



the stage of violent opposition to the violence of colonialism. The Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola (MPLA) had been organized as a nationalist movement in 1956, but was driven underground by the harassment of PIDE, the Portuguese political police; in 1960, for example, 200 Africans were killed or wounded at Catete while demonstrating peacefully against the arrest, public flogging and imprisonment of Dr. Agostino Neto, a prominent leader of MPLA. Then, early in 1961, a series of dramatic events finally brought the Angola situation to the attention of the world. Resistance to enforced cotton-growing in Kasanje led to "Maria's War" — overt action by peasants in the area. At about the same time, MPLA attempted to free political prisoners being held in Luanda, the capital. The Portuguese response to these February initiatives, and to a rebellion in Northern Angola launched by the Uniao de Populacoes de Angola (UPA) a month later, was particularly ruthless. It has been estimated that from 30,000 to 50,000 Africans died in the savage Portuguese "pacification" program that followed these events. Yet at this stage the African challenge was largely spontaneous and localized. The mounting of co-ordinated and effective guerilla warfare was to take more time and to face real set-backs.

At first the UPA (later named the Frente Nacional de Libertacao de Angola — FNLA) seemed the most active agent of Angolan nationalism and continued for a time to have a marginal guerilla presence in the north. But, under the self-serving leadership of Holden Roberto, its strength was sapped by too close ties to Mobutu's Congo (and hence to American influence) and too narrow an identification with a particular ethnic base, the Bakongo people. The Uniao para la Independencia Total de Angola (UNITA), a third movement that emerged with Jonas Savimbi's splitting-away from UPA in 1964, did try to launch a struggle in Eastern Angola intended to be more closely linked to popular aspirations and popular participation. While the extent of its success remained a matter of controversy for many years, most observers agreed that, up to the time of the *coup*, it remained very small and had been effectively stalemated. Nevertheless, both of these movements remained in existence and are now a part of the complicated post-*coup* situation in Angola.

Of greater significance has been MPLA itself, which regrouped and began to demonstrate renewed strength. At first it concentrated its activities on the small enclave of Cabinda, but logistically Zam-

bia's independence in 1964 was a key development, since the preliminary mobilization of the people could begin in the eastern regions of the country and fully effective guerilla warfare could be launched in Moxico district in 1966. Soon the struggle had been pushed into ten of Angola's 15 districts, and MPLA found itself not only able to weather the storm of various general offensives launched by the Portuguese but also to make steady advance against a Portuguese deployment of some 60,000 troops. Moreover, a number of outside observers (like the eminent British Africanist, Basil Davidson) testified to the fact that a new society was indeed coming into existence in the liberated areas of Angola, just as it had in Guinea-Bissau and in Mozambique, and that the movement was drawing further political strength from this fact.

At the same time, it must be noted that the logic of protracted struggle has failed to express itself as unequivocally in Angola as in the other Portuguese African colonies. Even within MPLA, there has been considerable factionalism, Dr. Neto's hold upon the Presidency being only recently confirmed after the intervention of Tanzania's President Nyerere and others to reconcile three warring groups. Moreover, it is clear that such factionalism (both within and between the liberation movements), and the ethnic rivalry that it also tends to stimulate, have been encouraged by other interests. For Angola has long been the richest of Portugal's African outposts. Multinational corporations like Gulf Oil and Krupp are active there, and a large white settler group is also pressing energetically for a continuation of its privileges. Although the present Portuguese Government, which is much more firmly committed to decolonization since the resignation of President Spínola, seems serious about beginning a process of transition towards independence, the disarray on the African side has provided those who oppose African freedom with an opportunity to manipulate the situation. Even if attempts to forestall African control do fail, there will be those who seek merely to facilitate the expression of some lowest common denominator of African assertion, those who wish to find a neo-colonial solution that pares away as many as possible of the revolutionary implications of liberation in Angola. Nonetheless, it can be hoped that, whatever the difficulties, the continuing efforts of Africans to reconcile their differences and clarify their goals will bear fruit. Then the two-year period the Portuguese have set for the realization of Angola's independence could

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