

Refugees from North Angola who told us of these developments also told a particularly horrid tale of 15 of their fellow villagers being decapitated, their heads being placed on sticks in the village square. The Africans were told that if Kasavubu was really their King he would come to their village and restore the lives of the decapitated.

HOW MUCH ORGANISATION there was, for either the well-known events in Luanda of February 1961, or in North Angola in March 1961, is not known. The UPA says it arranged for the March rebellion by organising mass defections of Africans from the Portuguese army on 15 March (to provide a military nucleus and arms) and that this was timed with instructions to labourers to begin the burning of plantations and the assaults on Portuguese plantation owners. The MPLA argues that the events of both February and March were essentially spontaneous, that given the impact of Congo independence and the most recent Portuguese repressions and atrocities the people were ready for a mass rising with very little leadership.

At any rate, when the uprising occurred the UPA was established in Leopoldville, ready to provide direction to what turned into a continuing rebellion, while the MPLA was located far away from the hostilities in Conakry. It was not until six months later, in October 1961, that the MPLA was able to set up headquarters in Leopoldville.

The MPLA says that it now has about 1,000 men under arms.

A conclusive assessment of the relative strengths or the future prospects of the major Angolan nationalist parties is virtually impossible. What seems depressingly clear at the moment, from discussions with numerous Angolan nationalists as well as with outsiders who are familiar with the situation, is that none of the Parties commands influence, as a Party, over even close to a majority of the Angolan population, three-fourths of which lives south and east of the war-affected areas.

The UPA claims to have mass support among the African population as a whole. It is certain that it is known and supported by the overwhelming majority of the Kikongo-speaking peoples who live in the war areas and who compose most of the refugee population. Some who admit that the depth of its support in other regions is much less clear, claim that as the African Party it will genuinely become the mass national party once it is possible to come into contact with the rest of Angola.

IT IS SUGGESTED, however, that many different factors will be important if the rest of Angola is opened to political party activity: (1) The emergence of a variety of new and regional parties; (2) The possibility that the UPA will be conclusively stamped as a Protestant party (roughly 500,000 Angolans are Protestants, 1,500,000 Catholics, the rest having no western religion); (3) The possibility that the UPA will be effectively accused of being an exile party whose leaders have not suffered the brutality of Portuguese colonialism; (4) The problems which the UPA will have in communicating with peoples of other Angolan regions because its leadership allegedly speaks only Kikongo or French (because they had their schooling in the Congo).

The popular support of the UPA is not significantly augmented in joining with the PDA. The leaders of the PDA say openly that their own support is limited to the Zombo peoples which live in the Bakongo regions. The PDA, originally called "Aliazo", was established as an alliance of the Zombo peoples, an important group known for its skill as merchants and as farmers.

What is clear is that the war in Angola is still being prosecuted by the Angolans over great obstacles. The Portuguese economy, based very much on what it has been able to extract from Angola, cannot stand the serious diminution of this base when simultaneously there is greatly increased expenditure for its army. An early collapse would pose many urgent questions for the Angolan nationalist organisations. The divisions within the movement may appear much more serious to the outsider than they will prove to be when the time arrives for beginning the transition to an independent Angola and when unity of purpose and action will be even more fundamental for dealing with the immense issues of constitutional structure and economic development. ●

The Schoolboy A STORY

JAMES J. RAVELL

YES, LIFE HERE in this country at the southern tip of the continent was hell. So thought the 15-year old schoolboy as he left the library with a frown

At school he was encouraged by all his teachers to read widely. That was how one improved one's command of a language, they said. Officially, this country had two languages, but there were also others spoken here. He was fairly good at his mother tongue, but had difficulty with the other official language. That was because his primary education was received in a district where his home language was almost the only language spoken. He was now, however, at a high school in a different part of the country, near a big city, where the medium was the other language. He realised that he had quite a lot of leeway to make up. That was why he had resolved to read as much as possible, especially books in his second language.

