

GUERRILLA BROADCASTERS AND THE UNNERVED COLONIAL STATE IN ANGOLA (1961–74)*

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Abstract

This article explores the relationship between Angolan guerrilla broadcasts and their effects on the Portuguese counterinsurgency project in their war to hold on to their African colonies. The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA's *Angola Combatente*) and National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA's *Voz de Angola Livre*) broadcasts allowed these movements to maintain a sonic presence in the Angolan territory from exile and to engage in a war of the airwaves with the Portuguese colonial state with whom they were fighting a ground war. First and foremost, it analyzes the effects of these rebel broadcasts on listeners, be they state or non-state actors. A reading of the archives of the state secret police and military exposes the nervousness and weakness of the colonial state even as it was winning the war.

Key Words

Angola, Southern Africa, independence wars, media, nationalism, technology.

Luanda is twice marked with the history of liberation radio. The brutalist modernist edifice of what is today *Rádio Nacional de Angola (RNA)* (Angolan National Radio) (Fig. 1) – the former colonial broadcaster (EOA) – built to counter the disturbing broadcasts of the liberation movement radio broadcasts, is still at the center of the country's communications network. A block away, a modest, well-maintained, representation of the Movimento Popular para a Libertação de Angola's (MPLA) (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) radio program *Angola Combatente (AC)* (*Fighting Angola*) is part of a mural (Fig. 2) on the walls surrounding the military hospital. This work of public art recounts the history of the MPLA's struggle and triumph against Portuguese colonialism. The modernist radio station is the product of late colonial counterinsurgency infrastructure and the mural the result of a postcolonial socialist popular art mobilization and official

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Fig. 1. Official Angolan Broadcaster (EOA). Photo by Fernão Simões de Carvalho.



Fig. 2. Part of the Military Hospital mural. Photo by Margarida Paredes, printed with her permission.

public history. The former bespeaks the colonial state's nervousness, the latter the need of the new MPLA state to project a sense of certainty about history and memory.

This article explores how the MPLA's *Angola Combatente* and the Frente Nacional para a Libertação de Angola's (FNLA) (National Front for the Liberation of Angola) *Voz de Angola Livre* (VAL) broadcasts allowed these movements to maintain a sonic presence in the Angolan territory from exile and to engage in a war of the airwaves with the Portuguese colonial state with whom they were fighting a ground war. First and foremost, it analyzes the effects of these rebel broadcasts on listeners, be they state or non-state actors. A reading of the archives of the state secret police and military exposes the nervousness and weakness of the colonial state even as it was winning the war. Portugal was fighting a war on three fronts: Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau. Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique presented military challenges to the Portuguese military. Angola, with three national liberation movements often fighting one another, proved an easier front.¹ So why did rebel broadcasting make the Portuguese so nervous if they had the military

1 The *União Nacional de Independência Total de Angola* (UNITA) (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) joined the war in 1966 when Jonas Savimbi broke from the FNLA. Joseph Sanches Cervelló, "Caso Angola", in A. Afonso and C. de Matos Gomes (eds.), *Guerra Colonial* (Lisboa, 2000), 74 and N. MacQueen, *The Decolonization of Portuguese Africa: Metropolitan Revolution and the Dissolution of Empire* (New York, 1997), 35–6.

situation under control? How did radio level the playing field? I argue that by understanding the specificity of radio as a technology – that is, the intimacy of sound and the material effects of the medium understood through the process of transduction – we gain insight into this nervousness and into the power of radio.

THE ARCHIVE AND READING FOR SOUND

Angola Combatente and *Voz de Angola Livre* have left few audio and documentary archival traces. In 1974, *Voice of America* and USIA researcher James M. Kushner, in an article on African liberation radios, worried that studies ignored *how* liberation movements communicated their messages.² He found work of the period too focused on print. Much has changed in the intervening four decades. African radio studies thrive. Historical work on the radio is growing. The recent spate of historical work on African liberation radios addresses sources, propaganda, and listenership.³ This new work underscores the difficulty of locating and/or accessing reliable archival material. Scholars point to the particularity of radio as a medium and the state of the archives as complicating factors.⁴ Radio's ephemerality, the invisibility of sound, and its fleeting intimacies, along with the generally dismal state of liberation movement sound and documentary archives, often hinder research.⁵

The Angolan armed liberation movements have not archived recorded or documentary material related to their radio programs. The pressures on returning exiled movements jostling for hegemony in the period of transition between the military coup in Portugal on 25 April 1974 and Angola's independence on 11 November 1975, muddied further by foreign intervention, relegated the urgency of paper keeping and put a premium on recycling audiotape. Sound reels and the few written transcripts that existed were lost, damaged, reused, or simply forgotten.⁶ This is true even for the triumphant MPLA.

2 J. M. Kushner, 'African liberation broadcasting', *Journal of Broadcasting*, 18:3 (1974), 299.

3 S. R. Davis, 'The African National Congress, its radio, its allies and exile', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 35:2 (2009), 349–73; R. Heinze, "'It recharged our batteries'": writing the history of the *Voice of Namibia*', *Journal of Namibian Studies*, 15 (2015), 30; S. P. Lekgoathi, 'The African National Congress's *Radio Freedom* and its audiences in apartheid South Africa, 1963–1991', *Journal of African Media Studies*, 2:2 (2010), 141. The following papers were part of the Wits Workshop on Liberation Radios in Southern Africa, University of the Witwatersrand, February 2017 and cover ZANU, ZAPU, and FRELIMO broadcasting: D. Moyo and C. Chinaka, 'Persuasion, propaganda and mass mobilisation through underground radio in the Zimbabwe War of Liberation: a comparative study of radio *Voice of the People* and *Voice of the Revolution*'; E. dos Prazeres Viegas Filipe, 'Voice of FRELIMO insurrection against the *Voice of Mozambique*: waging propaganda war against Portuguese colonialism and building a national consciousness, 1960s–1975'; and A. Romão Saúte Saúde, 'A *Voz da FRELIMO* and the struggle for the liberation of Mozambique, 1960s to 1970s'.

4 J. Mowitt in *Radio: Essays in Bad Reception* (Berkeley, 2011) notes the sense of radio as a forgotten, understudied, technology in radio studies.

5 R. Heinze, "'It recharged our batteries'", 4. 'Work on radio in other places emphasizes the irony of relying on documentary sources to study sound': S. Douglas (ed.), *Listening In: Radio and the American Imagination* (Minneapolis, 1999), 3 and 9; M. Hilmes, *Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922–1952* (Minneapolis, 1997), xvi.

6 *Rádio Nacional de Angola* (RNA) has one recording of *Angola Combatente* (AC) from its Brazzaville and Lusaka years. The Associação Tchiweka de Documentação in Luanda holds 15–20 transcripts of radio broadcasts from Brazzaville and Dar es Salaam translated from Portuguese to English by Marga Holness. General Mbeto Traça, director of AC in Lusaka, and Guilherme Mogas, the second director of RNA, tried

Under such circumstances, discerning the basics of what and how the MPLA and FNLA broadcast is difficult. Accessing listenership for any once clandestine radio is doubly vexed. Sekiba Lekgoathi, writing about audience and the African National Congress's (ANC) *Radio Freedom* noted: 'it was unlawful to listen to [the ANC's broadcasts] within the country and logically it would have been illegal if not downright impossible to conduct research on the phenomenon'.⁷ Systematic studies do not exist. The situation in the Portuguese colonies was no different.

