa and South Africa itself as wars of national liberation to get out of the American camp, if you like, out of the bounds of American imperialism. The struggle in Vietnam is exactly like what's going on in Angola. So, I thought that there's only one way to smash imperialism; that is to work with national liberation movements, in the Portuguese colonies specifically because they are the weakest link in the American empire.

My skills working in the MPLA was setting up radio communications equipment, getting it from north America, bringing it to East Africa, training some other people and actually going into Angola for a period of 4 months to set it up, just to see what it's like to see the government in the countryside, what it actually does every day.

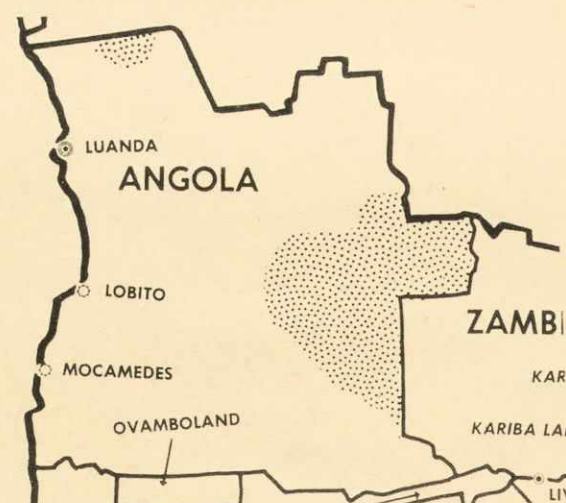
GAZETTE: Maybe the thing for you to do at this point is to give a short history of exactly what Portuguese colonialism has done to Angola, in terms of its national resources, in terms of the abuse of the people, and this sort of thing.

ROY: The most important thing is that first of all, Angola was where most of the manpower for slavery came from. Today, that exploitation continues, except it's not exported. Or, that's not true. Some of it is exported to the island of Sam Tome where Nestle's Cocoa has a big plantation on Sam Tome.

GAZETTE: You don't mean to say that Americans support slavery or forced labour?

ROY: Yes, that's exactly what I'm saying. In fact, this is where the Portuguese community get a percentage profit, so long as they are able to continue doing the dirty laundry — 15 or 20% depending on what industry. In the oil industry they get 50% and that's Gulf Oil. Today the major export of Angola is coffee, and 2/3 of the exports of coffee go to the United States. What they do is recruit all males over the age of sixteen for 9 to 18 months, and pay them a bottle of whiskey or a blanket, but never any cash. And your girlfriend, or your wife and children work on the

Portuguese military roads. Someone's got to keep up the maintenance. There's 80,000 Portuguese troops in Angola today, and they're spending over 50% of Portugal's budget on defence. Why they can continue is because of NATO, without whose help the Portuguese would collapse. The latest thinking within NATO is to extend the NATC boundaries all the way to South Africa. I met a black draft dodger just before I came to Halifax; his younger brother is in the Special Forces, and has been transferred to Southwest Africa. I think the extension of the NATO boundaries will occur. There's no doubt about it; it will make the invasion of Angola by American GIs easier. At the present time the Green Berets work with the Portuguese, you see.



A 1966 map of Angola. The dotted territory is liberated.

GAZETTE: Wouldn't you say that by doing this, or by attempting to do this, the United States is performing the third world a service, in that it's making an effort to make the world safe for Democracy?

ROY: We believe the United States will come, not as a friend, but as an enemy. If it upholds peace and freedom, then it should give us our independence, because they like to have one man, one vote. The black people don't even have a vote, they have nothing, to save but the future of their country. And you take Gulf Oil, which is pumping out 150,000 gallons of oil a day, and by the end of '73, double that amount. That's plenty of oil for us. That means that we would get the \$6 per barrel or whatever the going rate is. We would also have access to all the land we have. We wouldn't have to produce that much coffee, because we needed that land to produce other goods. Swifts of Canada has just invested I don't know how many thousands of head of cattle in Angola, just this summer.

The Japanese are pulling iron ore out at 2 million tons a year, just themselves. And then 300,000 to the French, and 250,000 to the English. These are all mineral wealths that the Angolians own. They are the sole rightful owners of these, but they do not have the means by which to determine their own future.

Now the basics of Angola is that there have been 5 centuries of colonial exploitation: the Portuguese came there in 1482. After 500 years of colonial rule, the illiteracy in Angola is 99.3% infant mortality is 60% and the average life expectancy is 28. There's one hospital bed for every 22,500 human beings. There is one doctor per 114,000. These are all U.N. statistics, you see, and it's really unfortunate, but it's one of those cases where you have to make a greater intellectual understanding of what are the reasons behind Angola, Mozambique and Guinea. Christ, the Angolians themselves, the inhabitants of the area have nothing to say about determining their own future. It's more of a de facto situation. Those who are supporting the Portuguese are helping the Portuguese oppress those people, and those who are helping the Portuguese are going to have to pay the penalty like the Portuguese.

