

LETTER ADDRESSED

BY JONAS MALHEIRO SAVIMBI, LEADER OF U.N.I.T.A.

TO CARLOS PEREIRA MENDES,

CORRESPONDENT OF THE PORTUGUESE BROADCAST, IN LUSO (ANGOLA).

Some days ago I received your letter, for which I thank you.

It is impossible to know closely we have followed the present political situation, how we examine each statement and position taken with the utmost care and the greatest attention.

UNITA, as its name indicates, is for the complete independence of Angola, because only in this way can the best of this country play its true role in Africa and in the world. But UNITA is in favour of a period of preparation for the Angolan people for the democratic system, and for this it is indispensable that the liberation movements participate in the campaign to prepare the people, once the war is finished.

It is very easy to ask for immediate independence for Angola but when one carefully weighs up the problem surrounding the birth of a state, and especially when that state has the name Angola, one must be prudent. Anyone who accepts the lack of preparation of the Angolan people for the democratic system, and will later educate the people after this immense country has been hand over, is only playing with words and running away from political reality.

If the three liberation movements, who have fought with arms in hand, have not been able to unite in 13 years, we must remove the climate of emotions so that serious lasting things can be built. If we take into account the proliferation of political parties in Angola, we are more and more sure every day that Angola needs a certain length of time to know how to make its choice. The time, long or short, will depend on the satisfactory carrying through of the education process of the people, for if this is not done it will be just another game of the elite without the true participation of the people.

Because of this UNITA does not support the idea of a referendum within one year for Angola to determine its future. In fact we consider that it would be more correct not to hold a referendum which places before the Angolan people options other than independence. This would merely be to evade the problem.

What is wanted after a period of intense political activity, once peace is re-established in Angola, is the organisation of elections so as to constitute the legislative assembly, from which would come a government responsible for the future of Angola. And from this government, coming from a popular plebiscite, the form of relations between Portugal and Angola would be discussed.

Angola needs unity to build a happy, prosperous country. Its division is the result of colonial policy of the past regime and it is necessary that the whole Angolan people feel united in their common destiny, so that they choose those of their sons who are really concerned for them.

It is not in Angola where one should talk about multiracialism, unless it is that those who use the term do not understand its political significance. It implies that the qualifying of Angolans will be made on the basis of colour. We, in UNITA, consider as Angolans all those who were born in Angola, all those who live there and all those who in the future choose Angola as their country. This is without in any way taking into account the pigmentation of their skin. The sociology of Angola has itself long passed any concept of multiracialism.

So far as this is concerned all reasonable thinkers will agree with us that Angola needs a space of time to calm its emotions.

Graduate in Political Science and Law
President of U.N.I.T.A.

26th JUNE 1974

It is sufficient to read the Angolan press or hear political opinions on the radio, to appreciate that on one hand a part of our society is afraid of reprisals and revenge by its compatriots, while on the other hand, some people think that they have suffered humiliation, without having the hope that the future will inevitably be different and content for all. Nothing good can be built upon hatred and vengeance.

We, in the name of all and for the liberty of all, took up arms and suffered in the bush and continue to suffer, cannot betray the true interests of the people. It is because of that we point the way to national reconciliation, because we know the limits of force and its destructive effects. On the other hand, he who has been accustomed to death during years, this becoming his second nature, the better appreciates happiness in others.

The happiness of the Angolan people is in finding tactical ways to end the fear of some and vengeance of others.

Angola is a country with immense economic potential but its development for the benefit of the Angolan people, without unnecessary mortgages, for it is not for these that we fought and continue to fight should count on private property which has knowledge and practical experience.

Only a strong economy will allow the realisation of the social progress that Angola needs so badly. There are sectors of our economy that should belong to the state because of their key position in the national economy and because of their influence in the development of the whole Angolan economy.

It is important to stress at this time that the press has an extremely important role to play. In spite of still being conditioned by the war, it should be politically prepared to educate the opinions of Angolans, and abandon the mistakes of the past regime, who saw in us, nothing but terrorists, bandits, foreign subversives agents and other names besides.

Many of these could compete with the political parties that with every step deform those that honestly work for Angola. In fact, that the first breath of freedom is felt in Angola is due to our armed struggle. So they should think about the sons of Angola who still not died but continue to die to hasten the return of peace to Angola.

The achievement of peace should be the first objective of all Angolans, because the liberty which the Armed Forces Movement gave Angolans can give noble and vigorous lessons.

For the process of decolonization in Angola to be genuine, it should be the exclusive responsibility of the Portuguese Government without any sort of foreign interference. Only in this way can Angola avoid being placed in the cross-fire of the ambitions of the great powers who would like to make Angola another centre of conflict and tension, without benefit to our people.

The relations between Angola and Portugal, as I said earlier, will be determined by an Angolan Government coming from popular opinion and this already offers a vast range of perspectives. The language spoken is the vehicle that will maintain an indissoluble link; the culture that only needs to open the way for Angolan and African particularities; the economy, the justice, the blood that made Portugal a Euro-African nation, with all the values that history cannot deny.

Many will disagree with my assessment because emotions continue to move the pieces on the Angolan chess-board, but when time has passed over our pain and the tears cried over our dead have dried, we can only live securely when all Angolans feel that we are truly brothers. Once the war is finished, which was, and continues to be, a school of national reconciliation, so that we can adapt our attitudes to the new society which will certainly arise.

An embrace, friends, from your fellow countryman,

JONAS MALHEIRO SAVIMBI
Graduate in Political Sciences and Law
Presidente of U.N.I.T.A.

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