

Dispute with Vatican after Pope's Reception of Rebel Leaders from Portuguese Africa. Rebels' "Solidarity Conference" in Rome. - Continued Guerrilla Activities in African Provinces.

Following a conference held in Rome on June 27-29 to express "solidarity with the peoples of the Portuguese colonies" and attended by about 300 delegates of "liberation movements" waging guerrilla warfare in Angola, Mozambique and Portuguese Guinea (Bissau), Pope Paul VI received, at the end of a weekly general audience on July 1, three of the leaders of these movements -Dr. Agostinho Neto of the *Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola* (MPLA), Senhor Marcelino dos Santos of the *Frente de Libertacao de Mocambique* (Frelimo) and Senhor Amilcar Cabral of the *Partido Africano da Independencia da Guine e do Cabo Verde* (PAIGC).

The Portuguese Government recalled its Ambassador to the Holy See, Dr. Eduardo Brazao, for consultations on July 3, after he had presented to the Papal Secretary of State a Note expressing "the protest and profound regret of the Portuguese Government and nation" at the Pope's action. In particular the Note complained that "His Holiness allowed the terrorist leaders, in rebellion against an established Government which maintains centuries-old relations with the Holy See, to come close to his person, talking to them and addressing to them words of salutation and exhortation of fidelity to the Christian principles in which they were educated".

In an address on July 5 the Pope declared that in the struggle to achieve the equilibrium needed for progress and peace, "serious threats are mixed with good intentions, and for neither side can we neglect God's help". Vatican Radio stated on the same day: "Pacification, or liberation by force of arms-according to which side one takes-is a source of misery and death.... May Angola, Guinea and Mozambique at last achieve peace in Justice." It also pointed out that this conference in which the three leaders had taken part had been attended by members of the U.N. Committee of 24 (on decolonization) and delegates from many countries, and that the Church's attitude towards the independence of the new nations was consistent and well known from Vatican Council documents, encyclicals and speeches by Paul VI.

In a Note to the Portuguese Government, published in Lisbon on July 8 and in Vatican City on July 10, the Holy See explained that there was no political significance in the Pope's meeting with the three nationalist leaders, who had been received as Roman Catholics and Christians without reference to their political functions and had been reminded that peaceful means should always be used, even in seeking what one considered to be one's rights.

Dr. Caetano, the Portuguese Prime Minister, announced on July 7 that Portugal's relations with the Holy See would "return to the usual cordiality", the Vatican having given a satisfactory explanation of the circumstances of the audience. Dr. Brazao returned to his post at the end of July.

The African nationalists, however, claimed that they had been able to submit to the Pope a dossier on transgressions of which the Portuguese had allegedly been guilty in Africa, and especially in Portuguese Guinea (Bissau), and that this dossier was being studied by the Papal Secretariat of State. Senhor Cabral described the audience as "a political and moral fact of the greatest importance", as "before the Portuguese hierarchy Paul VI has shown that the Church supports the freedom and independence of peoples" and because "the Portuguese prelates who are on our side, such as the Bishop of Oporto," would "draw encouragement and comfort from it".

The Rome "solidarity conference" [which followed a similar conference held in Khartoum in January 1969] was attended by delegates of the MPLA, Frelimo and the PAIGC, but two other Angolan liberation movements-Senhor Holden Roberto's *Governo Revolucionario de Angola no Exilio* (GRAE) and the *Uniao Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola* (UNITA) -had not been invited. [the UNITA was led by Sennor Jonas Savimbe, who until 1964 had been a follower of Sennor Holder Roberto -see 20258 A and page 19276] Observers included representatives of the Christian Democratic trade union movement in Italy and leaders of the Italian Socialist Party.

According to *The Economist* of May 16, most of the fighting in Angola was being carried out by the MPLA (which obtained funds from the liberation committee of the Organization of African Unity), whereas the GRAE was "almost moribund" and had to some extent been replaced by the UNITA, which was active in south-eastern Angola. The UNITA was said to receive funds from America and to have an office in Cairo after having been asked by the Zambian authorities to leave Lusaka-possibly because it had tribal associations with the African National Congress, the Zambian Opposition party.

A final communique issued at the end of the Rome conference called for the military, economic and political isolation of Portugal and concrete aid for the liberation movement. The conference's political committee decided to set up an internal documentation and information bureau in Rome.

Meanwhile the Portuguese forces in the African provinces appeared to be successful in containing the threat posed by the guerrilla bands operating in certain areas. Most towns were, and had always been, firmly in Portuguese hands, while in the countryside true control was often denied to either side, and conflicting claims were made of losses inflicted.

In Angola rebel forces were active in six districts, covering a little more than one-third of the territory, where they had been increasingly aggressive and had inflicted losses averaging from five to 10 persons killed and 15-30 wounded a week, as borne out by Portuguese official communiqués. The Portuguese Army was reinforced by home guard units of tribesmen armed with rifles to defend villages and to prevent the kidnapping of villagers by terrorists whom they regarded as bandits.

The armed forces of the GRAE claimed in January 1969 to have killed 912 Portuguese soldiers during 1968 while themselves losing 148 killed and 15 missing.

On Jan. 20, 1969, guerrilla fighters killed 14 workers and wounded 32 others on the Benguela railway near Teixeira de Souza, whereupon the railway line was temporarily cut by Africans protesting against the killings. According to the Zambian authorities, three Portuguese soldiers were killed in a skirmish on Zambian soil on Jan. 24, 1969.

An official communique issued in Luanda on June 8, 1970, listed 78 "terrorists" as having been killed and 113 captured in "increasing activities" in the last week of May; another communique issued in Lisbon on July 18 described an operation, begun in May, in which 60 guerrillas were claimed to have been killed. A High Command bulletin for the week ended Aug. 1 claimed that 487 guerrillas had given themselves up and that there was "growing demoralization" among the rebels.

