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RELIGION AND POLITICS IN ANGOLA: THE CHURCH,
THE COLONIAL STATE AND THE EMERGENCE OF
ANGOLAN NATIONALISM, 1940-1961¹

BY

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Luanda, 19.10.1975: Holden Roberto has announced that he will enter Luanda today. He's asked the populace to remain calm. Yesterday his planes dropped leaflets, pictures of Holden with the caption GOD RULES IN HEAVEN HOLDEN RULES ON EARTH...²

[Religion] is in everything. The movement cadres are steeped in religiosity, whether Catholic or Protestant. And not only those of the movement. Take any party. [...] A party is a church. So that is why you think those at the top should criticise themselves on their own, like the priest and the sacristan, who only in the sacristy are accused of stealing their lovers, because if they said it in public the believers would become sceptics.³

The history of Angolan nationalism, like that of nationalism in many African countries, is closely tied to the history of Christian churches and missions. Angolan leaders such as Agostinho Neto, Holden Roberto and Jonas Savimbi all had, in one way or another, ties with the church.⁴ Even more evident is the role played by the church as social and political institution during the colonial period. In this paper I examine the impact of the church on early nationalist feelings and later political movements in Angola. My object is not so much to trace the social trajectory of historical nationalist figures as to examine the various ways in which the church both encouraged and impeded the development of an anti-colonialist, at times nationalist culture. Prior to looking at the Angolan situation though, a few theoretical considerations on the relations between missions and nationalism will set this particular case in a wider perspective.

The missionary enterprise was ambiguous and diverse in the way it proceeded into the African continent, sometimes before, sometimes alongside, and sometimes after colonial powers. At the same time as it was a product of the Enlightenment,⁵ it developed in a context which led many missionaries to be very critical of their own society: what the latter sought to build in Africa was not a carbon copy of Western societies which many of them saw as corrupted by mammon and the delights of materialism, and which tended to lose their spiritual basis in the midst of heavy industrialisation, but rather a new 'Kingdom of God' in which Christian beliefs and practices would be respected. It would be misleading therefore to consider that the missionaries' first and foremost historical responsibility has been to reproduce the signs and symbols of colonial domination. Can we for all that consider them (or some of them) as the 'spiritual fathers' of African nationalism?

Missionaries and sorcerer's apprentices:

In an historical summary of the 'Igreja Evangélica do Sudoeste de Angola' (IESA), the church that stemmed from the 'Alliance Missionnaire Evangélique Suisse' (AME, former 'Mission Philafricaine en Angola'), Eliseu Simeão, its current president, touched upon the question of the succession of the mission. He argued in very strong terms that it was time for the mission to 'die' and give way to an autonomous church, or rather that it was time for the missionaries to realise that this dramatic change was irreversibly under way:

Autonomy is an inalienable fact [sic]. If missionaries do not implement it, it will be done without them. The missionary is no longer a pioneer who takes it upon himself to explore or conquer. It is rather the opposite: he must put on a humble spirit, and be a simple servant. If a mission has been successful and has founded a church, if its members have professed their faith, then it will have to fade away and die of its own will.⁶

One of the striking features of this short quote is that the issue of the transition between the mission and an autonomous church still seemed to be a matter for concern when the text was written, i.e. in 1982. But ten years earlier, Dr. Bréchet, head of the AME in Kalukembe between 1942 and 1972, had written about this question in quite different terms. For the missionary, the transition had been a smooth and successful process:

The maturity of the Church in relation to the sometimes heavy organism of the Mission is also a matter for gratitude. This autonomy was not acquired abruptly and was not imposed by any political factor. It was the fruit of the continuous

labour of the Spirit of God. [...] In 1960, representatives of the communities are urged to attend the executive of the [missionary] Field and become more fully aware of the inner functioning of the œuvre [des rouages intérieurs de l'œuvre]. The integration that is achieved is devoid of any spirit of competition. It is characterised by a true brotherly communion.⁷

The differences in outlook and tone between the missionary and the Angolan pastor are both striking and revealing. Whereas for the former the transition clearly had not yet taken place in 1982, or at least not in a satisfying manner, for the latter it was a smooth and 'brotherly' process, already long accomplished in 1972. Besides, the missionary's insistence on the apolitical character of the process seems to hide a feeling of unease: the nature of the transition, and of the potential confrontation between missionaries and Angolan pastors on this issue is precisely political.⁸ And despite the stress Bréchet puts on the smoothness of the process, one gets a contrary impression reading pastor Simeão's words: autonomy is still spoken of as something yet to occur, the missionary has to be reminded that he should stay (or become) 'humble' in spirit, that his role is that of a 'servant,' and he must finally come to grips with the fact that the times of the explorer-missionary are long gone. These elements, anecdotal though they may seem, lead on to important theoretical issues.

The missionary phenomenon in Africa was a constantly changing one, and it presents a different face depending on the period that one chooses to focus on. Thus, if one bears in mind that '[...] authentic African appropriations [are] the key to African Church history in the twentieth century,'⁹ there is little doubt that missions and the missionary perspective in the mid-twentieth century were quite strikingly different to that prevailing one century earlier, and that Christianity in Africa was becoming more African. Mudimbe for example gives a theoretical account of this shift in perspective. From approximately the middle of the twentieth century onwards Christian theology and practices in Africa experienced a process of 'indigenisation':

Gradually, official policies shifted from the initial step of adaptation, one that insisted on the Africanization of some external aspects (music, hymns, etc.), to an examination of the content of Christianity in an African setting. New premises established a completely different perspective: the 'pagan culture' is considered as an abandoned field in which God's signs already exist.¹⁰

Although largely welcome when not called for by African intellectuals, this important step gradually appeared to them as nothing more than what it really meant: the concepts of adaptation and indigenisation still contained within themselves the 'seeds of perpetual Western superiority and domination.'¹¹ Hence another step was necessary for an

African Christianity to emerge that would do justice to African beliefs, traditions and philosophies. This step necessitated a thorough rejection of the missionaries' and anthropologists' perspective on Africa and Africans, and it allowed what Mudimbe dubs a 'theology of incarnation' to emerge. Its premises were: 'negritude and black personality as expressions of an African civilization, African history with its own symbols as a preparation for Christianity, and finally the experience of slavery, exploitation, and colonization as signs of the suffering of God's chosen ones.'¹² Rather than the precise content of these new theological outlooks, it is the attitude of missionaries in relation to this process that is relevant here, that is the way in which they responded to what ultimately amounted to no less than a take-over of the spiritual and material initiative within African Christianity.

This transition was all but an easy move, and missionaries did not always welcome it,¹³ especially since it ultimately meant that their presence in Africa was no longer necessary, or at least that they should completely rethink its rationale as well as its practicalities:

It would be inaccurate to pretend that most missionaries supported the new African perspective. The Church's official policies in the late 1950s and early 1960s were as confusing as those of the colonial powers. Despite the fact that the Church had trained most of the nationalist leaders and intellectuals, and also despite widely held doubts concerning the Church's commitment to the principles of Western supremacy in Africa, many a missionary did not welcome the outcome of ideologies of otherness and did not at all like doctrines of African independence. Besides political fears, there was the feeling that these new theories were opening a new era and meant the end of missionary initiatives in Africa.¹⁴

A parallel is clearly established here between theological moves towards independence within Christian churches in Africa and political ideologies that promoted African nationalism and laid the basis for the fight against colonial powers. According to Mudimbe's argument, it would be no historical coincidence if the struggle for the establishment of autonomous churches and the more general struggle for national independence from colonial powers developed in roughly the same period: since both missionaries and colonialists shared the same intellectual framework, emancipation from both went hand in hand. Missionaries set up a process that gradually grew out of their control, in the same way as the sorcerer's apprentice rapidly became overcome by the activity of his brooms and the magician's cave filled up with water because he had tried to use a magic formula whose effect he could not control.

