

Angola—MPLA Stages Witch-hunt Against the Left

By Ernest Harsch

The biggest wave of political arrests in Luanda since Angola gained its independence is now under way. Faced with growing criticisms of its policies by students and workers in the capital, the MPLA (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola—People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola) began a crackdown against political opponents in early April.

Before the month was over, more than 100 persons had been arrested by the MPLA's political police, the Direcção de Informação e Segurança de Angola (DISA—Angola Directorate of Information and Security).

The official signal for the repression came from Interior Minister Nito Alves. According to the April 9 Lisbon daily *Jornal Novo*, he ordered all neighborhood, municipal, and provincial "people's commissions" to be "vigilant" and to turn in to the authorities all members of the Revolta Activa (Active Revolt, an opposition faction within the MPLA) and the Organização Comunista de Angola (OCA—Angola Communist Organization, a pro-Maoist group).

"Because they are the cornerstone of reaction," Alves declared, "this operation is vital for the defense of the revolution, for the consolidation of our political position, and for our advancement."

He continued, "All obviously reactionary individuals—those who individually are known to belong to the OCA, either as advisers, writers, or propagandists, or those who have up to now been passionately loyal to the Revolta Activa or have shown such an attitude—will have to be immediately arrested."

The crackdown began even before Alves's declaration. A report in the April 7 *Jornal Novo* said that the DISA was on the alert for persons distributing antigovernment literature: "Arbitrary searches and arrests are now a constant feature of life in the Angolan capital."

"As is generally known, all those suspected of fomenting relations, even purely personal ones, with the faction of the Pinto de Andrade brothers [the Revolta Activa] have been systematically arrested."

Father Joaquim Pinto de Andrade, who was seized on April 18, was the most well known of the political figures arrested by the MPLA. A former chancellor of the Archdiocese of Luanda, he is the brother of Mário Pinto de Andrade, one of the principal founders of the MPLA. According to René Pélissier, in his contribution to the book *Angola* (New York: Praeger Publish-



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MPLA LEADER NETO: His police have begun burning collections of revolutionary books.

ers, 1971), he played an important role in helping the MPLA establish some of its first cells in Luanda in the late 1950s.

Andrade was imprisoned by the Portuguese colonialists in June 1960 after protesting the arrest of Agostinho Neto, the present head of the MPLA and the president of the People's Republic of Angola. Andrade spent more than ten years in various Portuguese prisons. In 1962 he was elected honorary president of the MPLA.

After his release he became a leader of the Revolta Activa faction, which is opposed to Neto's leadership of the MPLA. On May 11, 1974, he signed the "Platform of the 19," which denounced the Neto leadership's "presidentialism" and raised charges of "tribalism and regionalism" in the MPLA's functioning.

A correspondent for the London *Economist*, reporting from Luanda in the April 3 issue, said that the Revolta Activa had not cooperated with the MPLA leadership since the government was formed. "It has a strong following in the university and among those who are loosely known as the movement's intellectuals," the correspondent reported.

Among the other Revolta Activa leaders who have been arrested by the MPLA are Gentil Viana, a former adviser to Neto; Rui

Castro Lopo, a former commander of the MPLA's second military region during the guerrilla war against the Portuguese; Manuel Videira, a doctor who served on the MPLA's eastern front during the guerrilla war; and Hugo de Menezes, a signer of the Platform of the 19 and a member of the MPLA's steering committee in 1962.

According to the report in the April 7 *Jornal Novo*, the MPLA has even begun to practice book burning. The police, it said, "burned the best library of revolutionary books in the country, just because it had been set up by Maria do Céu Carmo Reis, a former activist of the MPLA who is intellectually allied with the so-called Revolta Activa."

The repression has also hit members and leaders of other political groups opposed to the MPLA that have emerged in Luanda's *muceques*, the large slum areas that surround the city.

The April 20 *Jornal Novo* reported that "many young communists" have been detained and taken to the MPLA's prison camps outside the capital. A statement released by the OCA charged that "the MPLA has arrested dozens of outstanding revolutionary militants." (*Jornal Novo*, April 23.)

Among those seized, the OCA said, were members of the Secretariat of the Coordinating Body of the Neighborhood People's Commissions of Luanda, Sirgado, and Nogueira, as well as other OCA activists, such as Henrique Guerra, who spent many years in Portuguese prisons and who was a friend of Joaquim Pinto de Andrade.

The OCA was formed in early 1975 and held its first congress in October. Shortly after the congress, it began publishing *Jornal Comunista*, which labeled the MPLA a bourgeois party and denounced its repressive and anti-working-class policies.

The OCA was also opposed to the MPLA's rivals in the civil war, the FNLA (Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola—Angolan National Liberation Front) and the UNITA (União Nacional para Independência Total de Angola—National Union for the Total Independence of Angola).

The OCA was clearly influenced by Maoism. It denounced Soviet "social imperialism" in Angola and called for the establishment of a "people's democracy." Its position on the civil war, however, was at variance with that of Peking. While the

Chinese Communist party—in the interests of its own narrow bureaucratic dispute with the Soviet Stalinists—directed most of its criticisms at Moscow's involvement in Angola, the OCA labeled U.S. imperialism and its allies as the main enemy of the Angolan peoples. (*Jornal Comunista*, October 1975, No. 2.)

