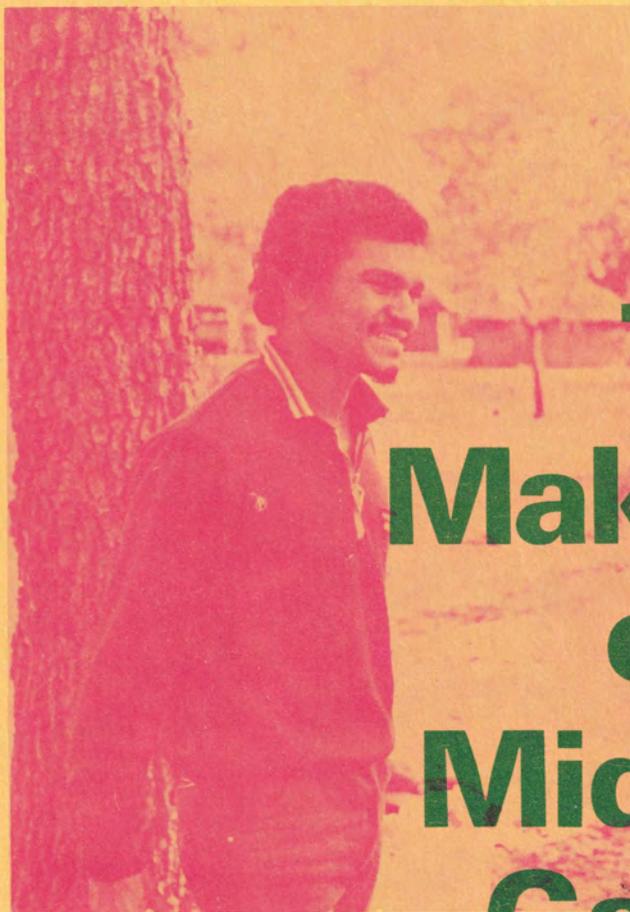


Life Histories from the Revolution.
Angola, MPLA. 1



The Making of a Middle Cadre

Rui de Pinto.

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The Making of a Middle Cadre

The Story of Rui de Pinto.



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Foreword

The vast majority of peasants and workers in the super-exploited hinterlands of the imperialist system are illiterate. This is a part of their oppression. They comprise almost half of the world's total population, some 75% of the population within the "free world", and the emiserated broad base from which all contemporary anti-imperialist revolutions draw their essential moral and material strength. These are the masses who, under the leadership of revolutionary vanguards, are making modern history. Yet, due in large measure to the chains of their enforced illiteracy, these makers of history rarely have the opportunity to document their own experiences within it. Their "backwardness" condemns them to literary silence — as well as to poverty, disease and a tragically short life.

One of our objectives in launching this series of LIFE HISTORIES FROM THE REVOLUTION is to provide a vehicle through which individual members of these classes-in-motion within the revolution can *speak*. We also believe it important that they *be heard* by those of us who comprise imperialism's privileged and literate metropolitan minority. Their recounted lives throw our own into sharp relief — living as we do on opposite sides of the imperialist railroad tracks. And at the same time these life histories offer us fresh perspectives on the processes of repression and revolution from a unique vantage point: *from below*. They provide us with a window into the qualitative aspects of class conflict and change, into the personal and human dimensions of revolutionary struggle, in stark contrast to our usual diet of lifeless statistics which numb human sensibilities. We hope this will enable the reader to better understand and weigh the various factors at work in transforming oppressed masses into revolutionary classes, and to relate one's own role within imperialism to this process. The remembered life experiences of the people in these pages can provide us,

thereby, with significant insights into that dialectical relationship between material and subjective forces which shapes the contemporary international class struggle, embracing those revolutionary transformations of individuals and classes alike and moving humanity ahead toward a new international social formation.

Not all of the individuals whose life histories are included in this series are illiterate peasants or workers. Some are educated "defectors" from petty-bourgeois classes who have joined the revolution and identified their interests with those of the oppressed masses in a concrete way. They constitute a very important part of the revolutionary vanguard — the middle leadership or cadre who carry forward the military and civilian programs in day-to-day contact with the armed militants and popular masses. The selfless dedication, integrity, comportment and skill of the middle cadre is an essential ingredient within any successful revolutionary process.

The life histories in this series have been recorded and prepared as historical documents from the revolutionary struggles of our time. The techniques and methods employed at each stage of the process, from initial contact to final editing, have therefore been chosen or fashioned with the purpose of guaranteeing the authenticity and integrity of each of the life histories concerned. These stories, then, to the best of our ability to make them so, constitute a body of data and testimony as revealed by a few of those history-makers normally condemned to silence while others speak on their behalf.

Don Barnett

Introduction

This is the story of Rui de Pinto, a mestizo born of middle class parents in Luanda, capital of the Portuguese African colony of Angola. I met Rui in Lusaka, Zambia. It was shortly before he was assigned to train and command one of the MPLA's first 150-man mobile guerrilla squadrons for combat against Portuguese occupation forces in the vast Eastern Region of Angola. At the time of our meeting, in July 1970, Rui was still working for the Movement's Information Department (DIP) — taking and developing photographs, illustrating pamphlets, writing articles, and doing the occasional odd-jobs as necessity required.

As we talked over lunch in a small Lusaka café Rui told me something about himself, his background, and the work he was doing. I explained some things about the LSM Information Center — our internationalist objectives, previous work related to the MPLA and, especially, the importance we attached to recording and publishing the life histories of peasants, workers, guerrillas and cadre within the armed revolutionary process. I suggested that his own life, based on what he had told me of it, would make an interesting and important story and he indicated a willingness to tell it if arrangements could be worked out. Fortunately, the CCPM (MPLA's Politico-Military Coordinating Committee) gave its approval. Rui was going to the border (to repair a DIP Land Rover damaged on a previous trip) and I was heading for the same place to record some music, interviews and additional life histories. It was decided that we go together and start our work on the way. The trip was only about four hundred miles, but the bad road and an accident we had en route caused the journey to last a full week. Thus, resting beside the road, in MPLA houses along the way, on river craft and in small town restaurants, we recorded the life history of Rui de Pinto. No translator was necessary as Rui's English (unlike my Portuguese) was quite good.

Though his selection for this task was entirely fortuitous, and despite the story's unique aspects and Rui's unusual talent in relating it, I believe that the Rui de Pinto life history is but a microcosm of a very general process and phenomenon. It reveals the working out of a dialectic by which certain members of the colonized petty bourgeoisie "defect" from the class of their origin and throw in their lot with the oppressed masses. The unfolding contradictions in Rui's life and consciousness, the subtle interplay of material and subjective elements — of class privilege and racial abuse, personal ambition and recognized social need, life-style and ideals, inclination and opportunity — led Rui through a transforming maze of conflict and resolution from a level of abstract concern for the masses to that of concrete engagement in their life and struggles.

Rui the mestizo child in a colonial world of "black and white"; Rui the artist seeking creative expression, the existentialist seeking personal freedom; Rui the captive of Portuguese culture trying to escape, the exile seeking a meaningful life; Rui the militant embracing discipline through self-discipline, the guerrilla leading and learning from the Angolan masses: all this and a great deal more is the Rui de Pinto who says, "I think that I am not yet a revolutionary. I must try to do much more — that is principally, whatever is necessary to do — and transform myself in order to become what Angola will need in the future."

In Lisbon as in Paris, Rui, like numerous middle-class rebels in imperialism's other metropolitan centers, could find no praxis which integrated the crucial moral, intellectual and social aspects of his being. This he achieved only through his work within the Movement *in relation to the masses* — by integrating his life with a revolutionary class in motion. "In France," Rui tells us, "the reality of our revolution was very far away...there were plenty of things I had only romantic ideas about." In Angola, however, Rui learned "...that it was necessary to fight for the people — because they need it and they deserve it. They are able to organize and to fight for themselves; they are always ready to defend their cultures, their homes, their families...There were plenty of opportunities for the people to show that they were willing to make sacrifices for me; and I think that I also proved I could make sacrifices for them — you know, without really feeling it was a sacrifice, just doing things because it was a duty, a normal duty toward the people."

At first, as a city-born mestizo from a distant culture, Rui was a stranger, a "foreigner", to the Angolan peasantry. "At the beginning, when I first arrived in this area, the people didn't know me and they called me the 'white man'.

Then I would say to them: 'I'm not white; I could be, but I'm not.' Many times they asked, 'Do you eat *njima*? Do you eat this? Do you eat that?' And so forth. I just said, 'Yes, of course, why not?' So, after a while they started treating me just like any of the other comrades...Our way of living together was very natural."

Without this "living close with the people" in revolutionary motion, it is most likely that Rui would have remained, at best, a rebellious artist with sentimental humanist feelings toward the oppressed. But fortunately for Rui, he was from a sector of the imperialist system where an oppressed, underprivileged and super-exploited people were moving, under the pressure of concrete historical and material forces, into a revolutionary praxis — becoming a "class for itself", conscious of and organized around its common interests. As members of a colony struggling arms-in-hand to free itself from colonial and imperialist control and exploitation, the Angolan people — including Rui de Pinto and other willing members of the petty bourgeoisie — could embrace a unifying and progressive form of nationalism not in contradiction, at this particular historical moment, with genuine socialist internationalism. Rui could, in short, both subordinate and realize himself in relation to a revolutionary class — a class which due to its particular relation to imperialism's productive means and other classes, has material and spiritual interests whose satisfaction advances the entire species closer to a more humane international social formation.

*Class
traitor*

Many potential "Rui de Pintos" exist also among the radical intelligentsia and other strata of imperialism's privileged metropolitan sectors. Unfortunately, their "defection" to the revolutionary struggle of the oppressed masses is vastly more difficult to accomplish than was Rui's, for they cannot fuse their socialist ideals with a progressive form of nationalism or immerse themselves in the revolutionary praxis of a "domestic" class. At this juncture of history, and for as long as they derive substantial economic benefit from the super-exploitation by "their" bourgeoisies of the laboring masses in oppressed colonies and neocolonies, the mass of metropolitan wage workers possess neither revolutionary interests nor, obviously, a revolutionary praxis, and their nationalism is but a form of racism and "great nation" chauvinism.

What is required for this "defection", therefore, is a moving beyond metropolitan nationalism to a creative fashioning of internationalist links and productive relationships with imperialism's masses in armed revolutionary struggle: a difficult but nonetheless extremely important

and not impossible task. And one firmly implanted in the rich internationalist revolutionary tradition of the Paris Commune, Simon Bolivar, the International Brigades, Norman Bethune and Che Guevara.

Part 1



1 Rui de Pinto

My name is Rui de Pinto. I was born in Luanda, the capital of Angola, on 26 May 1943. My family is middle-class — not rich, nor poor — and when I was a small boy we lived quite well. Our house was in the Coqueiros Quarter of the city. It had an inside yard where we could play, make toys. Sometimes my mother planted a little garden just in front of the house. It had five rooms and a bathroom: a bedroom for my parents, one for my brother — he was eight years older than me — and one for my sister and me; then there was a kitchen and a living room. The house was painted pale yellow and the roof was covered with red tiles. The window sills and doors were also painted red. It was a nice place, very near to my aunt and uncle's house, and I used to play a lot with my two cousins who were about the same age as me. There were big vacant lots around and we always went to play there.

Gilberto is my brother's name — we called him Gil. My sister, Anna Maria, is four years older than me and we called her Nita. My mother's name is Guida — we called her that around the house — short for Margarita, and my father, Francisco, was called Chico since he was a little boy. I was the youngest in the family and everyone just called me Rui; it was too short to form a nickname from. I recall that when I was a small boy my parents seemed to be very young and almost always happy and well.

My father worked for the Ports Authority, in customs. He was slight and of medium height, about five feet nine; but my mother was thin and very short, barely five feet. She stayed at home, cooking and working around the house. Both my parents had a Portuguese father and an Angolan mother. My mother's mother came from the Luanda area, near Nambuangongo and my other grandmother from Malange. My grandfathers — one from Lisbon and the other from Viseu — both became

rich and eventually abandoned their African wives and children. So my mother was raised by her godmother and my father by his mother. He lived a little better than my mother because his father left his African wife three houses: she lived in one, our family lived in another and the third was rented. My father studied up to the fifth year of secondary school in Luanda. My mother completed primary school, then went to live at her godmother's home where she remained until she met my father and got married.

I never saw my grandfather — my father's father. My father used to say we could live without him; that we didn't need him or his money. Even when he sometimes offered us help, my father would say: "We can manage well enough on what I earn — and I'll see to it that my children, too, are able to make their own way in the world without handouts." My father always taught us this, and it is one of the main reasons my parents were so determined to give us the best possible education.

My mother's father died long before I was born, so I never met him either. My mother often told us that he was not a bad man. It was a pity, she said, that he died during a visit to Lisbon when she was only seven years old. Her mother had died a short time earlier — her house had burned down completely — and that's when she went to live with her godmother. My mother always spoke of her real mother as being a rich person, with several pieces of land around Luanda — of course Luanda was not a very large or developed city at that time. All this land became the property of my grandfather when my grandmother died in the fire and when he married a Portuguese woman and then died in Lisbon the land went to his new family. So my mother was left with nothing.

The only grandparent I knew was my father's mother. She was very old and nervous. Her head would quiver. She used to give us money to buy candy and would cry — you know, like old women or grandmothers do when they are happy and sad at the same time.

When I was little and stayed around the house — before starting school — I was closer to my mother, though I always got along well with my father too. Of course, like all fathers, he was the one who spanked us when we did something wrong or bad. I remember that I was always getting into trouble with my parents because I would leave home to play in the empty lands around the house, returning dirty and late and sometimes forgetting my shirt or shoes. I usually played with my cousins, as I said. We liked to make our own toys out of cardboard. I remember learning from my brother how to make cardboard trucks; he also taught me how to make soldiers and horses out of leather.

What I enjoyed most was going to the beach. It wasn't very far. I learned to swim when I was about four or five, and I was very proud of being able to swim. I especially remember the good times we had when my father got a holiday. He would rent a little house on the beach and we would all go. I really enjoyed it.

I also liked to draw. I spent a lot of time drawing and making little sculptures with clay. I remember that one time a friend of my father gave me some plasticine and I made very nice sculptures with it. So, in general, it was a good time in my life. We lived very well; were almost always happy. And even when I did bad things, the punishment was not very harsh.

I first went to school in Oporto, in Portugal, when I was six years old. I went with my mother and sister and we stayed in Portugal for about nine months. I remember the day we were leaving for Oporto very well. Everybody was ready to go and board the boat and my mother had dressed me up very nicely. Then just before leaving, I went to play with my cousins in the open land around the dock. I returned without my shoes — very dirty — and my arm was badly bruised from a fall I'd taken. This is the only time I can remember when my father was really angry with me. But he couldn't beat me since in a few hours we would be leaving one another for a long time. He was furious, but he was quiet. I think, perhaps, he was nervous, very emotional or sentimental about leaving us. Things like this, separating from one another, were very important and sad events in our family. I remember everyone was crying. For my mother and father it was the second time they would be separated for a long period. The first time, when I was just a few months old, my father had to take my brother to Portugal for an operation on his arm which they could not perform in Angola. It was a major operation — but it turned out all right. Anyway, after this my mother always talked about this as being a very hard period for her because my father was not there.

Well, as for myself, I was very very happy to be making a trip, but I recall that my sister and I were there in the boat crying and crying because my father and brother were staying behind. They were standing down below on the dock and we were high up in the boat waving and crying very much. It was maybe nine o'clock in the morning when the ship left the dock and it wasn't until noon, when they called us for lunch, that we stopped crying. Of course, once we had finished crying, we were all very happy and excited about the trip to Portugal. The voyage was a long one because the

ship was a very old steamer. It took us eighteen days to reach Lisbon. But there were plenty of kids on board and I was happy, always playing.

When we finally reached Lisbon we were met by friends of the family who had been living there a long time. We stayed with them a few days before going to Oporto where we lived with a family my father had come to know well when he visited Portugal six years earlier with my brother.

At Oporto I went to school for the first time. I remember the day when my mother and the woman we were staying with took me to the school and introduced me to the teacher. She was glad to have me there; said I was the first Angolan to go to her school. All the children gathered around me, looking at me, asking questions — wanting to know if there were any lions in Angola and so on. After a while, when they got to know me better, they started calling me "Preto de Guiné", or "Little Black One". They would even run up behind me on the road calling "Preto de Guiné, lava cara con café", "Black from Guiné, washes his face with coffee". It was a form of racism, but the kids liked me, they just weren't used to seeing black people in Portugal. In Angola it was different, but even there it was mainly the older people, not the children, who were concerned about race. I had lots of friends, white and black, and don't remember a single case of racism among them. But I recall that sometimes one of the white parents would say to their little boy: "Oh! Are you playing with those black people again?" This happened to us, even if my brother, sister and cousins were classed as *assimilados** — as different from the "real" Angolans, pure Angolans. The Coqueiros Quarter where we lived contained a few white and black families, but it was primarily an *assimilado* quarter — practically in the center of town and very far from the *museke* or African quarter, where the poor Angolans lived. I think maybe this is why I only came to understand the social realities of our country much later.

Well, this school in Oporto was different than anything I'd ever experienced before. It was in an old house, on the first floor. To just stay there, sitting with an exercise book in front of me and trying to write new letters — it was difficult. And, of course, I preferred to be outside playing or at least drawing. The teacher called my mother in once and showed her my exercise book which contained

*Africans and/or persons of Afro-European ancestry could be legally classified as *assimilados* if they were adjudged by the colonial officials to have acculturated to Portuguese values and customs. (D.B.)

plenty of drawings instead of the things she was teaching. I remember that in class I sat near a window and there was a playground outside. What I came to enjoy most was looking out at this playground, even if it was raining and dark.

Oporto seemed to me to be a very big town, but also very sad. It was always raining — not like Luanda. The man we lived with was an officer in the Portuguese army and I remember once when he took me to a military base. I was surprised to see so many men in uniform — soldiers and officers. They gathered around me and made me talk and sing; then they put me on a horse. It was the first time I was ever on a horse; perhaps that's why it has stuck in my mind.

After nine months we returned to Angola and I entered school to finish my first class. My mother put me in a school near our house, run by the state. But after two or three weeks she was forced to take me out. The Portuguese teacher was a real racist. She put all the mestizo and African students in the back desks and didn't even try to teach them anything. So my mother withdrew me from the state school and put me in a Catholic school, a private parochial school. The owner and principal was a very religious old woman who always wanted to take us to church and liked to take us out with white frocks to parade around the town. On Saturdays we had to sing religious songs for the first hour of school and on religious holidays she made us buy flowers and take them to the church.

At that age I believed in religion, as much as a child of seven or eight years can believe in anything. And I continued to accept Catholicism more or less unquestioningly until I was about sixteen years old. In the school we had classes in Catholicism and if we didn't learn our lessons well we were beaten. The other subjects were Portuguese — we took dictation and made copies — some arithmetic, and drawing. After I passed my examinations I entered the second year of primary school, where we started to learn some grammar and write compositions as well as continuing in arithmetic. I stayed at this school for two years. I didn't like it very much because the headmaster was very very hard, and she made all the other teachers be hard too — there were many beatings. If we didn't do our lessons well, or did poorly in the Catholic subjects, we were beaten.

When I'd just passed my second year examinations, an uncle on my mother's side came to visit us in Luanda. "As you are good people," he said, "you must come and stay with us for a while on the *fazenda*." My parents agreed and we went. It was a very big plantation in Malange, near Luála.

We took the train and everybody enjoyed this holiday very much. My uncle gave me a .22 long rifle and I was always out hunting birds. My greatest dream was to shoot a big animal with this rifle, but it never happened; I just killed birds.

It was the first time I saw *contratados**, contract laborers, working on a plantation. In Luanda I saw some who worked for the state. They took care of the football stadium not far from my house. They were different, of course; they had on uniforms while those on the plantation just wore ragged shorts and no shirts or shoes. They ate two bananas in the morning and went to work for the whole day.



I remember once being very shocked and frightened seeing a *contratado*, a big man, being beaten terribly because he didn't go to work for two days. He said he was sick, and his wife too. And he really looked sick. But the *capatáz*, the overseer on the plantation, said: "No, you're not sick; just drunk", and he ordered some men to beat him. He was

*"Contratados" is a general term for African contract laborers, many of whom are in fact forced into service and never enter into a written contract. The *contratado* system has been widely condemned as an only slightly disguised form of forced labor or modern slavery. (D.B.)

beaten badly — a hundred *palmatória** on each hand and also on the buttocks and feet. When they beat him on the buttocks they first put salt on his skin and it shocked me to see a big, strong man like him crying like a child. Myself, I had never been beaten like this.

Another time there was also a man who didn't go to work. He passed in front of the house on his bicycle and the *capatáz* sent someone to stop him. The man caught him and beat him with a stick while he was still on his bicycle, so the laborer fell down onto the ground and was bleeding from his head. Even so, they took him and gave him plenty of *palmatórias*. I don't know if he was trying to run away or was just passing by; but in any event he wasn't a *contratado*, he was what they called a *voluntário*, someone employed locally without a contract.

I remember also a day when a Portuguese friend of my uncle and his family arrived from Luanda. This man had his own plantation nearby and was saying: "You know, we have a problem now because the Government is insisting that we hire a medical dresser for each *fazenda* to care for these *pretos*". And my uncle said: "Yes, I know, and we will also have to buy medicines and some medical equipment, and for what?"

At that point a man was brought up with his hands tied very tightly behind his back. The skin on his wrists was cut and bleeding, and as he struggled to liberate his hands he just made the ropes cut in more deeply. For some reason, everybody around was laughing. I didn't know what the man had done or why he was bound up like that, but I wasn't laughing and didn't see anything funny about the situation. I just couldn't understand how a grown man could be treated like that and why everybody — men, women and children — were laughing.

Well, these are the events I remember most clearly about

*A wooden paddle with conical holes drilled in it. When hit with a *palmatória*, skin and tissue are drawn up into the narrowing holes, if hit hard and often enough, and the skin will break. Many an Angolan has died as a result of severe beatings with this torture weapon. (D.B.)

our holidays in the *mato*, as we called it; in the interior of Angola. The brutality I witnessed made a very strong impression on me, and I was both shocked and revolted by the *capataz* and the men he ordered to carry out the beatings. Of course, at that time I could not understand all the mechanics of the plantation system — why the plantations were there, why people were treated like this, and so on.

In the third year of primary school I changed to another school near our house. It was a state school, but I was treated better than at the first one I went to. I remember on the first day the teacher, a young Portuguese woman, asked my sister, "Why does your brother have the name Machado de Pinto?" My sister told her, "It is because we are of the family of Machado de Pinto." This must have impressed the teacher, since my grandfather was very well known in Luanda, and she started treating me very well.

Before finishing my third year, my father was transferred to Ambriz and my mother went with him. My brother was not in Luanda at that time as in 1950 he went to Portugal to begin agricultural studies at Santarém. So my sister and I stayed at my aunt and uncle's house until we completed the school year. I remember the day I learned that I'd passed my third year examinations. I ran to the Bank of Angola where my uncle worked and said he could now reserve a seat for me and my sister — she had already passed her exams — on the plane for Ambriz the following day. This plan had already been made by my father and uncle, so the next day we took the plane for Ambriz.

For a while we stayed in an old, very small Government house, but a short time later we moved into a very nice house near the sea. In front of the house was the ocean and to the east we could see mountains. Just to the north of our house was a pan where they got salt. It was the first time I'd seen a salt pan and I liked going there to play. *Contratados* worked there in the salt mines, which were owned by José Martin — a very rich and important man in Ambriz. He also owned a fleet of boats which unloaded the freighters. He needed the help of my father, who was at that time the chief of the port, so I met José Martin many times — he came to our house several times and was always inviting us to his place.

