

Dr. Jonas SAVIMBI, President of UNITA, interviewed by Yvette Jarrico in August 1970. Interview transcribed from a recorded tape.

PORTUGUESE ARMY

**Question:** Mr. President, certain "experts" claim that the Portuguese Army is a well equipped, fearless force. In view of this, do you think that it is a vain hope to think of liberating Angola militarily? On the other hand, Basil Davidson after spending six weeks with MPLA, has just published a work in which he states that it is the Portuguese who are counter-attacking, because in his opinion they are in the main demoralised. As a leader of a resistance movement, what is your assessment of the state of the Portuguese army in Angola? Could you tell us about your more recent encounters?

**Answer:** There are certain very pertinent aspects of this question which deserve a sincere and realistic analysis.

First of all, that is true that the Portuguese Army is well equipped, but then it does not equip itself. The Portuguese are equipped by their allies, chief amongst whom are the U.S.A. and N.A.T.O. It is because of this that the Portuguese Army is well equipped. However, it is wrong to think the Portuguese are intrepid fighters, because we have had encounters with them, and have captured all our supplies from them and taken some of their soldiers prisoners. As you well know, UNITA has never received any arms, not even bullets or grenades, from outside country, so it would be completely hopeless to think that we could hold out here inside Angola unless we were able to capture Portuguese arms. How then, if the soldiers were fearless could we get their arms? Indeed in our August and October 1970 communique we have shown how, in addition to arms and ammunition, we have succeeded in capturing Portuguese prisoners. How could intrepid soldiers allow themselves to be captured? They should fight to the finish, but there are no Portuguese soldiers who fight to the finish. They drop their arms and surrender. Our friends contact our representatives abroad in Cairo, London, Stockholm and Lusaka so that they may see these communique (of August and October 1970) and appreciate for themselves how the Portuguese "fell flat on their faces."

You asked me to describe one of our most recent attacks on the Portuguese, but I think this would be pointless. Which for confrontations should I describe? There have been many, and each individual attack had many characteristics. In UNITA'S case, after each attack the military and political leaders get together to sum up experiences and with each attack, we are ready to learn and to correct mistakes. How could I describe just one attack? Which shall I choose? And why? The success and victory we have had up till now are the result of many individual victories.

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With reference to Mr. Basil Davidson's claims at establishing whether it is the nationalists or the Portuguese who initiate a confrontation, I would simply like to say one thing: I heard, here in Angola, the B.B.C. interview with Basil Davidson in which he was asked if MPLA actually exercised control over the area he had visited, that is, control with implications, such as administration, free life, schools, economic co-operatives of production etc. Basil Davidson said, "MPLA exercises a strategic control." He ought not to allow himself to use double-talk; it is absolutely essential to use scientific terms. For UNITA, control of a zone must be, above all, tactical; that is to say, the enemy cannot penetrate it; and if he tries he will be forced to retreat. Strategic control means that you can run away from "here" to "there", leaving behind an enemy who retreats, and this is exactly what MPLA does. So if there are some soldiers who would not dare to fight the Portuguese, they are the soldiers of MPLA, never those of UNITA. In UNITA'S case there is a confrontation, a fight.

In short, in the areas which UNITA controls the Portuguese cannot enter because our control is both tactical and strategic. Naturally, areas completely controlled by us may be reduced to small areas, but these areas are entirely controlled by UNITA patriots. Therefore, the statement about nationalists, avoiding confrontation only applies to Mr. Basil Davidson's friends, and not to UNITA.

LIBERATION OF THE TOWNS

Question: Do you think, Mr. President, that it would be possible to liberate militarily the cities and all Angolan territory up to the coast? Or do you consider the guerrilla warfare to be merely an element of pressure in the struggle against the colonial system?