Yet a substantial archive of broadcast transcripts and memos regarding listening in Angola remains. The colonial state listened in and classified the banned liberation movements broadcasts as dangerous, 'anti-Portuguese', and 'enemy' propaganda. Listening denoted support or, at the very least, inspired suspicion. It was illegal. But the International Police for State Defense (PIDE) listened diligently. PIDE agents recorded and transcribed broadcasts. Later the military and the Centralization and Coordination of Information Service of Angola (SCCIA) undertook this labor. Thousands of pages of transcribed radio broadcasts of *Angola Combatente*, and to a lesser extent *Voz de Angola Livre*, sit in the PIDE files of the Portuguese National Archives, known as the Torre de Tombo, and in the Arquivo Histórico Militar (Military History Archive) in Lisbon. These are not scientific studies. What we know of the broadcasts, and of their reception, comes filtered through the interests and concerns of police chiefs, surveillance officers, soldiers, and informers.

These state agents recorded broadcasts and then transcribed them. The PIDE destroyed the original recordings and many transcripts before the fall of the Portuguese regime, in April 1974.⁸ As a result, none of the files for the years 1969 to 1973 remain. Transcripts collected before 1969, namely those produced between 1966 (when consistent transcription began) and 1968 are still available, as are those from 1974 in the months preceding the coup.⁹ PIDE and the military listened to not only *Angola Combatente* and *Voz de Angola Livre*, but any other stations broadcasting material with an 'anti-Portuguese character' (1966–8) and what they later described as 'enemy broadcasts' (1973–4). This included the liberation movement radios as well as *Radio Moscow*, the *Voice of Nigeria*, *Radio Hanoi*, and sometimes the *BBC*.

The Torre do Tombo and military archives in Lisbon hold the transcripts, but no recordings. How, then, do we read these documents? Transcripts written entirely in capital letters tell us more about the desire to foster legibility than about inflection. The voice is lost. While transcripts tell us something about the broadcast content and transmission quality,

to recover materials from the exiled stations in Brazzaville and Lusaka but said they had been lost over the course of the 1980s. Interview with Guilherme Mogas, Luanda, 11 May 2011 and interview with General Mbeto Traça, Luanda, 9 May 2011.

7 Lekgoathi, 'The African National Congress's *Radio Freedom*', 144.

8 Namely, those from 1969–73. For example, see PIDE/DGS Del. Angola, P Inf. 11.08.E, U.I. 1818, fols. 1–474 and 11.08.F, U. I. 1817, fols. 1–950. The Broadcast Reconnaissance Command (CHERET) collected these transcripts and published them in their *Bulletin of Radio Listening* circulated to military and police with a certain security clearance. The PIDE transcribed broadcasts between 1964 and 1968 under different rules that did not mandate the disposal of the documents.

9 See, for example, the documents in PIDE/DGS, Del. Angola, P. Inf. 14.17.A, U. I. 2044, all of which are from this period.

they tell us even more about the preoccupations of their transcribers. Accompanied by commentaries about the conditions of transmission, the perceived danger of the content, and/or the range of the broadcast, the documents capture the state's concern. The SCCIA transcripts included grids and maps. Agents managed their nervousness by subjecting broadcasts to visual dissection. Grids divided the broadcasts by theme, substantive content, target audience, and additional commentary, quantifying conclusions. SCCIA agents did not transcribe broadcasts in African languages. Ignoring disturbing content in African languages, these reports betray their nerves, suppressing sounds they cannot decipher.¹⁰ Maps of radio reception plot the targets of sound waves. We need to learn to listen to these documents, to hear what Nancy Rose Hunt calls their 'acoustic register', as much as parse their language for the subjects of broadcasts and harvest them for data.¹¹ This is true when we read all archival documents but it is especially urgent when analyzing the effects and work of radio. The words in these reports have a tone and timbre. It is not the tone and timbre of the broadcast voice (much of which disappeared with the recordings though some is captured in the text); instead, it is one that quivers and shouts in response to it, one that registers its effects.

I follow Mhoze Chikowero, who mines the colonial radio archive to destabilize the solidity of the state's story about its own project.¹² He locates the 'nervous condition of colonial authority' in concerns about broadcasting and how Africans read the press.¹³ Nancy Rose Hunt theorizes the Belgian colonial state in the Congo as 'a nervous state'. A nervous state is 'taut, a nervous wreck'; that is, on edge, on the verge, and unstable. In Hunt's telling this develops around therapeutic insurgencies, on the one hand, and the enumerating, modernist, visibilizing practices of the biopolitical state (health clinics promoting pro-natalist policies to correct colonial destruction, the effects of which were billed as behavior by uneducated 'natives'), on the other.¹⁴ In particular, she scours the archives for sonic traces of violence to loosen the grip of the visual on how journalists, scholars, and humanitarians framed and imagined the Congo Free State and Belgian Congo. In the space that sound opens, Hunt discerns the effects of a nervous state; laughter destabilizes its routine violence and exposes its affect. Attending to sound in the PIDE and military archives of AC and VAL broadcasts means thinking at the interface of sound, nervousness, and nationalist insurgency, both real and imagined. Despite the fact that the Portuguese were winning the ground war – a narrative repeated in news reports in the Portuguese press – the archives disclose Portuguese military and secret police insecurity and nervousness. Guerrilla radio, I argue, produced this.

10 See Portugal (PT)/AHM/7B/13/4/273/40, Sit. Rep 339, Sept. 1968, p. 6 of 6: the head of SCCIA calls this practice dangerous for weakening potential counter-propaganda.

11 N. R. Hunt, 'An acoustic register, tenacious images, and Congolese scenes of rape and repetition', *Cultural Anthropology*, 23:2 (2008), 220–53. On valuing delivery and affect and not just empirical evidence in oral histories, see T. McCaskie, 'Unspeakable words, unmasterable feelings: calamity and the making of history in Asante', *The Journal of African History*, 59:1 (2018), 3–5.

12 M. Chikowero, 'Is propaganda modernity? Press and radio for "Africans" in Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Malawi during World War II and its aftermath', in P. J. Bloom, S. F. Miescher, and T. Manuh (eds.), *Modernization as Spectacle in Africa* (Bloomington, 2014), 113, 132.

13 Chikowero, 'Is propaganda modernity?', 114.

14 Hunt, *A Nervous State*.

ANTICOLONIAL WAR

Radio in Angola got its start in the hands of hobbyists. Radio clubs spread across the territory connecting white settlements by the mid-1940s. The state became involved in broadcasting belatedly. The need to argue its position on the war motivated colonial state broadcasting. The police suppressed nationalist organizers in 1959 in the *Processo dos 50* (Trial of 50). The state arrested and sent some nationalists to Luanda prisons and others to Tarrafal Prison in Cape Verde. The PIDE arrived in Angola shortly thereafter.¹⁵ But it did not stop insurgency.

In early January 1961, cotton workers in Malanje went on strike to protest against forced labor and taxation; they mobilised around a prophetic movement that announced the arrival of Maria, a woman who would deliver freedom from Portuguese oppression. António Mariano, originally from Malanje but recently returned from the newly independent Congo, galvanized a following who preached Maria's return, in what became known as 'Maria's War'.¹⁶ Historian Aida Freudenthal called this an 'anticolonial revolt permeated by an ethno-nationalist ferment', though it lacked a nationalist or even a clear political program.¹⁷ The movement evidenced, if not prefigured, a robust, cross-border communications network – one that straddled the material and the spiritual worlds – well before the advent of guerrilla broadcasting.¹⁸ In a revisionist reading, Aharon de Grassi sees the revolt as part of nationalist mobilization that connected Luanda, small and large towns in Malanje, and Congo-Kinshasa, through migration, activism, and contract labor.¹⁹ Malanje was a 'crossroads of nationalism'.²⁰ The mobilization surfaced not only local, but territorial processes.²¹ African residents of the Angolan territory pursued and nurtured ties of language, cultural practice, and commerce across the colony and region. If the colonial state and Portuguese settlers had been largely deaf to African discontent, this clamor finally perforated that veil of silence.²²

15 D. C. Mateus, *A PIDE/DGS na Guerra Colonial 1961–1974* (Lisboa, 2004), 227.

16 A. Freudenthal, 'A Baixa de Cassanje: algodão e revolta', *Revista Internacional de Estudos Africanos*, 18–22 (1995–1999), 245–83. Freudenthal argues that the Portuguese colonial administration not only responded violently, but also acted to conceal and downplay the events to cover over their violence and obscure the causes of the revolt – namely, a pitiless forced labor regime by the state sanctioned concessionary Cotonang. See, for example, 250–1 and 270–1.