I remember a funny thing happened once soon after I arrived in Ambriz. One day I went to walk in the municipal gardens and noticed a parrot up in a tree. I decided to try and catch it and started climbing the tree. Strangely, it didn't fly away and I caught it. Getting down from the tree,

however, I fell and tore my trousers and when I got up a young boy came over and said, "Oh, this parrot belongs to my master. You must come to the house with me and give it to him." He was the *criado* or servant of another big shot in town by the name of Manuel Graza. I didn't really understand, but I went with him. Arriving at the house, he made me wait at the door. Then a woman came and took the parrot. She tried to give me a reward but I said it was all right and didn't accept the money.

The next day I went with my father and the rest of our family to visit this Manuel Graza, who was a big merchant in Ambriz who also had large coffee plantations. His wife, on seeing me, seemed a bit nervous and confused. She called me aside and said: "I hope you didn't say anything to your father about the money I tried to give you yesterday. You must excuse me. I thought you were just a little *preto* from the *museke*." She was embarrassed, because what was the wife of a big merchant doing giving a reward to the son of the new port chief.

I was nine years old at that time and before the beginning of my fourth school year I just stayed home and played. My parents invited my cousins to visit us for the holidays, so we just played, went to the beach — it was a very nice beach — and swam a lot. When school started, my cousins returned to Luanda, as did my sister who was starting secondary school. I stayed in Ambriz with my mother and father and when school started I was a bit lonesome with my brother, sister and cousins away. I didn't know any boys from the town yet, as our house was near the port, pretty far from town.

My first and best friend in Ambriz was the son of the lighthouse keeper. This lighthouse was not very far from my house and once I went walking over there to see it. I had never seen one before. A boy was there and he called his father to show me how the lighthouse worked. Afterwards, Patu and I became good friends; we were always playing together. Because of this, during the first week of school, the teacher called me into her office and said, "You must not play anymore with Patu". I didn't understand why. Then the teacher came to my house and I remember her saying to my mother: "You really shouldn't allow your son to play with this boy, Patu. You know, he is only the son of a lighthouse keeper and, well, your husband is chief of the port. Rui shouldn't play with Patu."

Even if similar things had happened in Luanda, with white people or at school, I never felt like I did at that moment. I was very angry — and I think it was the first time ...the beginning of my understanding of class differences

and privilege. Patu's father was called a *faz tudo*, jack-of-all-trades, or sometimes *o homem dos sete oficios*, a man of seven professions. Of course, none of these trades or professions was fit for a man of quality or substance. They were things like carpentry, mechanics, repair and maintenance work, and so on. In addition, though Patu's father was a mestizo like we were, he had been raised by his mother in the black quarter and didn't have a good education. Finally, and perhaps this is the main reason they didn't like me playing with Patu, his father was married to a black woman. The teacher kept repeating this.

Well, this was the time I engaged in my first act of rebellion. I continued being friends with Patu and always playing with him. My parents didn't like it, but they really didn't care too much. The teacher, however, was shocked and very angry with me.

Patu was a good boy. He lived near my house and we liked many of the same things. We went to the beach, swam, hunted for crabs in the rocks, fished together and were always playing about. He made plenty of toys, including some very big trucks, like the ones I made when I was younger; but he made nice ones, big ones. So we always played together.

Near the lighthouse there were many warehouses for storing the coffee grown around Ambriz. The guards were Cape Verdians and everybody said that Cape Verdians were very proud and arrogant. Once I talked to them as they stood with their rifles. They said: "We are hired to work here because they won't allow black men to have guns like this." The Portuguese, you see, wouldn't employ Angolans to guard the coffee because they would be forced to give them rifles — and they didn't trust Africans with guns in their hands.

Even without guns, some Angolans from Ambriz stole large quantities of coffee. They worked for a Portuguese merchant, who also had them steal cars and other things. They took my father's truck once, leaving it in a ditch after moving coffee with it during the night. They even stole the administrator's car. When they stole coffee this Portuguese merchant just took it as if it were his own and went to sell it in Luanda. He gave his men a little money for their work, but after a time they were caught — discovered after buying an unusual amount of radios, record players and the like. The merchant was also arrested, but he was not held for very long.

This was the year I took my holy communion. I was eleven years old. My father had just been transferred again back

to Luanda and I was finishing my fifth and last year of primary school. My teacher, like almost all the others, was an old Portuguese woman. She really forced us to go to church and learn the catechisms — and if a student failed to go or did badly in his lessons, she would beat him very hard. So, I took my communion wearing a very nice white coat — it was the first time I'd ever worn such a coat — and afterwards there was a party. It was a party only for the sons of merchants, Government officials and so on. There was another party and everybody who had taken communion was invited. It was in the black quarter — a very nice black quarter with plenty of cocoa trees...I liked to walk there. They held the party in the house of a barber, because it was the biggest nicest house in the quarter. This party was for the poor people and I think I felt — even stronger than in the Patu case — the cold reality of class differences. You see, after our party — the rich party — some of us went over to the other party in the black quarter. And it was really different. There were no big cakes and pastries with cream. There were some small cakes and cookies — but it was not a very rich table, because the parents who made this party were poor.

After I finished primary school, my mother and sister went to Lisbon. My mother was sick, needing an operation, so she took my sister and put her in a boarding school. I went to Luanda and stayed alone with my father, then started secondary school. This was the time I became much closer to my father. I also came to know him better, to see him not only as my father but also as a man, a human being, and to understand that he had emotions and feeling just like other people. For example, I appreciated how he would always become anxious when he didn't get a letter from my mother. And after her operation, when my brother wrote that she was not well, my father became very very emotional and cried like a baby. I was also very upset — more because of my father's misery than for my mother, as I couldn't really understand the problem.

The technical secondary school I went to was very close to where my father worked. When my classes ended at the right time, I would go to have lunch with my father and his friends, or we would return home together. My mother was no longer there to choose my clothes, shoes and so on, and my father just took me to a shoemaker or clothing store and told me I had to start selecting my own things. "It is for you to wear," he said, "so you must choose it."

When I completed two years of secondary school, which was like a preparatory course, I had to choose a career and

enrol in a specialized course. My father had been advising me to go to Portugal to study agriculture. My brother went there, finished his studies, returned to Angola and was earning good money. First he worked for a private plantation, but after a few months started working for the Government in Nova Lisboa. So, for my third year — they call it the professional school — I decided to follow my father's suggestion and enrol in a course on chemical engineering.

My brother went with me. He had always wanted to become a painter and several times he told me: "Oh, you like art, and are good at it. You should become a painter." So, when we went down there to the technical school and saw that they were opening a new course in painting and sculpture he said, "Let's enrol you in the arts course; I know it's what you really want to do." And that is what we did.

I was enjoying the art course, but my father kept talking about agricultural school. About half way through the first year he told me that I should accompany him to Portugal to see my mother, who had remained in Lisbon because of her illness. I could finish my first year there, he said, and then go to agricultural school. "But I would prefer to continue with my art studies," I said. "Look at your brother," he argued, "he went to agricultural school but he is still painting; he always paints. You know, he is even holding an exhibition — but he also has a good career."

Though I wasn't fully convinced, I agreed to go to Portugal with my father and finish my first year at the Antonio Arroio Art School in Lisbon. Then I would take the entrance examination for agricultural school.

2 In Portugal

We arrived in Lisbon (I can remember the exact date) on the 20th of May 1958. I was almost fifteen years old. My mother and a cousin who was studying in Lisbon met us. We had a very emotional family reunion, particularly my father and mother. I rested at our house that first afternoon, but at night my cousin and I went out to see the city. To me it seemed like a very strange town; much bigger than Luanda, of course, and the people, or many of them, seemed different and strange to me.

This was an important moment in Portugal. The first elections in thirty years, since Salazar came to power in 1928, were about to be held. There was a lot of excitement and commotion with people shouting about the opposition candidate, Humberto Delgado. I saw plenty of broken windows and just over my window were several bullet holes. The big square in Lisbon and the pavement along many other streets was scratched and torn up by tanks. The Salazar regime was very worried. With the election coming, the people started to make noise — talking and expressing political ideas for the first time in many years, or ever.

Of course, I didn't understand much about these things at that time. I didn't really know who Delgado was or what he stood for. But there were plenty of students at Antonio Arroio who were political and they would talk in corners, in cafes and so forth. I would hear them saying things like: "Hey, you know that yesterday there was a meeting at so-and-so's house and the police came and did this and that."

Once I heard them talking about a policeman who beat a woman badly with a nightstick. The woman fell down, she had lost an eye. The crowd was enraged. They charged the policeman and grabbed him by his legs and arms; then they just pulled him apart, killing him.

During this period, everybody at school was very excited — especially because one of our schoolmates was a young girl named Louisa Delgado, the niece of Humberto Delgado. Everywhere in school, and even outside, they were writing "Viva Delgado!" and similar things. Well, Delgado lost the election, but all the students were sure that he really won.

There were only two Angolans at the art school, and we were also the only people from the colonies. I had never met the other Angolan before; he was from Luanda too, but was much older than me. We were together whenever we could arrange it and things were really quite good for us there. We even had some Portuguese friends, especially two — Raul and Campião. Well, I liked this Antonio Arroio school very much and I was hoping that I'd be able to return there after I had finished agricultural school. The courses at Antonio Arroio were very good, better than in Luanda, and so were the teachers. The only good teacher we had in Luanda had taught before at Antonio Arroio — but of course the art school in Luanda had just opened.

After completing this first year in the art school, and passing my entrance exam, I started Santarém Agricultural School. It was a very reactionary school about sixty kilometers north of Lisbon. There were quite a few sons of the great agricultural families of Portugal — especially from Ribatejo and Alentejo, the richest agricultural province in Portugal. These were the sons of the rural aristocracy, and most of them were very rich. Some even had titles, were the sons of barons, dukes and so on, and wore the emblems of their houses.

The students at Santarém were very stratified and there were many rules and procedures. Senior students could give any orders they liked and the younger new students had to obey, were forced to obey. Even if the command was stupid, like telling someone to go knock a tree down with their head, they would have to do it or try to do it. And if they failed they would be beaten. I was told, for example, to climb a very high wall. "Go climb that wall!" one of the seniors ordered. Well, I couldn't do it so they came and beat me with a stick. Everyone thought it was funny; they laughed. But it was really brutal. These people were like this, especially the seniors. All their games were like this, and they liked it that way. They were brutal. What they liked most was bullfighting and getting drunk. Everybody drank very much — too much. There was one boy only seventeen years old who had this liver sickness, you know, hepatitis, and the doctor forbid him to drink. But he just didn't care; he was drunk almost every night.

During the first year at school we had courses in botany, agrology or soil science, zoology, physics, drafting, mathematics, Portuguese and English. The subjects I liked best were botany and English. Of course, there was some drawing in the drafting class, but it was geometrical drawing and I didn't like it very much. In the second year, a few new subjects like geology were started, and if you passed your examination in botany, for example, you would be finished with that subject. And it went on like this in the last year, the third year, when new subjects like topography were started.

Some of the students lived outside the school and just came to classes, but there were over a hundred of us in the boarding school and the majority were from the colonies. I don't know why so many people from the colonies wanted to study agriculture; maybe because Africans, or mainly mestizos, could get jobs more easily in this area. Anyway, it was very important for me because the people from the colonies were very close — we were proud to be from the colonies and we tried to be the best in our classes and, especially, in athletics. We felt very strongly about this. Every year there were competitions — in football, track, swimming and so on — and we vowed that first place always had to be won by a student from the colonies. So we always did our best. I don't know if this had any political implications, but we did it. We felt different from the Portuguese.

During the summertime we would go out for an hour or so before doing our studies. There were always four or five of us and we would start talking, talking, talking — and always about religion. One or two would take the part of the priest and the others would start attacking Catholic theology. In this way we prepared to challenge our priest at the school. I forgot to mention earlier that from the first year to the last, everyone had to take classes in religion and morals. And it was an important subject. If you missed this class four times you would lose a whole year, would have to start your last year again. So we used to attack this religion and morals teacher, posing very difficult questions for him, challenging what he said, and so on. Finally it reached a point where he just refused to call on us. He would lecture on something, then ask: "Are there any questions?" We would raise our hands, but he wouldn't call on us. Then, right at the end of the class, he might say: "Oh, I think Mr. de Pinto or Mr. Marcielo had a question to raise earlier. Perhaps I could answer it now." But we would just say "Nevermind, the period is almost over." You see, if we put our questions to him, he would start answering and then in a few minutes the bell would ring and he would dismiss the class. We would have no chance to reply or ask follow-up questions. It was

important for us to put the priest in this position. Everybody knew what he was doing.

He wasn't really a bad man but as a priest, of course, he was a priest. Sometimes he tried to do socially good things. We would analyse it and usually conclude that the only thing wrong was that he always tried to help people through religion; and he intended for us to develop a human understanding, do humanistic things, because it was the Christian thing to do.

In any event, he did get us to think about the masses, other people. Around the school there were a lot of very poor people. Sometimes he would say: "You see, you are very rich, but if you go for a walk just outside the school you'll find many poor people, very very poor. But you go to town and spend plenty of money just for enjoyment, while these people often don't even have one escudo to buy bread. This is not right. You must practice Christian charity. It is all right for you to be rich, but you must be generous and give to the poor."

So even if he approached things like a priest, he did show us that there were very poor people living right near our school, in very terrible conditions. In one case there was a man and his wife and several small children living in one very tiny room. The man had T.B. — but he just stayed there, without medical attention, and with all the little children running about. We felt very bad about this and a number of us agreed with our priest to give some money for the poor people. Afterwards we discussed it a long time and finally decided against this kind of charity. "No, we should not support the poor people through this priest or the Church," we said. "If we want to give them money we should go there ourselves and give it to them personally."

Then we went to give the man with T.B. some money. We found him in very bad shape — he was trying hard to harvest some potatoes, but he just couldn't do it. One fellow in our small group by the name of Bésaba, an Angolan born in Brazzaville, said: "Why don't we do this work for him?" So we took the hoes and started digging up potatoes for the man, who was very pleased and appreciative about our work. When this was discovered at school, however, the sub-director called us in and asked why we had done it. We explained about the priest, Christian charity and brotherly love, but the sub-director just became more agitated. Finally, he said: "Well, you must go and talk with your priest again and he will explain to you how to correctly practice Christian charity."

I don't know what he intended to do, or told the priest, but in our next class on religion and morals we asked the priest again how we should practice Christian charity. It was one of those questions that he always left for the end of the period and never answered.

In this small group we had five or six close friends, there was always one Portuguese student. This boy, Paulo, was the only poor Portuguese student in the school. A cousin paid for his studies the first year but after that they were paid for by the Academic Director. Paulo was such a good athlete that when his cousin couldn't pay any more, the Director asked local supporters of the school teams to contribute money for his studies. At first Paulo wasn't a very good pupil, in fact he failed his first year. Then, after the Director started paying for his school fees, he changed his attitude toward studying — he started working very hard and doing well in his classes.

I should say too that I also had to repeat my first year of studies. I don't know why, but probably because I only worked hard in the subjects I liked and was very involved in athletics and in thinking and talking about things like religion, philosophy and sometimes politics. In fact, in this small group with Paulo, BÉnsaba, Marcielo and a couple of others, I first started thinking and talking seriously about politics. Not about colonial problems; it started with the contradictions between rich people and poor people. We began looking at ourselves, principally at the rich Portuguese students and their families — and they were *really* rich. They came to school with their sportscars, fancy clothes and plenty of money in their pockets. Then we looked at the poor people around, like the sick man we helped, with nothing to eat, ragged clothes, crowded into poor houses and so on.

So we started thinking and talking about these things and I think perhaps it was Marcielo who first put it forward as a political problem. Marcielo was a white Angolan, the son of an *administrator*, a Government official in charge of a fairly large African area. I don't know how, but Marcielo knew more than any of us about Portuguese politics. Our discussions at first didn't have any particular direction; just talking about this and that. Sometimes we even talked openly on the streets or in buses, not caring who might be listening to us. Once, in fact, Marcielo was arrested on the road just like this, by PIDE agents. They took him in for questioning and told him: "You must be careful about what you are saying." Even when they found out that his father was a Government official in Angola they said, "O.K., but remember, take care about what you say!"

This was the time, during my first and second years at Santarém, when I gradually gave up my religious beliefs. In fact, all of us in our group did. We compared what we read and discussed with what the priest told us and, well, there were just more and more things which seemed incredible to us. We were reading Sartre and other existentialists at that time and most of us began to think of ourselves as existentialists and not Christians.

And it continued like this during my third year. When we weren't in class or studying, we would be talking or out on the playing field practicing different sports. All of us except Marcielo played a lot of sports and practiced almost every day. Sometimes Portuguese army units came to do their physical training on our field and I remember once when they came and were running an obstacle course. We were standing around watching and talking very loudly among ourselves so they would hear. "Very bad," one would say. "Yes, we could do it much better, and we're not even in the army." Finally, their officer came over. "Where are you from?" he asked. "From Angola," we replied.

Well, it was 1961 and the war in Angola had begun that February; so saying we were from Angola took on an added meaning. The officer said: "Let's just see how good you are." Then he stopped the soldiers and made us race them over the obstacle course. At that time we trained a lot and were in very good condition. So, we did our best and came in with the fastest times — though I had plenty of trouble, and the others too, with the last part of the course where we had to run with heavy packs and climb over obstacles. Anyway, the Portuguese soldiers were not very dedicated or anxious to win. After, the officer was a bit upset and said: "Very good. I'm sure that when you come into the army you will be equally good at killing terrorists." Then this son of an *administrador*, Marcielo, said: "Terrorists? Well, we'll see." And the officer was furious, just standing there glaring, glaring, glaring at us. Finally he said, "O.K., you just wait till you come into the army. I'll see to it that you have plenty of problems!"

Well, with this and other things we started thinking that, as Angolans, our situation could become very serious. I was also getting curious about what was happening in Angola. During the holidays between my second and third year of school, in 1961, I talked a bit with my cousin Humberto who was studying literature at Coimbra. I found that he knew a lot about many things and sometimes I would ask him to tell me his thoughts about politics. At first he hesitated and said little, but little by little as time went on and we continued talking he explained a few things to me about the

war in Angola.

You see, he didn't quite trust me and, in fact, it was only when I told him about an incident that happened to me at school that he really started talking seriously to me about politics. The Director called me into his office. He was there with my Portuguese teacher, looking quite serious. "We have something to ask you," he said. "You are one of our Angolan students here and, well...professor Santos will explain it to you." So my Portuguese teacher said: "As you might have heard, there is going to be a big public meeting in the town and we are going to write a speech which we would like you to read at this meeting."

I asked him what kind of speech it was. "You'll find out," he said. "You will go to the meeting in your school uniform (I might have forgotten to mention that we always wore uniforms at school) and read this speech to a large gathering of people who have been invited from around here in Ribatejo. They will be coming to learn about the terrorists in Angola, and that is what the speech is about."

"No, I can't do it," I said. "And why not?" asked the Director. "Well, because I just don't want to." "You must know it is not a good thing to refuse a request like this," he said, getting angry. I thought about it, remembering the friend who'd been questioned by the PIDE, and tried to think of some good excuses for refusing. "I really can't do it, you see, I don't speak well at public meetings. My voice is not good; I get very nervous and just can't speak."

"Very well, you can leave now," the Director said. I could tell they were very angry with me and didn't really believe my excuses. They finally talked a boy from São Tomé into reading the speech. Everyone who went found the speech ridiculous. I didn't go myself, but was very glad I'd refused.

This happened at the end of the school year in 1961, just before the holidays. When I told Humberto about it he said: "You did well not to go and speak for the Portuguese." I asked him why and that is when he started explaining things to me. "Haven't you lived in Angola?" he asked me. "Yes, of course," I replied. "Well, what did you see there, what did you observe?"

At first I could not think of anything, but then I started remembering about the *contratados*, about Patu and so on. I told him about these things and afterwards we met several times and talked more about politics. He never mentioned MPLA or UPA, but once I asked him about MPLA because I

heard it mentioned in a bar. There were some Portuguese soldiers there and one wore an UPA emblem; said it had been sent to him by a friend in Angola. He said, "Here is something from the terrorist in Angola." Then another soldier said, "Yes, but there are not only UPA's in Angola, there are also other terrorists called MPLA."

So the next time I talked with my cousin I asked him, "Which movement is the best, UPA or MPLA?" All he would say is that MPLA were the humanists. I still didn't know whether he supported MPLA or UPA.

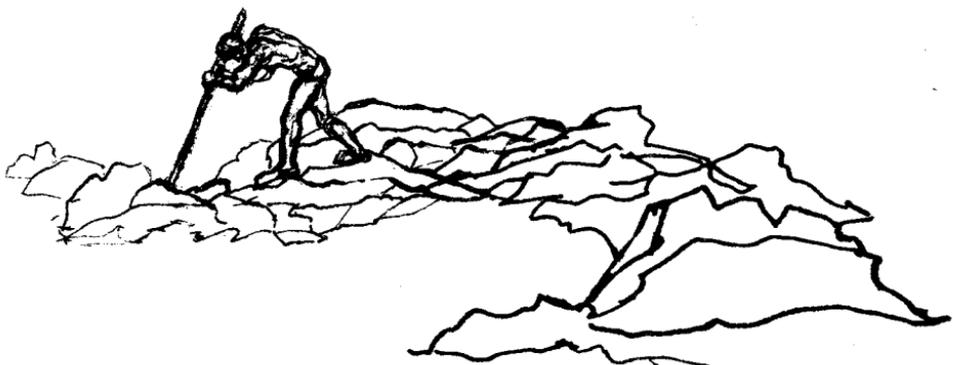
Then in mid-1962 Humberto's younger brother, Pio, who was at that time in school with me, ran away from Portugal and went to France with two of his friends. They were on the track team and were invited to go to Spain, to Madrid, for a meet. They went, and after the meet they escaped across the mountains into France. I was very angry at Pio because I told him many times that I wanted to leave Portugal, that I didn't like living in Portugal. I had started analyzing Portuguese society and decided, after spending four years there, that it was just not the society for me. I don't really think I understood the reasons very well, but part of it was that I just felt I didn't want to become part of the bourgeoisie. Then there were all those books I had been reading about existentialism and the feeling I had that I just didn't fit into Portuguese society.

I was only eighteen years old at this time. I didn't want to fight against the Angolan people, but I wasn't a revolutionary. In fact, it was very difficult to associate my own way of life with the revolution. As I said, I just knew I didn't want to live in Portugal anymore, that I wanted to leave. I think this was the beginning of my concrete dissociation from middle class Portuguese living. Of course, I still didn't understand very well the contradictions in my life and in society. I wasn't clear, for example, about the differences between my people in Angola and the Portuguese people — perhaps because I had not lived very closely with the Angolan people, the Angolan masses. I realized that there was much I had to learn, but the opportunities for studying and learning about these things were not very great. Partly this was because I didn't have much chance to talk about these political matters, but also because I wasn't very much inclined to study the Angolan reality. I needed someone to teach me about Portuguese-Angolan society and politics, but all my friends at school were just like me — interested in sports and the small things in life around us.

