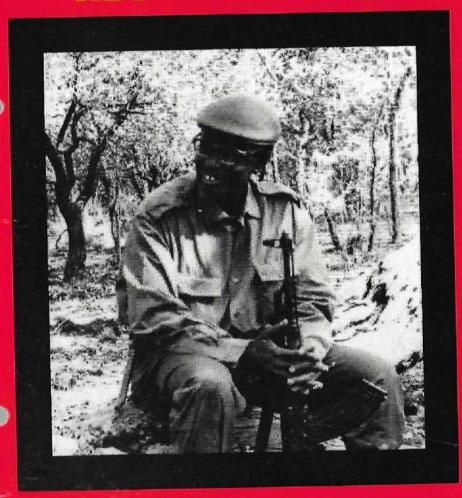
TRIBUTE TO COMRADE PRESIDENT RGOSTINHO NETO



PEOPLE'S POWER

in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau

Number 14

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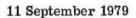
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Cover photo: Agostinho Neto in 1970, in the areas of eastern Angola liberated by the MPLA.

Statement of the Political Bureau of the MPLA-Workers' Party



People of Angola Members of the MPLA-Workers' Party Comrades and fellow-countrymen

The Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the MPLA-Workers' Party has the sad duty of informing you that our beloved President, Dr. Agostinho Neto, died at 14.20 on 10 September 1979, in Moscow, as a result of the extremely serious illness from which he was suffering, and despite the surgery he underwent in an unsuccessful attempt to save his life.

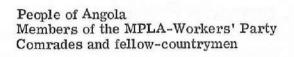
We feel deep anguish and sorrow and great emotion in this tragic hour. However, the never-fading example of his life - the life of someone who was and always will be our guide - now imposes on each and every one of us the solemn duty of following that calm, firm and determined example.

The life and the struggle of Comrade Doctor Agostinho Neto encompasses the historic dimensions of our country, because in him were to be found the highest virtues of the faultless revolutionary, of the totally committed militant, of the poet and intellectual who reached out to all mankind, of the deeply caring doctor, of the friend and farsighted leader, of the comrade at all times, of the tireless servant of the people.

The evocation of his name and of his undying memory will always be the inexhaustible source of inspiration for us to throw ourselves, with ever greater determination, into the struggle for the triumph of his ideas and teachings, the cause of socialism, the establishment of people's power, the strengthening and purifying of the Party, for national unity in our country.

The memory of Comrade President Dr. Agostinho Neto belongs today to all the peoples of the world taking part in the struggle for liberation and for the affirmation of human dignity. Every worker, every peasant, every exploited person, every internationalist fighter, every Marxist-Leninist found in him a symbol of their own struggles. This transcends frontiers and places him among the greatest leaders of our time.

Comrade President Agostinho Neto embodied the Angolan Revolution within the victorious struggle of all humanity.



In the name of the glorious banner that our beloved Comrade President Agostinho Neto left us, let us close ranks around the Central Committee of the MPLA-Workers' Party, let us fight against all those who try to oppose his teachings and guidelines, and, with fists clenched, let us carry forward the irreversible decision to build the socialist motherland and the happiness of the Angolan people.

Eternal glory to the guide of the Angolan Revolution and the founder

of the nation and of the MPLA-Workers' Party!

The struggle continues! Victory is certain!

New President elected

On 20 September, the Central Committee of the MPLA-Workers' Party elected its new President, who, in conformity with the Angolan Constitution, is also President of the Republic. Agostinho Neto's successor is Jose Eduardo dos Santos, who will hold the position of President at least until the next Congress of MPLA, scheduled for the first half of 1980.

Jose Eduardo dos Santos joined the MPLA in 1961 at the age of 19, having already worked clandestinely among the Luanda student population. Later that same year he went into exile and became Deputy President of the MPLA Youth, based in Leopold-ville (Kinshasa). He was then MPLA's first representative in Brazzaville, and in 1963 he was sent with a group of students for training in Moscow. He graduated as a petroleum engineer in June 1969, and then took a military course in telecommunications. From 1970 to 1973 he was second-in-command of the telecommunications services in MPLA's Second Politico-Military Region (Cabinda). In 1974 he became a member of the provisional readjustment committee on the Northern Front. In the same year he was elected to MPLA's Central Committee and Political Bureau.

After independence on 11 November 1975, he became Minister for Foreign Affairs, and coordinator of MPLA's Foreign Relations Department. He was then made First Deputy Prime Minister, and when this post was abolished in December 1978, he became Planning Minister and head of the newly-created National Planning Commission. He is now 37 years old.