17 Freudenthal, 'A Baixa de Cassanje', 274.

18 On the association between radio's invisible voices and the supernatural in the 1920s, radio's earliest days of broadcasting, see J. Loviglio, *Radio's Intimate Public: Network Broadcasting and Mass-Mediated Democracy* (Minneapolis, 2005), xviii.

19 A. De Grassi, 'Rethinking the 1961 Baixa de Cassanje Revolt: towards a relational geo-history of Angola', *Mulemba – Revista Angolana de Ciências Sociais*, V:10 (2015), 29–109.

20 A. De Grassi, 'Rethinking', 93. De Grassi argues that 'the discussion over the character of the revolt is also a proxy for other debates, including about moral claims to a dignity and a share of national development', 41.

21 *Ibid.* 67–70. Here de Grassi points beyond the movements of labor and road construction to villagization, a process he documents across the twentieth century, and not just as a counterinsurgency strategy.

22 The arrests, trials, and imprisonment of nationalists in 1959 and 1960 demonstrate the Portuguese colonial state's disinterest in negotiated political rights. The state suppressed Angolan political organizing and refused to engage it. J. Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution, Volume I: The Anatomy of an Explosion* (Cambridge, 1969), 33–4 and D. Wheeler and R. Pélissier, *Angola* (New York, 1971), 162–6.

In the face of strikes, the Portuguese colonial state sent in the army, police, and air force to bomb villages with napalm in the Baixa de Kassanje between February and March. Estimates of the numbers of dead bodies range between the hundreds and thirty thousand.²³ Freudenthal elaborates, suggesting that thousands were killed and many thousands more fled to the Congo, seeking shelter from the bombings and continued Portuguese repression.²⁴

In the midst of this, though disconnected from it, on 4 February 1961, a group of activists attacked two prisons in Luanda aiming to free some of the political prisoners jailed in the Trial of 50. Organized in part by the Catholic Canon Manuel das Neves, in coordination with the predecessor of the FNLA, União de Populações de Angola (UPA) (Union of Angolan People, this action was also met with extreme state repression. In Luanda, Portuguese civilians received arms and meted out reckless violence on urban elites they imagined were associated with the revolt.²⁵ Meanwhile, in the country's north, on 15 March 1961 five hundred armed men from UPA crossed the border from the Congo into Angola and invaded numerous villages and coffee plantations, brutally killing owners and Ovimbundu migrant workers from the country's south. David Birmingham described the attacks as 'the largest colonial uprising to be experienced in any part of tropical Africa'.²⁶ The colonial state and military responded with unprecedented violence, decapitating Africans and posting their heads on stakes to terrorize the local populations. Feeling under siege, unwilling to negotiate, the Portuguese colonial state again reacted with violence.²⁷ This would be war.²⁸ The carnage measured 'ten times larger' than the Mau Mau war in Kenya, Birmingham estimates.²⁹

The three attacks, uncoordinated one from the other, nonetheless brought to the surface systems of coordination and communication at work that the Portuguese colonial state had neither glimpsed nor heard. The imprisonment of nationalist agitators after the Trial of 50 temporarily subdued anticolonial politics.³⁰ While the events of 1961 heightened surveillance and security, they exposed desires illegible to the Portuguese state even as their police scoured the land for signs of communist infiltration. They might have had more success had they listened instead of just looked. Tuning in to foreign broadcasters and producing

23 De Grassi, 'Rethinking', 35; Freudenthal, 'A Baixa de Cassanje', 252; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution, Volume I*, 125; and Wheeler and Pélissier, *Angola*, 174.

24 Freudenthal, 'A Baixa de Cassanje', 276; G. J. Bender, *Angola Under the Portuguese: the Myth and the Reality* (Berkeley, 1978), 158, 165.

25 Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution, Volume I*, 129; Wheeler and Pélissier, *Angola*, 175–6.

26 D. Birmingham, *Frontline Nationalism in Angola and Mozambique* (Trenton, 1992), 42.

27 The uncoordinated, violent response by the Portuguese state exacerbated tensions between white settlers and the state. Settlers pressured Prime Minister Salazar for reforms that would give them more representation and encourage foreign investment. See F. Pimenta, 'O Estado Novo português e a reforma do Estado colonial em Angola: o comportamento político das elites brancas (1961–1962)', *História*, 33:2 (2014), 250–72.

28 The war began in earnest in May 1961 when forces arrived from Portugal to occupy the north. See Afonso and de Matos Gomes (eds.), *Guerra Colonial*, 38–41.

29 Birmingham, *Frontline Nationalism*, 42.

30 The Trial of 50 marked the opening of the nationalist struggle. Fifty-six nationalist activists were arrested and tried in three trials that named different organizations: ELA (Exército de Libertação de Angola), MIA (Movimento para a Independência de Angola), and MLA (Movimento para a Libertação de Angola) though numerous other small groups were involved. See Anabela Cunha, "'Processo dos 50": memórias de luta clandestina pela independência de Angola', *Revista Angolana de Sociologia*, 8 (2011), 87–96.

music that in its language and sounds defined what it meant to be Angolan, urban residents had already begun to imagine themselves as a distinct group with specific political interests.

Arriving in the territory in 1959 after the Trial of 50, the PIDE followed radio broadcasts in the region. Initially concerned with the Portuguese opposition, when *Angola Combatente* began broadcasting in 1964, PIDE agents tuned in. While *Voz de Angola Livre* began broadcasting consistently in 1965, the PIDE did not begin systematically recording and transcribing its broadcasts until 1966.³¹

GUERRILLA RADIOS AND THE WAR

The events of 1961 forced the nationalist movements to consolidate themselves in exile. Based outside Angola's borders, they needed a way to communicate with militants in the territory and to spread their message. The external services of newly independent countries offered airtime to nationalist movements fighting the white settler redoubts of Southern Africa, giving them access to international airwaves.³² Intermittent broadcasts came from Ghana. Consistent transmission occurred only after the MPLA settled in Brazzaville and the FNLA, already based in Kinshasa, established a relationship with the broadcaster there.

AC's Program A began broadcasting from Brazzaville in 1964.³³ Program B broadcast from Dar-Es-Salaam from 1968, but with poor sound quality.³⁴ Program C, broadcast from the MPLA base camp *Vitória é Certa* (*Victory is Certain*) in Lusaka started in 1972 to cover the Eastern areas of Angola in that region's languages (Luvalu, Tchokwe, Umbundu, and Portuguese).³⁵ An outgrowth of the movement's Department of Information and Propaganda, AC was the bailiwick of party intellectuals (in Brazzaville, Aníbel de Melo and Deolinda Rodrigues, later Adolfo Maria; in Lusaka, Paulo Jorge, Mbeto Traça, and Ilda Carreira).³⁶ None had previous radio experience. Some had worked in journalism, others were committed militants with more education than average cadres, so the movement employed them in writing broadcasts, newsletters, pamphlets, producing photos, film clips, and news releases. Propaganda work often took place in coordination with foreign journalists.³⁷

31 They were concerned with an Angolan-settled Portuguese citizen living in Brazzaville who was aligned with the Portuguese opposition. See 'Powerful Frequencies', ch. 3.

