

Pope — Ally of Salazar

MPLA

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On the 13th of May 1967, Pope Paul VI visited Portugal. Thus, with this visit, the Pope manifested openly his support to the fascist regime of Salazar. On the 13th of May, 1967, Pope Paul VI visited the shrine of Fatima in Portugal. At the airport when the Holy Father's plane landed, he was received by the President of the Portuguese Republic, Americo Tomas and by the dictator himself, besides many other prominent personalities of the colonial-fascist regime and of the Church.

At Fatima, there is celebrated every year the appearance of the Virgin Mary. It was 50 years ago that three little Portuguese pastors declared that they had seen and heard the voice of the Virgin. It was therefore the 50th anniversary that was being celebrated at Fatima.

It was this fact which Paul VI used as a pretext to go from the Vatican to Portugal. Although he had stated before leaving his headquarters that the visit had no political attributes, and beside the fact that he remained only a few hours in Salazar's territory, the positive political effect which the fascists got cannot be ruled out or denied by the Pope. This trip was a guarantee of the support given to the repressive regime by the Vatican.

Not so many people would have voiced their condemnation of the Pope's trip, as was the case, if Portugal had a just and democratic regime; if the right to independence of the peoples under its colonial rule was being respected by the Portuguese regime; if Portugal were not waging a criminal war against the people of the three African territories she is subjugating; if the Portuguese regime respected the right to freedom of the Portuguese people itself.

But Portugal has one of the most anti-democratic regimes in the world today. Portugal is also the only country which stubbornly insists in maintaining, by force, her African colonies.

In Portugal, the Salazar regime suppresses all the essential liberties of its

own people by taking away the right of Portuguese citizens to choose their own system of government, in free elections. To impose upon its people his iron rule, Salazar has created one of the most severe police, PIDE, among other instruments of repression no longer used in any part of the world today. The Portuguese economy is in the hands of a very restricted number of bourgeois who export most of the benefits acquired through the system of exploitation in the colonies, to the advantage of the foreign monopolists with whom they are associated.

In the colonies Salazar continues to negate the right to independence and sovereignty of the peoples. By adopting the most retrograde attitude of trying to go against the laws of history, the fascist regime of Salazar has installed in the colonies a police apparatus of a tremendous capacity; Salazar has sent to these African territories more than 100,000 troops, mobilised the settlers to combat on the side of the colonial army and is seeking to corrupt the Africans to oppose themselves to the freedom war of our people. However, all this is in vain. In Angola, the people under the leadership of the MPLA is today, more than ever before, determined and mobilised for the war for Independence. Our people is today, more than ever before, fully sure that our war can only end with victory for Angola.

Behaving hopelessly, the barbarian Portuguese colonialists are murdering defenceless men, women and children; burning, bombing and destroying whole villages; they are exterminating the people's cultivated lands, and are killing the cattle to destroy the material subsistence base of the people.

It was this policy of cruelty and violence that the Pope, in the interest of the Church of which he is the supreme representative, came to ratify during his visit to Fatima.

But this attitude of the Pope should not astonish anybody. Nothing new was revealed to us, for we always knew the Pope as a consistent ally of Salazar, as a staunch protector of the fascists and colonialists. Throughout its history the Catholic Church has given its support to the colonialist policy of the oppressive classes in Portugal and elsewhere.

Although the Christian religion has inherent in itself a humanitarian and sound character, this quality has been used by the Church itself as an instrument for the domination of some peoples by others, of some classes by others. Thus, in the past, the Catholic Church sided with the bourgeoisie and it was used as an instrument of this class; it sided with and protected the colonialists; and with the wealthy against the poor.

In Angola at the beginning of the period of 'maritime discoveries', the first contacts of the Portuguese colonialists with our people were made by the Catholic missionaries. They were the agents of the colonialists who penetrated the interior of our country 'preaching the faith', to convert our people to submission and humiliation, and to forsake the attitude of resistance to the colonialist invader. They were also the ones who paved the way for the soldiers who consolidated the conquests by violence, who sacked, who robbed, and murdered with the blessing of the Church.

At the beginning of the armed revolt in our country and with the advance-

ment of our struggle for liberation, the Catholic Church didn't take a position in favour of the nationalists. To the contrary, the Church always sided and collaborated with the colonialist Church repressive apparatus. More than ever before, the agents of the Church are preaching Christian humiliation and submission. And when this is not enough, the Church denounces the nationalists, handing them to the colonialist police agents, sending them to torture chambers and to death. Many Catholic priests took up arms and went to the battlefield, side by side with the colonialists who were soldiers, against the Angolan nationalists who were fighting to liberate themselves from oppression.

When some African Catholic priests began to manifest themselves actively against the Portuguese colonialists, they were thrown into jail and expelled from Angola. Faced with this, the Catholic Church abstained from taking a position defending the right of these priests to express their patriotic views.

Therefore, the Catholic Church has not been defending justice and liberty for men. Rather it has been serving as an instrument of domination. The Church has been used as a means to perpetuate the regimes of oppression by defending the fascists and the colonialists.

Upon paying a visit to the Portugal of Salazar, Pope Paul VI has only taken off the mask — shown his true face. The face of a man and of an institution that defends — the institution and the man — the interests of the colonialists, that blesses the cruel war of repression against the people and which acts accordingly in order to perpetuate the domination and the oppression of man by man.