



# ANGOLA, 1961

The Factual Record

by

**BASIL DAVIDSON**

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# ANGOLA, 1961

## THE FACTUAL RECORD

by  
**Basil Davidson**

### **A British responsibility**

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY, this year, the south-west African land of Angola has come to the notice of a wide public throughout the world.

This has happened because the Africans of Angola have at last turned from despair to revolt; and because the troops and bombing planes of Salazar, the Portuguese dictator, have replied with the pitiless massacre of African men, women and children.

Angola is the victim of one of the most ferocious repressions in all colonial history. And yet today, in this crucial year of 1961, the British Government is deeply and even actively involved in support for Salazar and his vicious colonial rule.

It may be argued in defence of this British commitment to Salazar that there are two sides to every case. After all, Angola is obscure and far away. What has really happened there?

The object of this survey is to provide a factual answer to this question and to suggest some practical conclusions.

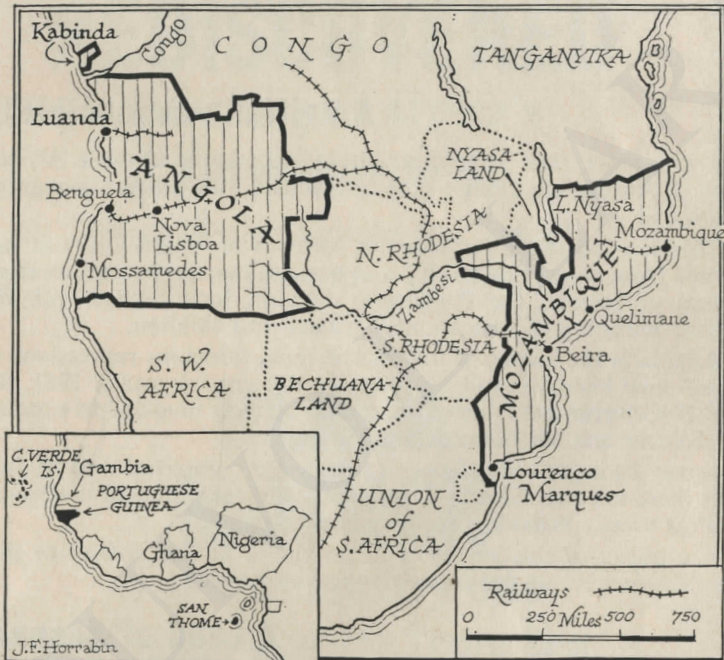
### **A Land of despair**

Some sixty years ago there arose in Western Europe and the United States a vast and vivid movement of protest against the misrule of another dictator in Africa—Leopold of Belgium in the so-called Congo Free State (which afterwards became the Belgian Congo and, in 1960, the Congo Republic) That great movement's final judgment on the Congo Free State was uttered by the Marquess of Lansdowne, speaking in the House of Lords in 1906. "Bondage under the most barbarous and inhuman conditions," declared Lord Lansdowne, "and maintained for mercenary motives of the most selfish character." Two years later Leopold's rule was brought to an end. The Congo Free State vanished from the scene.

In 1961 we have seen the rebirth of that 60-year old Congo Reform Association—founded by Edmund Dene Morel, who also founded the Union of Democratic Control—in a new shape and with a new purpose: the end of an intolerable tyranny in Angola.

Christian missionaries have added the powerful weight of their testimony to the support of journalists and travellers. These missionaries in Angola had long been held silent by the knowledge that they would be expelled from Angola if they should publish the truth of what they knew. Now they decided that the moment had come to speak out.

Their condemnation has been crushing. They have passed on Salazar's rule in Angola the same terrible judgment that Lord



Lansdowne delivered on Leopold's Congo: *Bondage under the most barbarous and inhuman conditions, and maintained for mercenary motives of the most selfish character.*

This colonial bondage and barbarism are the background to the Angolan revolt of 1961.

In case anyone should still fear that utter condemnation of Salazar's rule is unfair and ill-grounded, let us take a quick look at the main features of this regime. And what is true of Angola, one should remember, is also true in full or in large measure of Portugal's other colonies—and notably of Mozambique and Portuguese Guinea.

Angola is a big country of 481,000 square miles in south-west Africa. On the north it has the Congo Republic; on the east, Northern Rhodesia; on the south, the League-mandated territory

of South West Africa (claimed and governed by South Africa); and on the west the Atlantic Ocean. It has an estimated population of about 200,000 Portuguese (mostly peasants, small businessmen and officials) and more than 4½ million Africans. These Africans are mainly of the great Bantu language group, and include old and numerous nations like the Bakongo, the Kimbundu and the Ovimbundu.