But he wanted to improve his knowledge of that language not only to fare better in the examinations or to follow the lessons more fully. Did not some of his teachers say at the start of the term that this language was also spoken in many other countries? Did they not say further that to a great part of the world it was almost an unofficial international language? Did it not have a rich literature? Was it not the language of Science, Philosophy and other learned studies? True, his mother tongue was also important—else why its official recognition? True, it was taught as a compulsory subject in most schools, but often, as was the case

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at his present school. only as a "second language". Furthermore, it too had a literary tradition, not very old, of course, and there were already some scientific books that had appeared in it. His mother tongue was a young language and one did not know what lay in store for it. Coming to think of it, how many of the novelists and poets now writing in his home language were known outside his country? Frankly, he did not know. He had heard it said once that his home language was hardly of any use outside this country. On the other hand, it was said that with a knowledge of the other language one could go far in the world and be understood by many. That was why he was eager to become more proficient in it.

THAT TOO WAS WHY he had gone to the public library in his home town that afternoon. The schools had a short holiday and he was home again. He did not want to remain idle; he wanted to read. It was his first visit to the library. He had always known about its existence, but it was situated in the heart of town and he lived some distance away. His people did not live in the centre of town. They were concentrated in certain areas away from the centre, mostly on the outskirts. It was said that his people could not afford to live in the central portion of town. Plots and houses were much more expensive there. But there were in his neighbourhood many houses that looked much better than those in town. He knew of one man, a builder and close friend of his father, who owned a string of really expensive houses in their area. He knew of other rich people, like his father's friend, in other towns who had also to live in special areas.

He personally knew why his people had to live in special areas. But as a school-boy he was not to speak about such things. But surely, he could think about them? In fact, he and some of his class-mates who were taking History sometimes spoke about such matters on the playgrounds. Their History teacher always said that one should speak one's mind. Young people should practise a healthy scepticism, he once said. They should not just accept unquestioningly everything they heard or read. That principle they of course applied to their History teacher as well. They usually discussed the things he said in class amongst themselves afterwards. That was why he knew the reason, the real one, for his people living in certain areas. It was politics.

Yes, politics, they—school-boys—were not supposed to know anything about. But his teachers were no fools. They did not concern themselves only with rushing through the syllabuses; they were not concerned only with getting them through the examinations. They were, in the words of the History teacher, dedicated to the task of educating the youth. Yes, those were the words he used. He had said further that at a high school the child's intellectual horizons should be broadened, that the pupil should be inspired and helped to develop all his talents to the full. Those were fine words. Yes, fine words that inspired them, at least he knew they inspired him personally. At the beginning of the year the same teacher had said that history—the story of man's past—should be studied in order to see, amongst other things, what factors made for human progress

and what retarded it and that the former should be stressed. He had added that the study of the past should provide an insight into the present conditions, not only in their country but in the whole world. Students should therefore also take an active interest in the things that were going on around them.

WAS THAT NOT POLITICS, one of the class, not he, heaven forbid, had asked. What was politics? the teacher had asked in turn. He had gone further. Wasn't politics merely future history and history past politics? Politics was concerned with present social relations and history with past social relations. It was not possible to say where history stopped and where politics began for both were the same thing, only there was a time lapse between the two. He who wanted to know more about life and men, his teacher had concluded, should study both.

Strange teacher, this History teacher of theirs. He seemed to have a ready answer to most questions. At his old school teachers never talked like that. They were always afraid to touch on politics. He too had thought that it was something forbidding, sometimes horrible until he came to his new school. But seriously, weren't the teachers here, more outspoken than others, treading on dangerous ground? He remembered having read some time ago of the dismissal of two teachers for participating in politics outside the school. They were staunch critics of the present government, he knew. Only the other week the head of education in their province had referred to "agitators in schools" who would be dealt with. Weren't his teachers in danger? Shouldn't they be more cautious? Their History teacher was more vulnerable than the others for he was one of them; he did not belong to the governing group that enjoyed all the rights and privileges in the land. It was probably teachers like him that the education chief had in mind.