The problem with such an argument is, paradoxically, that it nearly fits too well: nationalist awareness grew simultaneously within churches and within the colonies as a whole, and both types of struggle fed off each other. But missions and colonisation are seen here as two sides

of the same coin, and this view is simplistic in that it implies that the history of Christianity and that of colonialism developed not only according to the same pattern, but at the same pace. Both processes did not have the same rhythm, however: many missions and churches started to become 'African' as early as the 1940s, some were still largely 'Western' well into the 1960s and 1970s, and most mission societies were founded in order not only to bring Christianity to Africans, but also to 'build' truly African churches. Besides, Western missionaries needed to rely on African auxiliaries to 'spread the word of God,' and in this debate the voice of these many African evangelists who greatly contributed to the development of Christianity in Africa has too often been left unheard. Their influence was probably greater than has been acknowledged so far, and their history remains to be done. Finally, the processes of indigenisation were different depending on whether one looks at missions from the grass-root level or from that of the missionary hierarchy. Hastings for example argues that in the case of the grass-root Catholic church, 'Africanisation was not possible or meaningful [after the first wave of accession to independence] for the simple reason that it had largely taken place before 1960. Only the external priest hurrying on a motor cycle would still probably be white.'¹⁵ Just as missionaries' attitudes towards the colonial enterprise were extremely diverse and heterogeneous, so, too, were their views on the emergence of autonomous churches and on the political independence of African countries. And one should not forget that if missionaries at times appeared very radical in their dealings with colonial authorities and in their support of nationalist movements, it was due as much to their own beliefs and political orientations as to the different political forces between which they were caught.¹⁶ As Ranger has shown in the case of so-called independent religious movements, it is important to remember that the political horizon of Christian churches was not limited to the colonial state; they were also, and maybe prominently enshrined in properly indigenous historical, social and political dynamics:

[...] the politics in which such movements are imbricated are by no means solely or even mainly responses to colonial political economy and culture; they are also very much the politics of contestation between African groupings [...] themselves. Moreover, such movements have their own politics in the sense that they generate power and flows of patronage which are eminently worth contesting for.¹⁷

Ultimately, then, by centering the analysis on missions and missionaries alone, one runs the risk of losing sight of the long-lasting historical trends that influenced their action in the 'field.' In a sense, the

theoretical conclusions one can draw from this historical evidence echo some of the arguments that Ernst Troeltsch, a contemporary of Max Weber's who followed up on and somewhat criticised the latter's well-known research on the *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, formulated about the contribution of Protestantism to modernity. Troeltsch contended that, whatever role Protestantism had in the making of European modernity, it was 'all but homogeneous and simple,' and that there was 'no direct way' that would lead from the one to the other. The role of Protestantism in this process was 'indirect and involuntary,' and it has to be searched for in unsuspected areas, in its 'indirect or unconscious consequences,' or in the influence it had despite itself.¹⁸ Accordingly, the most commonly shared characteristic of missionaries in Africa was perhaps that the consequences of their teaching and of their sheer presence and activity more often than not were out of their reach or control. Therefore, one should also look for the unforeseen or indirect consequences of their acts, or rather consider that what one usually deems to be direct outcomes of their work is the expression of such an ambiguous pattern. It is crucial therefore to take into account the historical dynamics that interplayed with the processes triggered off by missionaries and very often transformed the nature and scope of their influence.

Turning to the Angolan case now, it appears that Catholic and Protestant churches are generally deemed to have had utterly opposed attitudes towards the Portuguese state: more often than not, the Catholic church is considered as no less than the agent of Portuguese colonialism, while its Protestant counterpart is principally acknowledged for its purported distance from the latter, and, hence, its emancipatory or liberating potential.¹⁹ Translated into the somewhat paranoid language of Portuguese officials on the occasion of a council on 'counter subversion,' it becomes a distinction between 'patriotic' Catholic prelates and 'subversive' Protestant 'foreign agents':

We believe that the bishops of Angola have manifested very well their patriotism and their dynamic will for the expansion of the Catholic faith among the masses with the accent on civilizing in the constructive sense of Portugalization. [But] in the [Huila] District Council we have often spoken about the pernicious influence which the Protestant missions exercise through individuals who made harmful statements and propaganda. These are foreign agents who exert influence on the native masses. They generate admiration and enthusiasm for certain anti-Portuguese ideologies and movements. They surreptitiously undermine the idea of Portuguese citizenship. They create mentalities in the service of ideas inimical to Portugal. At best they limit themselves to propagating a religious ideology not in conformity with our tradition. They neutralize our efforts for Portugalisation and occupy key positions which make it easy for them to implant ideas contrary to our interests.²⁰

This report is important because it expresses some of the key issues regarding Church-State relations in colonial Angola, and because it is quite typical of the Portuguese attitude towards Protestant and Catholic missions and churches. Besides, the crude distinction it makes between both, despite its excesses, bears some elements of truth. Let us, first of all, look at the position of the Catholic church.

Does Catholicism rhyme with colonialism?

The history of the relations between the Portuguese colonial state in Angola and the Catholic church up until the first part of the twentieth century, especially after the latter was made the established church in Portugal in 1851, is in many ways the story of a collaboration. The state expected a 'missionary contribution to the colonial task,' and viewed Christian missionary work as 'the "Portuguese mission" for the world.'²¹ Of prime importance in this relationship was the general context of Portuguese colonisation in Angola in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The weakness of the Portuguese colonial state and its lack of control over the Angolan hinterland—it is only after the First World War that firm control was established outside the coastal strip that had been occupied for centuries—meant that territorial domination was a constant preoccupation, mainly against British and German interests. The Portuguese policy towards the Catholic church as well as towards foreign Catholic and *a fortiori* Protestant missionaries has to be understood against this background: Protestant missionaries were perceived as a permanent threat, both cultural, political, internal and external,²² as were to a lesser extent all foreign missionaries. In this period, then, the collaboration between the colonial state and the Catholic church expressed the former's weaknesses at least as much as it showed that the latter had become 'a servant of colonialism.'²³

Even the advent of the Republic in 1910, with its hostility to the clergy, translated into threats of replacing Catholic missions with 'Portuguese lay missions,' was no more than a parenthesis in the history of church-state relationship, and the trend to collaboration was again confirmed when Salazar came to power in 1926. A staunch Catholic himself, Salazar bore the hopes of the Catholic church's hierarchy that was looking forward to regaining all the privileges it had lost under the republicans.²⁴ An important step was taken in that direction on 7 May 1940 when, days before the celebration of eight centuries of Portuguese independence, a Concordat and a Missionary Accord were signed between the Holy See and the Portuguese government, complemented

one year later by the Missionary Statute which implemented some of the decisions taken in the Accord.²⁵ Whilst a façade of separation between the Church and the State was respected, these documents complied with the Catholic clergy's request for favourable conditions of evangelisation, but it linked it with the government's strategy to achieve more thorough control over the colonies. Missions and missionary corporations were to be subsidised by the State according to their needs and in proportion to the importance of their staff and to their educational activities. Missionaries also benefited from all the advantages of state officials without having to abide by the regulations that governed such officials. The Catholic church was entrusted with the whole of the 'native' education system (which was not supposed to go beyond primary school),²⁶ but the 'plans and syllabuses' were edicted by 'the government of the colonies' (art. 68 of the Missionary Statute). All Catholic missionaries were supposed to be of Portuguese nationality, but 'when a sufficient number of Portuguese missionaries [was] not available,' foreign missionaries could be invited 'by agreement with the holy See and with the Government, [. . .] provided they [declared] themselves to be subject to the laws and courts of Portugal' (art. XXVIII of the Concordat).