The Portuguese first reached what is now Angola in 1482. They occupied footholds along the coast during the next hundred years. Between about 1700 and 1850, this country became little more than a reservoir for slaves transported to Brazil. After 1850 the Portuguese began to occupy the interior as well as the coast. They met with repeated resistance to their colonial rule, and more or less serious revolts have occurred in Angola every dozen years or so since the conquest of the interior first began. The revolt of 1961 is only the largest in a history of many risings.

A poor and backward country, hard-pressed to pay for its own elementary needs, with an appallingly high rate of illiteracy even today, Portugal has been able to do little more in Angola than "pacify and occupy." This is therefore an outstandingly *underdeveloped* country although it has many European-owned coffee, sisal and sugar plantations. Its largest single source of exportable wealth, so far, has been diamonds: these are mined in north-eastern Angola by a Portuguese company which has close links with the international De Beers diamond organisation.

Over the past 30 years, during the oppressive and increasingly obscurantist regime of Salazar, the traditional "paternalism" of Portuguese colonial policy has turned more and more into a shameless exploitation of African life, land and labour. The old slavery that Angola knew for so long has been transformed into a covert form of slavery—periodical slavery—which is known as "contract labour."

Nearly all adult male Africans—from teenagers to grandfathers—are subject by law to this periodical slavery. It is supposed to be for six months of every year, but many can return home only after years of forced labour. They have no civic rights. They are allowed no political responsibilities. They can obtain no education. Their medical services are for the most part non-existent. They are treated like animals or worse than animals. "In some ways," wrote Captain Galvão some 14 years ago, when, as Inspector of Overseas Provinces, he was reporting on Angola to the Salazar Government, "the situation is worse than simple slavery. Under slavery, after all, the native is bought as an animal: his owner prefers him to remain as fit as a horse or an ox. Yet here the native is not bought—he is hired from the State, although he is called a free man. And his employer cares little if he sickens or dies, once he is working, because when he sickens or dies his employer will simply ask for another." This was the position of hopeless misery against which the Africans of Angola rose in revolt last February.

Such observations show the falsity of Portuguese claims to run Angola "without a colour bar." In Angola—as in Mozambique—there is a most rigid colour bar for more than ninety-nine per cent of Africans. The clearest proof of this lies in the fact that fewer than one per cent of Africans have been admitted by the Portuguese to the status of *assimilado* (assimilated person), and thus exempted from contract labour which is really forced labour.

After a century of Portuguese occupation and nearly five centuries of Portuguese contact, Angola has become a political and economic slum where the inmates are kept down by hunger and the whip, the prison and the firing-squad.

Other African countries have moved forward. Other African peoples have won equality and independence. But the Portuguese rulers of Angola have remained blind or indifferent to all the changes of the 20th century. As late as 1957 they were still bleating their ostrich-like refrain: "Everything in Angola is quiet and the same as before." And yet, already, the ground was moving beneath their feet.

## Not a single concession

The first stirrings of resistance, faint and far underground as yet, occurred in the early 1950s. Then it was that news began circulating in Angola of political developments in some French and British territories. Then it was, too, that the voice of independent Africa began to be heard, muffled yet recognisable, in the councils of the United Nations; and news of this, too, penetrated the colonial barriers behind which Angola lay. New ideas of freedom crossed the frontiers of Angola.

Little groups of African men and women began to meet together in the Angolan capital of Luanda and in some other towns. They were joined by a few Portuguese whose hatred of Salazar's stifling dictatorship was strong enough to make them act. Nothing very much was accomplished by these groups except to light the flame of resistance. Yet this, in the circumstances, was a great deal. And once lit, the spirit of resistance went on burning. In 1953 some fifty of these bold men sent a manifesto to the secretariat of the United Nations, signing it with their names and setting forth their reasoned protest against the misery and terror from which their people suffered. A year later the first African political parties began to be formed in secret. By 1957, in spite of many arrests, there were hundreds of Angolan Africans (and quite a few Angolan Europeans) who had taken the crucial step of joining one or other of these groups.

This was the moment when the Portuguese, if they had not been living so completely in the past, could have begun to form some kind of bridge of understanding across which new ideas of government might have moved. Not only did Salazar's agents and ad-

ministrators refuse to form any such bridge: they did their utmost to destroy the few remaining points of contact which still existed between the Portuguese and the peoples whom they dominated. They continued their arrests. They multiplied their bullying and torture. They reinforced their police.

They began this new wave of repression in 1960 by mounting a political trial of some forty-five Africans and seven Europeans (all of whom were Portuguese). Alive to the grave danger of a miscarriage of justice, the International Commission of Jurists engaged a Portuguese lawyer from Lisbon, Dr. Palma Carlos, to attend the trial as an observer. He was prevented by the Portuguese authorities from flying to Angola. During August, sitting in secret, Salazar's judges pronounced heavy sentences against which there could be no appeal.