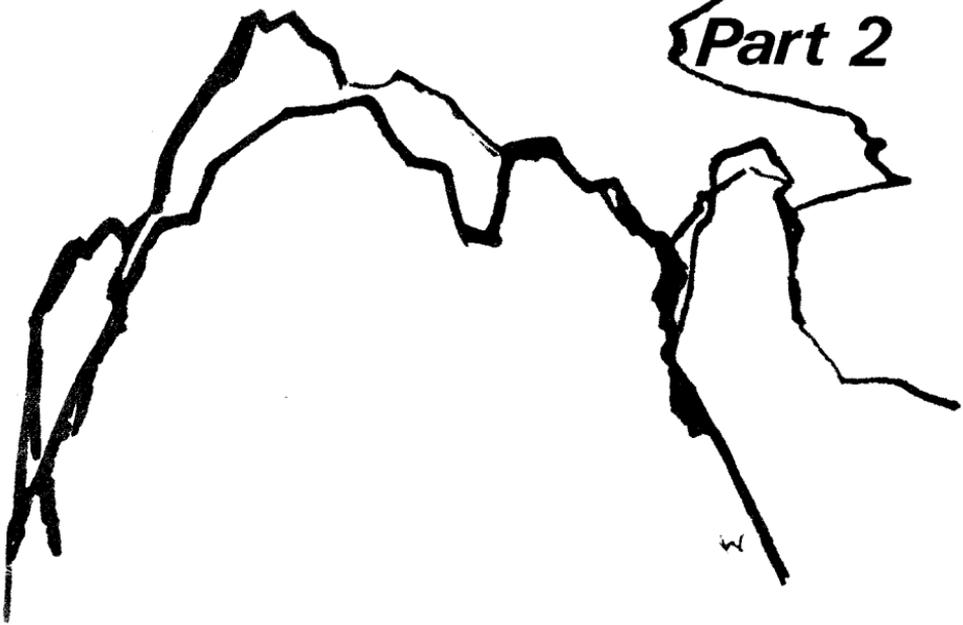
Just as with the Angolan people, I wasn't in close contact with the Portuguese masses. Only once, in 1960, did I

have a chance to live close to and observe the Portuguese people, a section of the rural population that made up fifty percent of the whole population. My Portuguese friend at school, Paulo, asked me to spend part of my holidays with him and his family. So I went with him. They lived in a small Ribatejo village, in a very old big house. Their conditions of life were very poor. Paulo's mother worked in the fields. They planted potatoes and a few garden crops. She was an old woman, though, and didn't have anyone to help except when Paulo came home on his holidays. He also had a very old grandmother who lived with them. His father had died several years earlier, so they had plenty of difficulties. One part of the family was fairly well off, but they didn't give any help to his mother.

This was my first real contact with the Portuguese masses. I met plenty of people who had never eaten meat. Sometimes they ate some fish from the river, but mainly they ate only the potatoes they grew and some tomatoes and a few other vegetables. So, when I compared the way of life of these peasants with the way of life of my schoolmates and their families, I could see that there was a very very big class difference. I wasn't able at that time, though, to understand that a similar relationship existed between my people, the Angolan people, and the Portuguese. Later, of course, I came to understand how the Angolan people were being exploited and oppressed by the Portuguese regime and oligarchy.



Part 2



3 The Rebellion

Thinking back to this period of my life, I sometimes try to understand just what my values were, and what I was, what my way of life was. I think that most of the time I just tried more or less to enjoy myself. At other times I did try to find values which were not exactly the same, bourgeois values. I thought that a person had to have a way of living and that I should choose my way and stick to it. Then at other times, maybe talking with friends I would say: "Well, we are living in this society, we are a part of it, so the most important thing is just to live, to really live; just enjoy yourself, have emotions and feelings and to try to satisfy them."

Sometimes I even thought we should respect and obey all the Portuguese laws, because we were a part of this society and these were the society's rules. But this was very difficult for me. In fact, I think that for a long time the greatest manifestation of my non-acceptance, my rejection, of Portuguese society was to violate the laws, even small and meaningless laws and sometimes without being really conscious of it. For instance, there was a garden with nice grass and a sign saying "Stay Off the Grass!" Well, without even thinking about it, I would walk across the grass, just like that. Once I was even arrested by a policeman because of this, and I became very very angry at him and argued. I even insulted him, and afterwards I was very proud and happy that I had the courage to speak up to him. "You're stupid!" I said. "You're just a policeman! You don't understand anything!" What I meant in saying this was that he didn't understand the things around him in life; that he tried to make people respect the law, but that he never thought about these laws, whether they were worth respecting.

Well, things like this happened several times, but on the other hand I was leading a bourgeois life — not very

bourgeois, but bourgeois. I don't know if I really liked it or not, but I guess I did. I had some comforts, spent my vacations at bourgeois beaches, like Cascais, and so on. And my friends at the school were just like me, and they discussed this problem too — at least some of my close friends did, even if they were Portuguese. They didn't like the society either. They lived in it, like me, but they really didn't like it. And like me, they led a bourgeois life but took pleasure in rebelling against certain little insignificant things. For instance, I remember that we often went to a certain cinema where they didn't allow people in without ties. So everytime we went to this cinema we put our ties in our pockets. Then, when they said we couldn't come in, we would take out our ties and put them on. But after passing the door, right in front of the ticket-taker, we took off our ties again and put them back in our pockets.

You see, it was just our way of showing them, of saying we didn't like it. But, of course, there were contradictions even in trying not to conform to this society, to the bourgeois values of the society. Even if I rebelled against society in little ways, I still lived in it and followed bourgeois values. Like my schoolfellows, or the great majority of them, I went to the bourgeois beaches, went to parties, fooled around with girls, got drunk and so on. Sometimes, for example, we went to these *féiras*, or fairs, in the small villages and towns around the school. There were a lot of people there and we would drink plenty of wine — and after we were almost proud of being drunk and rowdy.

During this period, in my last year at Santarém, I had my only serious relationship with a girl. Her name was Teresa and she was from Mozambique. We liked one another very much and several times talked about getting married when we finished our studies. But even this was part of the contradiction, my contradiction, because I really didn't want to complete my studies at this agricultural school. It could mean only one thing for me, you see, to have studied all this time to make money, only because of money. And for me at that time, to live only for money, to live like the people around me, trying to work only to make money, always money and no other values; well, I really hated to think that I would become a person like that, it seemed so little. Of course, I needed money — to go to my parties, to drink and so on. But I didn't feel that these things were very important. I was sure that I could live without a lot of money, in other conditions. And, really, this is what I longed for; another way of living, because I was not very happy with this bourgeois life.

So, my relationship with Teresa was a part of this

contradiction, because when I thought about getting married I felt it would be useful to finish my course in agriculture and make a good life — a house for my wife and children and so on. But at the same time, as I just explained, I didn't want to get into this chasing after money, the bourgeois rat-race.

When I went to the beaches on holidays it was usually with a group of boys and girls — we would go swimming and so on. But the way I like the beach most was when I went there alone. I took spear-fishing equipment and went for hours out to the rocks and coral reefs to hunt. It was very far out and nobody swam there, so I went and fished. Everybody said it was very dangerous, but I think that because it was dangerous I liked to do it. I don't know when I started doing things like this, but trying to analyze it, to give it an overall meaning, I think that I always liked this sort of test or challenge. And also, I think it was important for me to be alone. Even when I walked, I liked to walk alone — to think things out, analyze small actions and events. Several things, of course, like wanting to face challenges, I only came to understand a little about later.

It seemed natural to me to accept challenges. When I went out to the rocks to fish, I was accepting a challenge. Even when I was a little kid in Luanda, beyond the empty lands there were some mountains — not very far from my house — and what we would do, me and some other kids, was climb up on the rocks and jump down. And the one who jumped from the highest place was the winner, the best. I don't know if this will always influence my way of living, but there in Portugal it was important because it made me feel different, and good. You know, when I went on these little adventures out to the rocks to fish in dangerous waters alone, I would return and say to myself: "O.K., I went out there to fish, but these people here won't do it." I'm not sure if I felt good because they were Portuguese and I was not or because they belonged to a society that my action proved I was refusing to enter. Sometimes I thought about it, tried to analyze it, but I was never confident that I understood it very well. You see, there were plenty of rich Portuguese around with very good equipment, but they never went out to fish near the rocks.

I talked again with Humberto, before his brother left Portugal, and told him: "You know, I just can't live any longer in Portugal." He asked me: "Why?" I tried to tell him about the contradictions I felt, but it was difficult; my political ideas at the time were very confused — I didn't have a very high level of political consciousness. So, finally I just told him: "I don't really know why, but

I can't live here anymore. I'm sure that in France I would be able to find a much better way of life." "Oh! So you want to go to France because you can live it up there — more girls, parties and so on!" Well, I was shocked at this because it wasn't at all my reason for wanting to go to France. I didn't know exactly why, but everything I saw in films, read in books and so on indicated that there were several ways of living in France — and you could choose your own way.

Around that time, in 1962, I read several books about the French Resistance. I think these were the only books in Portugal which discussed communists fighting against fascism, and I was interested in reading about this. I think this is the first time I started questioning the idea about communists eating little boys and so on. You see, everywhere in Portugal — in class, in church, in the newspapers, etc. — communists were described as amoral and inhuman brutes who ate little children and did other terrible things.

Well, even though my ideas were very unclear I think Humberto began to take me more seriously. We talked about the contradictions in our lives and discussed various different ways of living. He never told me, however, that there were many political organizations in Portugal, clandestine organizations, which were preparing and working for a new way of life. Later I realized that my problems and the ways I thought about solving them could not have seemed very realistic to him. Sometimes I thought about returning to Angola and then making my way to the Congo to join the guerrillas. I didn't know which guerrillas, UPA or MPLA, because I still didn't know what either of these organizations stood for or were doing. Once, when I mentioned this plan, Humberto told me: "You know, if you want to go to Congo through the northern part of Angola you have to pass through heavy forests and jungle. And even if you could make it, the people dominating the revolution in northern Angola are racists; if they caught you, a mestizo, they would just kill you."

I was a bit frightened by this. I was not afraid to go and fight, even if I did not understand the aims of the revolution very well. But to be killed like he said, just because I was a mestizo, because people didn't understand me or what I wanted to do...this I didn't like. So he told me: "It's better for you to stay here for the time being. We'll try to find another way."

Well, when Pio disappeared I was angry, because I could have gone to the meet in Madrid also but refused because I didn't feel like competing for a Portuguese national team.

Of course, at first all we knew was that Pio had disappeared and about a week after he should have returned to Lisbon Humberto said: "Well, I don't know where my brother is, but I'm going to Coimbra; I have friends there who might know something." Humberto was at that time in the army, he had just been conscripted, and was on a weekend pass. So he went to Coimbra, left his army uniform at home, and never returned. He also ran away. I was happy for him, but also sad and a bit disappointed. Humberto was the only relative with whom I was really close and talked with confidentially. So I felt that now I was alone as far as any serious political matters were concerned. I realized how serious things had become, with both my cousins escaping from Portugal, but there was no one I could talk to.

So I started going to parties again and so forth. But it was different now. What I enjoyed most was going to town, to Lisbon, alone and visiting all the places I used to go to before with my friends. I liked to just watch the Portuguese, to study them. Sometimes I said to myself: "Look at these people, busy, running around, and for what? To do what?" At other times I thought: "These people have a very bad government, plenty of them are suffering, hungry and without jobs, and others are here in town working as clerks, taxi-drivers, etc. without trying to do anything to transform their country."

At school, my work continued as always. I studied the subjects I liked — as in my first year when I was top in botany and failed mathematics. I didn't care very much because I wasn't interested in making a career in agriculture and I thought that if I was really interested I could have been a good student like some of the others. When my teachers, or sometimes my parents, reprimanded me for doing poorly, I didn't feel guilty. I knew I could do good if I wanted, maybe even be the best in the class. This was what I told myself; it was a way of rationalizing my failures in school.

Earlier I mentioned that we had many rules at the boarding school. For example, we had three school uniforms — work clothes, a Sunday walking suit, nice but uncomfortable, and regular school clothes, just a shirt, trousers, jacket and boots. Then we also had a very fancy suit for dances other formal affairs. Well, if a teacher saw you in town not wearing your walking suit, you would be punished. Sometimes they would make you stay at the boarding school on the weekend and not go to town, and other times you would have to pay a fine. Even if a dish accidentally fell off your table while eating, they made you pay a fine, saying you did it on purpose; and it was the same if a window got

broken in the dormitory.

Well, from the beginning, every rule I didn't think was a good rule, or fair, I tried not to obey. For example, they didn't allow us to go to town without permission except on the weekends and holidays. I didn't think this was reasonable because a person might go to town just to study there. I liked to go to a certain coffee bar in town and sit there in the corner, studying my lessons. I'm not sure I could study better there, but I liked to go. At the same time, I felt a bit guilty about it because I wasn't strong enough to go to the Director of the school and just say: "I'm going to the coffee bar in town because I like to study there." I felt too weak to openly oppose the rules and regulations of the school. But everytime I had the chance, I ran away from the boarding school and went to town. Of course, I didn't always go to study; but sometimes, to prove to myself that I wasn't just running away because I was indisciplined, I went to the coffee bar and studied very hard.

All these rules turned me against the regime at the boarding school. I accepted our own rules better — the ones made by the older boys to direct the activities of the younger students. They were brutal — some of them — but they were better because at least they were our own.

Classes at Santarém started at half past eight. We woke up at six o'clock, got dressed and went to a study room. A proctor was always there looking around to make sure everyone was really studying. It was stupid because if you didn't want to study you could just sit there looking at your book and daydreaming. I used to find it funny.

After an hour of this study room, we got time to prepare ourselves for the day and eat breakfast. Then we started classes, which lasted fifty minutes, with ten minutes between classes. At half past twelve we ate lunch and got time to rest. Then at two o'clock classes started again — mainly the practical or laboratory classes. This schedule was from Monday to Saturday morning. On Saturday afternoon there were no classes, so we could go home for the weekend or go to town — unless you were staying at the boarding school and were being punished. Even then if you insisted that you had to go to town to church on Sunday, they would let you go. We did this several times, but didn't go to church.

There were some good things about the school. We had good athletic fields and a nice gymnasium where we could practice different sports, for example. I liked to practice athletics and, generally, I felt better about our afternoon

practical classes. There were also competitions at the end of the year and it was very good to win some medals. Generally, for our age or class, Paulo — my Portuguese friend — and I won most of the medals. He usually took more than me. I remember one track meet where we did very good — he won five medals and I got four. Paulo was especially good in the dashes and broadjump and I did best in the javelin, highjump, hop-step-and-jump and middle distances. I think it was athletics that made us close friends, and the reason he invited me to spend my holidays with him. Of course, there were also some class reasons. I remember there in his village he said to me: "Oh, I knew you would like it here. There are nice rivers and mountains. I knew you would like it. I wanted to ask some of the others, but I didn't think they'd like it; you know, our house is poor and we don't have very good food." He felt a real difference between himself and the other Portuguese students. Of course, at that time I only realized that there was a difference between Paulo and the others; it was only later that I thought about it and understood that Paulo belonged to a different class.

It was sometime toward the end of 1961, during my third year at Santarém, that I started thinking seriously about leaving Portugal. I was fed up with my way of life at the boarding school, and in Portuguese society in general. As I said, even if I couldn't analyze it correctly or scientifically, I knew it wasn't good and I didn't like it. I also thought and was quite sure that I could make a new life in France. I could study what I wanted — which was painting and especially sculpture, which I liked best — and meet people who could talk about important things. I could also find and read many books which were not allowed in Portugal. I remember one time, I was surprised to see a book called *Soviet Philosophy* in the bookstore. I was curious to read it, but I thought: "They must have put it here to check on the person who would buy it." I was afraid to buy it, but I thought it must be an important book to read, so I stole it. I went up to the counter to pay for some school books I needed, then said: "Oh, sorry; I forgot my coat over there. Then I went back, put this book under my coat and walked out. I was very angry when it was stolen from me by some other student before I'd had a chance to read much of it.

Well, anyway, it was around the end of 1961 when I started thinking more seriously about running away from Portugal. I don't know if it was because of the talks I was having with my cousin, but leaving Portugal began to take on more political meaning for me. So I was thinking about finding a way to escape when my cousins left. "Well," I said

to myself, "I'll just have to try it on my own." I didn't know exactly how, but I began studying the map and discovered that the shortest distance to a safe place was from southern Portugal to Morocco. Of course, I might have tried to cross Spain but my Spanish was very poor and I was sure I would be detected as a stranger and reported. Then, having no passport or other documents, I thought I would just be arrested and sent back to Portugal.

While I was thinking about boats and Morocco, someone at a party happened to mention — just like that, casually — that in the south of Portugal there were people who, for a price, would take you to Morocco. So I started trying to raise money. I got some from my parents, telling them I needed some clothes and other things, but I didn't think it would be enough. I was no longer living at the boarding school; having become nineteen I was allowed to take a room in town. So I had a little room near the school and paid for my meals there. I took this rent money, which I was supposed to pay at the beginning of the month, and used it as a deposit on an expensive radio. I signed a contract, using my father's name and telling them that he would be making the monthly payments. Then I took the radio and sold it. Actually, I only got half of what it cost, even though it was new. It was at a beach town called the Paredo where I had some friends. They introduced me to a boy around my age named José Manuel and we started talking. He was suspicious about my selling this new radio so cheap and said: "So you want to run away from Portugal? O.K. Let's try it together. I don't want to stay here any longer either."

Well, at first I was very suspicious because he just started talking like this, without even knowing me. But he just continued, saying: "Don't worry, I have a plan; I have investigated the ways to go, and there are several other people — mainly workers — who want to go also. So we'll all go together." I thought about it for awhile. If I went south alone, I would have to make arrangements with people I didn't know; I would have to trust them, or somebody, if I was going to try and leave by boat. Finally, the next day, I said: "O.K. José let's do it together. It's a risk, but let's try it."

So we went back to Santarém, I took care of some things at school, prepared and packed some clothes and other things and went alone by train to meet José and the others in Tavira, a small town near the coast in Algarve province. They were supposed to come and meet me in a couple of days, but I waited over a week without any word from José. I finally decided to take a train and go back to Lisbon, where I went directly to José Manuel's house. His mother told me

he wasn't home yet, he was still in school. She invited me to stay for dinner and I agreed. Then she said: "Oh, I know very well what you and José intend to do. I don't want José to do this, but I know I can't stop him — I've tried. But you must be very careful. José is my only son and I don't want to lose him. What I ask you is to promise that you won't let José do anything stupid or dangerous — that you will make him be careful." I nodded agreement, but I was really very confused. I had only known José Manuel a short time, and did not know him well. I only knew that he seemed to know quite a bit about politics, that he lived in a political milieu, and that he and his family had been supporters of Humberto Delgado — whom they said was a great man. But I didn't know how much José Manuel's family knew about our plans or how they felt about his leaving Portugal. So I left and returned by the night train to Tavira.

I had a little room in a building owned by a big tuna fishing company. The caretaker let me stay there for a few escudos and loaned me a small sail boat which also belonged to the company. When I returned it was early morning and I went straight to a little coffee bar near the house. The owner had a message for me from José Manuel. It was just a little note saying where he was staying, with a map he had drawn. I was very happy. It had been ten days, including my visit to Lisbon, and I was beginning to doubt if he would show up at all. I was also beginning to feel a bit uneasy as the local police, the *guarda-fiscal*, and other people were getting curious about me. When they asked what I was doing there, I just told them: "Oh, I'm a student and I came here for the carnival." It was February 1963, and every year during this month the people in this area celebrate their Saint's Day with a big festival.

Well, I went to the place indicated on the map and found José Manuel and another man whose name he said was Antonio. The first thing I said was: "Where are all the others?" "They didn't come," José said. "At the last minute they refused to come — they were afraid, just made excuses."

We had to make new plans because the boat we intended to hire cost 10,000 escudos, whether there was one person going or a dozen. We didn't have that much money between us, so the old plan was impossible. I told them where I was staying and about the boat the caretaker had loaned me. "It has oars and a single sail," I said. "Perhaps we should just take it and go." I remembered a conversation I'd had with an old wood carver in Faro, the capital of Algarve province, and told them about it. "I just saw this old man carving, found it interesting and went over to watch. Then we started talking and — I don't know why — he told me 'Oh, the

situation here in the south is very bad. Plenty of people are running away from Portugal. Some are passing through Spain, but others just take any boat they can get ahold of and go — even little rowboats. Only last week a man took his whole family in one of those tiny boats and set off for Morocco.'"

We discussed it further and given what our situation was, we decided to take the little boat I had borrowed and try to make it to Morocco on our own. We studied the maps for a while, checked our compass, then went over to my room with the things they had brought. A little later there was a knock on my door. It was a couple of policemen from the *guarda-fiscal*. I had been around Tavira for almost two weeks now. I knew there were agents around and that I was probably being watched. But I hadn't had any problems at all, wasn't even questioned by the police. Now, however, they wanted to see our identification cards and papers. I said: "I've been here for a long time. Don't you know me yet?" I said this half joking, as I had seen these policemen many times before and had even drunk wine with them. "Yes," replied the chief, "but we've never asked to see your identification papers before and now we want to see them — and your friends' too." So we gave them our identity cards, which they took saying they would return them after they did a bit of investigating.

When they left we discussed our situation. It was the morning of the first carnival day and that night there would be plenty of celebrating. It was also Sunday, and José said: "Well, they'll hand in our documents tomorrow, then they'll be sent to Lisbon and the PIDE* will come for us. I think it's best if we leave today. In fact, we must leave today or forget about going altogether." We agreed about this and went to town to buy provisions for the trip — some crackers, bread, tinned meat and cheese, some dried fruit and a big open-mouthed jug for drinking water.

Not long after we'd returned and packed-up the things we had bought the chief of the *guarda-fiscal* came by on his bicycle. We were sitting on the front steps of the house quietly discussing our plans. "It's carnival day," he said, "how is it that you are not out enjoying yourselves?" "But you have our documents," I said, "and we didn't think it wise to go to town without documents." He said, "Well, my

*The initials in PIDE stand for the International Police for the Defense of the State — Portugal's Gestapo-trained secret political police. At the end of 1969, the name of PIDE was changed to the General Directorate of Security (DGS).

daughter is having a party — why don't you go there and dance and have some fun?" "O.K., but first let us go and have some wine." Several times before I had met these *guardas-fiscal* at a little shop nearby and invited them for wine. That's why I had an easy-going relationship with them — almost friendly. The chief agreed and we went, joined on the way by two other policemen. We drank wine, ate tins of sardines and talked about the carnival.

After a few hours, at about eight o'clock, the chief said: "O.K. boys, here are your documents. Go along to my daughter's party — but be sure you bring these documents back to me in the morning!" "That's fine," we said. "We'll just go home and put on some clean clothes and then go straight to your daughter's party. But first you must give us the address." He wrote this out and drew a little map.

We hurried back to my room and prepared our things. The house I was staying in was right on the bank of a small river which ran straight through Tavira and then out into the sea. Just opposite the house and a little closer to the sea was the *guarda-fiscal* post. We prepared our things and went down to the river, packing everything as quickly and quietly as we could into this small boat. It was very dark. The moon was not up yet. We had planned to take the boat belonging to the big fishing company. "They've got plenty of money," we said. "They can afford to give us this little boat." But by accident, hurrying in the darkness, we took a similar little boat owned by the old man who had the shop where we usually drank wine. We didn't discover this mistake until morning.

It was around midnight when we pushed off from the riverside. We had to pass very near to the guard post and went close to the bank, slowly, slowly, until we had passed it. Then we rowed all night long, out of the mouth of the river and into the ocean. We kept looking back at the town, always seeing lights and thinking that we were moving very slowly. Finally, just before daybreak, the lights disappeared and we were alone at sea.