These three documents expressed two contradictory trends: on the one hand, they guaranteed the Portuguese State's full material support to the spread of Catholic missions in the colonies, but on the other they amounted to attempts by the Portuguese government to achieve thorough control over the Catholic church's missionary activities and incorporate them in its own colonial strategy. No distinction was made—or rather every possible distinction was blurred—between the 'christianisation' of the 'natives,' their 'Portugalisation' or 'nationalisation,' and Portugal's 'civilising mission.' As Salazar himself put it in his presentation of the concordat to the National Assembly:

What is it all about? Solely to implement the political aims of Acto Colonial (colonial act) with the spiritual reward given by the Holy See and also with the nationalization of missionary aims which must be integrated forever in the Portuguese colonial process.²⁷

No doubt the Concordat and the Missionary Accord were part of Salazar's thrust towards hegemonic control over all institutions within both mainland Portugal and its overseas territories. But they were not the ultimate stage of a process in the unfolding of which the Catholic church became ever more subservient to Portugal's colonial enterprise, and it would be hasty to conclude that in Angola the only role that the

Catholic church ever played was to simply reproduce colonial policies and strategies. First of all, we should not forget that the Concordat was signed in a context of struggle for power within Portuguese society itself, and that, although Salazar and Cardinal Cerejeira, the Patriarch of Lisbon, knew each other from their student years (they had even been flatmates), both were following clashing interests: 'the relationship between the dictatorship and the church was complex since the church expected to regain all its old authority under a strongly Catholic politician but the politician was determined to ensure the primacy of the state.' And when Salazar 'surprised the bishops by abolishing his own Catholic party with all other political movements [...] in 1932,' he showed that 'the coincidence of state and church interests was not complete.'²⁸ Secondly, and more importantly, the problem with the thesis of the 'identity of interests'²⁹ between the church and the state is that it rests on the implication that the Catholic church was a homogeneous, cohesive entity.

The 1941 Missionary Statute made it clear that, as far as the Portuguese government was concerned, missionaries sent to Angola (as well as to the other colonies) should be of Portuguese nationality, since they were expected to take an active part in the 'Portugalisation' of the 'natives.' But a constant lack in missionary vocations within Portugal itself³⁰ forced the church to rely, sometimes heavily, on foreign personnel: Dutch, Spanish, Italian, Belgian, French, mainly in the service of the Holy Ghost Fathers, the order that always dominated the Catholic missionary scene in Angola.³¹ Despite the provisions that the Portuguese government took in the Concordat and Missionary Accord in order to control the activities of foreign missionaries (necessity to declare themselves subject to Portuguese law; duty to regularly report to the bishops; entire and immediate dependence of foreign congregations on the bishops), it could not prevent them from bringing about different ideas about the place of the church in the political realm as well as different theological and politico-religious traditions.³² The link between 'christianisation' and 'Portugalisation' clearly could not be expected to be as straightforward for non-Portuguese missionaries as it was supposed to be for the Portuguese clergy. Furthermore, even the Portuguese Spiritans who were sent to Angola did not receive the same training as their fellow-countrymen educated at the theological seminaries in Lisbon; their professors were mainly French or Italian, and were certainly not inclined towards imbuing their seminarians with the Empire's civilising ideology. Finally, another dominant trend within the Catholic church gives these elements further perspective. The Portuguese church had

rarely been very active in the mission field. It had rather concentrated on providing parish services for settlers and had left the converting and nurturing of black subjects to foreign priests or Protestants.³³

Because the Catholic church needed to 'invite' foreign missionaries to Angola, then, and because it tended to let them do what it was not very inclined to do, i.e. spread the word of God—and, theoretically of the Portuguese empire—amongst Angolan rural populations, the majority of black Angolans mostly encountered Catholic missionaries who stemmed from a theological, social and political tradition which insisted on 'the respect of profane values and popular culture' as well as on the 'unavoidably political aspects of the role of the church and of the different religious actors.'³⁴ Besides, the experience that these 'deviant' missionaries had of Portugal's 'civilising mission' probably lead them to think that the colonial state was more concerned with limiting their own freedom of action than with allegedly contributing to the emancipation of the natives. The message that was thus transmitted to these (mainly rural) Angolans, and the practices it was related to, therefore, certainly did not bear the stamp of 'Portugalisation' and 'nationalisation' in the way that the Portuguese had intended.

This first type of division was echoed by another just as important one. The high and the low clergy had divergent views on colonialism. Both groups—inasmuch as one can speak of groups in this case—evolved in different intellectual, symbolic and ideological frameworks, and their representations of the role of the church among 'native' populations varied accordingly. Whereas priests and missionaries tended to put great emphasis, as their publications show, on social and political matters, bishops analysed colonialism through a very abstract and detached lens; and when commenting on their own practical attitude to colonialism, the former would praise any act that was intended to criticise the excesses of the colonial power, or the silence of the church on such excesses.³⁵ The 'deep ideological opposition'³⁶ that ran between priests and bishops was not only expressed in discourse, but also reproduced in missionary practices. And if in the Portuguese colonies the 'official church,' i.e. the 'basically Portuguese' hierarchy of the Catholic church, was committed to the completion of Portugal's civilising and nationalising mission, it did not prevent another type of church from making itself heard publicly³⁷—albeit quite late: in 1970, 22 Portuguese Spiritan missionaries signed a letter denouncing the patronising stance of the Portuguese church, and pleaded for a greater respect of African traditions and lifestyles.³⁸ And Henderson, after listing different Catholic priests who were arrested in 1961, aptly insists on

the ambivalence of the Catholic church, which had many priests and lay people who sympathized with the liberation struggle; the government still had confidence in the hierarchy, however, so these offenders could be kept safely in Catholic houses or monasteries.³⁹

This particular, potentially critical stance of both foreign missionaries and members of the lower clergy of the Portuguese Catholic church, as well as the Portuguese bishops' reluctance to work outside urban, mostly settlers' communities appear all the more important in the general context of the Catholic church in Africa: it 'is predominantly a rural church, and it is the ministry at the village level, where the great majority of its members actually live, which is finally important.'⁴⁰ A lot more work needs to be done for the influence of grass-roots Catholic missionaries and, especially, black catechists, to be understood in its full scope. Such a balanced analysis of the Catholic church's role in Angola in all its complexities and paradoxes might reveal that its activities at the grass-roots level were far from only oriented towards the 'Portugalisation' of the 'natives' and the completion of Portugal's 'civilising mission for the world,' and that if the position of the 'subversive' members of the Catholic clergy was not representative of the whole institution, it was in any case not negligible.⁴¹

Of interest here is also that the situation of the Catholic church changed quite dramatically after 1961 and the beginning of the liberation struggle. On an international level first of all, the Vatican II Council (1962-1965) introduced some crucial reforms within the Catholic church. These included the progressive 'vernacularisation' of the institution, its opening up to greater participation on the part of its members (contained in the idea of the 'people of God' as a fundamental theological as well as pastoral category), and the promotion of ecumenism, all of which were to have important consequences.⁴² 'Liberation theology,' although slow to reach the African continent, also influenced Catholic perceptions of the nationalist struggles in Africa. In making it possible to conceive of a 'Christian Marxism,' they removed one of the main obstacles to Catholic support of the nationalist movements that had opted for the 'Marxist option.'⁴³ Internally, the 1960s were also the decade during which the Catholic church slowly 'Africanised' its clergy (although it was as late as 1970 that the first native Angolan bishop was nominated), and some of its members finally went public with their condemnation of Portuguese rule. It would be beyond the time frame of this paper to go any further along these lines. However, the elements presented above show that 'progressive,' anti-colonial trends were not completely alien to the Catholic church before the actual start

of the liberation struggle, and that it is in this period that one could find the firmest roots of the changes that occurred in the 1960s.

Protestantism: a hotbed for nationalism?