There were more and more arrests. They reached a climax in June, 1960, when Salazar's police seized 52 Angolan Africans, including the Rev. Father Joaquim Pinto de Andrade, the African Chancellor of the Catholic Archbishopric of Luanda, on mere suspicion of sympathy with the nationalist cause. Many hundreds were now in gaol.

Among them was one of the leading spirits of Angolan liberty, a courageous poet and medical doctor named Agostinho Neto, African president of the clandestine nationalist organisation, The People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola. Though still a young man, Neto was already famous among his own people. There was widespread anger at his sudden arrest. Rumours of a protest march and of a massacre by Portuguese troops filtered through to Europe. These rumours were afterwards confirmed. It is important for the record to note that this outbreak of violence—the signal, as it turned out, for all the violence that was to follow—was not the work of Africans but the work of Salazar. Africans were still in the stage of peaceful protest: Salazar and his gunmen were already thirsting for blood.

Four months after Neto's arrest, in October 1960, a report at last reached London which shed a clear light on the events of June. I want to quote it at length, although its authorship must certainly remain anonymous:

After the arrest of Dr. Neto, on June 8, 1960, the people from Bengo, the birthplace of Dr. Neto, and from the neighbouring village of Icolo decided to go to their district office of Catete, a small town about 60 miles from Luanda, and demand the release of Dr. Neto.

When the district officer came to know about the decision he called for reinforcements from Luanda, and about 200 soldiers with Sten-guns were sent to Catete. About a week after the arrest, men, women and children from these villages, about one

thousand people, arrived at Catete in a peaceful demonstration, but the soldiers fired on the crowd without any warning and killed 30 people and injured over 200.

On the following day these soldiers went to Icolo and Bengo and killed or arrested everyone who was found in the two villages, which were then set on fire. The villages are now totally destroyed, with not a single soul in them.

That was in Central Angola, not far from the capital city of Luanda, during June 1960. Meanwhile, at the end of the same month, another crucial event was taking place next door in the Belgian Congo. On July 1 the Belgian Congo became the Congo Republic.

This transition had one immediate effect of profound importance for Angola. The Bakongo people living in northern Angola were already well aware that their kinsmen in the French Congo had won their independence. Now they saw their kinsmen in the Belgian Congo winning the same freedom. Yet if the "French Bakongo" and the "Belgian Bakongo" were ripe for political liberty, why not the "Portuguese Bakongo"?

From about this time, accordingly, ideas of practical resistance to colonial rule began circulating rapidly and convincingly in the forest lands and towns of Cabinda and northern Angola. Yet still the Portuguese ostrich kept its head stuck fast in the sand of bankrupt ideas.

Salazar ordered that his repression should continue. There were to be no concessions to the Africans of Angola: not a single one.

Tension grew towards breaking point. Soon it was to tighten beyond endurance.

What the atmosphere was like in Luanda at the beginning of 1961—and it was undoubtedly much the same in other towns and cities of Angola—may be seen from the report in January of an African pastor whose name I shall not give. (I have cut short what he wrote for reasons of space, but the dots permit no distortion of sense):

Curfew at 10 p.m. has been enforced for all Africans. But even before that time, if an African is found in the street after sunset by the police patrol he is harassed and sometimes arrested . . . .

Settlers threaten the Africans that a war between the Whites and Africans is imminent, and that all Blacks disloyal to Portugal who do not join hands with the Europeans, will be wiped out . . . . Planes fly low so as to create panic amongst Africans . . . .



An increasing number of slogans —**Angola Livre (Free Angola)**— have been appearing on the walls of Luanda.

The censorship is now very strict and I am sending this letter with a friend of mine who is going to Nigeria . . . .

Such damning evidence of Portuguese provocation and blind contempt for Africans could awaken the anger even of the most cautious and conservative men in the outside world, all the more because it came from the pen of a Christian priest. That is the reason why the writer's name may not be given. Soon the police and the firing-squads were especially busy with African pastors—Catholic as well as Protestant. Later on, in July 1961, American Methodists working in Angola would report the deaths of seventeen pastors at Portuguese hands. Thirty others were in prison, and a further ninety were missing. (Letter to the *Guardian*, July 18, 1961, from the Rev. C. J. Parsons of the British Baptist Missionary Society).

To Salazar's unyielding policy of brute repression, mass arrests, torture of prisoners and the shooting of innocent people there came at last, in February 1961, an African reply. It was the reply that desperate and tormented people have always made when they have brave men to lead them, and when reasoned argument and peaceful persuasion have alike completely failed. Africans turned to armed revolt.

In February 1961 the struggle for Angola's freedom entered a new and decisive phase—the phase of revolution.

## Revolution

The first action in the Angola rising of 1961 occurred in the capital city of Luanda on February 4.

Spokesmen for Angolan Africans had weeks before warned that they would answer violence with violence.

The Portuguese had treated these warnings with contempt and redoubled their repression. Now they were taken by surprise.

