



THE STATUS OF THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE IN AFRICA
A Midyear Report from the American Committee on Africa

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The purpose of our struggle is not only to destroy. It is first and foremost aimed at building a new Mozambique, where there will be no hunger and where all men will be free and equal.

FRELIMO Central Committee, September 25, 1967

An uneasy two-thousand-mile boundary wavers across Africa, separating independent states to the north from the captive nations under South Africa's hegemony. South West Africa, Namibia to be, has been incorporated as a fifth province, despite U.N. objections. Rhodesia, the future Zimbabwe, survives despite sanctions largely thanks to South African trade, finance, and support including troops. Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland oppose the apartheid philosophy but are economically dependent on surrounding South Africa. Angola and Mozambique, Portuguese colonies in revolt, are bound to South Africa by trade, by growing investments, by joint irrigation and power projects, and by military support.

In southern Africa, years that saw other African states gain independence brought only increased repression, and growing cooperation between the oppressors, South Africa and Portugal. In Angola, Guinea-Bissau, and Mozambique, the wars for independence erupted in the early sixties; liberation forces now pin down an estimated 150,000 Portuguese troops and control from one-fifth to two-thirds of each territory. The Sharpeville massacre and following repression drove the major South African opposition parties underground and into exile. South Africans are now united with Zimbabwe freedom fighters in the struggle against Rhodesia, while the Namibians of South West Africa, discouraged by the ineffectiveness of international action, are organizing to take back their country.

Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde Islands

"It is now we who surround the Portuguese"

Amilcar Cabral, July, 1970

Since 1963 the PAIGC has been at war with Portugal, seeking independence. Its forces are 7-10,000 troops; the Portuguese 30-35,000. PAIGC controls two-thirds of the country; Portugal claims 85 per cent. Evidence strongly supports PAIGC. The Portuguese report that, with their population resettlement (in controlled, strategic hamlets) policy, 44 per cent of the country is uninhabited. In effect, this concedes nearly half of Guinea to PAIGC. The Portuguese describe their two "great zones of peace," one around Bissau, the capital, the other the Manjaco area only thirty miles north and west. Manjaco is the prime development area, as well as "most successfully pacified," so the cost of building a road there from Bissau is a useful check. It took four months to pave 25 miles at a cost in lives (from guerrilla action) of ten soldiers and 70 civilian workers; and the road is travelled only in armed convoys.

The extent of PAIGC control is shown by changes in Portuguese tactics: They have withdrawn to the towns, relinquishing the countryside. They have changed from motorized troops (armored cars) and infantry to air strikes and quick raids (napalm bomb attacks, burning crops and villages). They have abandoned the strategy of military victory for the policy of "winning over the people" and for the first time schools and social services are being introduced.

PAIGC has organized the liberated countryside and has built a national army as well as local militia. Three mobile hospitals survive bombings, while a major medical center is located just inside neighboring Guinea-Conakry. About 15,000 children are in a school system which continues to grow and 300 are outside the country for special training. Local governments function; there is cooperative marketing and some export of crops.

Angola

"The enemy penetrates all sectors of life in Angola, openly and in every possible way."

Luanda newspaper, O Comercio, July, 1970

MPLA, most successful Angolan resistance, reported 11,000 troops in 1970 and control of one third of the country. It has broken through the attempt of the Portuguese to contain it in the east, and has organized the struggle in five combat zones. The third zone, Moxico and Cuando-Cubango provinces bordering Zambia, is most fully controlled. The second region is the Cabinda enclave, home of Gulf Oil; an early center of revolt, it suffered a severe Portuguese counter-offensive and military administration, but from 1970 on resistance has been growing again. The first region includes the capital, and north to the Congo-Kinshasa border. Liaison was established in 1970 with urban guerrillas, especially in Luanda where 100 were arrested in 1970 and deported or imprisoned. The fourth zone, Lunda and Malanje, includes outlet routes from the rich cotton and diamond districts and is well defended by troops including, according to MPLA, South African commandos. The fifth zone, Bie and Huambo, is accessible from Moxico and much more heavily populated. In the first five months of 1970, the Portuguese reported guerrilla activities in 35 different localities in the eastern region. MPLA reported that in the first nine months of 1970 it had killed 1,083 Portuguese troops, attacked 33 garrisons, wrecked 77 vehicles and 25 bridges, and sunk seven boats.

MPLA has a well-organized educational system and is producing texts and training teachers for Angola. Its depth is illustrated by an administrative and training center in Congo-B which lists among its needs (for potential contributors) equipment for physics, chemistry, zoology, botany, and mineralogy laboratories. SAM, the medical assistance service,

undertakes preventive medical programs such as smallpox inoculation as well as servicing the armed forces and civilians; nurses and medical aids are being trained. Seeds and agricultural tools are urgently needed.