But what about the other teachers? Some of them were from another country; some, however, were born here. They all belonged to the privileged section. Strangely enough, all these people who were now at the head of affairs had come from outside. In a sense they were all foreigners. But one had to go back into history to see the truth of this, of course. These other teachers did not share the views of the present government. Their ideas were different. They thought like the History teacher. They were therefore on their side.

Of course, those of them who were from another country, another continent had a different background. In the outside world traditions were different; people did not generally look down on persons like him. But some again were born in this country. And yet they had the right ideas. One should be proud of them. He and his classmates had already discussed this matter. These teachers were fighting against injustice. They had the courage of their convictions. They not only proclaimed but also openly practised the principle of the inherent equal worth and dignity of all mankind. That was why they accepted teaching posts at school where the pupils, in accordance with government policy, all belonged to the under-privileged section. That was also why their history teacher said that he was happy to work with such people. They were real human beings, he said

once. He was indeed proud to have such teachers. He looked up to them and always followed their good advice.

But this time he came off badly by following their good advice. Yes, his thoughts had been drifting. He was picking up the thread again. His teachers had advised him—all of them—to make good use of the vacation by visiting educational institutions like art galleries, libraries etc. He had walked into the building

that was marked in great letters: PUBLIC LIBRARY. He had gone straight to the shelves. There were other people there, also children. He noticed that some of them stared at him. He knew why. He did not bother about that. He was becoming quite used to such stares already. However, when after some time he had approached the lady at the desk he was politely told that the library was not meant for persons like him. It was exclusively for the use of the "other section."

Things I Don't Like

BESSIE HEAD

*I am Black.
Okay?
Hot sun and the geographical set-up
Made me Black;
And through my skin
A lot of things happen to me
THAT I DON'T LIKE.
And I wake each morning
Red murder in my eyes
'Cause some crook's robbed me again,
Taken what little I had right out of my hands
With the whole world standing by
And doing nothing
Okay?*

*Don't want your sympathy, brother,
Keep it. Keep it.
No wait. Give it to my enemies,
They'll need it.
I'm Black so I don't want your sympathy.
Okay?*

*Don't care. I don't care.
But this evening is kind of beautiful,
All soft and warm
And I feel mad lonely
Right in the hollow of the stomach.
And birds are flying home
With sunset on their wings
And everything's wrong with me
And I don't care,
And some bitch woman with dull brown eyes
Fries eggs and polony
For the fourth successive night,
Eggs and polony for supper,
And I don't know when last I had a woman.
The way I feel—so sick,
Never want a woman again
And I don't care
Lord, but the night is good
And the stars are hot green lights
Exploding and exploding
And everywhere there's kids and men and women
But I'm hanging around with nothing but hate,
Hate so bad that I don't want your sympathy.
Okay?*

*Why must they rob me,
Can't count the number that robbed me,
Why? They took all I got,
Even dignity.
Then they threw something at my feet
And I looked down. It was me.
My labour. My heart. My life
Shattered; and I was no more.
While the thieves walked on laughing
And no one said a word—
Okay?*

*But you don't know me.
The kind of man I am
Enough for you to see I'm Black.
Poor boy, you say. He's so simple,
And sweet.
But you. It's you that robs me
And I don't know how to fight you
A thousand million thieves;
Do you wonder I hate you? And say;
TO DAMN HELL WITH YOU ALL.
Good, bad and sympathisers—
Okay?*

*Look at this crazy little kid,
Dirty face.
Grinning as though life is good.
Don't know nothing kid. It's terrible.
Huh? Give you a penny. Get. Scram.
Don't look at me like that kid,
'Cause what I am is inside me,
A heart that loves fiercely, without hope,
'Cause tomorrow is the same as yesterday,
And signs all round say
NIE BLANKES; WHITES ONLY please.
And I go in back doors
And still I'm robbed.
Do you think I'm the kind of man
To stand around forever and be robbed?*

*Oh no.
Today is my day.
Going to get back tit-for-tat,
All you stole.
Going to fight you till you or I
Lie smashed and bleeding dead
And don't care who dies,
You or I,
But going to fight—
OKAY?*