On February 4 African crowds stormed the São Paulo gaol and police post in the capital. The attack was not successful in taking the prison itself, for the attackers were badly armed, but it seems that only seven of them were killed on this first day. They renewed their attack on February 5, and the fighting and casualties were more extensive. By that night Portuguese police and troops had gathered in force, and were further strengthened by panic-stricken settlers. There now began a massacre of Africans.

Nobody knows how many defenceless Africans were killed on the night of February 5 and on following days. There seems no doubt that police and troops and settlers went into the crowded *Muceques*—African quarters—of Luanda, and began beating up or shooting Africans indiscriminately. One eye-witness who left Luanda on February 6 (he too will have to remain anonymous, and for obvious reasons) told of a count of 49 African corpses, of hundreds wounded and of about three hundred under arrest.

The Portuguese now clamped an even tighter censorship on all news to the outside world. Yet the stories of massive reprisal are many and terrible. *Time* of February 24 reported that a Luanda cab driver had "told reporters that he saw five trucks loaded with corpses driven out to a mass burial in the bush." Nearly three weeks after the initial attack, the São Paulo prison "still 'stank like a charnel house' even after being cleared of dead bodies [for the police, it appears, turned their guns on the prisoners during or after the attack.] While tanks and armoured cars patrolled the streets at night and Portuguese gunboats and planes combed the coastline, a doctor said wearily, 'I don't know how much more of this I can stand. Every night we deal with men dreadfully wounded and cut up.'"

But the battle was only just beginning. Only five weeks after these Portuguese massacres in Luanda, the Bakongo of northern Angola answered the signal for revolt that had been given on February 4, and rose against their oppressors. On March 15 the little groups that had come together in the forests of northern Angola and Cabinda, during previous weeks and even months, suddenly launched a campaign of terror and revenge. They invaded European homes and plantations, shops, offices and communication-centres. They seem to have killed about two hundred Portuguese men, women and children, often atrociously. This was now a peasant rising, an outburst of uncontrollable anger, which matched the familiar horrors of repression with a new brutality. Everyone must regret the excesses that were committed, but can anyone really be surprised at them?

And still the Portuguese learned no lesson: as we shall see, they answered the rising in the north with a war of extermination.

"No one," commented *The Economist* on March 25, in the wake of the earliest news from northern Angola, "should feel anything but horror at this renewal of bloodshed in a part of the world that has already had a share of it this year; nor, however, should anyone be under any doubt that more will follow if the Portuguese government fails to modernise and improve its African policy."

Vain words: the Portuguese government had not the slightest intention of modernising and improving anything except its weapons of terror and extermination.

With fresh outbreaks in the north of the country, panic gripped settlers and administration alike. By mid-April Lisbon was already busy with a full-scale military build-up. "It is understood," reported the *Daily Telegraph* from Lisbon on April 17, "that reinforcements of up to 25,000 men will be sent [to Angola] . . . Forces available in Angola hitherto have not exceeded 7,000 men . . . It is evident that Dr. Salazar is resolved to stabilise the situation in Angola by firm military action." (For "stabilise" read death: for "firm military action," read annihilation of whole villages).

At about this time, pursuing their war policy, Salazar's government began to cast round for military aid, open or concealed, from their customary allies—and notably from Great Britain and the Union of South Africa. And at the same time, following Lisbon's idiotic ideas about how to convince the rest of the world that Salazar was a pure and innocent Christian gentleman, efforts were made to present the Angolan rising as the product of "outside influence"—of course, Communist—and as the work of savage and bloodthirsty "trouble makers."

A characteristic sample of this "atrocities propaganda" was reproduced by the correspondent of the *Sunday Times* on April 23, writing from Luanda and several hundred miles, one should note, from the scene of the rising. "One month of guerrilla war," wrote this correspondent, who was evidently reproducing what Salazar's men had told him, "has brought the formerly peaceful Portuguese Angola near to collapse. Portugal's largest and most prosperous colony"—an odd way to describe one of the most backward territories in all Africa—"is suffering an emergency far bigger and bloodier than anything Mau Mau achieved in Kenya. Even senior government officials express doubts that Europeans can conquer the ferocious rebel bands ravaging the northern areas. The present raids and official reprisals mean, say Portuguese moderates, *an end to hopes of racial compromise here.*"

I have put these extraordinary concluding words in italics, because they show that an enormous gulf now separates the Portuguese—even "Portuguese moderates"—from the realities of life. For when, after all, have the Portuguese ever made a genuine attempt at "racial compromise" here? Both before and after the advent of Salazar, the roots of all Portuguese policy in Angola have sucked their nourishment from the forced labour of the vast majority of the male African population. Forced labour and "racial compromise" simply do not go together.

