

# Chicago Defender

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## Angola poverty

LUANDA, ANGOLA (UPI)—You won't find an African taxi driver in this capital city or in any other major Angolan cities.

Nobody seems to know why this should be so, and the Portuguese appear surprised at the question.

"You see them (Africans) riding as passengers, don't you?" one said.

True, and you see them as truck drivers and driving fast, expensive sports cars, as shopkeepers, hotel clerks, newspaper editors and town councilmen—and in poverty.

In this Portuguese colony you also see whites as waitresses, chambermaids in hotels—and poor.

Though no official statistics are available, an estimated two to five per cent of the shantytown residents outside Luanda are white, a resident of this white-ruled country said.

"The presence of the European in Africa is as real as the presence of the blacks in the United States. No one there thinks of getting rid of them," said Baltazar Rebello De Souza, newly-appointed overseas conversation in Lobito, an hour's flying time south.

"So the solution to the problem is to have a mixed society."

That isn't everybody's answer. In March, 1961, the town of Carmona in the Uige District of Northern Angola came under heavy anti-Portuguese guerrilla attack to begin the first of Portugal's African "wars".

At that time it was a dusty town of 8,600 persons. For its defense against the guerrillas, the city was awarded Portugal's highest honor, the collar of the tower and swords, which can be

seen on the village coat of arms.

Today 20,000 people, mostly Africans, live and work in the town and on the dark red soil of the coffee plantations, which provide the principal crop in the area and Angola's main export. Some of the town's population growth came from villagers moving from the thick forests because of guerrilla attacks that still take place in the region.

But, said Victorine De Fonte, an African farmer and member of the local consultative counsel, "mostly they come because of the work available."

In the first three weeks of November, according to official figures, there were 67 instances of guerrilla activity, leaving two soldiers and six civilians dead and 20 guerrillas killed. Most of the action took place a few miles south of Carmona.

Troops of "Cacadores" (hunters), including some former guerrillas, constantly patrol the area and villages have organized militia. A network of uniformed civil defense guards, skilled and highly trained, also operate in the area.

Both Portuguese and Diplomats living in Carmona consider the guerrilla activity light, consisting mainly of isolated villages or ambushes of a truckload of coffee plantation workers.

"Terrorism is not the problem," De Fonte said. "The problem we have is getting money for investment in our crops and the things we need."

One of the charges commonly leveled against the Portuguese presence in Africa is that they are

exploiting the African. Certainly there is discrimination, but it is not readily observable in Luanda.

The African and white can be seen eating in the same restaurants, lunching in the same cafes, buying in the same shops and living in the same street. Except in purely African townships, they go to the same schools, dressed in identical white smocks.

A resident diplomat said, "unlike South Africa, if a white man hits a black man here, he'll get hit back. And he'll get a fair break from the police."

Appearances are not all they seem. In the African village of Calema outside of Nova Lisboa, the village school is built of ochre color sod brick and thatch, and desks and stools are piles of dirt baked in the sun. Less than a mile away in Vila Brava, a mixed community of Cabo Verdeans and Portuguese, the school is of cement and tile and the desks of wood.

It is obvious, even to the casual viewer, that the 390,000 Europeans and 126,000 "Mesticos" are generally better off than the 5,157,000 Africans.

But it is equally obvious that the African has, and can, advance. One sees an African commanding a mixed troop of black and white soldiers; one meets an African farmer who is on his city council; one sees school children of all ages walking, talking, laughing and playing together.

As for making a comparison with South Africa and Rhodesia a Luanda journalist said, "their way is not our way."

### PUBLICATIONS ABOUT ANGOLA

The following books tell the true story of ANGOLA and her courageous people.

#### ANGOLA IN ARMS

Information organ of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola

#### ANGOLA: FIVE CENTURIES OF PORTUGUESE EXPLOITATION

by Dr. Americo Boavida

#### IN THE EYE OF THE STORM ANGOLA'S PEOPLE

by Basil Davidson

#### PORTUGAL IN AFRICA

by James Duffy

#### THE REVOLUTION IN ANGOLA

by Don Barnett and Roy Harvey

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AN OPEN LETTER

Dear Brother Sengstacke:

In the January 12th issue of the Defender you printed an article from the UPI that was damaging to the cause of African Liberation, because it distorted the condition of our oppressed Brothers and Sisters in Angola. It can only confuse Black people in a period when we need clarity of analysis and militant action.

1. The article refers to "African 'wars'" and "terrorists" but it fails to point out that the heroic Angolan people are engaged in an anti-colonial peoples war of national liberation. Somehow implicit in the article there is no clear right and wrong associated with an oppressor state being in Africa after hundreds of years of plunder and exploitation. Moreover, the United Nations has voted that all colonies should be granted their freedom as soon as possible, so Portugal voted to declare Angola as part of Portugal and no longer a colony. Only 7% of the population is European, but the Portuguese contend that their claim is legitimate. Black people must stand united against this outrageous situation and demand that Angola be free.

2. The article indicates that there are Africans going to school with whites, eating in restaurants, riding in taxi cabs, etc. But the article fails to clarify that this is the "assimilado" policy of the Portuguese that requires Africans to be "white" in cultural behavior in order to have these privileges. This is 1% of the African population. He must speak Portuguese, wear European clothes, be a Christian, and arrange his home like a European. Only after a person passes an inspection is he considered "safe" and awarded the dubious honor of being an assimilado and granted citizenship. This is the award given for cultural suicide.

3. The article refers to Victorine De Fonte, an Angolan Black capitalist who is collaborating with the Portuguese invaders. This is a good example of what results from his class position. De Fonte, like David Rockefeller, whose class interests he identifies with, feels that investment is the answer to improving conditions in Angola. This is exactly what would happen for the imperialists and their followers like De Fonte, but the conditions of the Black masses would deteriorate rapidly. Over 88% of African workers are in agriculture making \$10 monthly, providing surplus value (profits) at the rate of 800%.

4. The article quotes a Portuguese official as saying, "the presence of the European in Africa is as real as the presence of the blacks in the United States. No one thinks of getting rid of them." This quote is left without any clarifying analysis, only to indicate that the so-called terrorists have developed. The fact that the Europeans have invaded Africa and raped and plundered for centuries, as compared to Blacks brought to the USA as chattle slaves, and now wage slaves forced to sell their labor power to the profit hungry capitalists is not made clear. Blacks in the USA have always had to face the threat of extinction by the most irrational racist elements of the ruling class in this society. Even Abe Lincoln sought to solve the race problem by sending Blacks back to Africa.

5. The article ends with a statement that indicates that Portugal has a different approach to the situation that Rhodesia and South Africa. The fact is that Portugal is a direct semi-colony of Western industrial society with the poorest, most illiterate population in Europe (40%), a per capita income of \$380.00, with 43% of the population in agricultural work. Portugal is a conduit for Western imperialism and must be recognized as a shield for over 30 USA corporations. Gulf has the largest investment (over \$50 million) and paid Portugal over \$40 million in taxes in 1972.

In order that your readers can have access to correct information, this position is being sent from the African Liberation Support Committee, P.O. Box 5747, Nashville, Tn. We trust that Black people in Chicago can use pro-Africa materials on the freedom struggles in Angola.

Thank you,

ALSC Research & Development