Answer : There are certain concepts of bourgeois philosophy which cannot be reconciled with the terms and conceptions of world revolutionaries. As one of the oppressed, I am bound to make this distinction because the struggle demands that one must identify and define which side one is on. For we who are engaged in the armed struggle for national liberation have made a careful scientific analysis of the concrete conditions of our country and the consequences of such a struggle. One is therefore not engaged in armed struggle for national liberation before he makes a scientific analysis of the concrete conditions of our country and the consequences of such a struggle. One is therefore not engaged in armed struggle with the intention of making that struggle merely a secondary pressure, or of waiting for the United Nations or the Great Powers to come and say "Boys (i.e. Portugal and ourselves) stop!" Never!... We do not merely have an ideal, a programme, an ideology, we have also the determination of an entire people, which must be correctly mobilized, In UNITA, when we speak of a protracted armed struggle, what we mean is that as soon as the Portuguese grasp the significance of the uprising of the

armed struggle and the necessity for the African people of this country to rule themselves, they will leave. Therefore, dear friends, if the Portuguese withdraw today from Angola, it will mean that they have realized that they cannot hold out, and that will be a victory for the people's armed struggle, not for the United Nations. If the Portuguese withdraw tomorrow, or in 15 years time, it will be because they have seen in political, economical, military and social terms that they have been defeated. Therefore, there is no illusion among the UNITA patriots that we should wait for the United Nations and the Great Powers to say their piece. Here inside Angola there is an armed struggle which will triumph, not only over the soldiers of Portugal, but also over the whole concept of colonial, social, economic and political domination. On that day, the Portuguese will acknowledge the fact that they can do no more here. Therefore, no concessions, no coalitions, no "peaceful coexistence" are possible in Angola. Either the Portuguese leave this country to the Africans to govern themselves, or the armed struggle continues. You ask if one day UNITA will control the cities; that can only result from the development of the armed struggle in the rural areas.

In Angola 95% of the population are peasants. In our struggle, they are the most reliable class. Therefore, they should join the struggle voluntarily and consciously, integrated into it by the most politically advanced elements of the party and the people. When this is achieved, we will begin to control the forest, the rural areas and surround the cities. And as the struggle develops we will first take over the small military posts, then the military garrisons, and the cities will inevitably yield. But this depends on the course the armed struggle takes one cannot talk about tomorrow or the next day. The armed struggle will go on and the day is not far off when the Portuguese will no longer be able to leave their cities, and be strengthened from outside. They will be obliged to give in, in one way or the other.

What UNITA cannot condone or accept is the ill-intentioned maneuver of giving independence to puppet groups here in Angola, in order to continue to exploit the African people. That UNITA cannot accept. Independence must be real. When this moment in time arrives, the Portuguese here in Angola will be yielding to military pressure. UNITA will oppose at all times any idea of collaboration between the Portuguese and their lackeys in giving independence to certain elements without the African people as a whole.



ANGOLAN NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Question : Mr. President, does an Angolan consciousness exist?

Answer : If there were no national consciousness, there would not be a national liberation struggle. But, national consciousness is created, it is not an innate phenomenon, and it has developed not only in Angola, but elsewhere. Look for instance at France of Piemont, of Pyrennees, of Alsace developed differently from the France of Flandres. Through struggle and common needs, men come to realize that it is necessary to unite, to live together, to fight together and to die together. Today, there is an obligation: if you fight with others, you must also be able to live with them. You cannot cut yourself off from others and live without them. If you remain alone, you die alone. Today, in our country the tendency is to live together. In Angola an attempt is being made to educate the people politically towards a national consciousness. The Luchazes, Ganguelas, Tchokwes, Ovimbundus, Bakongos, Umbundus, Cabindas and other people must feel that they cannot exist alone.

(Interview 1970)

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Angola

SELF-RELIANCE is UNITA principle number one. To carry a gun is an honor, you have to deserve it. You start with sticks. On apprend le corps-à-corps avant le maniement des armes à feu. Tout l'armement est arraché dans des combats héroïques contre un ennemi excellentement équipé par l'OTAN.