The *Sunday Times* correspondent went on with his report from Luanda of what had happened several hundred miles away. "In savage raids against isolated Portuguese traders and planters living near the Congo border, Africans have committed fearful atrocities. Men, women and children have been hacked with bush knives. At least 500 Europeans have been killed since March 15." Other newspaper reports, based on Salazarist information, carried much the same figure. It appears exaggerated. For the 1961 annual report of the Angola Diamond Company—certainly very well in-

formed—refers to the death of about 200 white men, women and children in the first few days. Whites killed since then will have been soldiers or armed civilians.

The agents of Portuguese “civilisation” reacted in their time-honoured way. What this really meant, in African suffering and death, was shown by the special correspondent in Luanda of the *Daily Mirror* on May 3, some seven weeks after the rising had begun:

“‘I estimate that we’ve killed 30,000 of these “animals,”’ one army officer told me.

‘There are probably another 100,000 working with the terrorists.

‘We intend killing them when the dry season starts in about six weeks’ time.’

The dry season lasts about four months and to achieve such a target would mean about 1,000 killings a day.

This, the Portuguese have decided, is the only way they can keep their foothold in Africa—and in this territory rich in coffee, diamonds and maize.”

The *Mirror’s* correspondent also described the behaviour of White settlers in Luanda. He saw an African thrown from the roof of a six-storey building into the street below. “Just round the corner another African was torn to pieces by a mob—a White mob.”

*Time*, reporting on May 19 with an article entitled “Lawless Terror,” threw fresh light on the nature of this Portuguese panic and counter-terror. The report quoted a young Angolan African whose name was given as Jean Felix, one of many refugees who were now flooding over the frontier of northern Angola into the Congo Republic. This young man was badly wounded. Two bayonet thrusts had gone completely through his chest; one of them had cut a kidney in half. He was interviewed in the Christian Medical Institute Hospital at Kimpese in the Congo, 20 miles north of the Angolan border. This is what he said:

Except for a few cooking fires, it was dark when seven truck-loads of Portuguese soldiers came. They took me and many of our village down to the river. I heard many shots, and four men near me fell into the river. Then a Portuguese soldier struck me many times in the back with the knife on his rifle. He kicked me into the river. I grabbed a branch and it carried me downstream. I crawled out and lay all the next day in the bush. Some friends found me and carried me here, where they are making me well.

The reporters of *Time* magazine continued their gruesome story. “Walking, hobbling on crutches, or carrying their wounded in bloody blankets, frightened refugees have been streaming across the border [into the Congo] at the rate of over 800 a day since the revolt began. All have their stories of indiscriminate Portuguese brutality . . . .

"In Luanda, civilian vigilantes raided São Paulo suburb to hunt for 'suspected arms,' shot down 33 Africans at random. A government spokesman later reported the raid proudly."

"Congo observers—working with the scraps of information that leak out past the iron censorship that Dictator Antonio de Oliveira Salazar has clamped on Angola, think as many as 7,000 Africans have been killed—many without reason, since probably no more than 2,000 or 3,000 natives are actively in revolt."

Whether or not these figures were accurate—and subsequent reports suggested that both the African casualties and the number of rebels were far too low—hysterical violence by Portuguese settlers was such that the Government was at last obliged to intervene. "In Luanda itself," wrote the *Sunday Telegraph* correspondent in that city on May 20, "the reign of terror and lynching of Africans has at last been stopped—not by public opinion, but by the fear of the authorities that the White militia was getting out of control. It has been followed instead by a series of savage 'precautions' extending to the hitherto peaceful south.

"Wave after wave of Africans have been arrested, 1,500 of them in the Lobito area alone. There are no known camps in the area. The local prison holds only 100 and the total disappearance of the arrested Africans has given rise to the most sinister fears."

"People arrested," continued the *Sunday Telegraph* correspondent, "include schoolteachers, 'assimilados,' and almost every African who is literate. Possession of a grammar primer, a wireless set or even just a bicycle has been enough to lead to a man's disappearance. African priests have in many cases been inexplicably transferred to Portugal in an attempt to empty the country of every potential African leader."

Challenged at last, Salazar and his regime piled folly upon folly, and followed one bloody act of blind repression by another.

## Massacre

To justify their actions, Salazar's paid scribes have invented any lie they could think of. Sometimes these lies have been so patently absurd as to have made Salazar a subject for laughter as well as for disgust and shame. Early in May, for example, his propagandists were claiming to have captured "seventy-one Ghanaians" fighting with the rebels in the north. A month later came the lame admission of a "mistake."

Yet no amount of exposure of lies and terror seems to have given the dictatorship the least idea that it could or should mend its ways. In mid-May, furthermore, sixty-one leading Portuguese (*Time* of May 19) "demanded drastic changes in the constitution to bring about a more democratic rule in the homeland—as the first step toward solving Portugal's smouldering colonial problems abroad." A month earlier, in Angola itself, the Catholic hierarchy had published a pastoral letter with the same plea, calling for the formation of "a more perfect social situation, more supported by

justice and charity;" and stating that "legitimate and just aspirations deserve to be taken into consideration." All this was ignored by Salazar and his henchmen.