The major characteristic of the Protestant missions in Angola (and, for that matter, anywhere else) is their great diversity: no central authority was likely to ensure a minimal unity of doctrine and a somewhat common message, as was the case, to the restricted extent I have indicated, with the Catholic Church. Protestant missionaries came from different countries, had different religious traditions, were affiliated to different denominations, and, perhaps most importantly, viewed the accomplishment of their missionary task in many different, sometimes opposed, ways. The message they transmitted depended very much on those different traditions and affiliations, as did, also, their attitude towards the colonial State. Broadly speaking, the Protestant missionary enterprise in Angola was divided into three main currents, established in as many quite definite areas: (1) the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) of Great Britain created its first missionary station in Northern Angola in 1878. (2) The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) sent its first missionaries to Bié and Bailundo, in the central Highlands, in 1879-1880. They were joined a few years later by Canadian Congregationalists (CCFMS), and, in 1956, together with the 'Association of Umbundu Churches,' which grouped most of the churches founded by the ABCFM and the CCFMS, they formed the Council of Evangelical Churches of Central Angola. (3) In 1885 a party of missionaries of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, led by Bishop Taylor, arrived in Luanda. Beside these three main currents, a Swiss mission was also established in the Southern part of the central Highlands in 1897 by Héli Chatelain: the 'Mission Philafricaine,' later to become the 'Alliance Missionnaire Evangélique,' from which stemmed the Evangelical Church of south-west Angola. Finally, Plymouth Brethren and Seventh Day Adventists also moved to the Central Highlands, and in the early 1920s, an Anglican independent missionary, Archibald Patterson, founded the North Angola Mission in the Uige district.⁴⁴ These different missions and churches progressively grouped themselves in evangelical alliances or councils, but they nevertheless always kept a good measure of independence, especially as far as their respective strategies of evangelisation were concerned. 'Protestant unity owed as much to the common opposition from Portuguese colonialism as to any other factor.'⁴⁵

The spread of Protestant missions in Angola throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century and the twentieth century is a tale of more or less overt and outright mistrust, suspicion, condemnation and attack on the part of the colonial State. Indeed, to every step taken in favour of the Catholic church corresponded measures destined to deter the growth of Protestant missionary activities, in a fashion that the report of the council on counter subversion quoted above implies.⁴⁶ The corollary of this aggressive attitude was to prove quite useful for the image and influence of Protestant missions: they were in a position of exteriority as regards the colonial state, not only on a political level, but also on a social and cultural one, and therefore could not be assimilated to the Portuguese colonial policies.⁴⁷ Thus, they were not discredited in the eyes of the early anti-Portuguese activists, as was the case of the Catholic church, and they provided shelter for 'subversive' ideas. Protestant missions could be seen, then, as 'the breeding ground for African nationalism.'⁴⁸ But these ideas did not emerge and develop in a vacuum. Firstly, the stance of the Protestant church on the side of the anti-colonial resistance was not only due to its 'objective' or unavoidable presence (as a foreign 'subversive' institution) at the oppositional end of the colonial spectrum as viewed by the Portuguese. Its own structures and the scope of its activities also bore the fruit of political emancipation. Its educational system allowed a literate elite to emerge which included some of the most prominent leaders of the liberation struggle (Agostinho Neto, Holden Roberto, and Jonas Savimbi forming the most conspicuous tip of the iceberg), and it relied on local organisations and structures which provided administrative and organisational training to many Angolans.⁴⁹ Secondly, whatever influence Protestant missionaries had on the emergence of Angolan nationalism, it was partly determined by the historical, political and social terrain in which they evolved. One of the important characteristics of the Angolan terrain was its strong regional division between three broad geographic, social and ethnic entities.⁵⁰ The territorial division of labour that was established between the three main groups of Protestant missions—English Baptists in the Bakongo northern region, American Methodists in the Mbundu areas of Luanda and its hinterland, and American and Canadian Congregationalists in the Ovimbundu central highlands—reacted with existing divisions in a fashion that was to leave deep scars in the making and spread of Angolan nationalism.

Henderson, himself an American Congregationalist missionary in central Angola for many years, has characteristically argued that Protestantism is 'a tribal religion.'⁵¹ Basing his analysis on his own experience

and observations as well as on several missionary accounts, he contended that the tribal character of Protestantism rested on three elements. (1) The coincidence of the areas covered by the major Protestant missionary societies and the main ethno-linguistic groups. (2) The crucial role of Protestant missionaries in the codification and transcription of the languages of these groups. (3) The fact that Protestant missions 'inherited' the principal functions and structures of Angolan traditional societies. Henderson's argument is interesting both because it highlights some central characteristics of Protestant missions, and because it is typical of the Angolan situation. The Protestant missionary tradition of writing down and promoting native languages—against all odds in the Portuguese colonies—has always been one of the main features of an evangelising strategy that one could probably trace back to Luther himself. Historically, this dimension of their *œuvre* was part of their attempts at delimiting the communities that they were to evangelise. Sometimes, this process went so far as to have more to do with the necessities of the missionary task than with socio-linguistic realities, and this had a crucial impact in terms of ethnic identities and identifications.⁵² The scarce literature on the ethnic question in Angola unfortunately only allows me to put forward some tentative remarks on the impact of Protestant missions on the politics of identity in Angola.

The territorial divisions of the Protestant church in Angola did not only determine the scope of activities of its foreign missionaries. It also, and prominently, concerned its Angolan 'pupils.'

Each [of the three main missions] created a network of school-leavers who knew each other intimately and could travel with confidence through the length and breadth of their own mission fief. They rarely, however, crossed boundaries into the other zones and had little or no contact with other Protestant churches. Indeed, they were more likely to be acquainted with local Catholics than with Protestants from other regions. Protestant missions, which provided the most important source of educated leadership, were thus responsible to some degree for the three-way partition that occurred in the national leadership.⁵³

This interestingly echoes some reflections made by Benedict Anderson in his compelling study of nationalism, and especially his concept of 'administrative pilgrimage' as a way to describe the particular experience that the elites acquired in their journey to the boundaries of their professional life.⁵⁴ In the course of such pilgrimages, whose route and final destination were determined by how the 'pilgrims' worked their way up the bureaucratic system as well as by the needs of the state, those who accomplished them were likely to become aware of both the material and symbolic boundaries of the national community they evolved in. They were physically confronted by the concrete limits of

the territory they helped administer at the same time as their contacts with other fellow-civil servants could foster a sense of belonging to a common symbolic entity, an 'imagined community.' Protestant missions neither organised nor required such 'pilgrimages' from their Angolan members. Still, an 'Andersonian' perspective could help us see to what extent the communities their 'school-leavers' were likely to discover and 'imagine' through their contacts with fellow-Protestants as well as through their eventual employment in the missions' or churches' structure corresponded to the ethno-linguistic entities in which the three main missions had settled down and not to the country as a whole. And if Birmingham is right in arguing that they probably had more contacts with Catholic neighbours than with Protestants from other regions, we can conclude that regional bonds superseded other, especially religious or denominational, links. If Angolan Protestants were more politically aware after their missionary *cursus*, they were also probably more regionally if not ethnically aware too. But the crux of the matter here is certainly that the symbolic as well as material meaningful boundaries of those very regions or ethnic groups constantly changed in the process of the missionaries' evangelising *œuvre*.

The Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) in Northern Angola is a good case in point here. In 1960, whereas the national average of Protestants amounted to 17% of the population (against 51% Catholics and 32% non-Christians), they were 46% among the Bakongo populations of the North, that is 35% in the district of Zaire and 50,5% in Uíge; in certain coffee-growing *concelhos* their domination was even massive (85% in the Uíge *concelho*).⁵⁵ This sheer quantitative fact made the impact of the BMS perhaps more important than any other Protestant mission in Angola, and it is not surprising if, of the three nationalist movements, the FNLA was always most closely related to the mission from which its prominent members stemmed. But for our concern here, another characteristic of the BMS and of the Bakongo region is more relevant. The BMS was also firmly established amongst the Bakongo populations of Southern Zaire, and strong links were always maintained between the two sides of the colonial border within the geographical boundaries of the ancient Kongo kingdom. It would be interesting to see how important these international links were in the Baptist *cursus*. What is sure is that there is a long tradition in Northern Angola of leaning towards lower Zaire, and especially Léopoldville-Kinshasa for business and other opportunities; it is also where the UPNA-UPA was organised and created in the 1950s;⁵⁶ and, finally, after 1961, huge numbers of refugees fled there, many of whom did not return to Angola

until 1974, which had crucial consequences in terms of national cohesion.⁵⁷ The historical specificities of the Bakongo regions of Northern Angola and lower Zaire, then, and the territorial organisation of the BMS coincided and together reinforced existing trends towards regional exclusiveness. In that sense, the communities that Protestant Bakongo might have 'imagined' were a complex ensemble of referents from different times, different symbolic and material worlds, different political outlooks: they were 'traditional' and 'modern,' and it is perhaps in the linking of both that BMS missionaries, like others, played their most significant part.