The water was very calm during the night and when the moon came up it shone like a huge sheet of glass. We rowed hard. But in the morning the sea began to swell and I became seasick, stretched over the back of the boat throwing up and miserable. Antonio and José Manuel joked and said, "Oh, fine. Like this, how do you expect us to reach Morocco?" You see, we were moving pretty slow by then. Antonio was strong and could really row well. He was twenty-four, the oldest of us, and was married and had a little boy. He had been working in a cork factory in Alentejo province where

there was plenty of unrest and revolutionary tension — which I had become aware of when I passed through on my way to Tavira. I didn't know, of course, if Antonio was leaving Portugal to seek a better life or if he had political intentions. And I never found out. José Manuel was the youngest, only eighteen and a student like me. He didn't know how to row; had never done it before. He really never learned how to row well during the whole trip. I was nineteen and could row almost as good as Antonio. We both tried to teach José Manuel but it was difficult and we were in a hurry that first day. So we said: "Nevermind for now; later you'll learn. We will continue for a time while we're strong and try to get as far away from Portugal as possible."

My seasickness passed during the morning and Antonio and I took turns at the oars. We ate some of the food we'd brought and in the afternoon saw several ships and fishing boats — big ones and little ones — passing us and heading in the other direction toward the coast. It started to get a little windy. The sea became choppy and the rowing more difficult. The little boat had attachments for two oars and we had an extra set of paddles. There was also a sail, which none of us knew how to put up. We tried a little at first, but there was no wind and we decided just to row.

At about six o'clock we ate some more and it started getting dark. The wind continued to get stronger and the ocean was rough. We just kept rowing and talking and before we knew it the wind was blowing furiously and water became very rough, with great swells. It was a storm. The ocean became terrible, the swells growing, growing, growing and our little boat going up, almost vertically, then dropping straight down with a crash. And it continued like this for four days.

We realized now that all the boats we had seen going to shore in the afternoon had been warned of the storm by radio. We had no radio and just kept going straight into the storm. All we could do was try to stay afloat — and we were very, very lucky. The first night of the storm the big jug where we kept fresh water got plenty of saltwater in it. It didn't have a cover, so there was nothing we could do. Even like this, with plenty of salt in it, we continued to drink it for a time, until it became almost pure saltwater. So after ten or twelve hours the water was gone, and the food too. The rain started and soon became very strong. The wind blew big waves right over the boat. We had a plastic bucket and had to continuously bail water out of the boat; and when a wave came in we had to work furiously to keep the little boat from sinking.



On Tuesday we lost one of our oars. Antonio was rowing and a wave crashed into us tearing the oar from his hand. So we had only three oars left. We were getting very tired. Before, on that first night, I rowed for hours — and Antonio rowed almost all day Monday. But after a couple of days in the storm we could only row for a few minutes — maybe five minutes — then we would go to the back of the boat and drop down and start sleeping. Our hands were very sore, almost raw. I couldn't even move my fingers and when it was my turn to row and I grabbed the oars it was extremely painful. After a minute or so you would warm up and forget about it, but when you rested again, even for five minutes, you couldn't move even one finger.

It was very, very painful — but we could not stop rowing. None of us had had an experience like this. Antonio and I had not even rowed in the open ocean and, of



course, never in a storm. But we soon learned that we always had to keep rowing in order to keep the boat facing into the wind — because the waves were coming from that direction and if a big one hit the boat from the side it would capsize and we would be finished. So we kept rowing, with hardly any sleep at all and no food or water, for four straight days.

We all became exhausted and demoralized. I remember José Manuel once — I don't know what day it was — sitting there at the back of the boat, not talking, just staring, staring, staring — like he was in a trance, completely out of it. I think all of us were in a daze and only half-conscious. Once, I think it was on Thursday, I said to Antonio: "I'm thirsty. Let's go to that shop over there and buy a *pirulito*" — it's something like lemonade." He said: "No. Why that shop? Let's go to this one here; it's closer — and we'll order wine." "I don't want to go to that shop," I said. "It's in Spain and I want to go to Morocco." "It's in Portugal," he said. "No. Africa. I can see the palm trees." So it went on like this for hours, talking, talking — and really believing that we were seeing these things.

Another time, at night, a big ship came very, very close. It was my turn to sleep and I woke up suddenly hearing a loud noise and seeing lights going up and down as our boat tossed in the water. Antonio shouted that we would have to row very fast to avoid being hit or capsized by the approaching ship. So Antonio strained at the oars and we all shouted — yelling frantically at the ship to stop, to help us. But it didn't stop and came very close to overturning our boat.

On Friday the sky cleared but the sea was still very rough. I remember it was my turn to rest but Antonio called me saying he was very tired. By that time we'd lost two more oars and couldn't do much more than struggle to keep the little boat going into the swells with our single oar. I don't know how, but we managed to do it quite well for almost a full day. Well, I got up to take the oar from Antonio just as the boat lurched and was hit by a wave. It crossed completely over the boat and knocked me into the water. It wasn't the first time a wave had hit us like this so we didn't panic. Earlier the boat had several times gotten filled with water only three or four inches from the top. We just started bailing furiously with the bucket and our hands. Once Antonio said, as we were bailing, "This is a great sport — but let's face it, we'll never get out of this ocean." José Manuel replied: "Oh, I'm sure one of us will live to tell our story." He was like this — a fatalist. Of course, we were all afraid and practically sure we would die — be drowned in this storm — after the first few

days. We were very tired and hadn't had anything to eat or drink for a long time.

Anyway, this wave hit me, turned me upside down in the air and I fell into the water, slamming my left arm on the rail of the boat. The first thought which crossed my mind was: "Oh, I've broken my arm!" Then I remember feeling that I was going very, very deep. "It's all over now," I thought. "I'm finished." But I looked up and there was the boat; it was there above me, yellow, and I saw the name "Sky" painted on it. I never saw the boat before from the outside. It was dark when we stole it and none of us knew what color it was.

Antonio was really brave. He turned the boat oblique to the wind with the oar trying to stay near me. Then he reached in and grabbed me and I was able to climb over the rail and back into the boat. The first thing I said was: "You know, the sky is yellow." I don't know why, but it seemed funny to me at that moment.

Friday night the water became calm, almost like the night we left. The whole ocean was like a huge sheet of glass. I remember José Manuel saying that first night: "Oh, with the water like this, we should be in Morocco in two days." We had made some calculations of the distance and our speed and figured it would take us between four and five days. Five days later we were lost at sea, not knowing which direction the storm had taken us. Finally, we managed to put up the sail. We used the oar as a rudder and tried to keep the boat going to the south, using our little compass. In fact, we were so exhausted that we all dropped off to sleep and the boat just drifted with the breeze.

When I woke up I remember that José Manuel came over near to me and started talking about his mother. I was very sleepy and couldn't really understand what he was saying. Then I realized that he wasn't talking *about* his mother, but that he believed he was really talking *to* her — that she was there.

Early in the morning, on Saturday, we saw a ship. It was still very far away but seemed to be heading in our direction. We started making signals, waving our shirts and shouting, shouting. The ship stopped. At least it looked to us like it stopped, and we were very happy. But then the ship started again and slowly moved out of sight. It was very demoralizing. We sat there silently for a long time. Then Antonio moved up to the front of the boat and sat between José Manuel and me. He just stared out across the sea and after a time we started talking again — Antonio and me. José Manuel just sat staring; not talking, not moving.

Finally, I asked Antonio to call José, to wake him up, as he was closer to him. Antonio called out his name a few times, then nudged him a little and looked at him closely. "He is dead," he said to me. It was the first time anyone had died near me like this. It was terrible. For some reason Antonio and I became very angry, furious. We shouted — I don't know what — and then Antonio took the pistol José Manuel had brought and started shooting, shooting into the air — I don't know at what. I think we were both very frightened.

Two hours later we saw another ship. Antonio said: "We must stop it! We can't let it escape!" Several times that day we thought we saw the coastline. Now we saw it again. The ship was headed in that direction. I said: "Maybe we've reached Morocco!" But it wasn't Morocco, it was the Spanish coast. We had been taken way off course by the storm and were heading for Baya de Huelga in Spain. Of course we didn't know it yet and Antonio said: "I hope it is Morocco, but if it's Spain we must go ashore anyway. We'll bury José Manuel's body in the sea — we can't leave it for the Spanish. Then we'll try to get some food and other supplies and set out again for Morocco." I agreed with this plan, but neither of us were very confident that we could reach the coast because it was very far away. We suspected it wasn't Morocco, but were confident it wasn't Portugal; our compass had been pointing south for too long.

The ship we had sighted continued to come, as all ships come. First just a dot on the horizon, very far away, then it came closer, closer, until we could see it clearly. It was a very old freighter. We started making signals while it was still far away, long before we could make out what flag it was flying. Before leaving Portugal we had agreed that even if we got lost or into trouble we wouldn't seek help from a Spanish or Portuguese ship — but at this point, any help looked very good. The ship came to within a hundred or so meters and stopped. It had a Spanish flag and we yelled the few Spanish words we knew, like "Ayuda!" (Help!). We slowly approached the side of the ship and when we got close they dropped down a rope ladder. This was the moment when I saw just how weak we really were. Antonio went first and they had to grab him by the arms and pull him up. I thought, "I'll make it up on my own." But as soon as I put my hands on the rope and tried to climb up, I fell back. My fingers were not strong enough to hold the ladder. So they helped both of us onto the deck. "What's wrong with the other one?" someone asked. "He's dead," we replied. They didn't believe us at first, but then some sailors went down to look and covered the body.

They took us inside then used a hoist to lift our little boat, with José Manuel's body still in it, up to the deck. They wrapped us in blankets and put us near the engine room because it was very warm there. The ship doctor or medic came, looked us over and gave us some tablets to take. Then they gave us some brandy, hot chocolate and clear soup.

The ship was heading for Cádiz and arrived just before dark. Even before the ship was in port there were journalists on board. They came to see us and started asking questions — plenty of questions. We said: "Oh, we were visiting in Tavira during our holidays. We were going for a little sail in that small boat. But a storm came, pulled us out to sea and, luckily, we ended up here." They took pictures of us and of our identity papers which they later published with their stories in the newspapers. I think they believed our story.

The Portuguese Consul was called and he came to see us at the port. It was strange. The Consul was German and had a French wife — so we had to carry on our conversation in English. He was kind to us and after our talk he drove us to the San Juan de Dios hospital. We could not walk yet and were both still shaky and dizzy. They put us in a nice room — we learned it was a first class room — with a telephone and told us we could phone and ask for food and anything else we wanted. Both Antonio and I were suffering from exposure — and I was suffering even more from my raw hands. I could not fall asleep and about two o'clock in the morning our door opened and they let in a very big man with a huge moustache and dark blue overcoat. He turned his collar up and said: "*Policia!*" I thought: "So now it begins." He started by asking for our names, addresses, and so on, and then wanted to hear our story. We told him briefly and he went out without saying a word. Two guards, armed with submachine guns, were posted in our room. It was the first time I'd seen machine guns like this.

Earlier that same Sunday they allowed me to send a telegram to my mother. It just said: "I am in Cádiz and I'm O.K." that was all; but I think this telegram was very important. In Portugal a number of people came to learn about our experience in the storm and rescue by the Spanish. Later, many friends and comrades told me I was lucky: "The PIDE would have killed you for sure," they said. "You were fortunate that people on the outside knew of your rescue." So, I think this telegram and the small reports in the Spanish newspapers helped save our lives.

On Tuesday morning José Manuel's family arrived to take

his body home. His mother, father and uncle came to visit us at the hospital. His mother was terribly upset and emotional. She came over to my bed and said: "You see? Do you remember what I told you in Lisbon? Now I have lost my only son." There was nothing I could say. José Manuel's uncle told us quietly: "Listen! You can expect to have serious problems when they let you out of this hospital. Be sure of that! And prepare yourselves. It won't be with the Spanish police, or the regular Portuguese police — it will be with PIDE."

They were asked to leave after about fifteen minutes and at two o'clock some Spanish police came in with another man I thought was also Spanish. They all had the same kind of big moustache and were talking in Spanish. Finally, they had us get dressed and ordered us into a Land Rover outside the hospital. They drove for over an hour to the police headquarters in Algeciras, and after signing some documents, this man I thought was Spanish turned to us and said: "*Vamos embora!*" — "Well, let's go!" in Portuguese. Another Portuguese agent was waiting downstairs and they put us in a Fiat painted green and black like a Portuguese taxi. The man with the moustache was an important inspector and the agent sitting in back with us looked like Aline Ventura, the French actor — short, heavy and with nose broken like a prizefighter's.

At first they didn't talk at all — in fact, the inspector had only said that one thing to us: "*Vamos embora!*" But while we were stopped for gas the inspector said to the agent: "Look, there is the Rock of Gibraltar." I said: "Oh, so this is the Rock of Gibraltar. I've heard a lot of talk about it." They both looked at me curiously. I continued to make small remarks like this and when we passed through Sevilla I said: "This is a very nice city. Look at that architecture!" I think the inspector liked the Gothic style of the buildings because he smiled a bit and said: "Well, maybe one day you will have a chance to visit Sevilla and take a closer look at that beautiful Gothic architecture." So, in this way, little by little, we started talking and I learned that the inspector had been working in Brazil before the PIDE transferred him to Spain.

We drove from Sevilla to the border, crossing at nine o'clock at night — after the border station was officially closed. Then we went to a town just across the border near the coast called Vila Real. I mentioned that we were getting hungry and the inspector said: "O.K., maybe we'll stop at a restaurant" and they both started laughing. Earlier Antonio and I had talked about wanting to eat at a restaurant. They stopped at what looked like a regular house. Inside there

was a table with a typewriter on it and they ordered us to sit on a little office bench. Finally, they brought us some food on paper plates and handed us plastic knives and forks.

We drove straight from Vila Real to Lisbon and stopped at Antonio Maria Cardoza, the headquarters of PIDE. It was only at this moment when I started thinking that our situation was really serious. You know, during most of the trip we were talking with these agents, sometimes almost forgetting they were PIDE. Then, at the headquarters, I asked if I could go to the toilet and they said O.K. When I turned around in the bathroom I noticed a man there, watching me, and I knew our situation was serious.

Well, they took us to a room on the third floor. There were three agents there and one of them said: "Oh, here they are!" Another took a newspaper out of his pocket and they all started looking at it. "Here's this one, and that must be the other." They went on like this, reading a little, then commenting. Finally, I asked: "Can I see it?" "You can't see anything here! Understand?" Then they kept Antonio there and one of them took me to a similar room. It was completely white, bright white, even the floors. There was one table, two chairs, and that was all. The windows were covered with white plastic louvers.

I sat there opposite one of the agents — he was not a very big man — and he started talking to me about the weather. It was just after midnight. The door opened and a man stood there in his pyjamas. He was an inspector and said: "Hey, you there! You can talk about women, football, and so on — but that's all, eh! Nothing serious." Then he made a gesture to the agent and said: "You understand?" The agent replied "O.K." then turned to me and said: "You must not say anything to me about this affair, about your case! Just sit there and we'll chat about anything else you want."

Then, after the inspector left, he said to me: "Oh, you don't know what kind of trouble you've gotten yourself into. Boy, I wouldn't want to be in your shoes," and so on. He continued like this, but didn't ask me any questions about our attempted escape. At four in the morning he was replaced by another agent, much friendlier; he laughed and joked. "Oh, you know," he said, "PIDE is just like me. We are men, human beings. They say we are monsters, horrible monsters who beat and torture people. But we don't do those things at all; you can be sure of that. No! We may ask a few questions, but we never beat or torture. You don't have anything to be afraid of. You can tell me anything, I'm your friend and I understand," and so on. He gave me cigarettes and kept tapping his lighter on the table. I was very sleepy, but

every time I closed my eyes he would tap harder and faster on top of the table and say, almost laughing: "No, no! You mustn't go to sleep. We must finish our talk; we haven't finished yet."

At eight o'clock a *chefe da brigada*, brigade chief, named Antonio Carvalho came in with two agents. He ordered me to take off all my clothes and shoes. They took away the clothes and brought them back a little later — but they kept my belt and shoelaces and all my documents. In the meantime, the *chefe* started talking to me: "Oh, you did a bad thing. You are a good boy, but you've made a serious mistake. Now you are going to tell me everything. There won't be any more complications or difficulties. You just go ahead and tell me everything that happened."

I wasn't really prepared for this. I knew that PIDE beat and tortured prisoners, and at first I was expecting this. Then the first two interrogators just talked and asked a few questions. Well, I decided to tell the *chefe da brigada* the same story I told the Spanish journalists and police. He listened, then said: "No, my boy. That was good enough for the Spaniards, but not for the PIDE. We know the truth already — but we want you to confirm it to show your good intentions, to show that you have a good character. Now, Antonio has told us the whole story. We know you were making arrangements for a French boat to take you to Morocco with some others and that you then stole that small boat you took from the owner of a wineshop in Tavira. Think it over. I'll be back in fifteen minutes and if you don't have your whole story prepared to tell me then...well, you'll see what will happen."

When he returned I told him that I was trying to go to Morocco because I didn't want to live any longer in Portugal. "And who made arrangements for you to take that French boat to Morocco?" he asked. "I don't know," I told him, "José Manuel made the plans and he was the only one who knew about that." "You're lying," he said, signaling to two other agents. They started slapping me, hitting me with their fists and kicking me in the legs. Finally, the *chefe*, this Antonio Carvalho, ordered them to stop. "Now tell me, who were the other men preparing to go with you to Morocco?" "I don't know," I replied. So they started beating me again, and it went on like this — questions, beatings, questions, beatings and so on.

This continued for five days. Every four hours they changed their interrogators. Each one came in very fresh, his hair combed, shaved, with after-shave lotion on, well-dressed, and so on, while I sat there dirty and tired. They

didn't even let me wash my face. And they used all sorts of techniques to keep me awake. One interrogator, as I told you, tapped his lighter on the table. Another kicked his foot against the leg of the table — very hard and loud when I started to fall asleep — and another, his name was Barbados, slapped my face and said: "If you fall asleep I'll break your nose!" Well, it was brutal. They had one method of interrogation for each type of man, each character. Some were soft-spoken and used no violence, others bargained, and others — especially this *chefe da brigada* and an inspector named Saquete, used beatings and torture, like burning cigarettes into the palms of my hands. It wasn't difficult to figure out their method, how they were operating to break me down. They kept me awake for five straight days, used different techniques — soft and hard — of questioning and never let me wash or clean-up. They did feed me breakfast, lunch and dinner, saying that I was fortunate to be eating the same food as the agents were given. In fact, it was not bad — but it was very little. Just enough, I think, to keep me strong for their beatings.

At some point, after a few days — I'm not sure exactly when — I started feeling that these agents were not really very clever. They were just there, doing their job; and at times, even if I didn't exactly feel superior to them, I could see that they were not as strong as they pretended to be. At the same time, I also started to gain some information and knowledge from them about PIDE. You know — how they became agents, how some became agents second class, then first class, *chefe da brigada* and inspector; how many agents were under a *chefe da brigada*, how many *chefes* did an inspector control, and so on. This gave me an idea of what this big PIDE machine was like. Sometimes I wondered why a big machine like this was so concerned about me. "Perhaps," I thought, "it is because there is something important or interesting about my case."

I remembered before, talking with a friend and agreeing that the State could be just like an Al Capone gang, but much bigger — something like the Mafia. And there at PIDE headquarters this impression of the Portuguese State was strengthened. I think, in fact, that these five days of interrogation were very, very important for me. You see, before, I talked about PIDE as being something bad, like the Germans in World War II; but they were not against me, Rui de Pinto, and I was not really fighting against them. Now it was different. I could feel that they were on one side and I was on the other side. They were against me, not just against the Portuguese people who engaged in opposition politics, as I thought before. At that moment I came to realize that these PIDE agents were enemies; they were protectors of the State,

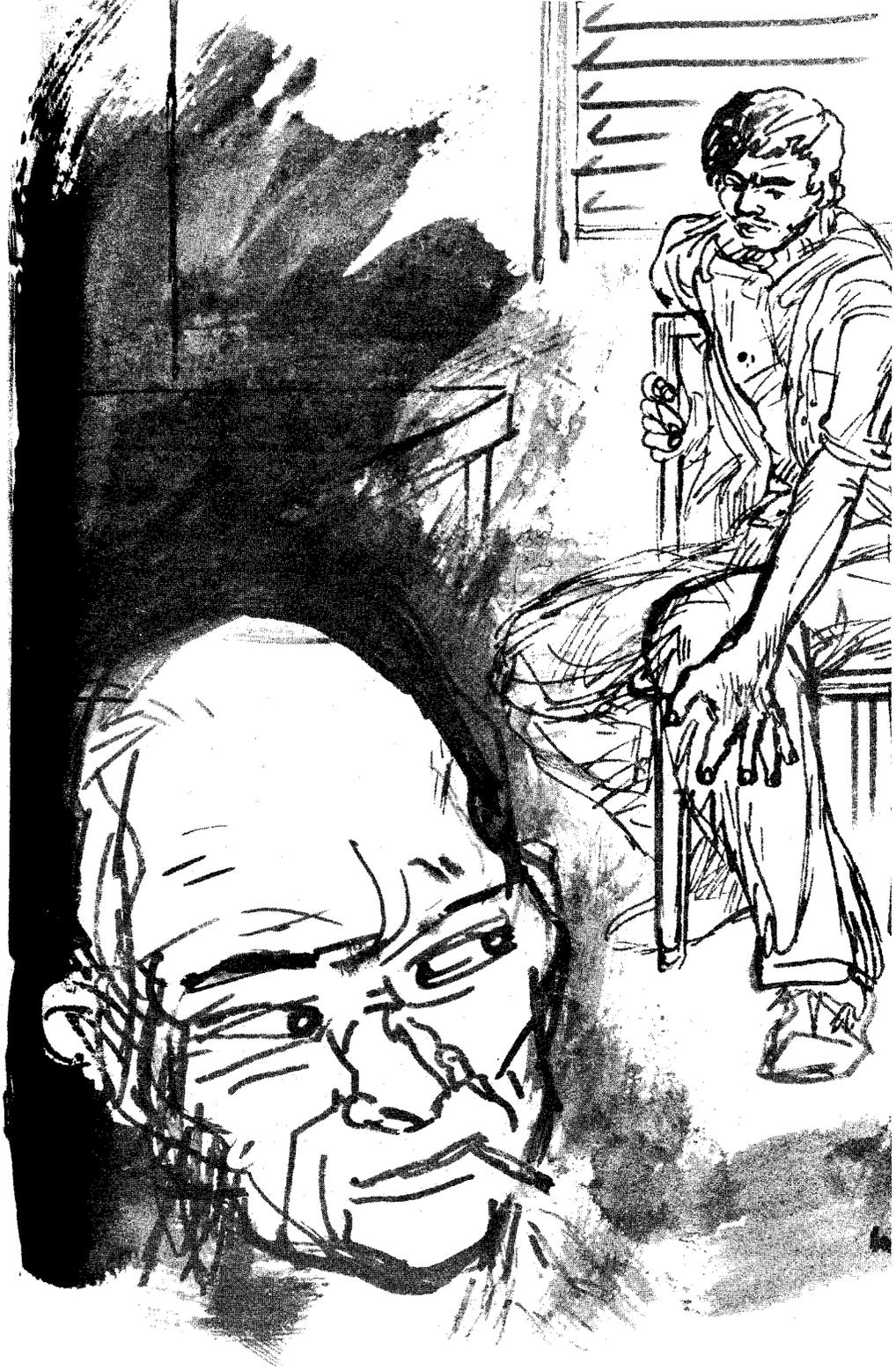
and everything that the fascist Portuguese State implied.