Angola — the weak link in the imperial chain

The Portuguese cannot continue much longer. In 1968 a BBC documentary claimed that there were 50,000 deaths in Angola in one year. That's more than what the Yanks have lost in Vietnam since 1961. The London Observer of February 15, 1970, claimed that for the United States to equal its concentration compared to the Portuguese in Angola, it would have to multiply its troop strength in Vietnam eight times.

GAZETTE: What does the U.N. think of all this mess?

ROY: In the early 1960's at the outbreak of the armed struggles, there was a commission set up by the United Nations' Security Council to investigate what was happening in Angola. Continuing since that time, the United Nations' position has been that if it wasn't for the western world, the colonial situation in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea wouldn't be able to continue. It was the western world which was systematically giving help through NATO and through direct economic assistance. That enabled the Portuguese to continue to exploit these countries for five centuries. Just to quote the United Nations in this one article they wrote in "A.D. 6300," addition to part three or something like that. "It was only the systematic support by the western powers, both direct and indirect, that enabled Portugal, one of the poorest, most backward countries in Europe, to wage a war for over nine years, a war on three fronts. And all those countries claiming to be anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist should support the liberation movements for their cause was just and lawful." For that matter, the World Council of Churches gives us that same kind of backing. In fact, the World Council of Churches has a seven point program. The seventh point says barring the failure of the above six (which have failed) we support revolution, including armed struggle. And so does the United Church of Canada for that matter. All those who believe in one man, one vote, have got to support what we're trying to do. And if you believe in North American democracy, if you believe that Trudeau was elected democratically through the one man, one vote system, you've got to uphold what we're trying to do, because the blacks in Angola do not have that vote. They don't even have that privilege. Now let's just give us that, and then by the time you realize that we can't even get that, then you understand also the alternatives that are left. Quite often the guerrillas or the freedom fighters of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea, Rhodesia and all of southern Africa are called terrorists. Bishop Dodge in Kitwazambie equated the word "Terrorist" or those who are fighting for independence in Angola, as equivalent with the French Underground during the Nazi occupation. That was in the United Church Observer in November, 1965. So we do have international support.

Of course, one of the important things is that other people are struggling for their independence too — like the South Vietnamese, or the people living in the southern half of Vietnam. There's no such thing as North and South Vietnam in my own head. In fact, my village is called Hanoi II and we have our own Ho Chi Minh and we know who Malcolm X was and we know who Bobby Seale is, we know who Ho Chi Minh, Guevera, Fidel Castro, Kenneth Kaunda, Patrice Lumumba, Frante Fanon, particularly the African intellectuals, are. Lumumba was democratically elected in the Congo, but he got wiped out. All you've got to do is look at the situation and you can see where a similar and parallel thing will occur in Chile where a Marxist president (Salvatore Allende) was elected. Although he was ratified, I don't suspect he'll be in office very long.

GAZETTE: What is the MPLA program?
ROY: The basis of MPLA is that we want a united and free Angola. And that is although there are mulattos, those people who have Portuguese fathers and Angolan mothers, they must participate fully in the new government to be formed. And the white Portuguese who have been born in Angola, we also want them to participate with us. People of all races, religions and colours, we want them to participate. We've got to have independence on the basis that Angolans are going to determine what Angola is going to do.

So one of the things we are implementing as MPLA is that we have schools to overcome illiteracy, because it's one of our biggest enemies. Also, we've set up small hospitals and medical dispensaries throughout the countryside. We have medically trained people to do so. We have engineers, we have agronomists, and people with all types of technical skills and medical doctors. Not enough, of course, to go around, but it's more than the Portuguese have done for us in 500 years.

This is only since 1963. The will of the people to struggle and their discipline has been totally amazing. For instance, with schools, we've condensed seven years of primary education into three. No one's allowed to use a weapon unless he's gone to that school. He's got to be at least literate, he's got to know why he's using a weapon. That's the most important thing.

The other aspect of it is that the military training occurs right in Angola itself. We have zones which are totally liberated — that means that the Portuguese do not come even by helicopter. The leadership is in Angola itself — the president and the vice-president of MPLA, and all those who do the representing for the people all live in Angola. They do travel out of Angola, of course, but their base is in Angola. I lived with them for four months, so I have a good idea of who they are.