32 J. R. Brennan, 'Communications and media in African history', ch. 26 in J. Parker and R. Reid (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern African History* (Oxford, 2013), 501–02 and Heinze, "It recharged our batteries", 30. A similar situation pertained in Algeria, see F. Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism* (New York, 1965), 74.

33 This was the first consistent broadcasting. The MPLA broadcast briefly and inconsistently from Ghana in the early 1960s. Kushner, 'African liberation broadcasting', 301–03.

34 The ANC's *Radio Freedom* likewise broadcast from Dar es Salaam and later Lusaka. Davis, 'The African National Congress', 379.

35 Interview with General Mbeto Traça, Luanda, 9 May 2011.

36 M. Bittencourt, '*Estamos Juntos!* O MPLA e a luta anticolonial (1961–1974), Volume I (Luanda, 2008), 272.

37 See D. Barnett, *Liberation Support Movement Interview: Sixth Region Commander, S. Likambuila, Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* (Vancouver, 1971); D. Barnett, *Liberation Support Movement Interview: Member of MPLA Comité Director Daniel Chipenda, Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* (Vancouver, 1972); A. Conchiglia, *Guerra di popolo in Angola* (Rome, 1969); and

Program A broadcast from the radio network *Voice of the Congolese Revolution* in Brazzaville. This radio network had the strongest transmitter on the continent, a well-used and guarded inheritance from the Second World War-era Free France movement. The independent government of the Republic of the Congo had maintained and expanded the station's technical capacity. Like other newly sovereign African states, the Republic of the Congo supported the liberation movements of those still under colonial rule and put its broadcast power at the service of the MPLA.³⁸ A PIDE agent transcribed an AC broadcast from Brazzaville in which the tagline underscored the solidarity.³⁹ The PIDE agent closed by reporting sound interference, likely atmospheric. Reliant on the ionosphere to bounce electromagnetic waves to faraway places, what shortwave gains in distance, it often loses in quality. But as the many files of transcripts attest, plenty of broadcasts came through loud and clear.

The FNLA broadcast *Voz de Angola Livre* from the *Voice of Zaire* in Kinshasa and Lubumbashi. The VAL broadcast in the name of the Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile (GRAE), formed by the FNLA in 1962. According to Holden Roberto, former FNLA president, party militants broadcast from Kinshasa between 1961 and 1974. PIDE transcripts of the program date to 1966, though the documentary film *Independência (Independence, 2015)* includes a broadcast from 1963, and a 1964 PIDE report from Malanje mentions the broadcasts.⁴⁰

Two men ran the VAL.⁴¹ Both received training in radio at Zaire's National Radio Station. VAL broadcasts, like those of AC, pushed back against Portuguese propaganda, addressed Portuguese soldiers and encouraged them to desert, followed the EOA closely, sent news of battlefront gains and losses, reported on the movement leaders' diplomatic travels, and communicated messages to Angolans within the country.⁴² Much more of VAL programming addressed the sizeable Angolan population in exile in Zaire and announced or reported on local community events. In what would later take on an ironic ring, one VAL broadcast attacked American imperialism.⁴³

The PIDE and military archives contain more AC than VAL program transcripts. The MPLA broadcast more regularly. PIDE and military documents highlight the MPLA's

B. Davidson, *In the Eye of the Storm: Angola's People* (New York, 1972). Support for radio journalism provided an easy route for foreign solidarity with the ANC given the polarizing rhetoric of the Cold War. See Lekgoathi, 'The African National Congress's *Radio Freedom*', 142.

38 Heinze mentions support first from *Radio Cairo* in the 1950s, then *Radio Ghana*, and Tanzania. Heinze, "They recharged our batteries", 30. See also J. R. Brennan, 'Radio Cairo and the decolonization of East Africa, 1953–1964', in C. J. Lee (ed.), *Making a World After Empire: the Bandung Moment and its Political Afterlives* (Athens, OH, 2010), 173–95.

39 Institute of National Archives/Torre do Tombo, Lisbon (INA/TT) PIDE/DGS, Delegação de Angola, Processo de Informação 14.17.A, fol. 915.

40 *Independência* (Luanda, 2015).

41 Roberto indicated a Sr Campos and the other was Hendrik Vaal Neto, recently the Angolan Ambassador to Egypt and someone who left the FNLA for the MPLA in the 1980s. Interview with Holden Roberto, Luanda, 9 Aug. 2005.

42 All citations from the following file: INA/TT PIDE/DGS, Delegação de Angola, PInf. 11.08. E, U.I. 1818. Examples include: battlefront victories, fols. 927–9; addressing Portuguese soldiers, fols. 912–13 and 'Portuguese oppressed by the Caetano regime', fols. 930–3; Roberto's visit to Bucharest, fol. 800 and to China, fols. 927–9; and sending greetings to family and asking particular people to show up at the delegation headquarters, fol. 911.

43 INA/TT PIDE/DGS, Delegação de Angola, PInf. 11.08. E, U.I. 1818, fols. 912–13.

investment in propaganda, particularly the radio. For example, a military report on psycho-social action from late October 1968 mentioned that ‘among the EN [enemy] psychological activities for the period, the MPLA continues to distinguish itself for having best undertaken them, especially in radio broadcasting’.⁴⁴

The military mounted a surveillance operation as part of its counterinsurgency strategy.⁴⁵ In the wake of the Baixa de Kassanje attack, a working group composed of military, PIDE, and civilian elements proposed the formation of the SCCIA to organize information from the various surveilling agencies. Political in-fighting between the secret police, military, and SCCIA hindered coordination.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, in Angola these agencies communicated with one another frequently and more regularly than in Mozambique or Guinea-Bissau.⁴⁷ Surveillance proved effective. By the late 1960s, the PIDE had dismantled urban-based MPLA-, FNLA-, and UNITA-affiliated cells.⁴⁸

Both the PIDE and SCCIA undertook radio surveillance. They forwarded radio broadcast transcriptions to the military, which had its own radio listening unit – the Broadcast Reconnaissance Command (CHERET). The PIDE sent transcripts while SCCIA forwarded monthly Situation Reports that combined transcripts, commentary, and, by the late 1960s, maps that showed broadcast reception and quality in the territory. This duplication, if not triplication, of labor bespeaks an inefficient need to record. The PIDE followed listening practices in the territory, while SCCIA focused on broadcast content. Meanwhile the military also worried, in a general sense, about listenership and the impact of what they called ‘Enemy propaganda’ on soldiers, the white population, and Africans.⁴⁹

CLANDESTINE LISTENING: THE INTERSECTION OF MEMORY AND ARCHIVE

Listening to *Angola Combatente* remains a proud, vivid memory in official and popular discourses about the exiled liberation struggle. Commemorated in the public history mural on the Military Hospital in central Luanda, the image of the radio with two listeners next to a man reading the MPLA’s paper ‘Vitória ou Morte’ (‘Victory or Death’)/ Brazzaville/‘Último Comunicado da Guerra’ (‘Latest War News’), is a key part of the MPLA’s official narrative of the national liberation struggle. While the current MPLA regime and new businesses raze other artifacts of the early days of independence (signs, marks to denote building occupations, monuments), painters refresh this mural, maintaining visual narrative certainty against street-level dust and the to-and-fro of daily life in

44 PT/AHM/FO/007/B/38, SSR 4- Angola, 1961970, 7/B 38/4 cx 360, pasta 18, rel tri APsic 4/68 1 Out a 31 Dez 68, 1. See also PT/AHM/7B/13/4/273/40, Sit. Rep. 334, p. 2 of 3 and Sit. Rep. 339, p. 6 of 6.