Henderson named as one of the signs of the 'tribal' character of Protestantism the fact that it had 'inherited' the main functions and structures of traditional societies.⁵⁸ In colonial Angola, this was to have a particular political resonance. One of the most notable outcomes of Portuguese colonial ideology and its system of direct rule was the discredit cast upon 'traditional' structures of power, and more generally, upon 'traditional' societies.⁵⁹ In a system where 'Portugalisation' and 'nationalisation' meant that the key to economic betterment implied a process of 'detribalisation' and 'assimilation' to the Portuguese way of life, those who were left aside were completely marginalised both culturally and economically. And since the assimilation policy of the Portuguese colonial state was largely a failure if one looks at the proportion of *assimilados* in 1960,⁶⁰ those left aside were in fact the overwhelming majority. Besides, the massive arrival, in the 1950s, of a population of poor white immigrants⁶¹ who took away from black or *mestiço* Angolans numbers of low-paid jobs resulted in the further closure of the colonial society on a minute core of white and *assimilados*. In this context, 'the retreat of the *indigenas* towards what Salazar call[ed] their tribal life [was] a necessity, even though there no longer [was] any tribe.'⁶² It is against this background, I believe, that Protestant missions, due to their staunch embeddedness in specific regions and their claimed 'inheritance' of traditional societies, certainly played their most important role, in allowing types of identities and identifications that had been discredited for both cultural and economic reasons to be reinvested, if not reinvented.

In Bakongo country the presence and activities of Baptist missionaries tended to 'further reinforce the isolation of the Bakongo from the other Angolan ethnic groups, as well as their unity on both sides of the border.'⁶³ It should be noted, in the light of what I have just indicated, that they also relied on existing social structure in their evangelising *œuvre*. A very revealing case in point here, which I can only

note *en passant*, is their involvement in controversies over the succession of the king of Kongo at different periods, in such a way that this issue came to focus the opposition between loyalist, mainly Catholic groups for whom the king was to remain a puppet in the hands of the Portuguese and Protestant networks that were trying to transform the Kongo kingdom into a 'modern' centre of actual political power.⁶⁴ And one only needs to note that it is partly from these latter groups that the Protestant educated leadership of the UPA-FNLA eventually stemmed for it to become clear that the revitalisation of traditional Kongo structures that the BMS allowed against Portuguese attempts at reducing these structures to 'puppet shows' did have lasting consequences.

In the Ovimbundu central highlands, where the thrust of economic exploitation had been particularly harsh, and the discredit cast upon traditional power structures because of their ruthless use by Portuguese colonisers in the recruitment of the labour force particularly severe, the presence of Protestant Congregationalists was to have two related effects. First, they permitted that the historical divisions of these societies between a dozen or more rival merchant kingdoms be transcended by networks of job mobility which ensured regular contacts throughout most parts of the highlands.⁶⁵ The 'administrative pilgrimage' of Protestant Umbundu school-leavers offered them opportunities to conceive of a united Umbundu central plateau in a way that had formerly not been possible, for instance at the turn of the century when the rubber trade was booming and resulted in fierce economic competition between Umbundu sub-kingdoms. The dramatic shattering of Umbundu trade networks and possibilities in the first part of the twentieth century and the ruthless inclusion of the Ovimbundu in the forced labour system, then, may have helped to forge a new, broader Umbundu ethnic identity, especially as the network of Congregational missions was based on such ethnic or regional terms. Second, 'the ecclesiastical organization in central Angola followed closely the pattern of Umbundu social structure. The mission station assumed the functions of the *ombala*, the king's village, and during the colonial period the missionary was the king.'⁶⁶ Thus, Congregationalist missionaries allowed traditional social structures to be seen under a new light. On the one hand, they rehabilitated a political and social organisation largely discarded as compromised with the Portuguese authorities—and not surprisingly, missions became a refuge for members of royal lineage and chief families;⁶⁷ on the other hand, they opened up new possibilities of social mobility within the structures of 'traditional' Umbundu society. This point is crucial: at the same time as *indigenas* were *negatively* rejected towards their 'tribal societies'

because they had no economic or cultural opportunities whatever in a very closed colonial society, they were *positively* attracted by Protestant missions whose educational system was their only hope of social and economic promotion.⁶⁸

For the huge numbers of *indigenas* who formed the somewhat undifferentiated mass of outcasts of the colonial system, Protestant missions and missionaries were at once economic, cultural, social and political brokers, mainly because of their particular situation at the margin of the colonial system (a situation that Catholic missionaries, even though they were far from all supporting the colonial regime, as I have shown, could not claim to endorse as easily because of their belonging to an institution that was discredited by its proximity to Portuguese rule). In a system where non-assimilation to the 'Portuguese way of life' meant economic, cultural, social and political marginality and deprivation, they offered 'havens' where all these disadvantages could be turned into assets. But they also provided their Angolan 'pupils' with a different sense of marginalisation—as 'heretics,' it was difficult for them to obtain the certificate of assimilation, passport for entering the colonial bureaucracy⁶⁹—at the same time as their education system gave them the political weapons to change this marginal status. In other words, Protestant missions, especially in rural areas, were a bridge between two competing worlds. Most importantly, they made it possible for *indigenas* to enter one without having to leave the other: thanks to them, it was possible to be 'traditional' in a way that made sense—economically as well as culturally, socially or politically—in a 'modern' context. Put into ethnic terms, this means that Protestant missionaries first contributed to the creation, invention, or at least reshaping of ethnic identities in Angola, and, second, secured the political meaningfulness of these identities in a colonial context that aimed at their destruction.⁷⁰

These remarks are certainly more true for rural areas such as the Bakongo North or the Umbundu central highlands than for Luanda. But even there, one can argue that Methodists had a related if not similar role. The links that they established between Luanda and its hinterland up to Malanje, and the fact that regional origins were a central criteria for the regrouping of rural populations who had moved into town probably made it relevant to 'feel' and 'act' Mbundu. But the very long presence of the Portuguese and the higher degree of assimilation in the Mbundu areas also meant that 'traditional' societies were not such important referents as in rural areas, even if given a 'modern' dimension by Methodists. The latter's most important role in

Luanda was probably the bringing together of different types of elites (especially rural, newly assimilated, and urban, highly integrated in the Portuguese colonial society),⁷¹ and the fact that those different types of elites were both Catholic and Protestant.⁷² In Luanda, then, the particularism of nationalism was probably due to the capital's specific social stratification, rather than to a strong ethnic identity and cohesion. And accordingly, the role of Protestant missionaries in this context was quite different to the one they played in other parts of the country.

However, important though the role of Protestant missionaries in creating a meaningful framework for the political expression of regional or ethnic identities may have been, the regionalisation of Angola is by no means only an ethnic problem: economic, social, ideological, class antagonisms all contributed, along with ethnic or regional factors, in reinforcing the divisions between the two, and later three nationalist movements.⁷³ And these historical dynamics channelled the influence of Protestant missionaries. The political weapons they offered could therefore largely be appropriated by their 'pupils' and used in ways their suppliers may not always have expected as well as according to long-lasting historical and social patterns of political behaviour and activism. Henderson himself readily admits the existence of such a room for manoeuvre when, listing the assets of Protestant missions in terms of nationalist awareness, he argues that:

the relative independence of the church from the missionaries and mission structures allowed the church leaders to communicate among themselves and to plan and organize without the missionaries participating or even being aware of what was happening.⁷⁴

Following up on this, I would argue that it is not in the 'creation of tribalism'⁷⁵ that Protestant missionaries played their most important role in Angola. In the historical and political context of Portuguese colonisation, the protection and promotion they ensured to 'traditional' ways of life had a very important impact on the structure of elites at the same time as it echoed historical and social dynamics in the country. The Portuguese colonisation of Angola was in many ways and until the first part of the 20th century an urban colonisation, in that the actual portion of land it occupied was restricted to coastal towns and their immediate surroundings. As a result, an important gap in terms of both infrastructure and political weight developed between urban (mainly Luanda) and rural areas within Angola, which colonial authorities only tried to make up for after the onset of the anti-colonial war.⁷⁶ The strategies of Protestant missions in Northern Angola and in the

central highlands echoed in a way this gap, as they tended to establish their stations in rural areas, more often than not far away from towns. On the one hand this was typical of a missionary conception where towns were considered as loci of corruption from whose negative influence new and potential converts had to be protected, and on the other, by remaining away from centres of colonial power, Protestant missions could hope to have more freedom of action. It is in the bosom of these Protestant rural strongholds, of which Dondi, congregational centre in the central highlands is a good example, that missionaries developed their evangelising and educational *œuvre*. Their defence of 'traditional' ways of life is thus maybe best explained in terms of the empowerment of rural societies in such a way as they could defend themselves against both Portuguese colonialism and urban elites, be they Portuguese or Angolan.