How little they cared for councils of reason could be seen in an interview that Salazar gave to a correspondent of the *New York Times* early in June (*Time* of June 9):

"Did he [Salazar] plan economic and social reforms for terror-ridden Angola? 'The rhythm of implementation of programs for social advancement [replied the dictator] will not be slowed down but rather the contrary, if possible . . . . It is possible [he went on] that we may have erred on the side of excessive caution and tolerance.'"

Not enough bloodshed: that was Salazar's reading of the situation. But what were the facts? Nobody knew—or knows today—exactly how many people the Portuguese have killed or maimed for life; how many homes and villages have they ravaged; how many families they have destroyed. But in mid-June the British Baptist Missionary Society gave a careful estimate, admittedly approximate and yet based on a detailed survey of evidence from many sides.

They estimated that the Portuguese had killed some 20,000 African men, women and children during the three months since the northern rising had begun. They spoke of "death and disaster." They called Angola "the blackest spot on the continent of Africa." They believed that the Portuguese government were planning operations which could lead to the killing of a further 50,000 men, women and children.

Twenty thousand killings, and other reports spoke of a much higher figure: yet Salazar, only two weeks earlier when this holocaust was at its worst, could say that he and his government might have "erred on the side of excessive tolerance and caution." Not enough terror: that was Salazar's conclusion, and he proceeded to act on it.

The missionaries said in their testimony that the Portuguese had taken reprisals against rebelling Africans with the "utmost barbarism," lynching and massacring "tens of thousands of men, women and children." They gave many detailed examples. But even the utmost barbarism, as the Nazis had learned to their cost during the Second World War, is not enough to quell the courage of desperate men who are ready to die for their freedom. The revolt continued. It won new adherents, new fighters. It spread across the whole country, drawing in all the principal peoples of Angola.

On June 5, according to Portuguese official sources quoted by the *Daily Telegraph*, "thousands of terrorists" attacked a village not ten miles from the port of Ambriz, only 87 miles up the coast from the capital itself. This daring attack was pressed home. As late as June 22 the same newspaper reported that "insurgents have surrounded the town of Ambriz in spite of heavy losses suffered

in an attack yesterday . . . . In yesterday's attack, carried out during fog, over 300 insurgents infiltrated into the streets of Ambriz while another group attacked the town's airport. The airport runway was put out of commission."

By this time, much of northern Angola was reported in rebel African hands and many roads were cut. And now, on June 21, the *Guardian* quoted official Portuguese sources showing how the rebellion had spread far to the south, beyond Luanda and the Cuanza river, into regions hitherto thought "undisturbed."

"About 190 miles south of Luanda," stated the *Guardian* on the basis of Portuguese reports, "at Novo Redondo, the police are said to have uncovered a terrorist organisation which was planning to assassinate all Whites and Natives loyal to the authorities. A 'great number' of arrests are reported. A similar organisation was discovered at Porto Alexandre, 125 miles north of the border with South West Africa, where 300 out of the 5,000 labourers were involved in an 'anti-loyalist' plot." One need not take the "explanations" of the Portuguese police very seriously: what these reports make clear is that the men who attacked the São Paulo prison on February 4 now had backing not only in the north but also in the south—indeed, across the whole western area of this vast country.

This national character of the rising was confirmed by the handful of Angolan Africans who were now getting through to Paris and London, mainly by way of the Congo Republic. What they had to say brought clear evidence that all the main peoples of Angola were now involved, directly or indirectly, in the effort to end Portuguese misrule. The Bakongo of the north were deeply involved; so were the Kimbundu and the Ovimbundu, large peoples of central Angola. If the fighting was severest in the north, this was partly because of the proximity of the Congo border, and partly because the terrain in the north was better for guerilla warfare than elsewhere.

But like the Nazis in wartime Europe, who were faced with similar risings, the Portuguese recognised only one course of action. "The first large-scale offensive against rebel terrorists in Angola," wrote the *Daily Telegraph* correspondent in Luanda on June 29, "is to be launched within the next ten days." Thus the Baptist missionaries were confirmed in their grim forecast: not content with 20,000 killings, the Portuguese prepared for more. A fresh wave of military terror now began. As I write these words, this new wave of terror is not yet ended.

No weapon that could kill or burn has been ignored. On July 1 a British missionary who was fresh from northern Angola, Mrs. Margaret Grenfell, told the *Observer* "how she and her husband had witnessed a napalm attack" on the village where their mission station was established and where they lived. "The canisters," said Mrs. Grenfell, "looked like oil drums with tapered ends. My husband went to bury one of our Christian workers who had been killed in the attack. He saw that the instructions on one of the canisters were in English."