45 Afonso and de Matos Gomes (eds.), *Guerra Colonial*, 67; J. P. Cann, *Counterinsurgency in Africa: the Portuguese Way of War* (Pinetown, UK, 2012), chs. 3 and 6. These authors insist that more than in counterinsurgency wars in general, the Portuguese approach focused on soldiers and their work with local populations.

46 Mateus, *A PIDE/DGS na Guerra Colonial*, 376–8.

47 *Ibid.* 381–2.

48 *Ibid.* 187–93.

49 PT/AHM/7B/38/4/360, 1962 and PT/AHM/7B/13/4/306, the ‘Orgânica da Contra-Subversão’, 15 Apr. 1970.

Luanda. Radio broadcasting, as the newspaper in the mural suggests, played its part in a propaganda strategy that involved information broadly cast: pamphlets, an international network of connections with socialist political movements, international journalists, and exiled centers of study.

Three lines joined in the upper corner of the mural denote an interior listening scene, reminding viewers that people hid their listening. A 1968 memo from the Steering Committee on Radio in Angola (Corangola) to the PIDE confirmed such practices. Informers encountered a rumored, duplicitous listening practice in the *musseques* (Luanda's informal neighborhood predominantly populated by Africans): 'many radio owners have two apparatuses: one located in the entry room tuned to a Luanda broadcaster and another, located in the back of the home, tuned to Brazzaville'.⁵⁰ Memory and archive intersect.

People often hid in much more extreme ways to listen to *AC* and *VAL* (or these are the memories they recount), and while the broadcasters were out of sight (located in exile), and the exiled movements of which they were a part were largely invisible to those inside the country, the broadcasts themselves were not a secret. That would have undermined the broadcast's utility. Invisibility cloaked listening practice in order to better spread the message. Militants and interested listeners dissimulated in order to tune in.⁵¹ Some people later met secretly to pass along what they had heard. Liberation movement sympathizers, and their opponents, created networks of communication in which guerrilla radio broadcasts constituted one node. Transmission of messages from the radio sometimes had visible effects. Historian Marcelo Bittencourt tells us that 'in 1966 slogans and words of support for the MPLA started appearing posted or painted in public places', offering material evidence that *AC*'s message sometimes came through.⁵²

Individuals recall that the guerrilla stations catalyzed their political awakening. Rodeth Gil said that the MPLA's broadcast informed her of the anticolonial war, something not reported in the colonial press.⁵³ Based in exile, movements broadcast radio waves that could perforate the silence that Portuguese state censorship carefully wove.⁵⁴ Lote Chivava Guilherme 'Sachikwenda' recalled young boys in groups of four or five gathering around the radio to listen to the broadcasts of the movements in exile. This was how he and his peers learned about the war.⁵⁵ Radio sparked political awakening. Ruth Mendes

50 This item received an F6 classification, which meant it was considered not trustworthy but deserving of further investigation. INA/TT PIDE/DGS, Delegação de Angola, PInf. 15.33.A, U.I. 2099, fol. 275.

51 For an example from South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s, see Lekgoathi, 'The African National Congress's *Radio Freedom*', 143-5.

52 Bittencourt, '*Estamos Juntos!*', 273.

53 *Independência* (Luanda: Geração 80, 2015).

54 Portuguese state censorship was uneven. Scholars and journalists note more censorship in the metropole than in the African colonies (for example, broadcaster Sebastião Coelho played songs banned in the metropole in Angola, for example). A Censorship Commission and a Reading Council followed print materials closely. These councils banned anything they deemed Marxist-Leninist, promoting *Angolanidade* (Angolanness), or possessing an Angolan perspective. They listened to radio but censored after the fact. See J. Filipe Pinto, 'A censura em Angola durante a Guerra Colonial' and interviews with 'Diamantino Pereira Monteiro' and 'David Borges', in S. Torres (ed.), *O Jornalismo Português e a Guerra Colonial* (Lisboa, 2016), 121-7, 173-94.

55 *Independência* (Luanda, 2015). 'Sachikwenda', a UNITA militant, was arrested and sent to Tarrafal prison in 1969.

remembered hearing about the liberation movements and tuning in as a twelve-year-old girl: ‘then we started listening to *Angola Combatente* without the adults knowing’.⁵⁶ The broadcasts ignited fear of reprisals and young people hid listening from the PIDE and their elders.⁵⁷

Scenes of secret or semi-secret listening, shrouded in fear, often anchor memories of guerrilla radio. Lekgoathi found similar ‘listening cultures’ in South Africa in which listeners met under cover of night, to avoid detection by police and informants, and later debated issues from the ANC’s *Radio Freedom* broadcasts.⁵⁸ Manuel Faria, owner of a recreational club in the *musseque* Sambizanga, recalled driving to a soccer field, turning off the car’s engine, and tuning in on a transistor inside the car in the field’s dark, empty expanse. The composer and musician Xabanu listened with his political cell and Alberto Jaime, a civil servant, described AC as a call to action, but a potential ‘death certificate’ for those caught listening.⁵⁹

A somewhat uncharacteristic scene, because of the size of the radio and the inversion of its location, appears in Zeze Gamboa’s 2013 film *O Grande Kilapy (The Great Swindle)*. The playboy protagonist and nationalist Joãozinho comes home late one night and startles his father who he finds with his ear close to the family’s large, tabletop radio, listening to the AC broadcast. Jardo Muekalia, today a senior member in UNITA, offers another tale of the masculinist and paternalist construction of nationalism through radio. One night in 1968 nine-year-old Muekalia finds his father alone, on the patio, accompanying a broadcast at low volume. Approaching he hears the call sign from Brazzaville. When his father realizes his son is near, he turns off the radio immediately, asks him to repeat what he heard, and swears him to silence. Noticing his father had not changed the frequency, Muekalia returns to listen:

they continued to talk about the MPLA and colonialism. In any case, it was all Chinese to me. All I knew was that it was a dangerous broadcaster. From then on, I listened now and then to the dangerous broadcaster, accompanied by my brother Tiago, until one day my father caught me. I had never seen him so angry.⁶⁰

Weeks later, the PIDE agents arrested his father, a Methodist minister. The PIDE accused him of using money raised for the local church mission to fund the ‘*turras*’ (Portuguese slang for terrorists and a general reference to the nationalist movements).

Material from the PIDE archives reiterates the trope of hidden listening, if not the sense of fear. But ‘semi-clandestine’ better describes the listening practices police and informers encountered. In their reports, police informants disdained listeners’ intrepidness. In Luanda in 1967, the author of this memo expressed exasperation at public displays of listening:

Enough of the shamelessness of natives who walk around with transistors in hand in the middle of the *musseque*, listening to broadcasts from the Congos – Kinshasa and Brazza. As for the MPLA

⁵⁶ *Independência* (Luanda, 2015).

⁵⁷ Interview with Albina Assis, Luanda, 22 Jan. 2002.

⁵⁸ Lekgoathi, ‘The African National Congress’s *Radio Freedom*’, 151.

⁵⁹ Interview with Alberto Jaime, Luanda, 4 Dec. 2001.

⁶⁰ J. Muekalia, *Angola A Segunda Revolução: Memórias da luta pela Democracia* (Lisboa, 2010), 16.

broadcasts, they are listened to inside the home. The influence among natives is great, increasing their euphoria in favor of independence.⁶¹

PIDE agents rarely referred so directly to independence. More typically they used words like ‘insurgency’, ‘terrorism’, or the ‘enemy broadcasts’ to describe the desires of Angolans for independence. In other words, even as they transcribed broadcasts about nationalism, agents sifted that content through a predetermined ideological frame that delegitimized nationalism.