'Farewell, Comrade President...'

THE FOLLOWING IS A SHORTENED VERSION OF THE SPEECH DELIVERED BY COMRADE LUCIO LARA, ON BEHALF OF THE POLITICAL BUREAU OF THE MPLAWORKERS' PARTY, AT THE FUNERAL OF PRESIDENT AGOSTINHO NETO IN LUANDA, 17 SEPTEMBER 1979.

The great figure who has gone from us was not unknown to you, nor to the world. He was born the son of teachers, 57 years ago today, in the village of Kaxikane, less than a hundred kilometres from Luanda. The story of his life is truly the modern history of our People's struggle for Independence and for dignity.

He was a health worker, and succeeded in graduating in medicine. On several occasions he was acquainted with the harsh conditions of Portuguese fascist prisons in his student days. He gained great international prestige which led Amnesty International, in 1961, to nominate

him as their Political Prisoner of the Year.

He understood early on that a struggle only grows in strength through organisation. He took part in various youth and student organisations, and in 1952, with Angolan ship workers, he founded the African S Club, a communications link between Angolan patriots in Portugal and those in Angola who were laying the foundations for the liberation movement, which was to give birth to the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola in 1956. The Shipping Club was already instrumental in denouncing the massacres of February 1953 in Sao Tome.

Always seeking more effective methods of clandestine struggle, in 1958, with Amilcar Cabral, Marcelino dos Santos, and other young people from the former Portuguese colonies, he founded the Anti-Colonialist Movement (MAC). This aimed to create national consciousness among young people in danger of alienation, and also to denounce outside

Portugal the fascist nature of Portuguese colonialism.

After completing his course, he returned to Luanda where, apart from practising medicine, he strated to give impetus to the slogans of the MPLA, which was then being structured. It was not difficult for the colonial henchmen to find out that Agostinho Neto had become a pole of attraction for young and old alike, who, on the pretext of medical treatment, were going to him to prepare the clandestine work of organisation and political mobilisation.

Imprisoned again, he was deported to Lisbon and Cape Verde. The people of Icolo e Bengo demonstrated peacefully against this, only to be the object of violent repression which culminated in massacre. This was the time of the mass imprisonment of all Angolans suspected of political activity. When the MPLA was restructured, Agostinho Neto was

proclaimed Honorary President.

Then came the glorious signal of 4 February, which started a new stage in our liberation struggle. The Luanda prisons were stormed by patriots armed only with machetes, and this sparked off the Angolan people's liberation war.

From the dungeons of Cape Verde and Lisbon, Agostinho Neto went on to a period of restricted residence which, thanks to the cooperation between the MPLA and a group of Portuguese progressives, made it possible to plan his spectacular flight to Morocco. There he met the first guerilla groups who were being trained with the help of the Algerian FLN, and from then onwards he took on the leadership of the struggle and its problems, until he was elected President of the MPLA in December 1962, at the MPLA's First National Conference.

The vicissitudes of a struggle waged under conditions of extreme shortage of material and without any strong support from abroad in no way reduced his unshakeable confidence in success, but on the contrary spurred a mighty effort to supply the guerilla groups in the First Region who were faced with great difficulties in getting arms.

The crises provoked by imperialist manoeuvres in 1963 led President Agostinho Neto to set up the Second Politico-Military Region, in Cabinda. Here brave fighters such as our outstanding hero, Hoji Ya Henda, were

successfully trained.

With his strategic mind, Agostinho Neto soon realised that the First and Second Regions were not sufficient for MPLA to advance the Armed Struggle forcefully. The Third Region was then opened in the centre and east of the country, and this gave fresh vigour to the liberation struggle.

Tirelessly, President Agostinho Neto visited the various military regions, so distant from each other, to encourage the fighters, to see to the supplies situation, to correct negligence, to give impetus to action. "Action, more action, ever more action", was the constant refrain on his lips when he spoke to the guerillas.

The new regions presented new kinds of problems. Repeating rifles and small automatic pistols proved ineffective in the face of the material used by the enemy. Chemical warfare was devastating the people's crops. President Neto realised that a qualitative leap was needed.

The first concern was the men. It was necessary to care for the men,

their development, their training and their political consciousness.

The second concern was the material. More powerful weapons, more effective means; also hoes, machetes, seeds to enable the guerillas and the People who supported them to develop a small-scale, self-sufficient war economy.