The damning evidence was too strong to be denied. "More than 80,000 refugees from Angola were strung out across the Congolese border last night," the *Guardian* had written twelve days earlier. "Some of them were suffering from burns and were in need of plastic surgery."

"The cumulative evidence of returning missionaries and African refugees of the napalm bombing of villages and wholesale executions," commented the *Sunday Times* on July 1, "is too consistent to be ignored."

## The British Government's Part

How did those British or American napalm canisters get to Angola?

The answer is that Portugal's whole military capacity and organisation has rested on regular support from the main NATO Powers in arms, ammunition and training facilities. There is not the slightest doubt that Portugal has used and is using NATO-supplied arms to fight the rebellion in Angola. Without this NATO help, the Salazar government could never deploy the modern aircraft, weapons and delivery techniques which they have operated—and still operate—against African men, women and children.

Every NATO Power must therefore bear some of the guilt for the crimes of Salazar in Africa.

But the general help of NATO has not seemed enough to Salazar. He has been looking round, as we have seen, for particular help from carefully chosen people: from South Africa, from the Central African Federation (of Rhodesia and Nyasaland), and from Britain.

That White supremacists should stand together was no doubt to be expected. But what about Britain?—What about other NATO countries?

Of these allies, Norway comes out of the sordid story with the best record. On June 21 the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Mr. Halvard Lange, confirmed that his Government had refused to sell ammunition to Portugal. He declared that "Norway regards it as a burden for the whole western alliance that one member-country seeks to retain colonies by force."

The United States Government moved more cautiously, but also made it clear that it condemned Salazar's policies. Its UN delegate, Mr. Adlai Stevenson, consistently voted in favour of resolutions that were critical of Portugal.

Not so the British Government, nor the Governments of some other NATO countries.

On April 20 1961, for example, the General Assembly of the UN passed a resolution calling on Portugal to take urgent measures to implement UN policies on colonial freedom. This resolution was passed by 73 votes with two against (Spain and South Africa) and nine abstentions. Among the abstainers was Britain. And so were France, Belgium and the Netherlands.



The British official record is a good deal worse than this suggests. However much British Ministers may be privately dismayed by the mounting evidence of Portuguese atrocities, and by the refusal of Salazar to make the least change in his policies, they have gone out of their way to show friendship to the Salazar regime and the dictator personally. Their actions were summarised in a Labour Party document published on June 22:

**March 15:** The British Government helped to prevent the Security Council from passing a resolution calling for reforms in Portugal's African territories.

**April 20:** The British delegate abstained in the UN Assembly vote [concerning Angola].

**May 15:** HMS Leopold sailed into Luanda on a good will visit, carrying aboard the Commander of the British Fleet in the South Atlantic.

**May 16:** The British Consul in São Paulo, Brazil, on instructions from the Home Office in London, refused a visa to visit Britain to Captain Galvão, one of the leading spokesmen of the opposition in Portugal.

**May 26:** Lord Home, the Foreign Secretary, arrived on an official good will mission to Lisbon and was present for the anniversary celebrations of the coup d'état, inaugurating the present regime.

**June 9:** Britain again abstained at the UN—this time in the Security Council—on a resolution critical of Portugal.

**June 15:** The Government refused to cancel or postpone the visit to Portugal of the 19th Brigade group for a training exercise. [This was later called off in view of the Kuwait crisis].

**June 16:** Arrival in Lisbon of the six frigates of the 2nd Squadron of the Home Fleet after exercises with the Portuguese Navy and Air Force.

**June 17:** The Government announced the sale to Portugal of two frigates, Mounts Bay and Morecambe Bay.

Thus all through those terrible June days, when bombing planes were scorching Angolan villages to cinders, when Portuguese soldiers were shooting indiscriminately at defenceless Africans, and when the rebels of Angola were fighting for their country's freedom, the British Government handed Salazar one gesture of friendship after another.

True enough, Foreign Secretary Lord Home said after returning from Lisbon that he had exhorted the Portuguese to change their colonial policies. But this he had done *in private*—while *public* gestures of good will continued to pour in from London.

One may well ask what special or general interest the British Government have thought—and still think—that they defend when giving Salazar their aid and comfort.

The spokesmen of the Soviet Union have strongly and repeatedly condemned Salazar and all his works. Is this a reason for defending Salazar?

Prime Minister Nehru of India has condemned Salazar's oppression. So has President Nkrumah of Ghana. Are these condemnations a reason for defending Salazar?

The British Government cannot claim that it speaks for British public opinion. It does nothing of the kind. Not only have the leaders of the Labour Party—notably Hugh Gaitskell, Denis Healey, George Brown—roundly attacked the Government for their pro-Salazarist actions. The leaders of the Liberal Party have done the same. So have many individual Conservatives inside and outside Parliament. So have influential sections of the public who are outside party politics altogether.