In Luanda indeed, protracted Portuguese presence permitted the coming into shape of a creole elite, which, with time, became culturally more Portuguese than Angolan, tended to lose the practice of Kimbundu (vernacular language spoken in Luanda and its hinterland) in favour of Portuguese, and was more oriented towards the Atlantic ocean than towards the interior of the country. This old creole elite, in alliance with new urban *assimilados*—mainly educated by missionaries in Luanda and its hinterland—was later to form the main pillar of the MPLA,⁷⁷ as I noted earlier. Nationalism in the North and in the central highlands was thus maybe an opportunity for new, non-urban, non-creole elites to impose themselves on the national political scene. And colour played a prominent role here, as the fractures between elites also (but by no means only) followed racial lines: only *mestiços* (and old *assimilados*) could hope to occupy the very few positions of wealth and power accumulation (nearly all in Luanda) open to non-Portuguese. This was even more so after the arrival, from the 1950s onwards, of thousands of poor white immigrants from Portugal, which further reinforced the marginalisation of the vast majority of (mainly black) Angolans. In this context, the protection of 'traditional' societies that Protestant missionaries offered was the protection and promotion of a certain image of 'Africinity' and *négritude* as opposed to the corruption that assimilation to Portuguese and urban cultural values represented in their view. And some Protestant missionaries even seem to have had a deep mistrust, sometimes on the verge of racism, of those they did not consider as 'truly' African.⁷⁸ Rather than as the sole result of ethnic politics, the division of the Angolan nationalism in three rival movements is thus to be understood as a consequence of such social

'fractures' between town and countryside, and between old urban creole elites mainly cut off from their 'traditional' roots and new rural (black) African elites encouraged by missionaries to protect themselves from the effects of 'detribalisation' and 'Portugalisation.'⁷⁹ Further research might show that it is in these dynamics that Protestant missionaries played their most important role.

Conclusion

Protestant missions and the Catholic church were both agents of modernisation in Angola. In their respective ways they contributed to the emergence of anti-colonialist movements and, consequently, to the ending of Portuguese rule. But their contribution was 'all but homogeneous and simple,' to use Troeltsch's words again. It was channelled and oriented by the historical dynamics of social formation and transformation at play in the conglomerate of regions that formed the Portuguese 'province of Angola'; it was also influenced by the contradictions and divisions inherent to both institutions.

The political awareness encouraged in the bosom of Protestant missions was particular in the sense that it contributed to regional antagonisms in two different ways: (1) the territorial division of labour between the three main Protestant missions corresponded to existing boundaries between three ethno-linguistic groups; at the same time, as in the case of the Ovimbundu highlands, Protestant missionaries also redefined the meaningful borders of these different entities, not least by the codification of native languages. (2) As economic and social brokers in the Portuguese colonial regime, they were in a position to give a 'modern' sense to 'traditional' structures. In a colonial system characterised by the opposition between a mainly white and *mestiço* colonial heart sealed off from the mass of Angolan *indigenas* and concentrating most of the wealth on the one hand, and culturally and socially disrupted *indigenas* with hardly any social and economic prospects on the other, they made it possible to acquire tools of social and economic promotion within an educational framework concerned with preserving or building upon 'traditional' ways of life. Rather than being forced to retreat towards 'tribal life,' *indigenas* could, thanks to Protestant missions, invest it in a way that made sense economically as well as socially in a modern context.

The Catholic church, although considered by the Portuguese authorities as well as by some members of the Catholic hierarchy as having a direct and central role to play in Portugal's 'civilising mission' was in fact far less homogeneously on the side of Portuguese colonialism

than it seems at first. Several lines of division appear when one looks below the surface: between foreign and Portuguese missionaries, between the top and the bottom of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and between prelates of the Portuguese Roman Catholic church and members of the Order of the Holy Ghost Fathers. These divisions alone call for a balanced analysis of its stance as regards the roots of the nationalist uprising, which could initiate a shift in interpretation: although its legal status as well as the stance of its leaders made it an apparent 'servant' of Portuguese colonialism, the Catholic church is also to be considered as one of the loci where anti-colonialist ideas developed.

Lastly, it is interesting to put the role of Protestant missions in the revival of ethnic or regional identities in a wider perspective. According to G. Clarence-Smith, the Catholic church, contrarily to its Protestant counterparts, was not regionally or ethnically implanted. It 'tried to merge its members into a great international community which, until the Vatican II council, insisted on uniformity to a quasi caricatured extent.'⁸⁰ Besides, the symbolic as well as material boundaries of the 'administrative pilgrimage' of its clergy corresponded to the nation and not to the territories of different ethnic groups. The Catholic church in Angola would thus have been one of the rare institutions likely to strengthen the nation against the divisive trends that Protestant missions had contributed to reinforce. To follow up on this provoking thought would require another study, but I shall just note *en passant* that to the extent that members of the lower clergy—local priests, catechists, of whom a good number were African—did keep their ethnic ties, as Clarence-Smith himself indicates, one might get two quite different pictures if one looks at the top or at the bottom of the Catholic hierarchy. There again the history of the different social groups from which the Angolan members of the clergy (especially the evangelists) emerged and that of the possible competition between these groups would be a determining factor.

NOTES

1. This is a revised version of an MSc thesis presented in September 1994 at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. I am grateful to Christine Messiant and Patrick Harries for all their useful comments and criticisms on earlier versions of this text.

2. R. Kapuscinski, *Another Day of Life* (Picador, London, 1987), p. 102.

3. Pepetela, *Mayombe* (Zimbabwe Publishing House, Harare, 1983), p. 77.

4. In the course of this paper, I will use the term 'church' in reference to Catholic and/or Protestant churches only. The different 'independent' churches or religious movements in Angola would require another study.

5. D. Bosch, *Dynamique de la Mission Chrétienne. Histoire et Avenir des Modèles Missionnaires*, (Karthala, Paris; HAHO, Lomé; Labor et Fides, Genève, 1996), chap. 9, pp. 349-469.

6. E. Simeão, *Igreja Evangelica do Sudoeste de Angola. Résumé Historique* (Kalukembe, 1983, original Portuguese version 1982), unpublished paper, p. 20. The translation, like all others in this paper, is my own.

7. R. Bréchet, *J'Ai Ouvvert une Porte devant Toi. Essai sur l'Histoire de la Mission Philafricaine* (Alliance Missionnaire Evangélique, Lausanne, 1972), p. 186.

8. Bréchet's reluctance to acknowledge the political dimension of events, and his tendency to analyse everything through the grid of God's will are also typical of the theological tradition he and the AME stemmed from. Set by Héli Chatelain, a spiritual follower of Dwight L. Moody, the theological orientation of this missionary society can be linked to 'pre-millenarism,' as opposed to 'social christianism.' See D. Bosch, *Dynamique de la Mission Chrétienne*, pp. 422-442.

9. R. Gray, *Black Christians and White Missionaries* (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1990), p. 64.

10. V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa*, p. 56.

11. Shorter, as quoted in *ibid.*, p. 57.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

13. Hastings for instance argues that the challenge posed to the church by claims to independence within the institution itself always led to some difficulties. He also interestingly notes that at that time the number of missionaries in Southern Africa increased, although one could have expected it to decrease as African churches grew to 'maturity' and became autonomous. See A. Hastings, *A History of African Christianity, 1950-1975* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1979), pp. 163-174.

