

FEBRUARY 4: DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF ANGOLA

Nine years ago, on February 4, 1961, African nationalists in Luanda, the capital of the Portuguese colony of Angola, launched an attack on the main political prison, intending to free a number of their leaders who had been arrested. The attack failed in its intent, and was followed by savage and indiscriminate Portuguese reprisals against Africans in the slums. But it marked the beginning of armed struggle against white rule in Southern Africa.

The fighting is still going on in Angola, and now in Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), and Namibia (Southwest Africa) as well. In Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, and in Angola, the Portuguese are on the defensive. With over 120,000 troops in Africa (much more, in proportion to Portugal's small population, than the United States has in Vietnam), Portugal is straining its manpower and financial resources. Yet they are unable to eliminate what they call "terrorism." Just a year ago, on February 3, 1969, they succeeded in assassinating Dr. Eduardo Mondlane, the President of the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), with a bomb sent to him in the mail. But the struggle in Mozambique did not stop.

Even with the replacement in 1968 of the Portuguese dictator Salazar by his colleague Caetano, reputed to be more "liberal," there has been no change in Portugal's African policy. The thought of independence for its African colonies is anathema, and in itself treasonable. Years after the independence of other African states, Portugal has still not accepted the idea that Africans should rule themselves.

But Portugal continues to fight, and to maintain its colonies, only with the aid of other more powerful states. South Africa, first of all, cooperates militarily, and is heavily involved in major hydroelectric projects in Angola and Mozambique. And Portugal is also, of course, a member of NATO, and receives military cooperation and aid from the other members, including the United States. According to Ray Vicker, of the Wall Street Journal, private capital is pouring in. Gulf Oil Company has struck oil in Angola, putting it soon among the top 20 oil-producing countries. Proceeds to the Portuguese government from Gulf alone are estimated (in 1969) at \$20 million, equivalent to approximately half the provincial military budget for Angola.

So Portugal, the last colonial power, supported by racist South Africa, and by its Western allies, tries still to hold on to territory in Africa. The people of Angola have been fighting for independence for nine years, in Guinea-Bissau for seven, in Mozambique for six. They will continue to fight for their freedom. The United States (government and business alike) will continue to help Portugal. What will we do?

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