

STATEMENT GIVEN BY BRO. MATUZOLELE MULATO  
VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE AFRICAN YOUTH  
MOVEMENT FOR LIBERATION & UNITY AT THE  
GULF OIL CONFERENCE HELD IN DETROIT MICHIGAN  
SEPT. 30, 1972.-

Dear brothers, Sisters,  
Delegates and Observers;

In the name of the AFRICAN YOUTH MOVEMENT FOR LIBERATION & UNITY and in the name of the Angolan people and its struggle, I would like to express my deep and sincere gratitude to the PAN-AFRICAN LIBERATION COMMITTEE for raising the issue of Gulf's involvement in the Portuguese held territory of Angola, to the African people in the U.S.

Secondly I would like to thank you all for having me among you to share the situation that today exist in Angola. As an Angolan Student, it is my duty to inform you about the conditions in our country and the conditions of the Angolan people.

The conditions of the Africans in the Portuguese colony of Angola have always been extremely deplorable, ever since the establishment of the Portuguese rule on that part of the African Continent. The Africans have been deprived of their traditional beliefs and customs by the introduction of a system known as "assimilacao" or assimilation. An assimilated person means an African who has abandoned the use of his or her native language and customs, and accepted the Portuguese value system.

In order to become assimilated, an African must make a written declaration stating that he or she has completely abandoned all traditional beliefs and customs and that the Portuguese way of life is the best. In addition to such a declaration, the African must learn

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how to speak, read and write portuguese fluently, and attain a certain educational level, which does not go beyond the primary school level. This system is so complicated that it took more than five years of processing before one could obtain a positive or favorable response. Out of ten applications for example, only two or perhaps three individuals were able to receive a favorable reply, while the majority of the applicants were rejected.

Once the assimilated status has been attained, it means theoretically that the African is a Portuguese citizen. However, the acquisition of such a status, does not guarantee the African in any way, the same right as the Portuguese white. The so-called assimilated African became just a little more privileged than the so-called non-assimilated African. This was of course, a device designed to perpetuate the Portuguese colonial domination, the technique of divide and rule. The whites do not have to undergo the same routine as the blacks. Their citizenship is represented in the color of their skin.

The system of forced labor has long been one of the main Portuguese physical exploitation of the Angolan people. Under this system, the African men, women and children, must fulfill two to five years of labor without pay, in white man's plantation, or in public menial jobs. A failure to do so, it results in many years of emprisonment and torture.

Although the Africans constitute the bulk of the unemployed population and the lowest paid working force, their tax burden is much higher than that of their white counterpart.

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Freedom of expression in Angola is absolutely non-existent. The Angolans are not permitted to form their own political or cultural organizations. The Angolan population is ruled by a handful of portuguese officials dierectly appointed by the government in Lisbon. The Africans therefore, have no voice in determining the destiny of their own country.

It is precisely due to this state of affairs that in 1961, the Angolan people rose against the Portuguese colonial domination. The struggle for liberation has completed its ten years. This decade, has been a period of intensive confrontation both inside and abroad between the portuguese colonialists and the Nationalist forces. On international scale, the Nationalists have been militating against the portuguese false explanation of the situation in Angola. Inside the country the Nationalists have succeeded in capturing a good portion of the territory.

The ability of Portugal to resist the Nationalists for such a long period of time, has been facilitated by the massive financial and military aid that it has been obainting from the Western countries, particularly the USA, Great Britain, West German, and France. In the United States, Portugal has been able to obtain contracts with large companies such as Gulf, in an effort to acquire the revenue necessary to finance its wars of repression against the African people in Angola. The Gulf Oil Corporation is at the present time, the major source of finance of the portuguese colonialism in Angola.

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The Students and the people of Angola feel that Gulf's exploitation of oil in a colonized and oppressed Angola, is a contribution to the Portuguese colonialism in Angola.

Gulf's actions in Angola is a clear indication that its relationship with a future Republic of Angola is in a complete jeopardy. The students and the people of Angola request that Gulf removes all its investments from Angola, so as to facilitate the decolonization process and finally, the establishment of good and genuine relations between free Angola and the Corporation.

I Thank You.

Matuzolele Mulato