Faced with this storm of criticism, the Government have made one—derisory—concession. Early in July (after Salazar's main offensive in Angola had got well under way) the Government announced that while they refused to ban the sale of British arms to Portugal itself, these arms must not be sent on to Angola. On this occasion it was the *Daily Mirror*, which does not mince its words, that put the matter squarely.

“How can they be sure,” asked the *Daily Mirror*, “WHERE the arms will go? Who can really doubt that the Portuguese will use ANY arms they need—wherever from—in order to slaughter Africans?”

“Allies who behave with the appalling cruelty displayed by the Portuguese,” concluded the *Mirror*, “are NOT WORTH HAVING.”

### The position in August

The story of the Angolan revolt for liberty is far from ended.

By mid-July the Portuguese had bombed and ravaged much of northern Angola into the silence of desolation. They had driven about 130,000 hapless men, women and children to seek refuge in the neighbouring Congo—many of whom had walked for weeks to get there, though often badly burned or wounded. Salazar's men were boasting of their successes. Reported the local Lisbon correspondent of the *Times* on July 18:

An important cleaning up operation is in progress in the Nambu-angongo hill area of Angola, according to the [official] Lusitania news agency. Troops are converging on the area under air force escort . . . .

But it was clear that the Portuguese were far from having crushed resistance to them. Even in the far north, where the Bakongo people had suffered appalling reprisals, there were reports of many



“armed bands” which were far from beaten. Such scraps of information as a severe censorship allowed to trickle out of Angola showed that the same was true farther south among the neighbours of the Bakongo. Continued the *Times* report from Lisbon on July 18:

A strongly armed voluntary corps left Carmona to help bring in the coffee crop from plantations in the Zala district, 156 miles from Luanda.

A military column has also left Luanda to protect cotton pickers in the Icolo-Bengo plantations near the river Bengo. Several farms and estates in this area have been attacked . . . .

The Icolo-Bengo area, one should note, is due east of Luanda in the heart of Angola. Thus the pattern of resistance follows the same course as in Nazi-occupied Europe during World War Two. Like the Nazis before them, the Portuguese claim to have “wiped out” their opponents in one place—only to find resistance bursting forth elsewhere, whether in the north or the centre or the south.

Faced with this situation, Portuguese morale was beginning to collapse. “Portugal is losing the war in Angola,” reported a correspondent of the *Observer* from Luanda on July 22. “Eight weeks after the start of the dry season”—advertised by Lisbon as the time when they would exterminate the rebels—“her Army still has not mounted anything that could be called an offensive against the rebels, except in the communiques of the High Command.”

It was also clear by now that this savage but unsuccessful colonial war was causing severe strains on the dictatorship in Portugal itself.

“Subversive propaganda protests against the dispatch of troops to Angola are being made, according to the Ministry of Information,” reported the *Times* from Lisbon on July 18: “A Ministry statement said that at recent embarkations of troops, women on the dockside screamed their sorrow and revulsion . . . .” And official spokesmen tried to explain away this demonstration by the fatuous claim that the opposition had “paid” soldiers’ wives for it!

Already the dictatorship—in Angola and perhaps also in Portugal—was far harder hit than it dared to admit.

The fight for Angola’s freedom was manifestly linked by close reaction with the cause of freedom in Portugal itself.

## **Act Now!**

Such is the record of 1961.

Rather than budge an inch towards treating Africans as human beings, the Salazar dictatorship has passed from repression to outright massacre. In this it has enjoyed—it still enjoys—the support if not approval of the British Government (as well as of the Governments of some other NATO countries).

All those who detest the policies of Salazar, and deplore official British support for them, must now ask themselves a simple question. How much longer will we allow our good name to be dragged through the prisons of Portugal and the blood and misery of Angola?

**Now comes the crucial test.**

Salazar is confronted with a challenge in Angola—and maybe soon in Mozambique—that he cannot meet with the resources now at his disposal. He is not winning his colonial war. His regime is badly shaken in Portugal itself. He will therefore clamour for more help, more arms, more ammunition, more bombs, more gestures of alliance and protection.

It is **URGENT** that every democratic organisation in Britain should bring every possible pressure to bear on the British Government to **make certain that such help is not given.**

Conference resolutions, protests, letters, meetings, demonstrations: all these are necessary.

It is **VITAL** that every democratic organisation in Britain should also press the British Government for **active steps to isolate the Salazarist dictatorship.**

This means, as a start, that Britain should:

**DECLARE sympathy and friendship for the Africans of Portugal's colonies and for the anti-Salazarist Opposition in Portugal itself.**

**DEMAND the intervention of the United Nations so as to bring this bloody colonial war in Angola to an end; ensure the release of political prisoners held by Salazar; and provide international aid to a free Angola.**

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The cartoon on front cover by courtesy of "Vicky" and the *New Statesman*.

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