At times I got very angry, especially once when I was being interrogated by Saquete, a very big PIDE inspector. He wasn't too old, but he was completely bald. He was the chief of the PIDE in Coimbra and very well known among the Angolans there. Well, he came and questioned me, beat me and accused me of being a Communist and of planning the whole escape, and so on. I got very angry, lost my head and said: "O.K. you son of a bitch. You can kill me if you want to, but I have nothing to tell you!" They beat me very badly and Saquete said: "Now, little black man, there'll be no more sitting for you tonight." Another agent was called in, a small, soft-spoken man, like a priest, and he didn't let me sit for the rest of the night. This was my fourth day at the PIDE center.

The next night Saquete came again. He said: "Oh, here is our little black man, eh." He started joking with the other agents, then took one of them aside and started whispering. They both went out of the room and a little later the junior agent returned with a cot. "O.K., little man," he said, "you can sleep tonight." But just as I was laying down, Saquete returned and shouted, "Get off that cot! There will be no sleep for you." Barbados, another agent, added: "If you go to sleep you can be sure I will carry out my orders to kill you." Saquete then said: "Make the little bastard stand up all night. I don't want him even to touch the wall, nothing!"

So, it was a very difficult night for me. And it was my last one under interrogation at Antonio Maria Cardoza. The next morning they transferred me to Aljube prison, where I was put into Cell #3. It was the same cell where they had earlier kept the Rev. Pinto de Andrade, Honorary President of the MPLA. They kept me in this little cell for two months, in isolation — no talking, no reading, nothing! And it was very small; I could put my hand on the wall and touch the other with my elbow.

Well, after my five days of interrogation at PIDE headquarters, what I wanted most in the world was to lay down in a bed and sleep. Arriving at Aljube, I didn't even notice what kind of bed was in the cell. I just laid down and slept for a long time — I don't know how long. When I woke up I saw that the bed was a sheet of wood which could be swung up and fastened on the wall. There were two filthy blankets and when I tried to shake them out the whole cell became filled with dust and dirt and I started coughing. So I just had to use the blankets as they were — and I found that they had plenty of lice in them too. There was so little room in the



cell that with the bed down I could not even walk or squat on the floor. I thought that I had to do some physical exercise, not just lay down all the time, so I kept the bed up except at night. They never let me outside. From the time they put me in the cell, at about midnight the first day, they didn't allow me out for two straight weeks — except to go to the toilet.

In isolation there, I had plenty of time to think. And I tried to analyze all the things which had happened: whether it had been good or not to try to escape that way, in such a little boat; about my interrogation; why a country like this needed a PIDE, and many other things. I also tried to find out who else was in the prison, because I could see that warders tried to keep me from finding out, or from having any contact at all with other prisoners. Nevertheless, sometimes I heard them ringing the bell to go to the toilet — you see, every time you wanted to go to the toilet you had to ring this bell and wait. So, I would listen to the bell, then hear a warder open the cell door, and footsteps in the corridor. I didn't know who it was, or what they had done to be put in Aljube, but I felt much closer to these prisoners I couldn't see than to the warders who brought my meals or the people I sometimes heard shouting out on the road. The prison is just opposite a cathedral and sometimes, especially on Sundays, I could listen to the church bells. I thought it was a big contradiction: the bells of Christian charity outside and the hell of this prison.

One morning, after two weeks in the cell, they called me out to take a bath. After, the warden said: "You must dress well!" And he forced me to button the top button of my shirt — and it was difficult because my neck was bigger than the shirt. Well, he forced me anyway and then said: "You have a visitor!" I was very happy. I thought about my family and knew that my mother and father were both in Portugal at this time.

The visitors' room was quite large and divided into two sections separated by a narrow corridor and two rows of iron bars. I was led into one section, my father was in the other and a guard walked up and down in the corridor. "You have fifteen minutes!" he said. It was dark in the room and my father asked: "Are you alone?" after we exchanged greetings. I don't know why, but the guard started insulting my father, saying: "Are you blind blacky? Or just stupid?" and things like that. I was surprised at this and very angry, wanting badly to do something to this guard. Well, there was nothing I could do. I told my father I was O.K., that he shouldn't worry, and so on. Then he told me a few things about the family. With the guard there, walking back and forth and

listening, we finished talking in seven or eight minutes and I was taken back to the cell. The warden told me I could have visitors once a week, on Mondays, for fifteen minutes. But it was always the same thing.

My family was allowed to send me food and cigarettes and in about the third week I started to make a chess set, using bread and chewing gum to make the pieces and weaving strips of a milk carton and tin foil from cigarette packages to make the squares of the board. I knew the rules of chess and had played a little at school. I thought it would be good if I could practice it to pass the time. As I said, there were no books allowed. Once, I even wrote a note to the warden — on the paper they gave us to write letters on — asking if it was possible for me to get some books. He told me to write a letter to the prison director requesting it. So I did, even asking for some art paper and water colors so I could paint. But, of course, he never answered my letter.

The days there in solitary were hard to pass. You had to divide them, and the weeks, into different parts and activities. First thing in the morning, three times a week and before seeing visitors, a barber would come in to shave me. Prisoners couldn't shave themselves. Well, I had no beard at all, but it didn't matter. Sometimes the guard would ask the barber: "Why are you shaving this little black man? He has nothing to cut." The barber would answer: "I don't know. It is the law." Then there were the Monday visits, the mealtimes, practicing chess, exercising, trying to communicate with the other prisoners, and so on.

Once when I went to the toilet I found a little piece of paper, the same kind they let us write letters to our families on, and on it was written, "Happy Easter Comrade," in Portuguese of course, and a small drawing of a peace symbol. I thought: "I'm not alone here, I have comrades." This was in the third week and I think it was then that I started trying to communicate with the other prisoners. One day I heard tapping on the other side of my cell wall and something like a voice, but I couldn't understand it. I remembered that one time — I don't know when — I read in a magazine that to talk through a wall it was good to put a cup against it and talk into it. So I tried it. It didn't work very well, but I could make out a few words and we managed to agree on a simple code. One tap was "A", two taps, "B" and so on, with long pauses to mark the beginning and end of words. It was a very difficult and slow process, but in this way I began communicating with the prisoners next to me in cells number two and four. Sometimes we would spend a whole day just to make one sentence, but we had nothing else to do.

I came to know that in #4 cell was a man who had been a schoolmate of mine, and in cell #5 was another Angolan boy. I started this tapping with the prisoner in cell #4 and only some weeks later did I learn that Antonio was in cell #2. Since that first day at the PIDE headquarters I had lost all contact with Antonio — except when a PIDE interrogator would tell me: "Oh, your friend Antonio has told us everything, why should you be so stubborn?"

Well, it was good to know that Antonio was alive and near me in Aljube. We continued communicating through the wall. It was difficult — sometimes we would lose a word and have to start all over again — and we had to be careful. If they caught us it would mean a week or two in the punishment cell. These were small cells near the bathrooms made completely out of tiles. I was never put in one, but I passed them on the way to the toilet and heard about them later from other prisoners. There were no windows in the punishment cells and being so close to the bathrooms they became very humid. The sun never shined in there and it was always dark. Even in cells like mine there were no windows, but I could feel the warmth and know when the sun was shining on my door. And when they opened the small window on the door I could even catch a glimpse of the Tejo and Sorraio rivers which merged near the prison. But those in the punishment cells never knew if it was day or night. Whenever I passed by I could hear them inside coughing, coughing — always coughing. It was terrible.

Well, after two months I was released from Aljube prison. They put me in a car with Antonio and three other Portuguese prisoners, who were joking and laughing. It seemed funny to me and I thought that they must have been through this experience several times before. Antonio looked heavier and well and when he saw me he said: "Hey, Rui, how is it that you have become so fat?" You see, both of us had been sent a lot of food by our families and without getting much exercise we had gained a lot of weight since our capture.

At first I thought we were going to be released, but they drove through Lisbon and on to Caxias Prison. They put us in a big room — it was no longer a cell — called a "*sala de transferencia*" or transfer room. There was a big window with bars and looking out I could see guards walking back and forth just outside and also on a ledge some distance away. You see, Caxias was built into the side of a mountain — it was something like a long cave. The mountain itself was the roof. Well, there was only one prisoner, a Mozambican, in the room when we arrived and they put in additional beds for us.

Generally it was better at Caxias than at Aljube. Mainly because there were other people so you could talk and so on, and also because the sun came into the room through the big barred window. I never realized before or expected that the sun could be so important. Once they brought in a man who was almost completely blue, and wrinkled like he was soaked in water for a long time. He came from deep within the prison — in the dungeons. I knew him from Aljube where he worked for PIDE as a common laborer, washing down the cells and corridors. They accused him of being a Communist Party member and beat him very badly during fourteen days of interrogation.

Right away on our first day in Caxias the Mozambican in our room started talking to us and asking questions. He said: "Oh, you are the boys who tried to escape from Portugal in that little boat. I read about you in the newspapers. It was a strange case, you must tell me about it," and so on. Well, we didn't answer his questions at first because everybody knew that the PIDE sometimes put agents in with the prisoners to gain information. It took several days before we decided that the Mozambican — his name was Afonso, was all right. He knew a lot about politics and economics and taught me something over the next weeks about political-economy, about capitalism, socialism and communism. We talked a lot.

There were other prisoners including two communists, arrested for distributing subversive literature and other propaganda. I learned a good deal from these political activists. There was also a man from the Azores who had been working as a professor at a Canadian university and an old newspaper vender. Both said they had been arrested by mistake, that they had done nothing to offend the Portuguese government or police. And there were others, some left while I was still there, and some I left behind when I was released.

At first I didn't hear anything from my family and later I learned that when I was transferred to Caxias the PIDE said nothing about it to my parents. When they came to bring me food the officer in charge just said: "Oh, he's not here anymore" — just this. And when my mother asked: "But where did you take him?" he replied sharply: "We don't know! He is not here, and that's all there is to it!" I don't know why they did this; perhaps just to make my mother suffer.

In Caxias I found a very old set of checkers. It was funny. They were made out of bread the way I made my chess pieces. But they were so hard, like stones, you could throw them against the wall and they wouldn't break. I thought they must have been made by another prisoner in a situation

similar to mine.

I was finally released from Caxias Prison on 24 May 1963 — just a couple of days before my twentieth birthday. They took me to the PIDE headquarters to sign a final statement. There had been no further interrogations at Aljube or Caxias. The statement said something about my escape attempt and plans to join the MPLA in Morocco. The PIDE agent said: "Oh, another communist, eh?" "No," I said, "I just didn't want to live anymore in Portugal." They kept me waiting there the whole day, with Antonio, and finally the old *chefe da brigada*, Antonio Carvalho, said: "O.K., you can leave now. But you'd better watch your step because you can return here, you know. And I can guarantee that it will be much, much worse for you if there is a next time."

So we left. Antonio went his way and I visited my family. Of course, my parents were very happy to see me free and well. They were crying and very emotional. I stayed with them for a couple of weeks before my father left again for Angola. My mother had to remain in Portugal for more medical treatment and we took an apartment in Lisbon. I lost a year at school, missing more than three months when I was in prison, so I just stayed there in Lisbon with my mother. My sister had gotten married some time earlier and went back to Angola with her husband.



4 The Long March

Lisbon was the same town, but for me everything seemed different, changed. Of course, I still didn't have a clear conception of what I wanted to do with my life, but I think I was on a different political level than before. And I knew one very important thing: that it was possible to resist — in many ways — even a big machine like the PIDE. My experiences in prison had taught me many things, really, and I think I had a much better understanding of political reality when I got out.

Soon after I went home I met a student, a girl, who told me that while I was in prison some Portuguese students were collecting signatures on a petition asking that Antonio and I be released. I also learned that on T.V. and the radio and in the newspapers, they had talked quite a bit about our case. Of course, they presented me as the big criminal in the story. I was Angolan, you see, while Antonio and José Manuel were Portuguese. So they said I had planned the escape and organized it, taking the two Portuguese with me because I was a "terrorist" and so on. Prague radio also talked about the case and told a story much closer to the truth.

Well, after all these stories about me, plenty of my old friends and schoolmates abandoned me. I don't know why. Perhaps they were afraid of the PIDE. After I tried to contact them a few times and failed — they were busy, or out or sick — I began to understand and said to myself: "Old friends, eh? Well, if any of you still want to be my friends, you'll have to call me!" So I stopped trying to contact them and began to make new friends — mainly just by accident and with people who were not so afraid of the PIDE. Some I just met on the bus or train. We started talking and when I told them I had been in prison they asked "Why?" and when I told them they might say "Oh, I heard about that." So, like that, I made some new friends. Several of them were students, study-

ing in Lisbon. We were not very close; they had their own political problems and interests. But I was much closer to them in some ways than I had been with my old friends. They at least had the courage to be my friends and I could trust them much more.

The PIDE was watching me during this period and several times I saw men just standing around my apartment — especially when I had visitors and, even more, if they happened to be Angolans. And when I used the phone I was sure it was tapped because after I dialed a number I would hear this "click, click, click" which was not there before.

Well, one of my friends, Ramon, I met in a very funny way. Once I went to the movies with two girls and afterwards we went to this coffee bar. There was a man at the door and as we went in he said something insulting to the girls and one of them was very upset. I turned and said something insulting to him like "You stupid jerk!" and then we continued inside. He was dressed like what the Portuguese call a "*rufia*", with tight trousers and a short coat with very large shoulders. *Rufias* are considered very low and inferior in Portuguese society — men who like to fight, engage in petty crime and make money from prostitutes as pimps and so on.

After we sat down a waiter came over and said that the man wanted to see me at his table. So I went over and he said something like, "There you were, coming in with those two girls and just because I said something to them you insulted me, called me a 'stupid jerk'. I work twelve hours a day and get very little for it — not even enough to buy coffee for girls like that. But you wouldn't know about that — you've probably never had to work at all." Well, what he said really shocked me and I would have liked to talk with him, but he continued saying, "Anyway, you've insulted me so we must fight. Do you see that garden? I'll wait for you there."

I agreed, saying that if he was insulted we should settle the matter alone, face to face. So I went out to the garden, but instead of fighting we began talking again and he told me his story, something about his life. He worked as a mechanic and came to Lisbon a few years earlier from a poor peasant family. I told him some things about myself and we soon became friends. Later, I learned that he was a Communist. He brought me the underground Party newspaper to read and we exchanged impressions about the fighting in Angola. It was funny because at first I didn't think he was a serious person, because of the way he was dressed, and before going to prison it would not have been possible for me to be-

come friends with a man like this.

Well, in every way my life became more serious during this period. I think my values had changed quite a bit. Still, I was not sure exactly what to do. I knew I was for the revolution in Angola, and that I had to do something about it. But exactly what, I didn't know. I was sympathetic to the MPLA, but I didn't know much about the organization and hadn't even read the Constitution or other statements about their objectives and procedures. Nevertheless, I felt it was necessary for me to do something, to engage my life in something concrete and important, with a purpose. Not like before, when I wanted only to be "free". Now I thought, "Free from what? To do what?"

After a time my mother returned to Angola and I spent the rest of the school year in Lisbon. Usually, when I woke up in the morning, I would go to a very small coffee bar where I could sit and write. I stayed there for hours, thinking and writing, trying to analyze my life in Angola and then as a student in Portugal. Sometimes I went to museums and, in general, I started doing more quiet things alone, like visiting some of the old chateaus. I would just take a drawing book, go there, walk around and make sketches; things I never had the patience to do before. And I think that this practice of drawing and writing on my own, imposing on myself a discipline of study, was a good thing for me. I had tried to do it before, but never very seriously. Now I was quite serious. I bought a very good book on anatomy, for example, and studied it by myself. Then I went to the park, sat there, and started observing people and trying to draw them in various positions and motions: sitting, walking, standing, etc. At the same time, I was studying from this book, copying drawings from it and trying to learn and understand the movements of the muscles, limbs, and so on. I also drew pictures of old monuments and nice scenes; it was good, something I could never do before. And with my writing, it was the same thing. I could do it with the feeling that I was really doing something creative, even if it was not important for other people. It was working in a disciplined way, creating something new. Sometimes, to get practice writing, I went for a walk, observing the people, things and events on my way, then returning to the coffee bar, ordering a cup of coffee and writing about what I'd seen and thought about. At first, of course, it went very slowly, but after a time I started getting better at writing down my impressions and thoughts.

Well, my life continued like this until the beginning of the school year when I decided to enrol again in agricul-

tural school. This time, not in Santarém but in Évora, about seventy-five miles east and south of Lisbon. Évora is the capital of Alentejo, the southeast province of Portugal, and the agricultural school there was even more reactionary than the one in Santarém. But all around the school the people were much more revolutionary — potentially revolutionary — because they suffered under much worse conditions. A peasant woman earned only twelve escudos* a day working, as they called it "sol a sol" — from sun-up till sun-down. A man earned eighteen escudos working the same hours. Going up on the mountain — it was a small mountain in a region which was very flat — all the land you could see except for the school property belonged to one man, Alberto Rosada. He had thousands of peasants working for him and I met many of them who said that the best thing that could happen in the world was a revolution to kill this Rosada. While I was in Lisbon, and even when I was still in prison, there were very big strikes in Alentejo. It was the first time that agricultural laborers ever stopped work in this province. Around the agricultural school one man tried to go to work with his tractor and some of the other workers beat him so badly that he had to go to the hospital.

One of the strike organizers was a shoemaker who generally repaired the student's boots. We became friends and sometimes, when I had nothing to do, I went to his shoeshop and we sat there talking. It was funny because he had fifteen big cartridges for a shotgun — he sometimes went hunting ducks and birds — but he said about them, "Oh, these big ones I cannot touch. They just stay there in the sun waiting for the big day." And plenty of people around Évora felt like this — workers and peasants. It created something like a revolutionary climate and it was not difficult to feel that it would explode at any time. But, unfortunately, it still hasn't.

Anyway, this political climate led me to think that revolution was possible — not only in Portugal, but everywhere. At the school I continued my studies but I also did a lot of drawing and writing, as I did in Lisbon. It was a calm period for me and I thought very seriously about everything — about the things I did and about my studies as well. I became even more sure than before that Portugal, whether I was studying or not, was just a place for me to pass through. I felt that I had to continue my life somewhere else, not just stay there in Portugal. My studies weren't really important to me; it was just a way to pass time while I found

*An escudo is the Portuguese equivalent of \$.034 in U. S. currency.

a way to escape.

The situation grew worse because I was called to take my physical for army service and told that I would have to join as soon as I was out of school. Finally, in early March 1964, I again left school and tried to escape. This time I went with my Mozambican friend, Afonso, and a Portuguese architecture student. Again we decided to escape by boat from Algarve. We set out from the coast at night but as soon as we launched the boat and got in a big wave hit us and capsized the boat. We lost our shoes, food and other supplies. Just at dawn some peasants saw us and we went over to them. Afonso started to speak to them, explaining everything; how we prepared our trip and were trying to leave Portugal. Finally, he said: "Now, you can do what you want. If you want to report us to the Guarda Republica, go ahead. And if you want to help us, well, just give us a place to stay until we solve our problems."

They talked about it among themselves and then decided to give us a place to stay. We remained there for a week, preparing another effort to escape. The peasants gave us food and said nothing. Finally, on a Sunday night exactly a week after our first attempt, we tried again. This time we got beyond the breakers without any trouble and were already some distance from the coast when we saw two Portuguese patrol boats with their search lights shining across the water. They were also flashing signals and we decided it would be foolish to continue that night. The next morning we learned that the patrol boats were sending all ships back to shore as a storm was coming up. It started that afternoon, with heavy rain and wind and the waves crashing on the shore.

Afonso went into the town and found a taxi driver we met when we first arrived. He borrowed some money and phoned a friend in Lisbon who cabled us enough money for train fare back to Lisbon and some cheap shoes. We returned to Lisbon depressed with our failures. Afonso and our Portuguese friend got jobs doing architectural drawing. I remained in Lisbon doing nothing in particular because once again I lost my school year.

A few weeks later I received a post card with a picture of two members of the Guarda Civil — the Spanish Civil guard — and just above these men was written: "There you are, two living examples of human stupidity." It was from San Sebastián in the north of Spain and signed "Raoul". I didn't know any Raoul, but it came just as my friend Afonso was crossing the border into France. My Portuguese friend had a passport so he arranged to leave Portugal to "visit"

relatives in France. I didn't have a passport, of course, so I had to try another way.

I had a friend, an ex-schoolmate named Caetano — like the present dictator of Portugal — who was drafted into the army and deserted. He hid in my apartment for several months and when I got my notice to report to the army we both decided to try and escape. We took a map, a compass and some money and left, just like that, with no luggage and wearing everyday clothes so that no one would think we were travelling. We took a train to the south, near the border, and then hiked across into Spain. We took buses and planned to avoid spending our nights in the towns, except for Madrid, which was a very large city. We went there and checked into a small hotel, wanting to rest and planning to leave the next day. Our room had a hot bath and just after we'd cleaned up and were getting dressed two men arrived. "Where are your passports?" they asked. "Oh, we left them in our big suitcase," I replied, "and we were just getting ready to go back to San Vicente to get it." San Vicente is a small town near Madrid. "Well," they said, "you don't have to go back for it today. Just so you have your passport by tomorrow afternoon."

When they left we decided not to spend even the rest of the day in Madrid. We got our few things together quickly and caught the train for Barcelona. So far we had faced only a few small problems and were worried a couple of times when the Spanish police asked us questions. But the most difficult part of our journey was in crossing the border from Spain into France, because we had to cross over the Pyrenees on foot. As I said, we only had our normal clothing and we suffered very much because of the awful cold in the mountains. It took us three painful days to cross the Pyrenees and at times I'm very surprised that we were able to do it at all, with only a little food, a compass and no one to guide us.

In any event, we managed to limp into Céret — a small town in France just across the Spanish border. We were very happy. We walked right in front of the police station, almost hoping that they would stop us and ask to see our identification papers. But they didn't. So we went to the post office and sent a telegram back to Lisbon saying that we were O.K. and had arrived safely in France. Then we took the small amount of money we had left and bought bus tickets to Perpignan. We thought it would be the easiest way to go by hitchhiking to Paris. But it was very difficult to get a ride and for hours we stood on the road and not even a single car stopped. Finally, I suggested that we just go to the police station in Perpignan and say: "We are deserters from

the Portuguese army and have just arrived from across the border." We discussed it and decided to try, thinking that the French police wouldn't arrest us and might give us some help.

We found a policeman and explained our situation to him. He said: "You should take a streetcar and go explain your case to the officer-in-charge at the prefecture." So we went, but when we got there they told us: "You'll have to come back on Monday. It's Saturday afternoon and this office is closed till Monday morning." We replied, "But you see, we have just arrived and do not even have one franc in our pockets." Actually, we had something like three or four francs each. "If you can't help us, at least arrest us so we can have a place to sleep and something to eat until Monday." "O.K., O.K." they said. "Why don't you go to the Red Cross and stay there until we open the station again."

We found this very funny because in Portugal we were always running away from the police, and in Spain it was the same; then arriving in France we go to the police and say "Arrest us" and they refuse. Well, arriving at the Red Cross office, we found it was also closed. But just then, we noticed a big church across the street and said: "There are priests in there to help people, so they must do something for us." One of the priests, in fact, had just left the church so we went up to him and explained our situation. He gave us the address of the Catholic Aid Society and told us to go there. So we went and they gave us a place to sleep, postage stamps so we could write home and some food tickets so we could eat at a local restaurant. They also promised to help find us jobs.