A second movement is GRAE, the united front originally recognized as the Angolan Government in Exile. It continues to be important because it traditionally represents large numbers of Angolans and because it has the support of the Congo-Kinshasa government with its long Angolan border. Its strength is in the north and northeast and it has instituted schools and other services. GRAE claimed 13,000 men fighting in Angola in September, 1970 but estimates run as low as 4,000. They are well armed and trained and have a potential base of some 400,000 refugees in the Congo to draw on. Portuguese sources have reported GRAE activity in 1970 north of Luso in Moxico district and near Quibaxe in the Dembos region where the Portuguese have been making a major effort to clear the coffee route.

UNITA, third Angolan movement, has fought since 1966 with captured weapons only. It claims two military bases and instruction centers inside Angola and two companies armed with NATO weapons. But its inadequate arming is shown by the death of a Central Committee member last year in an assault of 17 archers against a Portuguese platoon. Angolan newspapers verify UNITA action around the eastern Benguela railroad and an area to the south, while it claims to contest control in Moxico, Cuando-Cubango, Malanje, Bie, and Huila districts. About 300 students are in a literacy program for children and adults, and a clinic treated more than 20,000 patients last year. Agricultural cooperatives are encouraged.

As in Guinea and Mozambique, the Portuguese have recently increased attention to primary schooling and introduced social services and the infrastructure of development in some areas. The same policy of collecting people into strategic hamlets, reinforced by wide devastation of the land, is followed. But in Angola both MPLA and UNITA have reported deliberate destruction of crops by herbicides as well as napalm attacks on villages. South African helicopters are reported operating side by side with Portuguese, and South African bases and military personnel are mentioned at Luso, Gao Coutinho, and Mavinga as well as the Caprivi Strip. This policy is an attempt to ruin the economic foundation of the guerrilla struggle by inducing starvation in vast numbers of people in liberated zones. Failure to halt the liberation offensive is indicated by new Portuguese censorship. Since August, 1970, Portuguese military bulletins are issued monthly, not weekly, and no longer mention place names, type of guerrilla activities, or Portuguese military operations.

Mozambique

Who can carry off the multitude and lock it in a cage?

Poem on a 1947 strike
Noemia de Sousa, Mozambican Nationalist

FRELIMO territory includes a million people in three northern provinces, Cabo Delgado, Niassa, and Tete where South African troops help the Portuguese guard the site of Cabora Bassa dam. Recently, FRELIMO forces have crossed the Zambesi and the Messalo, opening operations in two other provinces, and an underground is growing in the cities. In summer, 1970, 1,400 Mozambicans in Lourenco Marques and Gaza districts were arrested as FRELIMO members.

Thus FRELIMO continues to advance while the Portuguese commander in Mozambique, Kaulza de Arriaga, continues to claim victory. In July, 1970, following a major offensive called *Gordian Knot* (35,000 troops and 15,000 tons of equipment), he announced destruction of the last sanctuaries of FRELIMO. Two months later, operation *Novo Rumo* had to be launched. In April, 1971, operations *Garrottee* and *Apoio* were needed to rout FRELIMO sorties into Cabo Delgado and Tete. (As in Guinea and Angola, the Portuguese are also stressing education and social services in an effort to counter the success of the nationalists.) The scale of the Portuguese campaigns and their control of the air did mean heavy losses in equipment, and hunger because of crops destroyed. But FRELIMO multiplied operations to counter them. While some 10,000 FRELIMO troops battle an estimated 80,000 Portuguese, the structure of free Mozambique is growing; around 20,000 children in school, 400 medical personnel trained to service the liberated areas, crops marketed for sale and exchange abroad; and institutions from printing presses to aid for the handicapped are developing.

Fourth Front

The Portuguese dictatorship is facing mounting opposition at home as well as in Africa. Around 100,000 people leave illegally for Europe annually, many to escape the draft, and thousands of draft resisters are in prison. Army deserters appear both in Europe and in Africa. Lisbon trials of liberation movement people arouse indignation. Since October, an underground Armed Revolutionary Action Group has destroyed a dozen planes and copters at an Air Force base, bombed a police training college, exploded a grenade in the engine room to stop the troop transport *Cunene* and bombed the U.S. embassy library and several minor sites.

Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)

"under heavy concentrated fire from well-defined terrorist positions"

citation in Rhodesia's first Honors List, November, 1970

Continuance of the little publicized Zimbabwe resistance was illustrated by the first Honors List announced in Rhodesia; most of the awards to 62 members of the security forces were for "bravery in battle with terrorists," and five were posthumous. Although the liberation forces are concentrating on building an adequate network of support, communication, and supplies within the country, guerrilla action continues. Actions reported early in 1970 included an attack on a patrol launch on the Zambesi; a raid on Victoria Falls airport which destroyed a plane and several copters, killing five Rhodesians; and an assault on a military base in the Wankie area in which eight South Africans were killed (South Africa has 3-4,000 troops supporting the Smith regime). Incidents which may be sabotage are frequently reported in the press: members of the Army or Security forces shot, damaging explosions, and the like. The struggle continues in various ways. Most open has been the resistance for years of the Tangwena tribe to forcible dispossession from ancestral lands, which

has encouraged others to protest dispossession. A recent book by former Prime Minister Welensky states that a growing number of prosecutions and convictions is reported for aid to "terrorists" by the African people.

Zimbabwe has two liberation movements, the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union and the Zimbabwe African National Union. Early in 1971 the outlook was for unity, but further divisions have been reported.

Namibia (South West Africa)

"We are Namibians and not South Africans"

one of 37 defendants on trial in Pretoria, February 1, 1968

Three mass trials of Namibians under South Africa's Terrorism Act are known from 1967 to 1970; but since men have been detained incommunicado up to two years, there is no certain way of knowing the number held and their future. Defendants have included leaders of the South West African Peoples Organization, and it is clear that SWAPO organized the recruitment, sending abroad for training, and return of guerrilla forces that were particularly active in the Caprivi Strip (which South Africa fortified contrary to Mandate terms, with an airbase directed at independent Africa; it has 17,000 troops in the whole territory). Some were trained in the Ovambo area, northern Namibia.

Despite the loss of so many in prison or exile, guerrilla activity continues in Caprivi, the Okavango, Ovambo, and Kaoveld areas and in action against the Cunene dam project in Angola. During the year, 125 successful ambushes and 75 attacks on enemy camps were reported by SWAPO. South Africa has posted a reward of \$1,400 for a SWAPO guerrilla leader.

South Africa

Who are the real terrorists?

Those who have used the gun, the sjambok, the baton to terrorize our people into accepting a life of poverty and humiliation.

1970 underground leaflet distributed in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg, and East London.

Both the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress, banned African political parties, exist underground, in prison, and in exile. The quote above is from an A.N.C. leaflet calling on the people to support the freedom fighters and to join the struggle themselves. It was distributed by an explosive device from the top of a building. Simultaneously, tape recorders broadcast, chained in place until implements to sever the chain were brought while an excited crowd swelled despite police.

Recent activities appear in charges brought against Winnie Mandela and 21 other A.N.C. members after public protest against their continued detention without trial. (Other trials have convicted P.A.C. members.) The state charged that they visited all sections of the country and held meetings in homes, cars, fields, with groups limited to five or ten for security reasons; experienced members lectured on A.N.C. policies. It was alleged that discussions were held on preparing the way for the guerrilla struggle and that efforts were made to obtain or to make explosives and to select targets; that leaflets and pamphlets were prepared and distributed on local issues such as the Urban Bantu Councils; advantage was taken of funerals for A.N.C. demonstrations. Defiance of the police state was echoed in court by spectators who greeted the defendants with the A.N.C. salute.

Police action in recent months has also revealed continuing resistance in South Africa. In Port Elizabeth thousands of Coloureds gathered for a protest meeting against a rise in bus fares and an arrest led to a clash with the police; five demonstrators were shot and many arrested, while at least ten officers were injured by stone-throwing crowds. A police round-up of members of the Unity Movement resulted in the detention of 20 last February; this followed a period of increasing peasant unrest in which, according to Unity, 65 peasants were killed by police.

The United States and the Liberation Struggle

Both Portugal and South Africa are trying to gull the world into the belief that their policies have changed: Portugal by announcing military success and defections in the "provinces" and greater autonomy for them; South Africa by promoting dialogue and promising economic advantages to other African countries. The United States, in the general swing to the right of the Nixon Administration, has embraced the opportunity to stress the value of continuing relations with the colonial and racist regimes.

Specifically in 1971, the U.S. has licensed the sale of 707s to Portugal for troop transport and of light planes and helicopters, easily convertible for military use, to South Africa. U.S. exports of herbicides to Portugal quadrupled between 1969 and 1970, the year Portugal began to use them in Angola. This is in addition to the support NATO gives Portugal in military training, intelligence, and equipment, without which it could not continue wars on three fronts. And it continues the support to South Africa which has enabled that country to reach self-sufficiency and become a nuclear power.

The American Committee on Africa

The United States supports the status quo in southern Africa. The American Committee on Africa supports the liberation movements and works to change U.S. policies. To learn more, or to join the struggle, write to ACOA at 164 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016.