14. V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa*, p. 59.

15. A. Hastings, 'The Ministry of the Catholic Church in Africa, 1960-1975' in E. Fasholé-Luke et alii (eds.), *Christianity in Independent Africa* (Rex Collings, London, 1978), p. 38.

16. A. Hastings, 'The Christian Churches and Liberation Movements in Southern Africa,' *African Affairs*, 80, 320 (July 1981), pp. 345-354.

17. T. Ranger, 'Religious Movements and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa,' p. 31. See also A. Mbembe, *Afriques Indociles*, chapter 3.

18. E. Troeltsch, *Protestantisme et Modernité* (Gallimard, Paris, 1991), pp. 58 and 67-68. See also the use Bayart makes of these reflections in his 'Conclusion: La Cité Culturelle en Afrique Noire,' in J.-F. Bayart (ed.), *Religion et Modernité Politique en Afrique Noire* (Karthala, Paris, 1993), pp. 299-310.

19. As research on the topic goes on, this simplistic vision fortunately seems to be changing. The best example of such a shift is a newly published very balanced and comprehensive study of church-state relations in Angola, which sheds new refreshing light on Protestant and Catholic attitudes towards Portuguese colonialism and Angolan national emancipation. B. Schubert, *Der Krieg und die Kirchen. Macht, Ohnmacht und Hoffnung in Angola, 1961-1991* (Edition Exodus, Lucerne, 1997). For two archetypes of the approach in terms of 'great divide' between Protestant and Catholics, see for instance: J. Disila Ghyos, 'La Colonisation de l'Angola. Le rôle Joué par l'Eglise Catholique Portugaise,' in *Congresso Internacional de Historia: Missionação Portuguesa e Encontro de Culturas, Actas, vol. III: Igreja, Sociedade e Missionação* (Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Braga, 1993), pp. 579-595; this study is an outright and unsophisticated condemnation of the Catholic church. H. Kay, 'A Catholic View,' in Institute of Race Relations (ed.): *Angola: a Symposium. Views of a Revolt* (Oxford University Press, London, 1962), pp. 80-103, is for its part a Pro-Portuguese pamphlet.

20. Quoted in L.W. Henderson, *The Church in Angola. A River of Many Currents* (The Pilgrim Press, Cleveland, Ohio, 1992), pp. 280-281.

21. G. Grohs & G. Czernik, *State and the Church in Angola, 1450-1980* (Institut Universitaire de Hautes Etudes Internationales, Genève, 1983), p. 31.

22. Ch. Messiant, 1961. *L'Angola Coloniale, Histoire et Société. Les Prémisses du Mouvement Nationaliste* (EHESS, Paris, 1984, unpublished PhD Thesis), pp. 128-129. On the difficulties experienced by Protestant missionaries in late nineteenth-century, see among others L.W. Henderson, *The Church in Angola*, pp. 248-258; Baptist Missionary Society (ed.), *One Hundred Years of Christian Mission in Angola and Zaire, 1878-1978* (Baptist Missionary Society, London, 1978); G. Grohs & G. Czernik, *State and the Church in Angola*, pp. 27-64.

23. G. Grohs & G. Czernik, *State and the Church in Angola*, p. 31.

24. D. Birmingham, *A Concise History of Portugal* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993), pp. 156-173.

25. The most important excerpts of these agreements can be found in A. Hastings, *Wiriyanu* (Search Press, London, 1974), Appendix 1, pp. 137-153. Besides, more or less full accounts of their contents can be found in the following studies: E. dos Santos, *L'Etat Portugais et le Problème Missionnaire* (Junta de Investigações do Ultramar & Centro de Estudos Ultramarinos, Lisbonne, 1964), pp. 95-124; Pro Mundi Vita (ed.), 'Governmental Policy and the Church in the Portuguese Territories of Africa,' *Pro Mundi Vita Bulletin, Special Notes*, 43 (1972), pp. 23-28; M. Guadalupe Rodrigues, 'The Catholic Church in Contexts of Crisis: the Case of the Angolan Independence,' *Current Research on Peace and Violence*, 1990 (4), pp. 235-243; L.B. Serapião, 'The Influence of the Catholic Church on Portuguese Colonial Policy,' *A Current Bibliography on African Affairs*, 7, 2 (Spring 1974), pp. 136-155.

26. L.B. Serapião, 'The Influence of the Catholic Church,' p. 142.

27. Quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 142-143.

28. D. Birmingham, *A Concise History of Portugal*, pp. 160 and 161.

29. L.B. Serapião, 'The Influence of the Catholic Church,' p. 142.

30. Manuel Nunes Gabriel, former Archbishop of Luanda wrote that many dioceses were suffering from 'spiritual anaemia,' which he mainly put down to the disastrous influence of 'liberal struggles and doctrines.' See M. Nunes Gabriel, *Angola. Cinco Séculos de Cristianismo* (Literal, Queluz, 1978), p. 421.

31. Between 1886 and 1940, 284 Spiritan priests and missionaries served in Angola, of whom 71 Portuguese and 213 from various European countries. And from 1930 to 1940, 86, of whom 35 Portuguese and 51 European. See *ibid.*, p. 435.

32. M. Legrand, *Colonisation Portugaise et Discours Religieux* (Centre de Recherches Socio-Religieuses, Louvain, 1974, unpublished paper), pp. 98-99.

33. D. Birmingham, *A Concise History of Portugal*, p. 175. See also his *Frontline Nationalism in Angola and Mozambique* (James Currey, London, 1992), p. 22.

34. M. Legrand, *Colonisation Portugaise et Discours Religieux*, p. 99. Legrand's argument is based on a close analysis of a series of official publications and pastoral letters by different Catholic bishops, priests and missionaries of various origins.

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 89-102.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

37. Pro Mundi Vita (ed.), 'Governmental Policy and the Church in the Portuguese Territories of Africa,' p. 25. As is argued in this article, this division within the overseas church echoes divisions within mainland Portuguese church between 1) the 'church of the hierarchy,' 2) a very small 'church in opposition,' and 3) the mass of rather apathetic believers (see pp. 15-23).

38. Excerpts of the letter are reproduced in *ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

39. L.W. Henderson, *The Church in Angola*, p. 277. The most famous of these priests is certainly Father Joaquim Pinto de Andrade, brother of one of the founders of the MPLA, Mário Pinto de Andrade. He was arrested in 1960, sent in exile to Principe and then Portugal, where he stayed under various forms of arrest until 1971.

40. A. Hastings, 'The Ministry of the Catholic Church in Africa,' p. 37.

41. Ch. Messiant, 1961. *L'Angola Coloniale*, p. 135.

42. See L.W. Henderson, *The Church in Angola*, pp. 302-313 on these reforms.

43. A. Hastings, 'The Christian Churches and Liberation Movements in Southern Africa,' pp. 345-354.

44. See L.W. Henderson, *The Church in Angola*, pp. 192-205 for a general overview; R. Bréchet, *J'ai Ouvert une Porte devant Toi*, for the Swiss Philafrican Mission; A.F. Alexandre, *Liberation of Mission. A History of the Anglican Church in Angola* (University of Birmingham, Selly Oak Colleges, Department of Mission, 1994, unpublished MA dissertation), for the North Angola Mission; Baptist Missionary Society (ed.), *One Hundred Years of Christian Mission*, for the Baptist church in the North.

45. L.W. Henderson, *The Church in Angola*, p. 205.

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 248-258. See also Ch. Messiant, 1961. *L'Angola Colonial*, pp. 132-140.

47. Ch. Messiant, 'Luanda (1945-1961): Colonisés, Société Coloniale et Engagement Nationaliste,' in M. Cahen (ed.), *Bourgs et Villes en Afrique Lusophone* (L'Harmattan, Paris, 1989), pp. 149-150.

48. Ch. Messiant, 1961. *L'Angola Colonial*, p. 136.

49. L.W. Henderson, *The Church in Angola*, p. 279.

50. Birmingham even argues that 'Angola was in effect a confederation of three colonies in Portuguese West Africa which were artificially brought under a central administration based in the relatively inaccessible town of Luanda.' D. Birmingham, *Frontline Nationalism*, p. 24.