A statement released by the OCA in late April called for the "withdrawal of the Cuban occupation army and all foreign forces from Angola."

Alves charged that OCA members may have "infiltrated" government ministries. Neto, according to the April 3 *Economist*, declared, "Consciously or not, there are agents of imperialism even within our movement. They praise a socialist country which never helped us during the war. They praise China. . . . Those who persist are traitors."

Members of the Comitês Amílcar Cabral (CAC—Amílcar Cabral Committees) have also been arrested in the recent crackdown. Most of its leaders are now in jail. The MPLA first began arresting members of the CAC, as well as other young activists, in October 1975. The arrests, as well as the banning of the CAC's newspaper *Poder Popular*, were carried out under the guise of a campaign against "the partisans of Trotsky and Bakunin."

Persons who worked on the popular radio program "Kudibenguela" (Our Struggle) have been detained as well. The MPLA suppressed the program three months ago, leading to a demonstration of about 600 dock workers and high-school students on February 6. The protesters demanded the reinstatement of the program and the ouster of all whites and *mestiços* (persons of mixed Portuguese and African ancestry) from the government.

The MPLA has tried to justify its repressive actions by claiming that its political opponents are "racists," "divisionists," and "agents of imperialism."

In the April 1 *Washington Post*, correspondent Caryle Murphy quoted Lucio Lara, the general secretary of the MPLA, as saying, "The enemy formed groups with fancy names like 'Communist' to make them appear more advanced than the program of the MPLA and then put these organizations, which are absolutely created by the CIA and which have crazy and incoherent language, to insulting the MPLA point by point."

"Insulting the MPLA" has now apparently become a capital offense.

In his call for the turning in of all members of the Revolta Activa and the OCA, Alves said that "reeducation camps will not be built. Of course, some can be saved through reeducation and persuasion. But the intransigent ones, the most hard-headed, the most obstinate, will have to be eliminated."

The MPLA's response to its political opponents is in keeping with its overall anti-working-class policies. Since coming

to power in Luanda it has sought to "discipline" the workers by breaking strikes, introducing speedup, and stifling any independent working-class leadership that has arisen.

The OCA statement cited in the April 23 *Jornal Novo* declared, "The imprisonment of well-known nationalists and democrats belonging to the Revolta Activa, who have been threatened with execution, such as Gentil Viana, Joaquim Pinto de Andrade (former honorary president of the MPLA), Liceu Vieira Dias, and Manuel Videira (among others), represents one more step in the wave of repression launched by the MPLA against revolutionists and against all Angolan democrats and patriots."

The OCA appealed to "all revolutionary and progressive political forces" to show their solidarity with the campaign for freedom for the political prisoners.

The MPLA's decision to resort to the use of repressive measures against political dissidents standing to the left indicates that it fears a socialist challenge to its course toward accommodation with imperialism. It also indicates the existence of

substantial dissatisfaction among the Angolan population.

According to a dispatch from Luanda by Caryle Murphy in the March 1 *Washington Post*, "The rising expectations of Angola's black population have been frustrated by the economic crisis created by months of civil war. The government's austerity measures and appeals for higher productivity have not been popular."

In the April 1 *Washington Post*, Murphy reported that an underground newspaper, *Jornal de Operário*, has charged the MPLA with making concessions to American imperialism by inviting the Gulf Oil Company to resume its operations in Cabinda. It also attacked the MPLA for having "sold out" to Moscow and for having allowed the Cubans to become "new colonizers" in Africa.

"The leftists," Murphy said, "have formed various clandestine groups and have demanded that the Popular Movement immediately form a government of 'workers and peasants.' In the last month they have accelerated propaganda activities among laborers and in the poorer neighborhoods of Luanda." □

Israeli Rightist Rebuts 'Slanders' of Zionism

Yediot Aharonot, a right-wing nationalist newspaper, is one of Israel's leading dailies. Its November 14, 1975, issue carried an article by Aharon Shamir on the United Nations vote condemning Zionism as a form of racism.

Speaking of those who "slander Zionism," Shamir said: "They have no reason to be ashamed of the fact that they have come down from the trees. On the contrary. But nations, like individuals, begin their development in the kindergarten, then in school and university. Just as it would be scandalous for the rector of a university to be appointed from among recent kindergarten graduates, it is even more scandalous when nations which have only just come down from the trees regard themselves as leaders of the world."

According to Shamir, "those who raised their hands [in favor of the UN resolution]—especially the African states—have shown their stupidity. . . ."

The vote, he argues, must have been "the result of pressure from the Muslim Arab states. For have primitives a mind of their own?"

Shamir concludes that Israel lost the UN vote on Zionism because "poor Israel tried to give the primitive Africans something better than money: help in acquiring knowledge so as to bring them nearer, if possible, to the civilized and progressive world."

This ultraright bigot even has a theory of the master race. "The blow we received in the UN," he said, "should not make us think again, about our Jewish-Zionist

essence. It should only increase our national pride and our absolute determination to establish our rule in our fatherland. It should also persuade us again that we are not at all similar to others and this is why our image suffers more than that of others."

Of course, Yitzhak Rabin and the other leaders of the Israeli regime would never openly make such racist declarations. They only roll out the red carpet for South African Prime Minister John Vorster. □

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