One officer reported that in the *musseques*, the PIDE commonly ‘surprise[d] whole families grouped around the radio listening devotedly as if it were a religious cult’.⁶² PIDE officers often referred to the population of the *musseques* as a whole, as if they were a kind of horde, one person indistinguishable from the next. For example, six months later, a different informant reported that ‘almost the whole population of the *musseques* can’t stop listening to the Brazza broadcasts’.⁶³ Lumping together *musseques* residents and all programming from the station, the informant equates listening with ‘insurgency’. In Sambizanga, ‘in various backyards, it was noted that avid subversives were found, listening to Brazza, and in one, there were five individuals with a radio inside a basket, listening to the broadcast in religious silence’.⁶⁴ Some committed political activists, at least, cultivated a sense of religious devotion around their listening.⁶⁵ Whether this was true for the average *musseques* listener or whether it was the projection of those recording the act is harder to know. But people did gather at a regular time, often in different places, to listen quietly and with focus. The association between radio broadcasting, listening, and religion or spirituality is a tight one. Aside from the widespread use of radio by religious organizations worldwide, the communications scholar John Durham Peters notes the mutual exchange between early radio enthusiasts and spiritualists in the late nineteenth century.⁶⁶

The memories of Angolans and the PIDE documents highlight the occlusion, not invisibility, and the muffling, not total silencing, of listening. Faria tuned in openly, but in the dark. Muekalia Senior listened outside but at low volume. And listeners shared the

61 INA/TT PIDE/DGS, Delegação de Angola, PInf. 14.17.A, U.I. 2044, fol. 266. The author’s tone and the mid-level security of the memo (C3 on a scale of A1-3- F1-3, most to least trustworthy) suggest that this was not a trained police officer but a neighborhood informer. Or, the tone might express frustration with the genuine inability of the PIDE to control the information in the territory and further evidence of the nervousness that independence in neighboring countries produced in the PIDE officers.

62 INA/TT PIDE/DGS, Delegação de Angola, PInf. 14.17.A, U.I. 2044, fol. 332, 14 July 1967.

63 INA/TT PIDE/DGS, Delegação de Angola, PInf. 14.17.A, U.I. 2044, fol. 101, 26 Feb. 1968.

64 INA/TT PIDE/DGS, Delegação de Angola, PInf. 14.17.A, U.I. 2044, fol. 101.

65 See M. J. Moorman, *Intonations: a Social and Cultural History of Nation, Luanda, Angola, 1945–Recent Times* (Athens, OH, 2008), 151. Albina Assis discusses how she and her female friends dissimulated listening by saying they were going to *bençon*, a gathering in the Catholic church, and a word that means ‘blessing’.

66 P. Apostolidis, *Stations of the Cross: Adorno and Christian Right Radio* (Durham, 2000) and J. D. Peters, *Speaking Into the Air: a History of the Idea of Communication* (Chicago, 2000), see ch. ‘The History of an Error: the Spiritualist Tradition’. With reference to African broadcasting, see, for example, D. E. Schulze, ‘Equivocal resonances: Islamic revival and female radio “preachers” in urban Mali’, in L. Gunner, D. Ligaga, and D. Moyo (eds.), *Radio in Africa: Publics, Cultures, Communities* (Johannesburg, 2011), 63–80.

contents of the broadcasts, relishing and debating details. They passed along the coded names of friends, or friends of friends or contacts, who had managed to make it to exile, or news of victories in international diplomacy. Muekalia's reminiscence points to youthful curiosity and the attraction of danger, in what sounded like a foreign language, in the MPLA's alternative interpretation of lived reality. Like Jaime, Muekalia stresses the tremendous risk faced by nationalist sympathizers or those just curious about other points of view. In the late colonial period, many people dreaded the PIDE. Transgressing the law, even when impelled by a sense of righteousness, or curiosity, still involved fear.

Indeed, listening could lead to arrest. An example from 1967 in the central Angolan village of Mungo near the city of Nova Lisboa (a post-independence UNITA stronghold) is illustrative. Around 7 pm one August night, the local administrator walked into a bar to buy cigarettes. As he entered, the barman Timoteo Chingualulo turned down the volume on the radio and then his friend, a microscope nurse from the local Health Delegation, António Francisco da Silva 'Baião', changed the station. After the administrator exited, they tuned back in to the original station: *Radio Brazzaville* broadcasting the MPLA's program. The administrator could hear it from his veranda. The local police detained both men and the offending radio.⁶⁷ While the police had no evidence that the men were liberation movement members, 'it is inferred that the accused are partisans of an independent Angola, who, for now, are trying to satisfy their ambition by sending out the Brazzaville broadcasts publicly'.⁶⁸ Again, illegal listening marked one as a subversive.

Press censorship and PIDE surveillance encircled radio listening with risk. The fear and perceived danger involved in tuning in to the guerrilla stations means that former listeners sometimes recall accompanying liberation movement radio programs as a mode of participation in the struggle for liberation. They offer the memory of listening as a symbol of having been a part of or aligned with the exiled movements, particularly that of the MPLA, where service in exile is a significant marker of party membership status.⁶⁹ Some people proffer listening as a badge of longstanding loyalty to the ruling party. At a book launch for a novel by an Angolan author in Lisbon, Portugal in April 2016, one attendee exclaimed: 'I am from the MPLA. We listened to *Angola Combatente!*' Here the speaker collapses party affiliation, if not militancy, and listening. If listening generated real fears, and listeners ran risks that some feel demand recognition or recompense, PIDE officers had their own affective responses.

THE COLONIAL STATE UNNERVED

The PIDE sometimes arrested listeners, but not always. An informant found a nurse working in Luanda rejoicing over news he heard on *Angola Combatente* in 1964. The informer

67 INA/TT PIDE/DGS, Delegação de Angola, PInf. 14.17.A, U.I. 2044, fols. 279–81.

68 INA/TT PIDE/DGS, Delegação de Angola, PInf. 14.17.A, U.I. 2044, fol. 281.

69 J.-M. Mabeko Tali, *O MPLA Perante Si Próprio: Dissidências e Poder de Estado (1962–1977)*, Volume I (Luanda, 2001), 209–20, the chart on p. 219 shows the composition of the Central Committee and the Political Bureau emerging from the Inter-Regional Conference of the MPLA in 1974. Five of the thirty-four members came from clandestine work or the prisons, all others were active in the exiled guerrilla struggle.

sent a memo up the intelligence hierarchy but it did not have immediate repercussions.⁷⁰ As the arrest of Chingualulo and Baião demonstrates, PIDE files offer evidence that the practice of listening extended beyond the politically conscious and engaged activists of urban areas. Even a cursory reading of the many thousands of pages of broadcast transcripts, interrupted listening séances, decrees about how to handle the new broadcasts, and reports of rumored tuning in brought to the PIDE amplifies the trope of hidden listening and complicates our understanding of what it meant.

It is difficult to know precisely how many people listened and how widely. PIDE transcripts come from nearly all provinces, but accounts of Africans tuning in did not. In a study of broadcasting in the Portuguese colonies, Alexander F. Toogood reported low radio density in Angola:

Considering that in 1971 there were only about 95,000 receivers in the country, one third concentrated in the Luanda district and mostly in the hands of Europeans, it seems doubtful that broadcasts by the nationalist movements could have a widespread impact ... It may be a measure of Portugal's insecurity that it nevertheless tried strenuously to counter the propaganda broadcasts by increasing Radio Angola's provincial coverage and giving financial support to private stations.⁷¹

If memories of listening seem exaggerated relative to the actual numbers of radios in homes (even if one radio set served many ears), so too does Portuguese 'insecurity'.⁷² In Toogood's account, this paranoia motivated action.