Centres for Revolutionary Instruction flourished, and the people started to see the first textbooks, the first medicines and the dawn of a new era. The first forms of People's Power appeared. Thanks to the efforts of President Neto and the confidence he inspired, better weapons and better equipment started to flow to the guerilla bases. The first



Agostinho Neto (seated front) at a meeting in the liberated areas of eastern Angola, 1970

artillery groups successfully entered the theatre of war. Enemy barracks were now attacked with more adequate weapons.

Neto was also an eminent diplomat, who used the truth, political courage and boldness as his weapons. The MPLA won the support of the OAU. And it was the President himself who took an OAU military delegation to visit the liberated areas.

It was during the Second War of National Liberation, after the truce with Portugal in October 1974, that the personality of Dr. Agostinho Neto as a statesman was brought to the attention of the entire world. On the eve of independence the violent South African aggression suffered by the Angolan people led some people to think that the only way the MPLA could safeguard its existence would be for it to accept the proposal mad both by friends and by enemies for collaboration with the puppets who had allied themselves with South Africa and international imperialism. To imperialism the balance of forces seemed favourable - but its calculations failed to take into account the determination of a leader who believed in his people and who was not daunted by the worst of threats.

Fully assuming his functions as Commander-in-Chief, President Agostinho Neto was able to lead the MPLA forces on the road to victory, using with particular sagacity the weaknesses of the enemy and our reserves, strengthened at an opportune moment by the internationalist efforts of the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces.

After the South Africans were driven out, with the country devastated by war, speed was needed in laying the foundations for new economic development to meet the interests of the masses. This was a difficult task in a country wracked by war, without enough technicians to keep all the enterprises functioning, and where at all costs an alienated petty-bourgeoisie was trying to keep the reins of State in its hands. It was a time for great choices. The Third Plenum of the MPLA Central Committee* (October 1976) laid down new lines for development. Expropriations and nationalisations began to transform the economic situation inherited from the colonial period. The bold spirit of our unchallenged leader began to make itself felt in every sphere. There were all kinds of obstacles, but the Revolution did not stop. The factionalist coup attempt left a painful memory which President Agostinho Neto never succeeded in ridding himself of. But the Revolution advanced. It advanced with the audacity of its leader.

Then came the First Congress in December 1977. And with it at last the Party of the Proletariat. A new gain, a bold gain, planned for a long time, but only possible to implement on the anvil of the political, social and economic situation of the first two years of independence.

Unanimously elected President of the MPLA-Workers' Party, decorated with the National Hero Medal. Comrade Agostinho Neto imparted a rapid pace to the building of the new Party, to the Rectification Movement. From the first members to the first cells, from the first cells to the first Party workplace committees, there was a whole process that was going to bear fruit in the restructuring of the youth organisation, the reorganising of the OMA, and the organisation of the first trade unions in UNTA.*

The best path was sought for the national economy and it progressed, slowly, but it progressed. But our leader wanted to go faster, always faster, and this without prejudice to an internationalist attitude towards the liberation struggles, towards other friendly peoples.

Diplomact started to play an active part in accelerating economic development. Cooperation agreements were signed with many countries. Successive goodwill missions were received by President Neto, and the reserved attitude towards Angola shown by some countries was quickly changed to sympathy and cooperation, even with regimes of a different ideology.

Friend Neto, Comrade President, Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Your fidelity to Marxist-Leninist principles will be a living example for our young people and for all Party members. Your concern with the problems of our People will be at the heart of our action. The light of your example will shine forever in the Angolan Nation.

Farewell, friend Neto, farewell, Comrade President.

A luta continua! A vitoria e certa!

UNTA - National Union of Angolan Workers

^{*} The documents from this meeting are available in an English translation from MAGIC, 34 Percy St., W1, price 50p plus postage.

** OMA - Organisation of Angolan Women



Basil Davidson addressing the memorial meeting (Photo - Andrew Wiard, Report)

BRITISH TRIBUTE TO AGOSTINHO NETO

A memorial meeting in memory of Comrade President Agostinho Neto was held in Central Hall, Westminster, on 21 September 1979, organised by the Mozambique, Angola and Guine Information Centre. Over 300 people gathered to hear tributes from Basil Davidson, personal friend of Agostinho Neto, and long-standing supporter of the MPLA; Dr. Yusuf Dadoo, Vice-Chairman of the Revolutionary Council of the African National Congress of South Africa; and other representatives from Africa, and from the British labour movement.

We reproduce here a slightly shortened version of the opening speech made at the meeting by Basil Davidson.

'HE WAS ONE OF THOSE WHO WOULD NOT WAIT UNTIL THE TIMES SHOULD ALTER....WHO BELIEVE THAT MEN MUST MAKE THEIR OWN HISTORY....'

