

ANGOLA'S NEW PRESIDENT

Comrade Jose Eduardo dos Santos, 37-year-old son of a Luanda bricklayer, was elected unanimously as President of the MPLA - Workers' Party and Head of State of the People's Republic of Angola by the Central Committee of the Party.

Under Party statutes the new President will come up for re-election at the next Party Congress which is to be held in 1980. Presidency of the Party, which is the equivalent to the post of Secretary-General of the Communist parties, entails the office of Head of State and Head of Government under the Angolan Constitution.

At his inaugural address Angola's new leader, who has been a leading militant and Political Bureau member for many years, stressed that he would be continuing Comrade Neto's work of building the Party, quaranteeing its unity and ideological purity, basing its membership on the working class with a significant membership from the peasantry, and ensuring that the workers rise to Party leadership.

President dos Santos stated: "It is not easy to replace Agostinho Neto. In fact it seems to me to be impossible. But it has to be done".

President dos Santos reaffirmed the Workers' Party commitment to non-alignment, friendly relations with all countries based on the principles of independence and national sovereignty, and reaffirmed the validity of all existing accords and agreements. He pledged the continuation of material and moral support to the liberation movements, especially in Southern Africa. He emphasised that Angola's internationalist duties would be carried forward. On national questions he reaffirmed that the changes in the state apparatus started by Comrade Neto would be continued "with the aim of guaranteeing the protection of each and every citizen, the security and stability of our borders, the improving of the economic and financial situation, an increase in production, and productivity at work; and the raising of our people's living standards".

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Comrade dos Santos was born in a Luanda shanty town in 1942, the son of a simple bricklayer. He grew up in the impoverished and struggling working class conditions of Portuguese colonial rule. A bright young schoolboy, he was stirred by feelings of patriotism in his teens. He joined the MPLA in 1961 and worked under illegal conditions in Luanda. Like many of our Soweto generation he resolved with a group of his friends to leave Angola in order to undergo training with the Movement which had been driven into exile after the Luanda Uprising of 4th February, 1961.

Driven out of Zaire by Mobuto in 1963, the MPLA set up headquarters at Brazzaville in the People's Republic of Congo. Comrade dos Santos had emerged as one of the most brilliant and dedicated representative in Brazzaville. He received his military training and was then singled out by the leadership to undergo study of a different kind. He thus spent six years in the Soviet Union where he graduated as a petroleum engineer. Once he had graduated he underwent further military training and became, on returning to Africa, the head of the MPLA's communications machinery which co-ordinated links with all the movement's battle fronts.

During the difficult period of 1973/74 when splittist elements attempted to oust Comrade Neto from leadership he played a decisive role to thwart those plans. Steeled in the struggle, he had emerged as one of the most steadfast and dedicated of the MPLA's new generation of leaders. His clarity as one of the Movement's leading Marxist-Leninist theoreticians, and as a firm and principled patriot and revolutionary was established during those difficult years.

After independence he became Angola's first Foreign Minister. Later he became first Vice-Premier and gained experience in the day-to-day running of the government. At the 1977 Party Congress he was elected onto the Central Committee and Political Bureau of the Party. He was appointed Secretary for Economic Development and Planning

in the Party structures. In December, 1978, he became Minister of Planning in the Government.

It is immediately apparent that even at such a young age he has had wide experience in the crucial fields of Foreign Policy and diplomacy, Economic planning and the strategy of party-building. An excellent speaker, popular amongst the people, immensely respected in the Party, he has great leadership qualities and is seen as a firm leader in the Neto mould who is capable of uniting the Angolan nation behind him.

Lucia Lara, the Central Committee Secretary for Organisation and Political/Ideological Education, Propaganda and Information, who swore in Angola's second President, as he swore in Dr. Neto on November 11, 1975, described President dos Santos as "The symbol of the vitality and youthful revolutionary spirit of our revolution. A childhood in the suburbs of Luanda taught him early on that the oppressive regime would only disappear after a bitter struggle. For this the children of his generation prepared themselves. The liberation movement brought this youth to adulthood. Youth became the vehicle for national consciousness and our young people became educators; educators of their parents; of those old people who had become resigned and no longer believed in the possibility of overthrowing the oppressor".

Since the funeral of Comrade Neto, the workers from factories and farms throughout Angola have begun a production drive to increase output in honour of Comrade Neto and his standing order: "THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF THE PEOPLE!"

ANGOLA'S CAUSE IS THE CAUSE OF NETO.
ETERNAL GLORY TO COMRADE NETO.
VIVA COMRADE DOS SANTOS!

*Corr: Page 26, Second Para, 5th Line.

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