Beginning in 1966, reports to the PIDE about VAL broadcasts described them as being 'of a subversive character'. PIDE officers recommended jamming the broadcast, something they were attempting to do with AC.⁷³ Often issued from the Luanda delegation, it is not clear from these documents where reception occurred, though an entire file of nearly one thousand pages of transcripts of both AC and VAL from 1966–68 includes nearly a third from two posts in other areas: Dundo-Portugalia in the far eastern Lunda region (the base of Diamang the diamond concessionary) and Lobito, a port city in central Angola.⁷⁴ In other words, the sound came from all around and was widely received.

Memos relating to radio crossed the desk of the PIDE's head of office, Jaime Oliveira. He received and signed off on nearly every report of listening. He drafted memos and circulars that resound with what Chikowero calls the 'nervous condition of colonial authority'. In May 1966 he reported on listenership securing the very trope that dominates in memory: 'In the most complete silence and isolation, uniting all the possible and imaginable precautions, the middle class, that is, administrative functionaries and servants and others, in an

70 INA/TT PIDE/DGS, Delegação de Angola, Processo de Informação 15.28.A, fol. 1076.

71 A. F. Toogood, 'Portuguese dependencies', in S. Head (ed.), *Broadcasting in Africa: a Continental Survey of Radio and Television* (Philadelphia, 1974), 163.

72 See Lekgoathi on group listening in South Africa, 'The African National Congress's *Radio Freedom*', 144. For examples of group listening in non-clandestine situations, see H. Englund, *Human Rights and African Airwaves: Mediating Equality on Chicewa Radio* (Bloomington, 2011), 176–9 and D. Spitulnik, 'Documenting radio culture as lived experience: reception studies and the mobile machine in Zambia', in R. Farndon and G. Furniss (eds.), *African Broadcast Cultures: Radio in Transition* (London, 2000), 152–5.

73 INA/TT PIDE/DGS, Delegação de Angola, Processo de Informação 14.17.A, fol. 814.

74 INA/TT PIDE/DGS, Delegação de Angola, PlInf. 14.17.A, U.I. 2044.

incredibly large number, listen to *Radio Brazzaville* on Sundays (the program of the subversive broadcasts)'. More prudent than elite listeners, Oliveira found these middle-class listeners difficult to count.⁷⁵ He continued: 'These broadcasts inspire them and give them ideas and oblige us to think, to judge that these [broadcasts] are no less dangerous than the armed war.' Oliveira added seven 'civilized' listeners whom he listed by name: a laughably small number, he noted, given the sizeable total number of listeners including 'a large number of white sympathizers'.⁷⁶

Propaganda, the war of words, of hearts and minds, captured the attention of large swaths of colonial society. Even white settlers tuned in regularly.⁷⁷ Broadcasts appealing to soldiers to desert caught listener attention and troubled the PIDE. In a series of reports from across the territory, from Pereira d'Eça in the far south to Cuanza Norte and Luanda in the center, the PIDE registered anticipation about and chatter around interviews with deserters in the late 1960s.⁷⁸ One officer noted the effects on Portuguese soldiers: some suddenly realized that they were defending the interests of elites.⁷⁹ Two months later another officer reported that an AC broadcast that encouraged desertion on the grounds that 'the army doesn't defend the Nation but the capitalism of "Diamang", of Oil and a half-dozen wealthy individuals because the people of Angola live in misery' had wide repercussions in Luandan public opinion.⁸⁰ And an AC interview of African soldiers who deserted the Portuguese army was 'listened to attentively' and one man was overheard repeating it nearly 'word for word' to a friend.⁸¹

In December 1966 Oliveira issued Secret Circular 52/66 to all PIDE delegations and sub-delegations from the Luanda office. This circular noted the growth in anti-Portuguese radio propaganda, especially that from the MPLA. Commenting on reception he noted that their 'programs reach the Province with the best conditions for listening, giving the sensation that we are hearing a local broadcast, and a large part of the population, even the Europeans, listens closely'.⁸² Oliveira went on to solicit help from local post and telegraph offices and radio clubs in jamming *Angola Combatente*. At this point, he did not know if it would be effective or even possible. Caught out both technologically and in the

75 By this he meant former *assimilados*. The state abolished the indigenato, which divided the African population into *assimilados* (assimilated or civilized) and *indígenas* (indigenous) after the uprisings of 1961, but class and cultural cleavages continued.

76 INA/TT PIDE/DGS, Delegação de Angola, Processo de Informação 15.28.A, fol. 1051. The military concerned itself with the impact of 'enemy' propaganda on the white population. In PT/AHM/7B/38/4/360, 1962, 1-4, the regional military commander for Angola reported to the military chief of staff in Lisbon that the white population, which is 'theoretically and erroneously considered a priori pro-national, finds itself perplexed and disillusioned or already contaminated by the insinuating propaganda of the En'.

77 David Borges remembered tuning in to *Angola Combatente* in Cunene but only becoming 'politically conscious' after the Portuguese coup of 25 Apr. 1974. Interview with 'David Borges', in Torres (ed.), *O Jornalismo Português*, 187. José Oliveira remembers listening when serving in the colonial army in the late 1960s, and at home, his mother leaning against his door at 7 pm, nervously checking if was following the *Angola Combatente* broadcast. Interview with José Oliveira, Luanda, 14 Dec. 2015.

78 INA/TT PIDE/DGS, Delegação de Angola, PInf. 14.17.A, U.I. 2044, fols. 183-4, 234, and 191.

79 *Ibid.* fol. 191, 1 Dec. 1967.

80 *Ibid.* fol. 113, 12 Feb. 1968.

81 *Ibid.* fol. 339. The transcriber noted that the soldiers did not speak Portuguese well, a suggestion they had been recruited from areas with little Portuguese presence.

82 INA/TT PIDE/DGS, Delegação de Angola, Processo de Informação 14.17.A, fol. 885.

propaganda game, the PIDE scrambled to take the upper hand, calling in local expertise and trying to centralize information and skills in a disconnected colonial world whose coherence lay only in violence.⁸³

However, the PIDE had been following foreign-based broadcasters since the late 1950s. They knew of the MPLA's and the FNLA's broadcasts well before 1966 even if they were not yet following them systematically. Attempts and requests to interfere with Brazzaville's signal were not new. Neither was the nervousness. It was an unsettling, destabilizing force that would not go away. Brimming with colonial stereotypes, a 1964 report from the PIDE sub-delegation in Malanje requested that Luanda insist that Lisbon prioritize 'the interference [with] Brazzaville communications'.⁸⁴ The body of the report concerned 'strange facts' apparent in the 'life of natives' in certain Malanje towns in the preceding month. Among them: a rumor that people should not work on Saturdays and Mondays, aimed at 'damaging the economy of the Province and as some kind of protest of something that is not yet clear'. The head of the PIDE delegation blamed African priests, pastors, and catechists in the area. He associated these behaviors with a state of unrest and rumors that circulated years earlier in 1961 when the colonial military first arrived in the area, following the uprisings against forced cotton production and the resultant massacre by the Portuguese military in the Baixa de Kassange.

The PIDE's head of delegation in Malanje gathered evidence and fueled agitation. He described the residents of Malanje villages as 'arrogant, insolent, and daring' in their interactions with whites. He said that residents had been told they should all have a guitar to play and sing 'the anthem of independence'. Thus the 'native masses' wandered around with homemade guitars, 'animat[ing] the idea of latent agitation noted and confirm[ing] the state of subversion observed all around'. The PIDE head of delegation then noted that those engaged in healing and witchcraft, 'who work clandestinely to achieve their ends', further fomented subversion. Finally, the last link in the chain,

in mixed commercial establishments and those which sell electrical articles, it's common to see natives, some of whom we are surveilling, buying portable radios and this is due, without a doubt, to the reception conditions of *Radio Brazzaville*, via which the directors of the MPLA, incite the mass [sic] to rebellion, in all manner of conspiratorial ways.⁸⁵

To summarize, the chief of the Malanje PIDE office reported absenteeism from work on Saturdays and Mondays, and the increased appearance of artisanal guitars, healing rituals, and radio sales. He linked these visible phenomena to what he could not see: rumor, clandestine (in his words) witches and healers, and the MPLA on *Radio Brazzaville*. He read 'strange behavior' as indexical of clandestine political activity. Where there is smoke, there is fire.