A special correspondent of *Le Monde* reported from Luanda in January 1970 that the resources of Angola were sufficient to finance the fight against the guerrillas. Spectacular economic growth had led to a favourable balance of payments-the first in three years-of 90,242,000,000 escudos (about £115,000,000) during the first nine months of 1969.

Frelimo's central committee in Dar-es-Salaam announced on May 22, 1970, that Senhor Samora Moises Machel and Senhor Marcelino dos Santos had been appointed president and vice-president respectively of the movement. Portuguese official reports subsequently indicated that Frelimo's forces had suffered major reverses.

In a communiqué issued in Beira on July 28, 1970, it was claimed that Portuguese forces were firmly established in four former bases of Frelimo, whose forces were "in full retreat to sanctuaries behind the Tanzanian border for the first time since 1964". According to a detailed report issued in Lourenco Marques on Aug. 1, a total of 368 military operations had been carried out during June and July by more than 35,000 troops, involving a major action known as "Gordian knot"; these operations had resulted in the loss of some 400 men to the guerrillas and the capture of 415 prisoners, for the loss of 150 Portuguese servicemen killed or seriously injured; 25 guerrilla bases had been destroyed and 40 tons of war material captured. The authorities also claimed to have made good progress in their "psychological" offensive against the guerrillas, of whom 2,537 were said to have surrendered.

At the Machava "rehabilitation camp" at Lourenco Marques, opened in 1964, some 2,000 men were still held in July 1970 for subversive activities, while a total of more than 1,200 had been released as "rehabilitated".

The PAIGC had, according to *The Economist* of April 27, 1968, about 10,000 men fighting against the Portuguese forces in Portuguese Guinea. The rebels consisted of a commando elite trained by Cuban instructors in the neighbouring Republic of Guinea, as well as troops and militia trained on the spot. They enjoyed the support of all the tribes except the Fula, whose Moslem chiefs considered independence to be a threat to their traditional suzerainty.

The Portuguese Government claimed on Aug. 5, 1969, that 92 former rebels had pledged their loyalty to Portugal's African policies, among them Senhor Rafael Barbosa, a former president of the PAIGC who had

been in detention for five years, and Senhor Raul Nunes Correia, a former secretary-general of the rebel organization, who had been arrested in 1967 after returning from a visit to Moscow. Senhor Cabral, on the other hand, produced in Algiers on Aug. 18 five Portuguese soldiers, who had deserted from their units in Portuguese Guinea and denounced "atrocities and reprisals" by Portuguese armed forces which they claimed to have witnessed.

A communiqué issued in Lisbon on Jan. 7, 1970, gave the total of guerrillas killed in 1969 as 614, with 50 tons of war material, mainly of Soviet origin, captured; Portuguese losses were not specified.

The fighting between guerrillas and Portuguese security forces led to a number of border incidents during 1967-70 and to mutual accusations between Portugal, Senegal and the Republic of Guinea, as well as to complaints to the United Nations.

A protest by Senegal on Sept. 12, 1967, against an alleged intrusion by Portuguese troops on Aug. 5-6 was rejected as unfounded by Portugal. A complaint by Senegal relating to the bombardment of villages in the Casamance (southern Senegal) by Portuguese artillery and aircraft in November and December 1969 was discussed by the U.N. security Council, which on Dec. 9, 1969, by 13 votes to none with two abstentions (U.S.A. and Spain), "severely condemned" the Portuguese authorities for their action. A similar complaint by Guinea against alleged Portuguese shelling of villages was upheld by the security Council on Dec. 22, 1969, by nine votes to none with six abstentions.

Portugal accused Guinea and Senegal of frontier violations on Feb. 11-14, 1970; Senegal radio alleged on June 20 that Portuguese troops had again attacked a Senegalese village; and further incidents occurred in July. According to an announcement in Dakar on July 13, Portuguese troops had on July 6 allegedly attacked three villages and seized 10 hostages from another village in Senegal and taken them to Bissau. A military spokesman in Lisbon, on the other hand, stated on July 16 that about 300 heavily-armed rebels, entering from Senegal, had attacked Pirada (near the border), while an attack was also reported as having been made on Novo Lamego by guerrillas operating from Guinea. According to a Bissau communiqué of July 28, a total of 47 rebels had been killed at Churo, Pirada and Bajocunde.

A special correspondent of *Le Monde* in April 1970 gave the number of Portuguese forces as about 25,000 soldiers, supported by an almost equal number of auxiliaries recruited from that part of the population which was hostile to the nationalists; these forces, he reported, had succeeded in repulsing the nationalists' attacks. Owing to a concentration of Senegalese troops along the northern border of Portuguese Guinea, the guerrillas had lost some of their facilities of retreat in the Casamance, where by that time the number of refugees from Portuguese territory exceeded 10 per cent of the population; the Governor of Ziguinchor (the chief town in the Casamance) had declared that he refused to grant asylum to armed combatants.

General Antonio Sebastiao Ribeiro de Spínola, who had succeeded General Arnaldo Schulz as Governor of Portuguese Guinea in May 1968, said in Lisbon early in August 1970 that the situation continued "to evolve satisfactorily". In a High Command bulletin for the week ended on Aug. 2, 1970, on the other hand, it was stated that guerrillas continued to infiltrate the province from Senegal and Guinea, though the Portuguese Army played an important role in protecting the population and helping in construction work.- (Le Monde - Neue Zürcher Zeitung - Times - Daily Telegraph - Guardian - Financial Times Economist - Corriere della Sera)(*Prev. rep. Angola, 21965 A; Mozambique, 23963 a; portuguese Guinea, 21943 C.*)