51. L.W. Henderson, 'Protestantism: a Tribal Religion,' in R.T. Parsons (ed.), *Windows on Africa: a Symposium* (E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1971), pp. 61-80.

52. See for instance in another but comparable context P. Harries, 'The Roots of Ethnicity: Discourse and the Politics of Language in South-East Africa,' *African Affairs*, 346 (January 1988), pp. 25-52.

53. D. Birmingham, *Frontline Nationalism*, p. 24.

54. B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, London & New York, 1993), chap. IV, pp. 47-66. His reflections in this chapter are based on the experience of early nineteenth-century civil servants in Latin America. Gervase Clarence-Smith has made an interesting use of some of Anderson's remarks in 'Le Problème Ethnique en Angola,' in J.-P. Chrétien, & G. Prunier (eds.), *Les Ethnies ont une Histoire* (Karthala & ACCT, Paris, 1989), pp. 405-415.

55. L.W. Henderson, 'Protestantism,' p. 63; Ch. Messiant, 1961. *L'Angola Colonial*, p. 527; R. Pélissier, *La Colonie du Minotaure. Nationalismes et Révoltes en Angola (1926-1961)* (Pélissier, Orgeval, 1978), pp. 438-439.

56. See especially J. Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution I: the Anatomy of a Revolt* (The MIT Press, Cambridge (Mass.), 1969), pp. 49-100.

57. D. Birmingham, *Frontline Nationalism*, pp. 24-25. For the long term consequences of the existence of a 'Zairian' economic elite in Luanda, see D. Birmingham, 'Angola Revisited,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 15, 1 (October 1988), pp. 1-14, and, more recently, J.-M. Mabeko Tali, 'La "chasse aux Zairois" à Lunda,' *Politique Africaine*, 57 (March 1995), pp. 71-84.

58. L.W. Henderson, 'Protestantism.'

59. Ch. Messiant, 1961. *L'Angola Colonial*, pp. 115-122.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 449. When, in 1960, the mass of *indigenas* numbered 4'562'602, there were only 41'756 black *assimilados* (of whom over a third in Luanda only)—that is not even 1%—, and 53'392 mulatto *civilizados*.

61. Between 1950 and 1960, the white population in Angola more than doubled, from 78'826 to 172'529. M. Newitt, *Portugal in Africa. The Last Hundred Years* (C. Hurst, London, 1981), p. 164.

62. Ch. Messiant, 1961. *L'Angola Colonial*, p. 396. On the desintegration of 'traditional' life, see also A.C. Edwards, *The Ovimbundu Under Two Sovereignities* (Oxford University Press, London, 1962).

63. Ch. Messiant, 1961. *L'Angola Colonial*, p. 528.

64. J. Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution*, pp. 51-64. The succession of King Dom Pedro

VII in 1955 was certainly a turning point here, especially since it resulted in a shift in opportunities for the nationalist struggle in the North: after Eduardo Pinock, one of the prominent Bakongo Protestant anti-Portuguese activists, attempted to overthrow the king that had been chosen as a compromise between the Portuguese government and Bakongo nationalists (the deal was that Pinock and Kiditu, the 'Protestant champion' for the succession, were appointed as special advisers to the new king), the Portuguese retaliation made the 'Léopoldville group,' led by Barros Necaca and his nephew Holden Roberto the only possible locus for the development of Bakongo-Angolan nationalism. See also M.W. James III, *The UNTA Insurgency in Angola* (The Catholic University of America, Washington DC, 1986, PhD Thesis), pp. 162-200, and *A Political History of the Civil War in Angola* (Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick & London, 1992).

65. D. Birmingham, *Frontline Nationalism*, p. 26.

66. L.W. Henderson, *The Church in Angola*, p. 194. See also his 'Protestantism: a Tribal Religion,' pp. 74-75, and Childs, an American missionary who worked for many years in central Angola, as quoted in A.C. Edwards, *The Ovimbundu Under Two Sovereignities*, p. 83: 'In Angola [...] the breakdown of traditional authority has been so rapid that the social life of the villages is now [i.e. in 1958] very near to complete anarchy [...] the missions and churches have been compelled to take over. Church leaders [...] have taken on judicial functions. Church meetings, both local and regional, have become courts and councils.'

67. Ch. Messiant, 1961. *L'Angola Coloniale*, p. 415.

68. *Ibid.*, pp. 412-419.

69. G. Clarence-Smith, 'Le Problème Ethnique en Angola,' p. 409.

70. A.C. Edwards, *The Ovimbundu Under Two Sovereignities*, is probably the best case study available on the problem of the passage from one world to the other, and especially on the question of the links between both. On the role of Catholic and Protestant in this process, see esp. chapter VI, pp. 76-89.

71. See Ch. Messiant, 'Luanda (1945-1961).'

72. See D. Birmingham, *Frontline Nationalism*, pp. 26-27; G. Clarence-Smith, 'Le Problème Ethnique en Angola,' p. 409. In fact, even though Neto was a Protestant, the head of the MPLA was dominated by Catholics, which was not the case for the rest of the movement. And for most of the MPLA Catholic leaders, adherence to the movement and to its Marxist ideology went hand in hand with an outright rejection of their religious background, whereas for their Protestant counterparts anti-colonial activism did not imply the same process of rejection. One could thus argue that within the MPLA ties with the Protestant missions remained stronger than with the Catholic church. I am grateful to Christine Messiant for this important insight.

73. D. Birmingham, *Frontline Nationalism*; Ch. Messiant, 1961. *L'Angola Coloniale*, and 'Luanda (1945-1961)'; G. Clarence-Smith, 'Class Structure and Class Struggle in Angola in the 1970s,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 7, 1 (1980), pp. 109-126; F.W. Heimer, *The Decolonisation Conflict in Angola, 1974-1976* (Institut Universitaire de Hautes Etudes Internationales, Genève, 1979), all stress the importance of this point. J. Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution*, in some ways sticks out as giving perhaps too much credit to the ethnic factor. J.-M. Mabeko-Tali, "Tribalisme," "Régionalisme," et Lutte de Libération Nationale: la Question "Tribale" et "Ethnico-Régionale" Dans la Dissidence au Sein du MPLA dans l'Est Angolais en 1969-1974,' *Année Africaine 1992-1993*, pp. 436-486, is an excellent case study of both the relevance and the limits of 'ethnic' explanations.

74. L.W. Henderson, *The Church in Angola*, p. 279.

75. L. Vail (ed.), *The creation of tribalism in Southern Africa* (James Currey, London, 1989).

76. B. Schubert, *Der Krieg und die Kirchen*, pp. 38-52. See F.-W. Heimer, *The Decolonization Conflict in Angola, 1974-1976. An Essay in Political Sociology* (Institut Universitaire de Hautes Etudes Internationales, Genève), 1979, pp. 5-16 for a dependency-type analysis of this gap between a central society and its 'tributaries.'

77. Ch. Messiant, 'Luanda (1945-1961).'

78. B. Schubert for instance quotes from a letter written by an American missionary in 1885, who spoke of *mestiços* in these terms: '[...] we dislike half-breeds; deplore their acceptance by the Portuguese as white men and consider them the offsprings of fornication.' B. Schubert, *Der Krieg und die Kirchen*, pp. 68-69.

79. Christine Messiant for example concludes that: "il est indispensable de comprendre les trois organisations en termes de la domination de certaines fractions sociales — "évolués bakongo" pour l'UPA-FNLA; "nouveaux *assimilados*" (umbundu) pour l'UNITA; alliance des créoles et des "nouveaux *assimilados*" (mbundu) pour le MPLA—, mais à un double niveau d'analyse. Premièrement, ce sont bien les rapports entre ces fractions qui sont déterminants dans la structuration du mouvements nationaliste en trois organisations. Deuxièmement, il n'y pas correspondance systématique entre telle fraction et telle organisation précisément parce que, dans des conditions historiques et sociales concrètes, les processus ont suivi des lignes de partage et d'unification spécifiques existant à la fois *entre* et *au sein* de ces trois fractions.' See Ch. Messiant, 'Luanda (1945-1961),' p. 188.

80. G. Clarence-Smith, 'Le Problème Ethnique en Angola,' p. 413.