83 See Bender, *Angola Under the Portuguese*. On Mozambique, see A. Isaacman and B. Isaacman, *Dams, Displacement, and the Delusion of Development: Cahora Bassa and Its Legacies in Mozambique, 1965–2007* (Athens, OH, 2013); A. Isaacman and B. Isaacman, *Mozambique from Colonialism to Revolution, 1900–1982* (Boulder, 1993); A. Isaacman, *Cotton is the Mother of Poverty* (Portsmouth, NH, 1996).

84 INA/TT PIDE/DGS, Delegação de Angola, Processo de Informação 15.28.A, fols. 1065–7 and the DGS report on Malanje, 1964, fol. 38.

85 All preceding citations from INA/TT PIDE/DGS, Delegação de Angola, Processo de Informação 15.28.A, fols. 1065–7.

This document evokes associations typically attributed to Africans interacting with new technologies, like radios, cinema, or medical devices.⁸⁶ Africans, colonial administrators insist, see magic in machines (so of course do most first-time users anywhere), use rumor as a form of communication, and are naturally inclined to musical recreation. Here the PIDE chief incorrectly divines a single cause: the MPLA broadcast. One can almost hear the MPLA leadership tittering with delight.

RADIO TECHNOLOGY AND NERVOUSNESS

The PIDE officer evinces nervousness in the face of what he calls ‘strange behavior’. To quell his tremulousness, he writes. In the act of writing he knits visible symptoms with a causality he locates in the invisible voice of the MPLA broadcast from Brazzaville. The solution? Jamming. Scramble the sound, interfere with transmission, block reception, calm the nerves. But his blunt diagnosis rests on shaky evidence. The uprising in the region in 1961, not linked with any organized political movement, had some ties to Congo-Kinshasa where its founder had worked and been touched by the Congolese politics of independence.⁸⁷ De Grassi reminds us that protestors chanted Lumumba’s name.⁸⁸ No evidence linked the uprising to the MPLA.

The officer clutches for causal certainty to counter his edgy state. But what precisely is the source of the nervousness? Hunt argues that ‘the Belgian colonial state was born from nervousness and the Congo became a nervous state’.⁸⁹ She finds its beginnings in the ‘tense, aggressive Free state, fierce Stanley, taut officers, wrathful inebriated concession agents, and armed sentries’.⁹⁰ For Chikowero, the colonial archive on radio bespeaks the ‘nervous condition’ of the colonial state by exposing its fear that radio would inspire nationalist insurgency that undermined its authority, a sentiment present throughout this document.⁹¹ While the Portuguese colonial state in Angola was a nervous state, this officer’s nervousness, and that of Jaime Oliveira, the PIDE, and the military also derived from the specificity of radio technology.

Immateriality, intimacy, and transduction characterize the radio. Sound waves travel through the ether, diminish distance, and banish time. Michele Hilmes describes the unifying ambitions of broadcasting in the early twentieth-century United States: ‘the basic technical qualities of radio would unite the nation physically, across geographical space, connecting remote regions with centers of civilization and culture, tying the country

86 B. Larkin, *Signal and Noise: Media, Infrastructure, and Urban Culture in Nigeria* (Durham, 2008), 40, 85; L. White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa* (Berkeley, 2000), 142–7. Both works highlight that these European representations of African responses tell us more about European projects and ideas than about Africans.

87 On the politics of independence and their relation to Congo, see J. Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution, Volume I*, 60–4, 70–6, and 83–8. On Congolese independence, see C. D. Gondola, *The History of the Congo* (Westport, CT, 2002); G. Nzongola-Ntalaja, *Congo: From Leopold to Kabila, a People’s History* (New York, 2002); and C. Young, *Politics in the Congo: Decolonization and Independence* (Princeton, 1965).

88 De Grassi, ‘Re-thining the Baixa de Kassanje’, 57.

89 Hunt, *A Nervous State*, 1.

90 *Ibid.* 8.

91 Chikowero, ‘Is propaganda modernity?’, 114.

together over the invisible waves of ether'.⁹² Radio broadcasting can connect across an empire despite miles and time differences or stitch together white settlements in a far-flung colonial territory, as member-based radio clubs in Angola did. But those invisible sound waves could create intimacies of a different stripe as well. Guerrilla stations, based in exile in sovereign African states, existed beyond the jurisdiction of colonial law but within broadcast range of the colonial state and the territory it claimed. Herein lies the power of the immateriality of radio, shortwave in particular, to disrupt, and to unnerve. It is unruly, does not respect borders, and runs roughshod over the sense of inviolable national territory. Broadcasting anticolonial propaganda, the stations of the MPLA and FNLA put the colonial state and its police and military on edge and on the defensive.

Salazar's lack of interest in radio broadcasting meant that guerrilla broadcasters caught the state off guard. If *musseque* dwellers owned radios, and PIDE officers nervously repeated rumors that some homes had two – one in the front tuned to the state broadcaster, one in the back tuned to Brazzaville – hidden listening in and outside the home was rife. And plenty of Europeans and black civil servants listened in the isolation of their homes. The capacity of radio broadcasting to produce unity and intimacy meant that it not only conquered distance but created seclusion in intimate listening space.

PIDE and military officers found a diverse set of listeners huddled around radios, alone or in groups, attentive to the nationalist movements' news, critiques, and exhortations. One military report noted the MPLA program's 'electrifying' effects.⁹³ The intimacy of radio, the fact of broadcasting into the private space of the home, into the ear and head of the listener, set the minds of PIDE officers reeling. They were unsettled, jumpy, and reactive.

Radios are transducers – sound changes energetically as the waves move across and through their inner workings.⁹⁴ Radios transform immaterial sound waves into material effects. Perhaps what made the PIDE officers and informers so nervous was this transformation and potential transubstantiation. Bodies close to radios, ears penetrated by that energy, could be transduced and changed. Officers nervously opined that radio listening made subversives of listeners or that listening equated to subversion. Perhaps it was the apprehension of how radios work on sound and bodies, the fear that this transformation was less about content and ideas than about how machines affect bodies, which made officers and informants and Oliveira himself so very nervous. The technical operations of radio troubled the minds of PIDE officers and informants as they touched the bodies of listeners.

CONCLUSION

Today's RNA, once the EOA, sits not far from the MPLA mural of the *Angola Combatente* broadcast. It allows for a slippage from guerrilla broadcasting to national radio that forgets

⁹² Himes, *Radio Voices*, 14.

⁹³ PT/AHM/FO/007/B/38, SSR 4, Angola 1962–70, 7/B 38/4 cx 360, pasta 18, relatório trimestral APsic 4–68, 1 Out a 31 Dez 68, 2.

⁹⁴ S. Helmreich, 'Transduction', in D. Novak and M. Sakakeeny (eds.), *Keywords in Sound* (Durham, 2015), 222–31.

the complexities of radio and the anticolonial war. A close reading of PIDE archive documents on the guerrilla stations and foreign broadcasting with an ear to the operations of radio technology adds new tones to our understanding of the colonial state and the newly independent state. They sound less sure than they once did. The immaterial world of sound production and the material effects of reception and how state and non-state actors understood it resonate. This occasions a new kind of vision too. The buildings and walls of urban space, carefully maintained, appear now more as fragments rather than the seemingly complete stories of this past.