It is easy to speak of what is evil: that is what the television media are doing all the time. It is hard to speak of what is good: and time will have to pass, perhaps, before the nature and the character and the life of Agostinho Neto, whom we mourn today, are told with an eye of history that will measure him as being among the outstanding leaders of human progress in our century. Now we can only celebrate with sorrow - and say, however insufficiently, a little of what he was and did.

Neto became a person who saw into the universals of our world. Perhaps he was always like that: I met him, myself, only in 1962: but even then - aged 38, I believe - he was already like that. He had just escaped from long persecution in fascist Portugal: escaped thanks to good Portuguese comrades, and he arrived by various difficult routes in the capital of the former Belgian Congo - Zaire today - so as to resume his leadership of Angola's movement of national liberation, the MPLA, founded six years earlier.

He could scarcely have come there - 1962 - in a darker moment. Colonial repression inside Angola still raged after the great Luanda rising of February 1961, and countless thousands of Angolans were already dead. But in Zaire, in Kinshasa, where the few surviving leaders of the MPLA had taken refuge from all that blind fury, there raged as well the power and malice of a corrupt neo-colonial government, of a coming dictator called Joseph Desire Mobutu, already in the pay of the CIA, and the Angolan enemies of Angolan liberation, the so-called "Dr" Holden and his mercenary cohorts of the FNLA.

But Neto allowed none of all that to deflect him. Resuming his leading part after long imprisonment, he never left one in any doubt but that he saw beyond those evils and the problems that they caused. Briefly in Kinshasa, and then again in refuge across the Congo river in Brazzaville, he set about rebuilding the MPLA and resuming the struggle inside Angola with the patient certitude, determination and courage that were characteristic of him.

In doing that, he and those who were with him had to confront crushing obstacles, huge discouragements, disasters, betrayals, false starts. I don't know who will ever record and recount the sheer difficulty of that process of struggle. But, in any case, it stands on the record - that he did face all those things, and, never turning aside, tackled them one by one.

And as those bitter years of the 1960s unfolded, with the colonial enemy ever more arrogant, backed by all the powers of the capitalist yorld - and with Angola itself riven by strife and confusion - Neto held on. He added one difficult step to another. With the collective of his trusted comrades - Lucio Lara, Hoji ya Henda, Iko Carreira, others whose names will not be forgotten - he carved a pathway into a different future.

We know the outcome. National Liberation came to the most problematic and difficult of all the territories to be liberated from colonial and racist repression in those years; and it was Agostinho Neto, with the collective of his comrades, who made that possible.

He was a student in Portugal - from 1945, I think it was. As a black man, this meant that he had a highly privileged position. Only a handful of Africans ever got to Lisbon for higher education. He was training to be a physician and pediatrician: and that would be a step to another guarantee of privilege. The Portuguese would accept him - as a Portuguese, not as an African - and he could become part of the colonial

system. The road to a safe and respectable career lay wide open for him: the road that could be followed, perhaps, by only one in every 200,000 of his fellow countrymen. Following that road, he could have pastured in the green fields of security and wealth. And let it not be forgotten that the fascist dictatorship of Portugal was very strong then so strong, indeed, that no-one then living could be sure that he or she would outlast it.

But Neto, most consciously and deliberately, turned his back on that road. He was still a young man, but he already saw ahead to what he had to do. He would use his chance to become a physician: that would be one way to help his people back home. But meanwhile, and at once, he would plunge into the active struggle against racism, fascism, colonialism. So he became, round the end of the 1940s, a leader of Portugal's revolutionary - and therefore sorely persecuted - youth movement. Not just a supporter, a sympathiser: but a leader, a man who led, and led from the front. They put him into prison, once and then again and then again: but nothing they could do to him, and did do to him, could stop him. He held on: and when it was time to form a national movement in Angola - round the middle of the 1950s - he once more led the challenge to a vile and savage regime and state.

You see how he was: he was one of those who would most carefully reckon and calculate the political odds and potentials of any situation he was in - but never the cost of personal involvement. He was one of those who would suffer with those who suffered injustice, resist with those who resisted injustice: who would follow others in that resistance, or if they would not lead, then he would lead himself. He was one of those who would not wait until the times should alter. He was one of those who believe that men must make their own history, no matter how difficult the making.

He had the gifts of good leadership. (Not easy gifts, not gifts often found, and found least of all among those who shout the loudest.) He combined an extraordinary personal modesty with an unbounding readiness to defend, at all costs, and against no matter what opposition, the causes that he had espoused. He spoke little in public, and with no great talent for oratory; and yet there were multitudes to listen to him, and to take confidence and hope from what he told them.