GAZETTE: The primary tenet of guerilla war is that a guerilla army can't survive unless it has virtually complete support from the people for whom it's working. What concrete indications would you say there are that MPLA does have support from the population of Angola?

ROY: Well, for instance, the eastern region where we were working was opened four year's ago last May, and it was opened by twelve men. Since that time, we've recruited over 200,000 people with us.

GAZETTE: That is as members of MPLA?

ROY: Yes. You see, as I explained before, slavery is the alternative, their illiteracy is the alternative, infant mortality is very high. When they come with us, at least they'll have a chance to have a say about the government they put into power. They'll have something to do about their own education. They don't have to go into slavery any more, and no one likes to be a slave. People have pride. They like to have a certain amount of wealth and goods beside them. It's how you get your wealth that's the question. So, in the eastern region of Angola, for two days a week, people cultivate food in their own gardens. Two days a week, we help them — that is the freedom fighters, work with the people on a common garden. And we spend two days in political education, articulating, for instance when I was there, about the need to have more people who are non-Angolans as part of our struggle. It's the same part of the struggle against American imperialism throughout the international spectrum — Guatemala, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Rhodesia, Guinea, all wars of national liberation. They're all our friends.

One of the most important things of the functions we participated in when we were there is doing the technical work, of course, but also articulating the "why". They would ask questions like "America is for peace and freedom. Why is it trying to wipe out the blacks?" "Why is there no room to articulate your anti-war sentiments?" and "Why is there such polarity?" I mean they wouldn't ask me in that kind of bluntness in terms of the war, because they wouldn't know the exact domestic issues. But certainly in terms of the blacks, like why are the blacks being wiped out? If you're all for peace and equality, if you read the democracy put down by Lincoln, it's a beautiful piece of literature, but in terms of reality, it's something else.

So, we participate with the people in producing some of our own food. Now, the Portuguese to offset this have set up strategic hamlets. As a result, what we have to do is go in and cut them open, and liberate some of the people. It cost a lot of lives. Like last October, we broke this one camp open and liberated some 2000 people but it cost 39 lives. My own protege was killed when I was in Angola. I have some idea of what it means to lose a person that is close to you. The people in Angola are determined to win, and they've been doing that since 1961.

GAZETTE: What sort of military aid are the Portuguese receiving and where are they getting it from?

ROY: Most of the Portuguese weaponry is coming from the NATO alliance, and it's very difficult to stop that because NATO has just claimed that they've told the Portuguese not to use them in Africa. But we know they're being used there — Alouette helicopters, Canadian jets, the F86K sabre type, which were sold to Germany, but delivered to Portugal; all types of NATO weapons, particularly American-made stuff in West Germany.

The Portuguese get all their weapons from the Northern Atlantic Treaty Organization, and without NATO, they would falter by the side. Now, most of our weapons come from the North through the Organization for African Unity. This is an organization set up by the free African states. These are the weapons we're getting. Of course, now we're getting more and more weapons from the Portuguese.

GAZETTE: You mentioned earlier that there are, I believe, 40 Special Forces troops in Angola. Have you any idea exactly what sort of training they're doing?

ROY: Well, they're very much in the Green Beret style, in other words, counter-insurgency. This is the first step towards an American presence in terms of GIs and things like that.

We're not so naive as to think that the United States will not come, because we've already got the Green Berets today. The next step is to land a few hundred American GIs. What they could do is land mercenaries, as they did in the Congo. In the large centres, the mercenaries, if you pay them \$400 or \$500 a week, they just murder all the

people.
GAZETTE: Angola isn't a burning issue to many Canadians for a number of reasons. Primarily, I think, because people aren't aware, not only of what is going on in Angola, but what is going on in Africa. What, basically, can Canadians do to help Angolans in a material way, and in forming solidarity groups, or things of this nature?

ROY: Angola is certainly not known very well, and the main reason for that is the censorship by the Portuguese. There are no cameras and very few tourists allowed in Angola-Mozambique. Also the Canadian press has certainly not spoken out very strongly because if they were to take an editorial position, they would have to condemn the Canadian government and its foreign policies towards these areas. We want self-determination for our Canada, but we won't give it to other people. What is this: A contradiction, or a two-faced approach.

