

ANGOLAN MOVEMENT FACES CRITICAL SITUATION

By Livio Maitan

The Angolan movement continues to be affected by a crisis. On the one hand the dramatic events in the Congo have had grave repercussions on the situation of the forces of the GRAE [Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile] stationed there. On the other hand, the internal conflicts dividing the movement -- with their projection on the scale of the African states -- are far from having reached a full solution.

As was recently reported [see World Outlook December 18], the Committee of Nine, after again going into the Angolan dossier, decided to adjust the preceding position taken by the African states and grant material and technical aid to the MPLA [Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola] as well as the FNLA [National Front for the Liberation of Angola]. The decision was not unexpected. It was known for some time that certain African states had posed the problem of at least an adjustment of policy toward the Angolan movement.

It can be asked whether the decision was inspired by a substantial change in the objective situation of the Angolan movement. It is known that the recognition of the GRAE and aid for the FNLA associated with it were determined essentially through ascertaining that they controlled the overwhelming majority of the fighting forces, while the MPLA had only greatly reduced influence. Is the situation now different? Has there been much change in the relation of forces following, among other things, the Savimbi affair [see World Outlook September 18] and other splits experienced by the FNLA?

The situation is undoubtedly complex and the factors involved in each side are naturally quite different, even contradictory. However, no one up to now has been able to report a big advance by the MPLA and it is generally admitted that its control is limited to the Cabinda enclave. As for the repercussions of the Jonas Savimbi affair, they were rather important from the political point of view and on the level of relations of the FNLA with the African states and revolutionary movements. The effect is not tangible -- at least

up to now -- in the relation of forces in the resistance movement inside the country.

The factor that most likely influenced certain shifts of position was the desperate situation in which the FNLA has now been caught. The difficulties which the GRAE faced in a Congo ruled by the neocolonialist Adoula were noted in the past. These difficulties could only be worsened to the extreme after Tshombe came to power, especially after the November-December 1964 events which aroused all of independent, progressive Africa and the entire international workers movement.

It was rumored at the time that the leadership of the FNLA was pro-American and that Holden Roberto himself was an American agent. The Soviet press, moreover, said that Tshombe had requested Roberto to participate directly in repressing the Congolese guerrillas and that he did not refuse.

It is certain that in the leadership of the FNLA there are elements under neocolonialist and imperialist influence. It is also extremely likely that Tshombe imposed very hard conditions on the FNLA. Finally, it is evident that certain decisions of the FNLA -- which could support the hypothesis it was making a turn (above all its decision to appeal to the workers states and especially China for military aid) -- remained without practical consequences. (It is said by some that this was a deliberate bluff. Others, however, estimate that a retreat occurred under pressure from well identified quarters.) But, in the final analysis, all this is relatively secondary. The Trotskyist movement, for instance, has never determined its attitude toward a mass movement on the basis of an appreciation of its leadership or a tendency in its leadership; and imperialist agents have never prevented such a movement from developing according to its own dynamics.

What is more important and, in the final analysis, decisive, is that objectively the FNLA is now in a real blind alley. Whatever its intentions, whatever the aims of this or that leader, it is becoming more and more prisoner to Tshombe; and its perspective is to become even more tied up. There is not the least doubt that the present premier of Léopoldville has every interest in compromising the FNLA to the bottom and even, under certain conditions, of trying to openly crush it. There is no need to point to the links this sinister person has with the partisans of the most hideous colonialism such as Salazar and the racist rulers of South Africa and it would be absurd for the Angolans to have the least illusion about this.

The problem is then, we repeat, an urgent one. The FNLA must make a substantial turn and set all its forces in motion within Angola, occupying, if possible, wide zones of the country, or at the very least developing a guerrilla struggle. We are aware of the enormous difficulties that exist. We know that an operation of this

kind has high probability of entailing serious losses. But there is no other way out. The alternative is either capitulation to Tshombe or being crushed.

As to the decision of the Committee of Nine, it appears correct to us. In reality, as we have said in the past, whatever may be one's appreciation of the strength of this or that movement or the nature of its leadership, it is necessary without any reservations to favor material and technical aid to all the forces that struggle effectively against Portuguese imperialism.

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