Early Sunday morning the director of this Catholic Aid Society took us to see a man named de Silva who he said usually found jobs for new Portuguese immigrants. What he actually did was take these people, arrange for them to get permits to work in France and then hire them out to work for the municipality. He did this for a percentage of their salaries. The municipality would give him something like four francs an hour for his workers and he would pay them about three francs an hour. He said we would be doing work like digging ditches for some new cables they were putting in and similar jobs. We agreed because we needed a job to get work permits.

The next day we went to an open area where workers gathered to be sent out to their jobs. De Silva started by interrogating us: "Why have you come here?" What kind of jobs have you had? What kind of work can you do?" and so on. The great majority of these immigrant workers were Spanish and Portuguese refugees — mostly illiterate workers and

peasants. We were the only students and de Silva was not at all happy about it. "Oh, I'm always ready to help Portuguese workers, but..." "I'm not Portuguese," I interrupted, "I'm Angolan." He looked at me strangely, saying: "Oh, so you're the type who comes here to make politics, eh?" Then, when we asked him how much money he intended to pay us, he became furious. "I've been giving Portuguese jobs for years without any trouble or complaints. Now you come and start asking questions about wages! Next thing you know, you'll be causing trouble among the workers. No, I don't need to employ any students. Just go away and leave me alone!"

He had already given us fifty francs to have our pictures taken and our documents prepared so we offered to work two days in order to pay this money back. But he was still angry and yelled at us just to get out and leave his workers alone. Well, we had money to eat for several days and when it was gone we got temporary jobs helping to prepare the fairgrounds. There was an art school in Perpignan and during the first week I decided to try to get enrolled and complete my work for a diploma by studying at night. The head of Catholic Aid talked to the director of the school about my case and I started taking some classes at night. They also decided to try and get me a job doing something artistic. So in about a week both Caetano and I got jobs working in a ceramics factory. I was put to work making small sculptures and Caetano did something else.

I worked like this for about two months. Then I had a conflict with the foreman. At first they told me I could make anything I wanted, but after a while this foreman insisted that I make only religious pieces. I refused and kept making the kind of things I liked, so finally he fired me. Caetano stayed and I soon got another job making art restorations at the Musée Rigo. This museum was far away from the ceramics factory and I got a place to live near it in a boarding house. Caetano continued living in a place near the factory.

This was an important period for me. For one thing, I was alone and learning — really for the first time — what it was like to work and support myself without any help. The pay was even less than at the factory and I had to be very, very careful with the little money I got in order to pay for my room and food and sometimes buy cigarettes. At times, on a Sunday, I had enough money left to go to a movie. Well, I was proud to be working and supporting myself, because I knew that before, as a student in Portugal, I would not have been able to live on so little money. Now I was imposing on myself a strict discipline. I didn't just go out drinking or see a pretty girl and invite her to the movies or make a

nice party. I saved every franc I could and after two and a half months of working at the museum I was able to buy a train ticket for Paris. So, after almost five months in Perpignan, in March 1965, I arrived in Paris.

I had written Afonso, my Mozambican friend, and he met me at the train station. It was good to see each other again and we discussed what we had each done since he left Lisbon. As we were walking down the street that first day in Paris, we ran into a friend of ours from Guiné, Pedro, who I had met a few times while he was studying in Lisbon. He told us that he had joined the PAIGC (Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde) and agreed to take me to meet the MPLA representative in Paris. It was late in the afternoon, but we went anyway and Pedro introduced me to Comrade Pires. We only talked a couple of minutes but he invited me to come back and see him the next morning.

So we met the next day, talked, had lunch together and finally Comrade Pires asked me if I was serious. "Do you really intend to become a militant of the MPLA?" he asked. "Yes, I think so," I replied. "But I need a little more time to think about it in order to make up my mind firmly." "Good," he said, "You should take as much time as you need because it is a very serious decision." Then we continued talking and he explained some more to me about the MPLA's history and structure.

Later that week I met two other Angolans, one was the fiancée of Pedro and the other was a militant named Irene Cohen — who later died at the hands of Holden Roberto's men in Kinkuzu prison in Congo-Kinshasa (now Zaire). They told me about another Angolan they'd met some time earlier who said he had become the representative of UPA (União das Populações de Angola) in France. His name was Fortunato. I asked them to introduce me to him and, after I'd phoned and made an appointment, we met and talked in a little coffee bar. I asked him to tell me about the UPA and to show me their constitution and other statements. He explained a bit, but — it was funny — he seemed offended when I asked again to see UPA's statements. "What do you mean, statements?" he asked. "They are only for our militants to see." "But how do you expect me to become an UPA militant without seeing a statement of its objectives and structure and procedures, and so on?" "That's the way things are," he said. "You must just believe what I tell you."

I left Fortunato thinking that UPA was not really very serious at all. Then I met Comrade Pires again, told him about my meeting with the UPA man — saying I wanted to know about it before I made up my mind — and said I was ready to

become a member of the MPLA. "Fine," he said. "You should try to find work immediately and, in time, MPLA will decide about you." He then asked if I intended to study in Paris, go somewhere else, or what. I told him that at the moment I preferred to complete my studies. You see, I was still thinking I wanted to become an artist. He said it was possible that I might get a bursary from the MPLA, but I must wait; and in the meantime I should get a job and not just hang around.

The MPLA comrades helped find me a room in Paris — which is very difficult — and I began looking for work. But finding a job in Paris was not easy and after a few days I started working on my own, making and selling ceramics in street cafes and squares — especially in the Place de Perdre. I managed to earn enough money to pay my rent and other expenses and I improved my French and learned something about Paris. About a month later one of the MPLA comrades found me a job in the Musée de L'Homme doing art restorations. It was a very nice job and I also had an opportunity to study. Working with old art objects, I thought it would be interesting and useful to study some anthropology and sociology; and it was easy because they had many courses right there in the museum.

So I started in my new job and classes and things went well. I was not doing much politically, of course, though I did meet often and talk with the MPLA comrades. I also met many other people and after a few months I started seeing a French girl named Danielle. We became quite close and started living together in the summer — July, I think.

Then in September our representative called me and said: "There is a comrade here who would like to meet you." So I took off work at the museum and went to his house right away. There I met Comrade Chipenda. We started talking and he said: "You know, we opened the Third Region in eastern Angola a few months ago and our struggle has seen a great expansion since then. We have had many successes and already have achieved a large semi-liberated area in the east. Of course, we also have many new problems and a need for more cadres. I know you have requested a bursary to continue your studies, and it is for you to decide. You can continue working and studying here and wait for your bursary or you can go for training and return to Angola to fight — perhaps later returning to complete your studies. What do you think?"

"I prefer to go and fight," I said. "Very good," he said. "I will see to it that you get a plane ticket as soon as we can make all the arrangements." So we parted and soon after I quit my job and classes at the museum and started

preparing to go. But it was not that easy. There were many delays and soon Paris began to be for me like Lisbon was: a place to wait, to pass through on my way to something more important. Comrade Pires became very ill and died a few months after my talk with Comrade Chipenda, so my contact with the Movement became even more irregular. I wrote many letters to the Steering Committee asking about my ticket to leave for Africa; sometimes I put up comrades who had escaped from Portugal, and did some other little things — but without a representative in Paris there was not much political activity I could do.

I had several jobs during this period and used my time to study and read all of the MPLA documents and publications. I was already a member of the MPLA and I became even more sure that I had made the right choice. I had many friends at this time and one, an Italian artist — a very good one, too — always used to ask me why I preferred to return to Africa and fight rather than remain in Paris. Often, when I was doing ceramics again in the Place de Perdre, we would go to the coffee bars and talk. "How can you return to Angola," he would ask, "before first realizing yourself as an artist? You are in Paris, the art center of the world. And you must take advantage of it; use your time here to study and practice," and so on.

These were serious questions and I had thought about them a great deal. I don't know exactly when or how, but during this period my ideas on this matter became much clearer. "You see," I would tell my friend, "I intend first to be free." "But how can you be free there?" he would ask. "You are going to fight. You are going to be in an army with strict rules and regulations. And you will have to do what other people order you to do. So how can you be free." I could only say, "Well, you can be free even with all these things — rules, regulations, orders and so forth — if you choose the way yourself." I don't know if someone told me this, or if I read it somewhere, but at some point I came to really believe it. I was sure I could be free as a member of MPLA — that it had to be like this — and I was determined to go to Angola and fight. It was more important to me to become free than to become a "big" man, an important artist. And that is the principal reason I chose to go and fight in Angola instead of continuing with my studies.

Living with Danielle for over a year also caused a change in my personality. Before, I could never have lived such a long time with the same girl, but our relationship was serious. We made many plans for the future, but there was always the same problem: I felt I had to go and fight to liberate Angola from the Portuguese. Of course, she wanted

to come with me, to help in any way she could, but it was just not possible at that time.

So in Paris I waited for my ticket to return to Africa. To buy a car, or a television set — even if I could afford them — were not important to me; and neither were clothes or other things one might want to buy or have. After a short time making ceramics I got a job working for a few antique dealers — merchants who sold very old furniture and things. I found some of this work very funny. Sometimes they would have me take a 19th Century table or chair and have me make it look much older than this. Of course, then they could sell it as an antique. But mainly I worked at restoring the antique furniture they bought. I made good money at this work until the day I finally got my ticket.

Part 3



5 Joining the MPLA

In September 1966 the MPLA President, Agostinho Neto, came to Paris and I had a chance to talk with him. I explained my situation and how I had been waiting a very long time to return to Angola with the MPLA. He listened and told me he would send me a ticket as soon as possible. About two weeks later my ticket arrived. My parents had just come to Paris for fifteen days to visit me and it was a very bad moment. I was sure I was going to Angola to fight, yet I had to tell them: "O.K., I'll write to you often and maybe next year you can come again," and so on. It gave me a bad feeling to lie like this, but it was the only thing I could do. You see, my mother intended to come to Paris for medical treatment and wanted to stay with me. I had to say "all right, of course," but I was lying since I couldn't say I was going back to Angola to fight.

Well, one night soon after my parents left, on 14 October, I took a plane for Brazzaville, the capital of the People's Republic of Congo. We landed in the morning and I went directly to the MPLA office. There were some comrades there and we sat and talked about several aspects of the struggle until Comrade Iko Carreira, a *responsável* or leader attached to the office, arrived and I reported to him. We had met once before in Paris. He greeted me and arranged for my quarters. "Now you must just stay here and wait for a while. We'll soon see what will be happening with you."

So I waited in Brazzaville for six days and then boarded a plane with a group of ninety comrades who had also been waiting to go for training. We landed in Havana and I spent the next seven months undergoing a very intensive military training in Cuba. It was interesting and I learned many things — because it was the first time I had done any military training. We had uniforms, military rules and regulations, various courses and so on. It was not as difficult as

*petty-bourgeois "personal" freedom vs
proletarian discipline + freedom.*

I had thought it might be — you know I worried a bit before that it might be very, very difficult for me — and I thought that the ideas I developed about freedom were certainly correct. I knew that three or four years earlier I would never have been able to accept all the rules and regulations because of my views at that time about "personal" freedom. But now, all this discipline seemed very natural. I even found that I liked it, because I had chosen my own way and all this training was helping me to achieve the goals that I thought were important. We had to do exercises, walk and run long distances, and so on, but I felt very healthy and strong. Of course, like the others, I sometimes got very tired; but anyway it felt good, because we all knew that it was necessary to be physically fit and trained like this if we were to return to Angola and help the people.

I think that politically, also, I continued to develop along the same lines as before and achieve a higher consciousness. Even if I didn't take a political course, I am sure that I developed a stronger basis for my political ideas. And, of course, seeing what the Cubans were able to do in their country was a great inspiration to all of us.

In June 1967 we returned to Brazzaville. We went to a camp where we met many other comrades who had also gone abroad for military training. We were all preparing for an important mission. You know, the First Region, which is in the forested area north of Luanda around Nambuagongo, was badly in need of reinforcements. Our fighters there had been isolated from the border or any kind of external help since 1963 by the Kinshasa government, which expelled the MPLA in that year and gave its support to Holden Roberto. UPA also had captured and imprisoned a number of MPLA militants who were trying to make their way into Angola to fight. There were several stories we heard about MPLA columns being ambushed and attacked by UPA forces near the Angolan border, and sometimes even inside Angola itself. But we were determined to try again and most of the comrades in our column had originally come from the First Region. They were very young, strong and well-trained, so we were sure they would be good fighters and be a great help in our struggle.

A short time after arriving in Brazzaville our column of over two hundred guerrillas was formed and I was appointed as a political commissar in one of the units. It was a good job for me because I had to really learn the things I was teaching and be very conscientious and serious about it. Doing this work, I came to feel stronger about the importance of teaching our comrades — not only about politics, but everything, even reading and writing, because most of them

were illiterate when they came into the MPLA. Seeing how interested they were in learning, in knowing everything about the MPLA and about what was going on in the world, I became very determined to teach them everything I could. We would listen to the radio, discuss things we heard and I would try and explain what it meant. Of course, we had formal classes too and everyone continued to train and practice militarily.

Self-discipline

This period was important for me also because I was working close to the other comrades as a *responsavel* and developed a much deeper understanding of discipline, of the need for discipline. Earlier, as I said, I was not disciplined at all — not a bit. Then I came to understand it intellectually, to talk about it and even to practice it. But during these preparations for our mission I could really feel — and I think the others did too — that to be disciplined like this, accepting our rules, feeling the need for these rules, in order to become free, to liberate our people, was much more important than to be personally free, to just go and do what you wanted, to be concerned only with yourself. In my work with the comrades I tried to explain this need for discipline and I think it was much easier when I tried to make them feel the same way — that is, not to impose discipline on them from the outside, but to make them feel and understand the need for this discipline. For example, near our camp there was a small shop and bar. We didn't forbid the comrades to go there, but none of them ever went. There was no rule against it. We didn't say, "If anyone goes to this bar they will be punished." No. We just explained to them, saying: "You know we are here for very important reasons, and with a very serious purpose, and it is not good for us at this time to go to bars, to drink and so on. People who live here can go; it is their country and they are already free and can do what they want. But we must do our work and have no time for this sort of thing. Almost the whole day we are busy with our training, and at night we must read, study, listen to the radio and discuss things. This is our way of living now, so we really don't have time to think about going to bars, drinking or playing about."

During these discussions I think everybody came to understand that going to a bar was not as important as discussing political matters and doing other work necessary to the revolution. Even in the camp, it was very rare when someone would say, "Oh, I'm not feeling so good today and I don't think I can do my work." Sometimes, of course, people were really sick, but no one made excuses to avoid work, because it was stupid to do this. Everybody knew we were working for ourselves, to liberate ourselves and our people, and if we didn't do it, nobody would. So we had no real problems with work or morale. When someone got sick, we had our own medical assistant there to treat them. He was also training

others who worked with him and after a few months we had five aides - not as good as the first, of course, but able to treat minor cases.

During the training I felt that everyone was doing as well as they could -- and this was the important thing. We spent plenty of time telling the comrades: "You might be good today, but in a few weeks you won't be good anymore unless you become better. Because to be good is to continue getting better." I think everybody understood this and always tried to improve. Not only with weapons and tactics, but also in their comportment as militants and human beings. Note

Though I had an easy life in Paris, living with Danielle and used to satisfaction with women, I didn't find the MPLA discipline regarding women very difficult to adjust to. I didn't really feel the need for a "wife" as I had in Paris with Danielle. Of course, it was possible for our militants to get married, with the permission of the Steering Committee, but we were not allowed to just go about with girls, especially other MPLA comrades. I think that for all of us the most important thing was to understand the need for these rules. If we were not strict and careful in these matters it was clear to everybody that our discipline, work and unity in the camp would be affected.

Before going to Cuba for training there had been a number of women in our camp. They were also receiving military training and left in another column for the First Region before we returned to Brazzaville. So our MPLA women trained just like the men and they were, and are, treated with respect as comrades. This made it easier to understand and respect our regulations about sex and marriage. Practicing criticism and self-criticism also helped the comrades to appreciate the need for discipline, and especially for self-discipline. Though we didn't have any serious problems in this camp, we met several times a week for discussion and criticism. We talked about our training, our courses and studies and so on, and anyone who didn't practice well or do their studies would say: "Well, I think I was a bit lazy today, but I will try much harder tomorrow." Then some of the others might comment and make some constructive suggestions. 

Finally, the day came when everything was prepared for us to go. Five comrades went ahead separately in two trucks with our weapons and other supplies. There was one woman among them (she later went with me to the Third Region) who had been doing clandestine work in the area. We were to meet them in Songololo and make our way the remaining fourteen kilometers to Angola by foot. As political commissar, I was

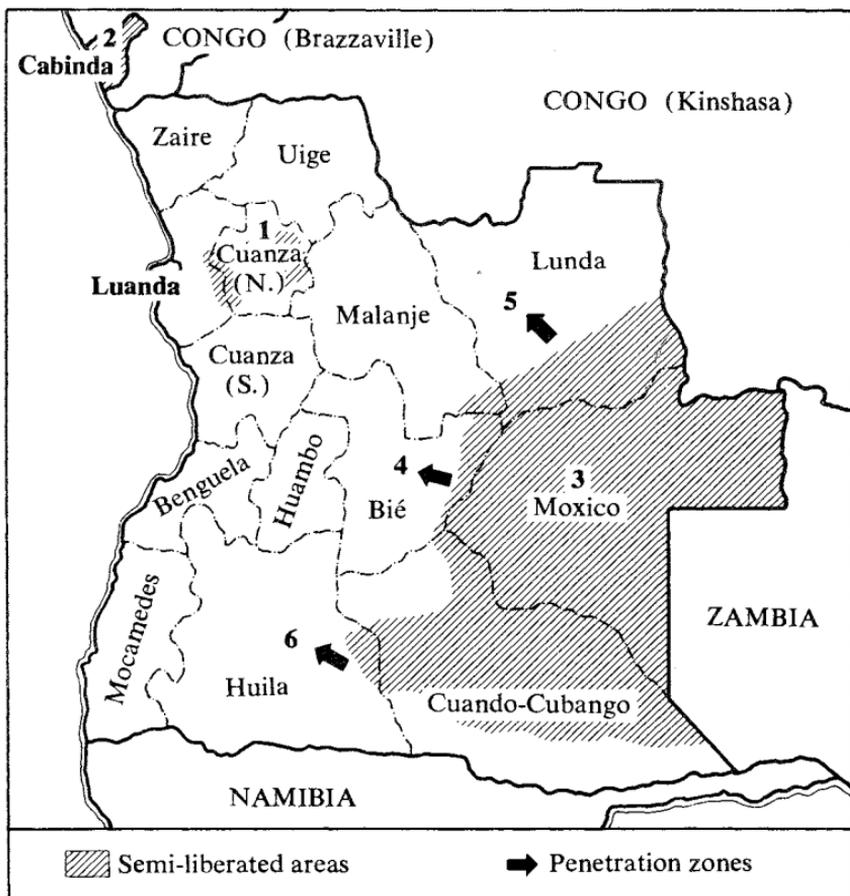
second in command of our unit. We were 220 altogether in the column. Of course, the Congolese knew nothing about our mission and we crossed the Congo river to Kinshasa by ferry in small groups and wearing just normal clothes as workers and so on. Everything went well and we all managed to board the train for Songololo without any problems. Then, at the station before Songololo, one of the five comrades who had just come from there boarded the train and told us that they had encountered serious problems. Just outside Songololo, as they were preparing to enter the village a group of UPA comandos arrived by truck. They jumped out with their rifles, running toward our comrades and shouting for them to give up their weapons and surrender. When the leader of our detachment refused, the UPA men started shooting. None of our comrades was hit and in the combat that followed, three UPA men were killed. They withdrew but a short time later a unit of twenty Congolese soldiers arrived. Remaining some distance away, they shouted: "You must leave your weapons and come out with your hands raised!"

The *chefe* of our unit replied: "No. We are soldiers. You can come and discuss things. Bring your weapons and we will keep ours. You have our word that we will not open fire first." But the Congolese soldiers kept insisting that our comrades surrender and started advancing and shouting, "Surrender! Surrender!" Just as our *chefe* threatened to open fire if they advanced any further a senior Congolese officer arrived and agreed to discuss things peacefully.

The message our comrades brought us from Songololo was "Do not resist." We had discussed this possibility before and everyone understood that, while it was all right to fight against UPA forces if they tried to stop us from going to Angola, it would have been incorrect to start fighting against the Congolese. It was their country and we were passing through and, besides, we did not want to have any serious problems with the Congolese government.

Of course, like the others, I was very disappointed. From the train window we could already see some mountains in Angola. Everybody was very excited and happy and I remember saying, just before our comrade brought the bad news, "Look! There is Angola. We should be there by tonight!"

Well, when we arrived in Songololo station there was a detachment of Congolese soldiers there waiting for us. We could see that they were very nervous and frightened as there were very few of them and we were over two hundred. It would not have been very difficult for us to neutralize them. Nevertheless, we surrendered and they started escorting us down the road to Songololo village. On the way, one



of our comrades became very sick from the heat. The soldiers put him in a taxi, but the driver was an UPA man. He picked up a few friends and they started beating our comrade very badly. Finally, they drove him to the small hospital in the town and just as we approached it we heard a shot. Later they told us that the UPA man had shouted: "You killed three of our comrades, so now you must die!" And they shot him, just like that.

We also learned that the comrades who had surrendered earlier to the Congolese soldiers were beaten and kicked badly. At first, the officer told them just to stay there, that they wouldn't be arrested until we had received orders from the government. But when he left, the soldiers started beating them. In fact, the woman comrade — who was the wife

of our column commander — was kicked so badly that she still suffers from stomach pains.

When we reached their military base, they left us guarded for a time in the open compound. It was a dangerous situation for us, because a Congolese sergeant — I think he must have been drunk or drugged with marijuana — started waving his sub-machine gun at us and shouting: "I'm going to kill all of you bastards!" He fired a few shots in our direction, but luckily an officer arrived and stopped him. He came up to with a few others, apologized and then asked us to give them our weapons. So those of us who had pistols or knives handed them over. We were then led into a few small rooms and the doors were locked from the outside. It was extremely crowded with forty or fifty people in each room. You could sit down on the floor, but there wasn't even room enough to move your foot. It was here that we met the four other comrades who had been beaten on the road.

During the night we stayed like this and it was even worse when some soldiers came by and started laughing and burning *pili pili* (hot peppers) near our windows. They did it just to make us suffer and it was really terrible; our eyes were burning and watering and everybody was coughing badly.

In the morning they started interrogating us, wanting to know about our mission and who our leaders were, the commander, unit chiefs and so on. We only introduced our political commissars, because we suspected that they might turn us over to UPA, which would be especially interested in our military commanders and *chefes*. We were all dressed the same, so there was no way for them to find out who our leaders were unless we told them. After taking down what we told them, they said they were contacting Kinshasa about us and would soon know what our fate was to be. They also must have requested specialized troops to help guard us, because at midnight on the second day there arrived several truckloads of para-commandos.

There were plenty of threats on our lives from the soldiers and their families on the base, and these were directed especially toward me and the one other mestizo in our column. They said things like: "There are the two white men. They must be the leaders. Let's kill them!" And it continued like this after we were transferred to an open prison in Thysville. There were plenty of families and young kids around who believed the UPA propaganda about MPLA being led by whites and mestizos. So they made a lot of threats about killing us.