GAZETTE: But do the people who rule Canada really

must materially assist in what we are trying to do. Some of the goods that we need are running shoes. We have a disease which is a parasite which is passed through human waste; it ferments in the ground, and it passes through the soft part of the feet, into your bloodstream, and back into your lower bowel. It's a complete cycle. If we were to put shoes on peoples' feet, we would stop that cycle. We need things like clothing because it's a very high altitude — 6000 feet. We need things like food, school supplies, portable homes. We have this model; it's a two-man portable home made out of plastic, a triangle of three and three with a base of four, and we put grommets in the corners and the top. Actually, it's a tube, and it's made by Union Carbide. It's perforated every seven feet so that we can make these things. And they cost less than two dollars apiece, and they weigh less than two pounds apiece. This is the only kind of home that we can live in now because of the Portuguese air raids. The Portuguese planes are



Daniel Chipenda, President of the Young Peoples' Movement of the M.P.L.A., receives an elephant tusk from an Angolan villager. The guerrilla to Chipenda's right is wearing a black armband in solidarity with the Black Panther Party.

want self-determination for Canada?

ROY: Well, that's another question, but the point isn't why people don't know what is going in Canada, but rather why the editors haven't taken a position. And as I said before, the United Nations condemns the Western world. In fact, Canada's Foreign Trade magazine, November 18, 1969, encouraged Canadian businessmen to invest in Angola-Mozambique, and particularly the Kabura Bassidam, which is a large hydro-electrical project being built on the Zambezi River. This is what the Canadian government's official position is, in terms of telling the Canadian businessmen what to do. What we can do here in North America is to know, first of all, what the relationship between Canada and Angola is. The U.S. is right now importing most of its oil from Kabinda Gulf Oil. If Angola became free, the U.S. would have to put more pressure on Canada to cough up the oil; if Angola keeps pouring oil into the U.S. at the same rate it is now, that means there will be less pressure on Canadians. So you see that Canada is involved there. Number two, we encourage and participated in this slavery, this forced labour business. There is a fellow by the name of Dr. Syd Gilchrist, who graduated from the Dalhousie Medical School in 1917, and who was the author of "Angola Awake", a Canadian medical missionary, who spent four years in Angola, and he was kicked out because he was communist and subversive. I believe he was subversive because anyone who has anything to do with education in a fascist state is subversive. The other aspect of what we can do is, once we learn the basics of Angola, and see that the economy is not run by the Angolans themselves, then we can start relating to other parts of the world. Once you find out the truth about Angola, you wonder how many other things don't you know about — like Mozambique, like Guatemala and the United Fruit Company, like Bolivia, Santo Domingo, Haiti and Ethiopia. There are ten thousand American troops today in Ethiopia — and no one knows about it. It's Eritrea, the province of Eritrea; there's a war of national liberation going on there, and the American troops there support Haile Selassie, who has got to be the man with the longest extension cord in the world. He's the only guy who still claims to talk directly to God because he's the son of the Queen of Sheba.

Once we learn the basic facts and figures of Angola, and understand what the World Council of Churches has to say, the U.N. and the United Church of Canada, then we

constantly patrolling the air, so we can't live in traditional villages anymore. It means that we have to live in the bush.

The other aspect is that we need things like rubber rafts because there are many rivers and creeks in Angola, and we have to go up and down these things, and also transport our people across them.

Most of the funds that we've been getting so far has been through the Miles for Millions in Vancouver, Saskatoon, Winnipeg and Ottawa. In fact, I was the executive secretary for the Ottawa Miles for Millions walk in 1969. Many of these organizations, when they are explained, the real difficulties and real problems in Angola, first of all do a little bit of studying and they realize that it's true. And it's so blatant, you see, that they've got to do something about it. It may, in the long run, seem very tokenistic on their part to support us, but the point is that it is very important for us. We just got \$5,000 last week from Ottawa, and we bought an ambulance with it. When people get hurt in Angola, we've got to take them out, sometimes they're very injured and we take them out to Zambia where we have bigger hospitals. But in Angola we can do the basic medical care through the medical program set up by our comrade friend Dr. Amerigo Boavida, who was killed at Hanoi II on September 25, 1968 in a Portuguese air raid. So these are some of the things that we can do. Most importantly is for Canadians to understand the basis of it, and once they understand, we'll ask them to help out. If they don't help us, then we can throw two questions at them: "How serious are you?" and "Aren't you just a phoney?" But the point is if people can understand what it's all about, then maybe we can mobilize them to do something helping us in what we're trying to do.

One of the important things about our struggle is that it's against colonialism and those forces supporting colonialism. I come from northern Ontario, I'm white, but in our struggle we have whites, we have Metis, half-breeds, and we have black people, and we will continue to have this sort of struggle so long as oppression continues. Our struggle is against oppression, and oppression has no colour, and this is why whites can participate in a war of national liberation.

GAZETTE: Or as Huey P. Newton says, "Hate the oppressor, not the colour of the oppressor's skin."
ROY: Right.