He was a natural leader, if there is such a person: and yet he had no passion for leadership, no grand ambition for himself, no overweening drive for power. I asked him once, back in 1970 in the wilderness of eastern Angola - "the lands at the end of the world", as the Portuguese used to call those plains - I asked him if he didn't regret the loss of his medical work. He said yes, he had enjoyed being a doctor, particularly a doctor for children. "And will you go back to it?" I asked. He shrugged with a laugh and replied - we were sitting, as I recall, on a fallen treetrunk and waiting for the arrival of a courier along the bush trails from the frontier with Zambia - "Oh yes, but first we must finish this job".

And they were words, I think, which meant simply what they said. The job then - and what a job- was to fight through the liberation war and win independence; and any ending of it, then, seemed a grim long way ahead. And even then we didn't know the worst that was going to happen, that had still to happen: the betrayals by Chipenda and others, the ferocity unleashed by the FNLA and UNITA, the invasions from South Africa.

That particular job was duly finished, in 1975 with the proclamation of the Republic, in March 1976 with the final defeat of the racist invaders. Neto's own health by then was sorely undermined; but he set about the next job, which was to put the new Republic on its feet and to make sure that the foundations stood firm.

Political insight, human kindness, unfailing courage: those are the qualities that his comrades and friends looked for in him, and found, and will remember him by. Even in the harshest moments, they were qualities that were not lacking.

One incident, if I may....

Late in October 1975, you remember, the South African army invaded in strength; and they did this in combination with the mercenary stooges of the FNLA and UNITA who were already hammering at the northern gates of Luanda, where the new government stood at bay.

In Angola then there was no force that could halt the armoured columns of the South African invasion. Contemptuously, the racists drove northward from the frontier of Namibia, sweeping aside such resistance as the fighters of the MPLA could offer; and that was little. The guerrilla units of the MPLA were already widely spread. They had no regular formations, no armoured cars, no tanks, no artillery. They fought hard, but it was not enough. In Luso, for example, they converted a tractor into some kind of primitive armoured car, and two MPLA commanders died in battle before the third withdrew with the few troops that remained to him.

That was the moment when Neto and his comrades asked Castro and Cuba to send troops to help them, troops and good artillery; and Castro and Cuba, as we know, did not fail to answer that appeal. In one of the greatest acts of revolutionary solidarity in this century, the Cubans came with effectiveness and speed, asking nothing in return - and how rare is that! - but they had to come at the last moment. For the MPLA considered, politically, that they should not ask for international aid in fighting men until the independence of Angola was proclaimed, and the government of Angola could act as a sovereign state. So they delayed until the hour of independence, during the small hours of the day of November 11 - and with the racist invaders, day by day, drawing nearer.

On November 5, in Luanda, a crucial meeting took place between the MPLA leadership and the diplomatic representatives of Cuba in Luanda. One of those Cubans told me about that meeting. At one point someone said to Neto: "It will now be touch and go. For what will happen, do you



Left: Joao Webba, Angolan representative to the International Coffee Organisation, addresses the meeting. Right: the audience stands for the Internationale. (Photos-Andrew Wiard, Report).



think, if the South Africans get into Luanda, the South Africans and their mercenary stooges?" And Neto said, in his usual calm way...:"If they can get here, they will kill all of us they find. But that will make no difference. We shall die, but the MPLA will not die. Nothing will kill the MPLA."

And in this, I think, he was speaking out of his most profound conviction. Nothing, he was convinced, would be able - ever - to kill the cause of human liberation - here in Angola, or anywhere else. Neither crime nor corruption, neither force nor weariness. The future is with us: the people will win.

And I suppose that this is the thought that we should think of him now. He has given his life before his time: but not for any kind of defeat. He lived to see his life's cause crowned with the emergence of a free republic. He lived to ensure that this republic, emerging from so many shadows, should at once turn in solidarity to others, still in need, and give them the help that Angola could now give, and does now give. He lived to see the future begin to open out not only for his own people, but for all peoples cursed by racism, reaction, and the inheritance of cruelty and greed. He lived as well to see this life's work guaranteed in its continuity. He knew, when he was dying, there in the darkness, that the cause of liberation was left in good hands. He knew that Angola's progress and freedom were no longer in doubt. Bad times will come, the racists are strong and full of malice – and he warned against that till the last week of his life... but the edifice of independence is strong, the building stands firm, the foundations are sure.

The struggle goes on A luta continua
But we shall win A vitoria e certa
Long live the cause of freedom
Long live the MPLA