There were some soldiers around, but we were not locked

in at night or guarded closely. They just told us to be careful and not try to run away; because if one of us escaped, it would be very dangerous for the rest of us. So the political commissar of our whole column called us together, told us we would continue to conduct ourselves in a disciplined revolutionary way and assigned various tasks to the different detachments. We tried to live as normally as possible in the prison. In the morning we did physical exercises, some would go to buy food, others would cook, and so on. My task was going to buy our food at a shop in the town, accompanied by a sergeant and one other soldier.

Even though we were prepared for anything that might happen, all of us were disappointed. You know, we had trained and worked hard to accomplish our mission in Angola and now we were just sitting in a Congolese prison. Once when we were listening to the radio in Thysville, we heard that mercenaries were attacking Kisangani and had occupied the airport. We talked about it and asked our commander to see if the Congolese authorities would allow us to go and fight the mercenaries. We felt that mercenaries anywhere in Africa were our enemies. But the Congolese refused.

So we just spent out time in this open prison doing the best we could to keep fit, to continue learning and to maintain discipline. A few times I was taken into their store and could see our weapons there. We were being held and watched but were not yet officially under arrest. They said: "We don't know if our government will let you continue your journey to Angola, or whether you'll be returned to Brazzaville." But, though the threats decreased, all of us felt that at any time we might just be lined up and shot. And it was really possible.

Anyway, the soldiers and their families came to us, asking for chocolates, medicines and other things. And as a matter of fact, our medical assistant spent most of his time treating the Congolese. After a while many of them, even the junior officers, would say: "Well, I think I am changing my mind about you. It's a pity our government thinks badly of you, because we have seen that you are really soldiers, with very good discipline and well organized. We see these things and, really, it's a shame, because we also see these UPA men around here, not fighting or doing anything."

After eighteen days in Thysville we were again taken to the train station. This time they took us to camp Konkolo, near Kinshasa. It was really a prison, not like a base as it was in Thysville. We continued as before, doing physical exercises, dividing the jobs we had to do and distributing the food we received equally. On the fourth day an officer

came and told us: "We are returning you to Brazzaville. Your arms and other supplies will be sent to you later." So, that afternoon, they put us in trucks, drove to the port and sent us across the river to Brazzaville. Like the other comrades, I was happy to be free again, but a bit sad that we had failed in our mission to reach Angola and join the fight there in the First Region.

Everyone was glad to see us and after a short time we returned to the camp and started training again. Many more comrades had arrived while we were gone and one of our tasks was to train them. We also continued to try and increase our consciousness and understanding as revolutionaries and to help all the illiterates learn to read and write. You see, when we went to Cuba there were only five or six comrades in our whole group who knew how to read and write. But by the time we were ready to begin a new mission, after our capture by the Congolese, everybody in our original group had learned to read and write — some better than others, of course.

In developing our consciousness, the practice of *auto-crítica* — criticism and self-criticism — was important. It was very, very good because you could see that when you made a mistake, everyone could feel it and benefit from the criticism. Of course, it was difficult — and it is really difficult for everybody — the first time, when you had to say that you were wrong, that you were not careful enough, and so on. But afterwards, when you see that all the other comrades do the same and that it is constructive, for a good purpose...well, then it is not so difficult. It becomes a normal part of your life and makes you feel much, much closer to your comrades.

Most of the criticisms, of course, were about our practical work — if someone felt he was not doing his job well, he would criticize himself and ask for criticism from the other comrades. This usually happened in the smaller units about three times a week; not on a regular basis, on fixed days, but as it became necessary. If a problem came up in a small unit, it would be discussed first at that level with the *chefe do grupo*. Then, if it was an important matter, it would be brought up by the political commissar and discussed in the larger group at a meeting. As I was a political commissar in a section of the Bomboko column, I conducted many meetings like this. I would start by talking about the importance of our work, the importance of what we were trying to do, and what we had done over the past week or so. Then I would ask the comrades if they really thought they had done their best in our work; you know, in their military training, their studies, duties around the camps, compartment,

and so on.

Sometimes, for example, people didn't really understand how important it was for us to take good care of our equipment and supplies. The new recruits who came, and even many older members, could easily begin to take things for granted. They came, didn't have to work in order to buy their uniforms, weapons, equipment, and so on, or earn money for their food. So they would be careless, spoiling things, failing to maintain equipment in good order, and so forth — failing to realize how difficult it was for the Movement to get the necessary materials for our struggle or to replace things which were ruined. So I had to explain our situation many times and we spent long hours discussing the importance of solving this problem; the need for everyone to take good care of all Movement property, just as they would care for their personal property, because it belonged to our people and was necessary to maintain — even a simple blanket or tent — if we intended to liberate our country.

I think that most of the comrades came to understand and really appreciate the importance of the problem. I remember one time when a comrade in my section came up to me and said he had lost the telescope cover for his rifle. I think it was the first time anyone admitted something like this, that they had lost something before it was even discovered missing. He said he had tried very hard to find it, but without any success. Well, during our next criticism that same day, this comrade said: "I lost my telescope cover and, really, I feel very bad and guilty about it. I looked hard to find it, but failed."

As this was the first time someone made a self-criticism like this, the other comrades were surprised, because it was really such a small thing. Some said: "Oh, it's not very important. You shouldn't feel bad. A gun can continue to shoot without this little cover; and anyway, anyone can make it, it's just a small piece of cloth." But this comrade went on to explain just how he had lost it, how he had spent a long time looking for it during his lunch time, and so forth. Then another comrade said: "I think that now it's all right. The comrade lost it, did his best to find it and now has criticised himself. It is not a very important thing; we can continue using the weapon without the telescope lens cover."

Well, we continued this discussion for some time and finally someone said: "If they make a protective cover for this telescope lens, then it is because the lens must be protected. When you march with your rifle like this, without the lens cover, the lens will get dusty or sandy and

scratched. And if you spoil the lens, the weapon will not work as well as it did with a good lens. Even if you are a very good marksman, you won't be able to do your job as well if your lens is no good. So losing the lens cover was important — it was a real loss to us."

The discussion went on like this for a very long time and, really, it was much more important than the lost telescope cover because it entailed many other problems which we had not yet had an opportunity to discuss. And I think everybody understood the importance of this as well as the importance of losing such a little thing, because after the meeting everyone went to help this comrade look for the telescope cover. And they found it.

Criticisms like this helped everyone to develop more self-discipline; and this was necessary because there were always difficulties and problems coming up and it would not have been possible to solve these only with external discipline. For example, we were allowed to leave the camp for several hours on Sundays — just to walk around and so on. It sometimes happened that a comrade returned a bit late. But no one would go up to him and say: "You are late. Why?" No, it was not necessary. The comrade would come forward himself and say, "I am late" and explain his reasons. If it was necessary to have a criticism, they didn't have to wait for the *chefe* or political commissar. Any of the comrades could criticize him. And, of course, when you criticize someone else's bad practice, it becomes difficult for you to make the same mistake. So I think this method of criticism and self-criticism was, and is, very important for developing the right kind of discipline.

Though I was criticized several times, I remember one case very clearly. We had a food problem in the base and I proposed to the command that I go and hunt for game in order to provide at least our column with some fresh meat. They agreed and gave me one week to go and try — to see if there was any game around the camp. I went with three comrades to an area where some local people said there were animals. We hunted for almost a whole week and managed to kill only a big snake and one other small animal. Then we met some people who said: "Oh, over there (pointing to the west, away from the base) you will find many very big animals." So I sent a letter to the command saying: "Here there are no animals, but I would like to propose that I go to another area where I have learned there is plenty of game." Our messenger brought back a note from the command agreeing to give me one more week.

So we set off to the west, but the place we went to was

very far away and it was difficult to return in a week. We kept hunting and hunting, without having much success, and instead of returning to the base in two weeks we stayed away for a total of twenty-three days. Everybody was worried about us. Of course, they didn't know what could have happened to us. Arriving back at the base, our political commissar called me in and said what I did was not right. I should have sent a message explaining what we intended to do, where we were planning to go, because it was very far. We walked about three hundred kilometers in seventeen days; and even then the only animals we shot were a few monkeys. There were some hippopotamuses, but we would have had to wait a long time to shoot one. As it was, we spent almost a week waiting near the water, with millions of mosquitos all around.

Well, later I went to a meeting of our unit and one of the comrades started by saying: "Well, comrade commissar, you made a mistake. Now you must explain things to us." So I told them what happened and, of course, I had to make a self-criticism. "I know that I should not have allowed this to happen," I said. "From the very beginning I let my pride drive me on. I left the camp to go and bring back meat, so I felt that I just could not return empty handed. That is why I stayed away so long. But I should have known that it was more important to let my comrades know where I was going than to bring back meat."

Then they made some more criticisms, saying mainly that it was not good for a political commissar to leave his section like I did for such a long time, because problems could come up and there was no other *responsável* there to do my job of leading the discussions. The *chefe* of our unit had recently been transferred to another position, so they said: "You knew that the *chefe* was gone and that you had a big responsibility to be here and deal with the problems that come up. We understand your reasons for going away and staying so long, but they are not good enough."

I think this criticism was very important for me. It made me realize that my petty bourgeois pride and individualism, even when they were part of a determined effort to serve the people, could be very dangerous — could make me forget more important responsibilities and act in an undisciplined way.

6 Part of the Struggle

We stayed at our base near Brazzaville until 14 April 1968. Then some sections were sent to the Second Region, in Cabinda, and the majority of us were flown to Dar es Salaam, in Tanzania, on our way to the Third Region. Everyone was very happy, because we were at last going to have an opportunity to fight. In the office of our representation in Dar, however, I was told that I had been transferred to the DIP, our Department of Information and Propaganda, and would be working permanently in the Third Region. I was not pleased to hear this, of course; I had trained a long time with the Bomboko column and my particular detachment. They were only on a temporary assignment to the Third Region and I was sad at the thought of being separated from them. Mostly, I think, I was unhappy about being transferred out of a combat unit, because this is where I had my training and was what I wanted to do.

Well, after two weeks in Dar es Salaam, we went by truck to Zambia and then to the border of Angola in the Eastern Region. It was a very hard trip because we didn't have enough trucks — only three, which made two or three trips each — and forty or fifty comrades were crowded into each vehicle. Altogether, it was a trip of about two thousand kilometers over roads which in many places were extremely bad.

From the border we entered Zone "A" on foot. The first part of our journey was very, very difficult — because nobody who was unfamiliar with this region could be prepared for it. The terrain was very different from what we were used to — sandy, sometimes a foot deep, and requiring a lot of extra effort to walk in. We also took plenty of things in our packs and they were terribly heavy. I remember that to cover the first part of our trip, from the border to the camp

of our first detachment, it took some thirteen hours: we left at three o'clock in the morning and didn't arrive till four in the afternoon. Later, I could do that trip in two and a half hours. Of course, we were a very large column and in addition one comrade got sick, so we had to stop and wait, and another comrade had a bad knee so we had to rest fairly often — making the trip seem very long.

Crossing the border into Angola was a very emotional moment for me. I had left Luanda in 1958, over ten years earlier, and now I was finally returning. I don't remember what I was thinking — just that I had very strong feelings about being back in Angola again.

From the detachment camp we went on to Mandume II, the Zone "A" base camp which, at that time, also contained the regional *posto de commande* or command post. Of course, a command post or P.C. is not an advanced base, a place to fight. During my first week, however, as I was beginning to learn a few things about my job with the DIP, I got a chance to go for a combat with the Portuguese. It was my first chance but, unfortunately, it never materialized.

This is what happened: I was returning with a few comrades from the fields where cassava, millet and some garden crops were cultivated by us for use at the base. There were two rivers separating the fields and the base, which were quite a long distance apart. It took about eight hours to go there, collect some food and return to the base. Well, we had just crossed the river nearest the base when some villagers ran toward us saying: "Oh, there is a big column of Portuguese heading this way along the Siqueira road!" They were very excited.

We had a detachment stationed to watch for and control enemy movements along this road but, nevertheless, we hurried back to the base and told Commander Monimambu what the villagers had said. He immediately called all the guerrillas together, explained the situation and chose about twenty to go set an ambush to stop the Portuguese. The rest of the guerrillas would remain to protect the base. I volunteered to go even though I was a bit tired and my stomach was not right — changing to a diet of mainly cassava, which I had never eaten before, gave me a very, very bad diarrhea and made me feel weak. But it didn't matter; I could feel that a fight was coming and I wanted to go very badly. You know, when you spend such a long time training and waiting for such a moment, you are very anxious to go. At first, Monimambu said I'd better remain at the base, but seeing how enthusiastic I was, he finally said O.K.

In addition to our weapons, which we always carried with us, we took some extra grenades and ammunition. We left the base at about six, just before dark, and I stayed at the end of the column because my diarrhea forced me to stop so many times. I was upset because the others would have to stop and wait for me quite often. Well, we moved ahead carefully as we didn't know yet exactly where the Portuguese were. Crossing the two rivers we went to one of our detachments — not the one which controlled the road, but another one which was responsible for a different strategic position. Arriving there after a five or six hour march, we tried to get more precise information about the situation. But only a few comrades were in the camp, the rest having gone out to try and stop the Portuguese. They too had heard that the Portuguese were coming and went to reinforce the detachment near the road.

We left after a very short rest, walking along the Portuguese road toward the other detachment. It was more or less safe to walk along the road, even if the Portuguese would be coming on it, because there were other comrades ahead of us. When we approached the camp of our detachment, we moved very carefully. If the Portuguese had come this far, they would have attacked the detachment and, since they hadn't come any further, they still might be there, stopping for a rest. So we advanced to surprise and attack them if they were there. But there were no Portuguese, and our comrades were gone also. Though we didn't know it at the time, they also learned from villagers that the Portuguese were coming and had gone to set an ambush.

We left the camp and Monimambu decided to set up an ambush along the road. When I had thought about this situation before, about entering my first combat, I imagined it would be a very different emotional experience. But it wasn't. It was just the same as I felt during similar training exercises. There is not much time to think; you know what you have to do and you do it.

I was carrying a heavy machine gun, which I got at the first detachment where we stopped. It had a tripod and I set it up, somewhat camouflaged under a tree which had fallen across the road. I lay there, right in the middle of the road, thinking only about being in a good position to attack the Portuguese when they came. It was a mistake, because I would have had an extremely difficult time moving with that heavy machine gun to a different position when the Portuguese advanced. After a short time, Monimambu came by and said: "Rui! Don't stay there. It's too dangerous." So I changed my position and started waiting for the Portuguese. I thought I would be nervous, but I wasn't.

We waited all day, without sleeping or eating, till

about four in the afternoon, when a messenger arrived and we learned it was just a false alarm. Someone had dropped a bullet into a fire somewhere, by accident, and when nearby villagers heard it they simply assumed it was the Portuguese. You see, it doesn't take very much to cause a false alarm. One says, "Oh, it might be the Portuguese." Another says: "It's the Portuguese!" Then: "There are plenty of Portuguese!" And, finally, someone says: "They are coming!"

So, a bit relieved but also disappointed, we returned to the base. I stayed there for a total of twenty days, making a report for the DIP and learning some other things. One day after the false alarm, I escorted two Italian photographers to Mandume II — Stefano and Agusta — and I stayed with them during their visit. I was no longer a political commissar and had felt bad when I was transferred from my detachment to the DIP. But once I was in Angola, I found it was all right; because everybody inside is a soldier — always carrying his gun and being prepared to fight.

After leaving Mandume II with the two photographers and a detachment of guerrillas, we visited several camps, they took many pictures — including moving pictures — and we finally arrived at Mandume III. The Italian comrades soon returned to the border and I remained at Mandume III — really beginning to learn and do work for the DIP — from early July until the end of October, 1968. Besides writing and illustrating some pamphlets and other small publications, we also produced a small internal paper for our zone. It was not very big, since we lacked the equipment, paper and other supplies to produce anything very large or fancy. But it was important to make a beginning somewhere, so we used our Roneo duplicating machine, typewriter, stencils, ink and so forth to produce a small newspaper for the local people and detachments in Zone "A". We typed it in the two main local languages — Chokwe and Luvale — as well as in Portuguese. Though very few people in this area were literate, there was usually someone in every *kimbo* or village who was able to read the paper out loud to the others.

I also started collecting information for the DIP to use outside, wrote a few articles, prepared some things for our radio broadcasts and made a few trips to the border to deliver these things to the DIP comrades there.

Mandume III was the P.C. for Zone "A" and also contained a SAM (Medical Assistance Services) clinic and the largest CIR (Center for Revolutionary Instruction) in the Eastern Region. In addition to my primary work for the DIP, I also helped out at the CIR — taking over classes when a teacher was sick, giving military instruction to the students and



teaching Portuguese to some UNTA (National Union of Angolan Workers) comrades who were raised mainly in Kinshasa and spoke only French.

I found that giving military instruction here was not as easy as when we were at the training base. Inside Angola there were always the additional problems and tasks involved in living a guerrilla life. It was necessary, for example, for everybody to work, even though they were in training. Students at the CIR, those studying to become medical aides at the SAM school, as well as the teachers, guerrillas and others, had to go to our fields and help with the cultivation. Or sometimes we had to go and collect meat — because we had a very good hunter and killed plenty of animals, especially hippos. Often we had to go very far to collect this

meat and I remember once when the journey was so far that much of the meat spoiled before we could get it back to the base. Hippo meat, by the way, is quite good for eating and we used the fat — which was like pork fat — to fry other things.

A few times I went hunting also and once I went with a small reconnaissance unit to study the activities of a Portuguese engineering team which was building a new barracks near the town of Lumbala. This was at a time when the Portuguese first started using military helicopters in Zone "A". They had just bombed Mandume II and used helicopters to strafe and drop incendiary grenades. This attack failed and our comrades were not driven off the base.

Sometimes I discussed agricultural problems with the

UNTA comrades, who were responsible for developing cooperatives of "people's plantations" among the villagers and experimenting with and introducing new crops. It was funny. In Portugal they gave a class in tropical agriculture only at the very end of the course. So even though I went for over three years to agricultural school, I didn't complete my last year and knew absolutely nothing about Angolan crops such as cassava, millet, coffee and so forth — though I knew plenty about the cultivation of grapes and other Portuguese crops.

My training in art was more useful. I used it first to illustrate a military text for the CIR. I remember that I was worried because it had been a very long time since I'd done any drawing and I thought I might have lost my skill. But it came back very easily. Later, I even started making some pottery out of local clay for use around the base.

At Mandume III we had a lot of contact with the nearby villagers. They came to see us at the base quite often — sometimes when it wasn't necessary, just to visit, and of course also to bring food and information and to get treatment at the SAM clinic. They were always friendly and very serious about discussing the many problems of war and ways to advance our struggle. I remember talking once to the chairman of the action committee from Lucata village. He said he had been thinking about making a weapons factory in the village. They knew how to work with iron and he asked why the Movement didn't send in some steel pipes because with this material they could make weapons. "They are very old and primitive," he said, "but they will be good enough to help us fight the Portuguese." Like this, the people were always thinking that they had to fight also — not just the guerrillas. Of course, this was the general MPLA idea — to form a popular militia — but it was good to hear it from the people themselves, to see them trying to take the initiative. Now, of course, the villagers are much better armed and organized into militias than they were at that time.

Sometimes we went to visit the people in their *kimbos*, and they always received us very well. At first, the question of hospitality was very important and they brought eggs, chickens and other things for us; later we discussed it and they stopped, because if they continued it wouldn't be too long before we finished off all their chickens. But the people are always very generous and kind. Once, two weeks passed without my visiting a certain village, so they came bringing me food — cassava or *bompo*, as they call it — and also some honey, because they knew I liked it.

At the beginning, when I first arrived in this area, the people didn't know me and they called me the "White Man".

Then I would say to them: "I'm not white; I could be, but I'm not." Many times they asked, "Do you eat *njima*? Do you eat this? Do you eat that?" And so forth. I just said, "Yes, of course, why not?" So, after a while they started treating me just like any of the other comrades.

Once I went with another member of the DIP, a comrade named Ginapu — who was also a mestizo — to hunt near a *kimbo* close to the Luena river. It was not very far from our base. At first, the chairman of the action committee was a bit concerned or anxious. He asked us if we would be able to sleep on the ground, because they had just shifted their village down to the river — so that they could fish — and they had not built huts or beds there. He also asked if we could eat the food they had. We told him, "Yes, of course," and later he explained that the road passed close to their village and the Portuguese officials — when they came to collect taxes, workers for the road, and so on — would demand all kinds of comforts and bring special foods with them. We said that it was quite different with us and, after a long discussion, he was very happy. "These men", he said to the villagers, "are really Angolans like us; they are guerrillas." Then the people treated us very well. I think this situation happened because we were the first mestizos in the MPLA to work in that part of the Third Region. Now I think all our people know that the MPLA has militants of various colors — and there are no problems at all.

Well, I continued working like this at Mandume III until our base was attacked by the Portuguese. It was a very big attack. I remember that I was in my hut near the CIR, repairing a weapon and talking with some other comrades about the bombings in Vietnam. It was almost noon when the first plane — I think it was a reconnaissance plane — came over. It passed very low, then turned and circled the base — so we were sure an attack was coming. In the P.C., which was close to the CIR, our comrades opened fire just as another enemy plane came over and dropped the first bomb. It fell and exploded, destroying the SAM clinic. Then other bombs fell, mainly in the area of the CIR. For a time, it seemed like the whole Portuguese attack was directed against the CIR. We don't know how they knew about the location of the base — but it was probably because they had been informed by a traitor and had made a long reconnaissance.

Well, once the bombing started we began firing our rifles and machine guns. The bombers went a bit higher. Soon there were seven bombers and four helicopters in the air over the base. They increased their altitude, stopped bombing and seemed just to be waiting. Then, a minute or so later, they were joined by more Portuguese planes...there were now eleven bombers and nine helicopters. And they started bombing and strafing the base again.

The base commander was Comrade Paganini, but the regional commander, Toka, was there as well as Comrade Gatu, the commander of the Bomboko column. Our orders were to stay at the base and resist the attack. Of course, we would try to get the children from the CIR and the women medical aides to a safe place. There were plenty of kids at the CIR and we were fortunate that during this attack only one pioneer was killed in the bombing. We had many trenches dug in the base and though many bombs dropped very close, no one in the trenches was injured.

Well, at the beginning of the attack, as I said, I was in my hut near the CIR. I prepared my rucksack, picked up the weapon I had been repairing and left the hut soon after the first bomb had fallen. Just then a pioneer came up with his little brother and asked me to take care of him as he could not. I took the brother and handed the pioneer my rucksack, asking him to hide it in a safe place. At that same instant, some bombs fell very near. The ground we were laying on shook and I felt a bomb fragment passing through my hair. "Must find a place with better protection! Can't fight with this little boy on my hands!" were the thoughts running through my head. So I picked up the child and ran as fast as I could to an anti-aircraft tunnel not far away. Inside, I found some women and asked them to care for the little boy. Then I went to the entrance of the tunnel and started firing at the Portuguese planes. The helicopters were passing so low that I could see the faces of the people inside. I aimed at them with my rifle — a semi-automatic — but don't know if I hit anyone. Soon, all my ammunition was finished. There was nobody else firing from the CIR, so the helicopters and planes came in even lower and started dropping grenades and strafing. Fortunately, a comrade from the P.C. came up to the tunnel just before I ran out of ammunition. "Is everything all right?" he asked. "Yes," I said, "but I have only six bullets left." "Oh, I saw plenty of bullets over at the P.C." he said, as he turned and ran back toward the command post. I yelled at him to stop because the Portuguese were dropping plenty of bombs along his way to prevent comrades from the P.C. coming to protect the CIR. But he was very, very brave and in a few minutes he returned with plenty of ammunition.

Both of us started firing and the helicopters had to increase their altitude a bit. It wasn't too long before the base commander, Comrade Paganini, arrived and asked: "Has anyone been sent to guard the approach to the base from Lucusse/Lumbala road?" "I don't think so," I replied. "Here at the CIR there were very few weapons — and the two machine guns we had weren't working; I think their springs were bad." "I think we'd better go there," he said, "as it will soon be



dark. The planes will leave, but the *Tugas* might bring troops in by truck along the road and send them to the base on foot."

So we first went into the tunnel and asked the women — who had been training as political activists (*activistas políticas*) at the CIR — to take the little boy and leave the

base for a safe place as soon as the bombing stopped. Then the three of us — Paganini, Petrov, who was from Lunda in the Fourth Region, and I — moved off quickly toward the Lucusse/Lumbala road. On the way, between the base and the road, we met several of our pioneers. I gave my pistol to one of them. He was bigger than the rest and I knew he would feel more confident with a pistol in his hand. Then we went on and checked the road. Two of our guerrillas were there and they reported that everything was more or less O.K. — that no *Tugas* had come by the road so far.

Paganini then decided that we should return to the base to see how things were going there. I led the way, then Paganini, followed by Petrov. On the way, we were joined by a group of pioneers who trailed along after Petrov. As we approached the trenches near our parade ground, Paganini whispered: "You must be very careful now!" I said, "Yes, I know." We were passing very close to some Portuguese bombs which had not exploded. It was about half past five; the enemy planes had just gone and our firing stopped. It seemed very quiet all of a sudden and the sound of our movement in the bush was the only noise I could hear. Then a voice rang out from the parade ground: "*Quem é?*" ("Who is it?"). Many thoughts ran through my head at that moment: "It's one of the comrades." "Perhaps it's a student." "Maybe he has a weapon and will shoot without thinking." "He could be nervous."

So I said: "Calma" ("Take it easy!"). Again the voice asked: "Who is there?" I replied again, "Calma!" I had been moving ahead very carefully and just at that time I found myself facing a Portuguese soldier across a clearing, about twenty-five yards away. The enemy was already in the parade ground area. I had a very strange feeling, like shock or great surprise, because I never thought that the Portuguese could have gotten inside the base already. They could not have entered the base on foot, since the whole area was protected by our detachments; and they didn't come in from the road.

Well, at the same instant, the Portuguese soldier and I dropped to the ground. I shouted to the comrades that there were Portuguese ahead and we began to pull back. We didn't open fire and initiate a combat because of the pioneers following us. First we would have to put the children in a safe place, then stop and try to analyze the situation. So we turned and ran. It was my first experience of having the enemy shooting directly at me. As I was running I tripped over a fallen branch and just as I hit the ground a stream of bullets passed over my head. It was just lucky.

We continued running and soon the shooting stopped. A short distance outside the base we sat down and talked things over. Paganini decided to direct the women and children to our back-up base — which we had just for occasions like this — and then return to Mandume III. After the pioneers and women left and messages had been sent to the others, we made our way back to the base — but not the way we had come, as the Portuguese were there. It was night by this time, and very dark. We walked in a big circle around the P.C. and CIR — which, as I said, were quite close together — and entered the base from the opposite side. From there we moved very carefully toward the P.C. It seemed that the Portuguese had pulled out, as there was no sign of them.

As we approached the P.C. we met some comrades who were there collecting what they could from the houses and hiding it in safe places. There were nine of us there altogether. Six remained at the P.C. and I went with two others — a guerrilla and a *responsável* — to inspect the situation at the SAM clinic. We found several medical assistants there. They were armed, but were not guerrillas. We took all the medicines and other supplies we could find and cached them, then headed back toward the CIR. I went to my house and, though there was still no sign of the Portuguese, my place was close to the parade ground and I found it had been completely ransacked. They pulled everything down and took some of the papers and documents I had left there...Not military documents, just some propaganda articles and other pamphlets.

As we stood there, I thought I heard someone coughing near the parade ground. "It must be one of the comrades," I said. We had been talking and making quite a bit of noise, thinking that the Portuguese had withdrawn in their helicopters. Earlier we had decided that the Portuguese we encountered at the parade ground had entered the base from the side opposite the road, having been dropped off there by helicopters. Nevertheless, we sent a guerrilla to check and he left making a wide circle around the parade ground. When we were ready to leave and he hadn't returned, I decided to go and check myself. It was around midnight and there was no moon at all, just pitch-black darkness. I walked carefully across to the parade ground and when I got there I heard another cough. As I reached out, sort of feeling my way, I touched a piece of cloth. It was something like a tent, but I thought it was just a piece of clothing left on a bush by somebody as they ran away during the attack that day. Then, a few seconds later, someone coughed again and on my right, very close, I could see a tent. And there was no doubt about this one — a Portuguese soldier was coughing inside. I looked around carefully and could make out several tents all around me. I was right in the middle of a Portuguese

encampment. They hadn't noticed me yet and I prepared a grenade as I slowly backed out of the parade ground. I thought about opening fire and hitting them with one or two grenades, but as I was alone it would have been foolish.

I went back to the other comrades and we quickly returned to the P.C. to prepare an attack on the Portuguese during the night. Unfortunately, a comrade coming to join us at the P.C. tripped and fell down, his pistol firing by accident. After this, we decided not to attack, as the Portuguese would have been alerted by the gunshot. We left the base and stayed in the bush until morning. At about six o'clock reconnaissance planes started coming, followed by plenty of helicopters. We figured they were changing troops, or bringing in more, and decided to go to our back-up base. There we found our other comrades as well as the pioneers and other students. We set about reorganizing the base — building additional huts, digging trenches, sending groups to contact nearby villages to arrange for our food supply, and so on.

Then that same day, in the late afternoon, we formed a group of a dozen or so guerrillas and headed back to Mandume III to attack the Portuguese. We didn't want to just leave them there peacefully at our base. On the way we met a wounded comrade and sent four guerrillas back with him to the new base. By the time we reached Mandume III it was already night. We approached the Portuguese encampment very, very closely as they were asleep and it was very dark. We could see their guards at the perimeter of the camp. Then, as we were preparing to attack, a Portuguese soldier lit a candle in one of their tents. It created a glow in the whole area and Paganini gave the order to open fire. We had two sub-machine guns, two semi-automatic rifles, some grenades and a few pistols and single-shot rifles. After a few seconds, the Portuguese — there were fifteen or twenty of them — started firing wildly with all of their weapons — bazookas, heavy machine guns, grenades and automatic rifles. We withdrew after a few minutes and returned to the base. On the way, just at sunrise, we came across an abandoned Portuguese ambush position. We examined it and decided that there must have been about forty enemy soldiers there a short time earlier. Perhaps something like sixty to seventy-five Portuguese soldiers participated in the enemy ground operations. But they were very frightened. Even when we attacked them with our small group of eight guerrillas, they didn't follow us or try to counter-attack when we withdrew — even though they knew we only had a few light weapons. They abandoned Mandume III later that same morning, after we had returned to our new base.

Later we learned that this attack was the beginning of a general Portuguese offensive in the Eastern Region — especially in Zone "A", between the Zambian border and the Lunda district in the Fourth Region. The Portuguese intended to cut our supply routes, demoralize the population and annihilate the MPLA guerrilla forces. They attacked with very, very strong ground and air forces, trying as hard as they could to destroy us, but they didn't succeed. At Mandume III, for example, there were about 340 people — including many new recruits who were being trained at the P.C. as well as a large number of students at the SAM and CIR. After the attack, the Portuguese claimed in their radio broadcast that they had killed over a hundred armed "terrorists", when in fact they had killed only five people altogether, including two pioneers, one medical assistant and two unarmed recruits.

We were sure that the Portuguese had been preparing this offensive for a long time and were expecting good results from it. They started by using terror tactics against the population and captured guerrillas — torturing them and not just killing them, but cutting off their hands and feet, and sometimes their penis, which they would put in the dead man's mouth, poking out the eyes, and so on. They did this to a guerrilla comrade who was a good friend of mine. His name was Windi, which means "Little One" in Luvale. After finding and examining his body, we figured that he had first been hit by a bullet in the shoulder. Then, when he was helpless on the ground, they began by cutting off his fingers, then his hands, arms, and so on, finally killing him and removing his eyes. They then just left him there to terrorize the people who found him, and others who would hear about it. They did the same thing to any villagers they could capture. Once they passed very close to one of our detachments. They knew we were there, but didn't attack. Instead, they hid in the bush and ambushed a group of villagers — killing seven, including several women and children, then mutilating their bodies. This kind of terrorism increased just before the Portuguese launched their big dry-season offensive in late September 1968.

After the offensive, though our position was not as good as before — especially as regards supplies — we were even more confident than before that the Portuguese could not defeat or destroy us. They had used a large part of their overall strength — plenty of soldiers, bombers and helicopters — and we had survived with surprisingly few casualties. And their terror tactics served only to harden the will and determination of our people against them.

Well, as I said, we began preparing our back-up base as a new P.C. for the zone — digging many trenches, constructing huts, buildings for the SAM and CIR, and so forth. I helped with all this, but when it was finished there wasn't much work I could do there for the DIP. We had lost a good deal of supplies — paper, ink, etc. — as well as some of the materials I was working on for the newspaper and radio broadcasts. The Portuguese hadn't destroyed or captured our duplicating machine, but there was no point in bringing it to the new P.C. without the necessary supplies and other equipment — especially since our typewriter was lost.

So one day a letter came from the chairman of an action committee in a *kimbo* near the Luena river. He said that some elephants were destroying their *massango* (millet) fields and asked the base commander if he could send some guerrillas to help them. As I had almost nothing to do at the base, I volunteered to go. Two of us were selected. We went down to the Luena and hunted, not only for the troublesome elephants, but also for other animals to provide food for both the base and the local *kimbo*.

The villagers were very kind. We had many long discussions, especially when it rained or when we ran out of ammunition for hunting and were waiting for more from the base. We talked about the problems of war and they raised a number of questions. For example, once they asked me why only the Portuguese had planes to come and bomb them — why the MPLA didn't use planes to bomb the Portuguese. In trying to explain this we had to tell them about the history of our Movement, how our revolution started in 1961 and had developed to this point and some things about the nature of guerrilla war — especially about how the enemy can have more and better weapons and yet cannot defeat a whole people when they have decided to stand up and fight for their freedom and independence.

"It is not very important," I told them, "if the Portuguese come and destroy one or two bases. We are continuing to advance our struggle into new regions, and this is much more important than losing a few thatch houses — which is not important at all because, as you know, we can build a base in very few days. So even if the Portuguese make plenty of propaganda about how they destroyed some of our bases, it is really nothing."

I also learned many things from the people. They have their special ways of doing things, practical things, and they taught me — especially how to hunt. But besides that, I also learned that it was really necessary to fight for the people — because they need it and they deserve it. They are

able to organize and to fight for themselves; they are always ready to defend their cultures, their homes, their families, and in a very short time they are able to achieve a minimum protection for their *kimbos* without needing guerrillas to stay close to them and defend them. They proved to me that our struggle can advance very quickly and that the objectives of our Movement can be accomplished without any doubt.

For a long time — two months, December 1968 and January 1969 — I was the only guerrilla in the *kimbo*, as my comrade returned to the base after about a week. During this time our way of living together was very natural. There were plenty of opportunities for the people to show that they were willing to make sacrifices for me; and I think that I also proved I could make sacrifices for them — you know, without really feeling it was a sacrifice, just doing things because it was a duty, a normal duty toward the people.

There are several cases I could mention. Once, after a week or so in the *kimbo*, I went hunting alone and got lost. The villagers in this area didn't generally go out into the bush at night because there were many panthers around. They were really frightened, but they went to search for me anyway — even the women. They spread out and looked in the bush for hours, finally finding me.

A similar thing happened another time. I went down to the Luena and was so enthusiastic about the hunting that I stayed for a very long time. Our rivers, you know, are sometimes just very small twisting things in the middle of very big *chanas* or plains. Once you are in the river you can walk for several kilometers before reaching the hard bank on either side. Well, the people were worried about me and even though they said there were crocodiles in the Luena, they came looking for me at night, thinking I might be lost or in trouble.

As for me, one time two helicopters passed low a few hundred yards from the village. I didn't know if they were on reconnaissance and had seen us or would just keep going. Without even thinking, I took my rifle — at the time I had only a single-shot hunting rifle — and started telling the people what to do to defend themselves. I didn't think about it — defending the people. It wasn't a question of forcing myself; it was just the natural thing for me to do. Fortunately, the helicopters hadn't spotted the village. Later, when I thought about it, I felt that it was a good thing for the villagers to see that MPLA was there and that we thought first about the people and only later about ourselves.

Well, after these two months living very close to the people, I was called back to the P.C. There was an order for me to go to the border and meet Comrade Chipenda, a member of our Political-Military Coordinating Committee. So I went, but Chipenda hadn't arrived yet. Another *responsável* told me to go and wait at one of our detachments near the border. Then, in a few days, I was called outside again. Comrade Chipenda was there with some members of the Military Commission of the OAU — an Algerian, a Congolese and an Egyptian — who had come to visit the liberated regions in eastern Angola. Soon we were joined by President Neto, Commander Monimambu, Dr. dos Santos of SAM, and a large detachment of guerrillas. We walked as far as the P.C. of Zone "B" and the Military Commission had a chance to visit many of our detachments and villages. They studied the situation with our zone commanders, visited a CIR and SAM clinic, talked with many guerrillas and villagers and so on. My work was to write reports of the visit for the DIP and take photographs. It was my first assignment with a camera and I discovered that I had much to learn about this kind of art.

The Military Commission remained in Angola for sixteen days — as they seemed to be pressed for time. We returned to the border and after a few days I left with some other comrades by Land Rover to Lusaka. There I started working at the DIP center. It was a new job for me and I found it a bit difficult at first to adapt myself to working with files, archives, and so on. I had never learned to type, since I preferred writing in longhand, but at the DIP I was forced to learn since I had to cut stencils. I really didn't enjoy this work much at the beginning, you know. At first, when Comrade Chipenda told me I was being transferred from the Bomboko column to the DIP, I said: "Well, I would prefer to remain a guerrilla; to fight, because I have been preparing for this for a long time." But at least during my first period with the DIP I was in Angola, with a weapon and prepared to fight. Now I was outside and it took me some time to get used to working without a weapon in hand. Of course, I could clearly see the need in our struggle for doing information and propaganda work — anybody could understand that. But I used to ask myself: "Why can't someone else do it? Why me?"

Well, at first I found my new work very tiring and, as I said, I didn't really enjoy it. But I worked very hard, because I knew it was necessary — an important part of the revolution. There was a very big difference between this and my attitude toward my studies at the agricultural school in Portugal. There I was not interested, so I just didn't study; but now it was altogether different: I could feel and understand the necessity of this work and even if at the beginning I was not very interested, I really tried to do my best. And

finally, though I didn't change my mind about wanting to fight, I got better at the DIP work and found it much more interesting — especially when some other comrades joined us in the DIP and I was able to concentrate more on taking and developing pictures, doing drawings and organizing our film and photographs files, archives and so forth.

I found that even the many difficulties I faced in trying to do good work could be very interesting — because I always had to learn new things, to improvise, to study. In preparing a radio program, a bulletin or an internal communication I would have to use our files, take out the useful photos or statistics — things I had never done before. So I was always learning, because when you have to write, you first must study. I also had to learn to use my art in different ways — to take a picture or a drawing and prepare a text or bulletin so that it would become effective in educating our people or in propaganda. To communicate and explain things to the Angolan people — who are still mainly illiterate — requires learning and using different techniques and, primarily, working a lot with drawings, photos and simple language. It is not the same as when preparing a bulletin in English or French, when we are trying to communicate the reality of our struggle and provide useful information to people living in other countries — to support committees and fraternal organizations, for example.

This I found very interesting: to see the interest these foreign groups have in our revolution; how much they want to help, and what they in fact contribute to our struggle in material support and in their public statements, articles, posters, books and so on. You know, even after almost ten years of fighting in Angola, there are still many, many people in the world who know very little, or nothing, about our struggle. So this work is important. Then, inside Angola, many of our people — and even some guerrillas — don't know about the international support we receive. And it is important for the DIP to inform our people and guerrillas — even if they are very deep inside the country — that everywhere in the world there are progressive people and comrades helping us — from America and Europe to the socialist countries. These people are doing their best for the success of our revolution and the worldwide struggle against colonialism and imperialism.

Since I started working for the DIP, I have gone several times to Angola with foreign journalists and writers who want to see and experience for themselves the difficulties and successes of our struggle. They talk with our people and guerrillas, do interviews, take pictures, record music and so on. For example, from the end of November to early

January of this year, 1970, I went to Angola with a Zambian journalist, Winta Lemba — a very good man — who writes for the *Times of Zambia*. It was his second visit — his first being in 1968. We went to Zone "C", then to Zone "D" and back through Zone "C"; a trip of about five hundred miles by foot. We visited the CIR and SAM centers in Zone "C" and many villages and detachments, and Lemba wrote in his paper about what he saw — about the changes and progress we had made since his last visit. This is very important for us because even in Zambia, which has a long border with Angola, people don't know very much about our fight — and before Lemba's articles they had some wrong ideas from the enemy's propaganda.

So, what Lemba wrote was an important contribution to our struggle — letting the Zambian people know the truth about the Angolan revolution. You know, in Zambia and other places, the Portuguese and their allies make plenty of counter-propaganda; and in some cases this has led to people not supporting us. Quite the contrary, sometimes they oppose us and help circulate a very bad picture of us. I remember once when an article appeared — this was before Lemba's visit — saying that MPLA guerrillas were attacking Zambian villagers. This was not only a lie and a very cowardly way to fight, but it caused some problems for us with Zambians along the border who believed it to be true. Now, since the visits and articles by Lemba and other journalists, public opinion in Zambia has changed — even though the enemies of the Angolan revolution continue to make false and deceiving counter-propaganda.

Well, during this trip with Lemba I took plenty of pictures and when we returned I had a very big job developing all of them. I think I'm doing a better job now than when I started, but in the beginning I ruined a lot of photo paper.

Soon after this, in June and July, I went to Angola with Basil Davidson. Comrade Neto was with us, talking to the people and discussing all kinds of problems with them. It was very interesting and important for me to see how the people and guerrillas talked to him, exposing many difficulties and asking questions without any reserve at all. If they thought there was something not being done right they would say so and criticise it, saying: "The Movement is doing this and it is wrong. You must do this and that, etc." They gave their ideas freely. I especially remember a militia chief in one of the villages we visited. He put forward some very good ideas which I am sure the Steering Committee will study and probably accept.

The people were always asking for more weapons, because

they clearly understood their need to be able to defend themselves. They often said: "We are not guerrillas, but we are men and women and we can use weapons to fight for ourselves, leaving the guerrillas free to move forward and attack the enemy." It was the same thing in every village we passed — which shows the degree to which our people are engaged in this struggle; how much they understand the need for everybody to fight. So, Davidson saw all of this and we are sure he will write about it. The only unfortunate thing was that we were able to remain in Angola for only twenty days — though we had planned to stay much longer. First, we had an accident just before reaching the border, when one of our trucks fell off a pontoon ferry and into the river, causing a delay of over a week before we could enter Angola. We went to Sector 4 of Zone "C" and planned to go as far as the Muíé quarter to visit people in the Portuguese-controlled post. It was not possible, however, as several of our detachments had launched a number of attacks against the Portuguese barracks at Muíé and we had to wait and assess the Portuguese reaction. It came very quickly. They counter-attacked by air, bombing wildly in the area and using a number of helicopters. Sometimes they landed heli-troops to attack villages or our detachments.

With all this military activity ahead along our route, we decided it was best if we returned with our visitor to the border. At one point, we listened as MPLA mines exploded on a bridge along the Gago Coutinho/Lumbala road, destroying several Portuguese trucks. After this, there was a lot of wild bombing by the Portuguese, who were very angry.

I had taken plenty of photographs during the trip and when I returned to Lusaka I again had a lot of work developing them. I think this was one of my most interesting jobs. Of course, I enjoyed drawing the most.

In July 1970 I met Don Barnett from the LSM Information Center in Canada. He had a very good idea about doing something which would not only be interesting for the international community but also useful for us — for the Angolan people and MPLA. This was to record and prepare some books containing the life stories of Angolan villagers, guerrillas and *responsáveis*...so that many people can understand and feel how we feel about our struggle. This is the reason I am now recording my story, and I hope it will be a contribution to our revolution. Our work has been done on the way to the border, where I must replace a broken spring in one of our Land Rovers and drive it back to Lusaka.

I think that I am not yet a revolutionary. I must try

to do much more — that is, principally, whatever is necessary to do — and transform myself in order to become what Angola will need in the future. In fact, I don't know yet what I'll become later — what I'll do or be able to do — but I can say that I am prepared to do anything which is necessary for the revolution, for our people.

This will be much easier for me now. When I started, I was doing something I liked — being a guerrilla. Then I went to work for the DIP, which was not very interesting for me at the beginning. But the need for this kind of work in our struggle soon led me to develop an interest in it. So, like this, in the future I think I can do anything which becomes necessary during our struggle.

In this way, when I look back, I think I have changed very much since my Paris days. In France I was already involved with the MPLA and I had some strong ideas about our struggle — feeling that it was very good and necessary. But the reality of our revolution was very far away. Coming here to Angola, many things changed in my mind. I found that there were plenty of things that I had had only romantic ideas about. But the reality of our struggle, and especially the contact I have had with our people, have made me feel even more sure, more strongly, about the necessity for our revolution and the certainty that we will win.

Our struggle is progressing — everybody knows that is true. Even if we sometimes suffer enemy attacks — and you know that the Portuguese always have the means to attack us with their bombers and helicopters — the revolution is advancing. When we hear that the enemy came and attacked a detachment or a village, we are not discouraged, because we know that in the Fourth Region, in Lunda, our comrades are moving ahead; and also in the Fifth Region, in Bié, and in the Sixth Region. We are achieving our main strategic objective: to generalize the fight throughout Angola. Everywhere now the Angolan people feel that the struggle is there — near their village, their town — and that the time is coming fast when each one of them rise up and play his part in the fight. This is very important.

In the general, worldwide struggle against imperialism, I believe that our revolution in Angola is an important part. We know that in the African context, where imperialism is still very strong, winning our revolution will be a very important victory against imperialism and will make more victories possible. Of course, over the past few years, with the rapid development of our struggle, the Portuguese have been trying to do everything they can to tie Angola to the international corporations of the imperialists. So, the most

immediate victory we must achieve is to defeat the Portuguese and their imperialist friends in Angola. But this would also be a victory for the whole of Africa and the world. It would be an example, very important for Africa in particular, showing that victory against imperialism is always possible.

In Angola itself, after we have driven out the Portuguese regime, I would like to see a country where everyone could really live well — could have the necessary, basic things, such as schools, hospitals, houses...the minimum human material comforts people need and want. You know, the Angolan people always worked very hard and have received very little for their labors. The moment is coming when they will have what they produce. The social system we create must be one which can assure our people these basic things, and I think that a socialist system is the only kind that can do this — can really raise the material and human conditions of life for our people in a short time. We are not fighting just to end up where we were before — just to kick out the colonialists and take their place, letting everything else continue like it was. No! The Angolan people are suffering very much for this freedom, and they must benefit from this freedom. There cannot be Angolan freedom only on paper. We can't just say: "Well, we are free; we are Angolans now," and have the masses continue suffering like before.



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