

My Years in Angola

1950 - 1970

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I visited Angola for the first time in 1950.

ZAH (*Zuid Afrikaans Handelshuis*) had two offices there, one in Luanda, the other in Nova Lisboa. I was to replace Mr. Alfred Peterson in Nova Lisboa while he was on holiday in Europe.

The area covered by the Nova Lisboa office was mostly that along the Benguela Railway: a section from the coast to the border with the Belgian Congo (Katanga).

Trade was mainly in goods ex stock: foodstuffs, textile, construction materials, paint, small agricultural tools, general merchandise, and so on. The staff was very small; the manager had a general assistant (who also acted as bookkeeper and looked after the petty cash), a couple of white Portuguese, and a few young native men. Cash transactions were always dealt with by the manager himself. Most of the trips were also done by the manager himself, using a "closed" jeep, filled with samples of all sorts of articles, often driving to Lobito, mainly to deal with the arrival of goods there, customs clearance, dispatching, and so on. These trips were also used as a means to visit all clients in Lobito and Benguela, and also all those along the way. In the rainy season, these trips often had to be postponed, as the road was poor, and very little was done about this, as the Railways, who had a great say in the matter, felt that good road connections would harm the railway's interests. Only ten years later was an asphalt road built, which shortened the distance from more than 400 km down to around 350. The road nearest the railway track was mostly impassable, so usually the more northerly route was taken, via Luimbale.

When I arrived in Lobito, I was met by Mr. Petersen, and within the hour we were visiting clients. Mr. Petersen had been in Angola for a long time, and knew the Portuguese mentality well. He dealt with his clients with extreme patience. Smoking his pipe, he asked after the client's family, about business in general, current circumstances, the drought, the rains, and so on, coming in the end to the purpose of the visit itself, the client's stock of supplies. It was April then, stiflingly hot along the coast, and this was my first immersion in Portuguese conversation. Sometimes we spent long days at the counters of the "lojas" (*shops*), where the natives came to do their shopping, mainly by barter, or to get their "copo de vinho" (*glass of wine*) - the smell was one of sweat, manioc flour, dried fish and palm oil - an unpleasant atmosphere; other times we did administration in the stifling offices of the shopkeepers. This is what we did on the way to Nova Lisboa; the shops in the "mato" (*bush*) were even more primitive. Outside sat native women with their baskets full of products for barter, and by the entrance one or more natives with treadle sewing machines, busy making up aprons and other native clothing.

There were hot springs here and there, which we hardly needed, but fortunately the temperature improved as we reached the plateau, the "Planalto." The difference in altitude between the coast and Nova Lisboa is 1700 meters.

At first I was given provisional lodgings at the Hotel Coelho, the best hotel in Nova Lisboa, but it was no luxury, and there were lots of bugs. Fortunately, later I could move in to the Petersen's house.

The ZUID building in Nova Lisboa was on the same road, close to where it still is now. It was a warehouse, mostly. Massive square piles of cotton cloth were the first thing you saw. Here clients came to choose what they wanted, pulling out the pieces that attracted them. Once they'd left, one of the natives would build up the pile again. The cotton prints that attracted the greatest interest were the ones that had just arrived: "novidades," and I remember that we sometimes switched around pieces that had been lying around in one stack for a long time, the patterns of which were probably not popular, and mixed them in with new bales so as to get them sold. Quite possibly, these pieces would continue to lie forgotten on the retailer's shelves, because the natives, the end buyers, were very set on specific patterns. In the area around Nova Lisboa, "pintados" ("blue print"), originally from Germany (Fritz Becker), were still in general use, and worn by both men and women. It was dark blue material with white lines or spotted patterns. Natives from each region had their own special preferences, e.g., with or without a border.

Sometimes business contacts arrived from the interior with elephant tusks. Their weight varied from 10 to 40 kg, sometimes even more. Consignments were made up and eventually shipped to Holland, where there was always a great deal of interest in these tusks. In Amsterdam, Mr. Eijlers was the man who dealt with these sales. The tusks were mainly used to make billiard balls.

Sometimes we shipped consignments of beeswax. The wax was obtained by hanging "hives" (hollowed-out tree branches) in trees. After a time, these would be taken down from the trees, smoked out, and the wax kneaded into round clumps of a couple of kilos, and then sold to shopkeepers. A lot of bees died of course in the process, but who would worry about that? The shopkeepers sold them on to bigger companies that had the necessary cooking installations and drums. Wax was offered to us in these drums, about 1m x 50 cm by 40 cm, wrapped in jute. Sometimes there were stones in the beeswax; these could not be seen from the outside. In order to avoid claims in this regard, we were at one time on the point of buying one of these cooking installations, but when wax collecting started to drop off, we gave up on the idea.

Other products from the upper plateau which were exported by ZUID were: beans, castor seed, manioc (*cassava*, Portuguese: *crueira*) and sesame seed; and from the river basins: palm nuts, palm oil; also Arabica coffee, as opposed to Robusta, which was practically the only kind of coffee grown in the north of Angola.

However, the main emphasis was on imports.

Castro, the general assistant, was a very active young Portuguese man, who helped me a great deal. I needed all the help I could get, because in those days Portuguese was the only language of communication in the interior, and my knowledge of the language was little more than what I'd learned in text books. Castro worked in the ZUID Nova Lisboa office for a long time. In later years he began to act rather too independently, and things came to a head. He then became the local manager of the Cabinda division of a Portuguese company.

During the eight months I spent in Nova Lisboa, I of course made a number of trips to the coast. Once I spent the night in a "pensão" (*inn*) in Catengue, which then was a very remote place. The owner was a client of ours, too, and I hoped to make some sales, but it seemed

that the "patrão" (*the boss*) was away, which was bad luck. In the evening, guests and family of the comerciante (*merchant*) sat together in the light of the Coleman pressure lamps, and the conversation turned to the shortage of "rendinhas" (lace), much loved by the Portuguese women. By chance I had quite a few with me, in a large variety of patterns. These had to be brought from the car, and I sold the lot, mostly to the comerciante's wife, who appeared very capable of managing the business in her husband's absence.

"Pensões" could be found everywhere, but the facilities left a lot to be desired. A very low bed with a hard straw mattress and an oil lamp was practically all there was. In coastal areas, there was also the mosquito net, under which it could be extremely clammy. Mosquito nets and bed linen, all very grim. On the equally grim white-washed walls would be the remains of crushed, dead mosquitoes. In the mornings, I was happy to leave the room.

I remember that one morning, a young native man who always travelled with us to help with the bags, told me that "the rain had rained during the night." This was the first time I had come across the typically Bantu personification of natural phenomena. It had indeed rained a good deal, and here and there the road was flooded. A number of rivers and streams have their sources in the upper plateau and the mountains of Chela. Sometimes you'd get stuck where the water was too deep, but someone always appeared to help, and you'd manage to get through.

In the evenings and early mornings you sometimes saw antelope or other wild animals crossing the road. Sometimes they just stood there, in the light of the headlights, a wonderful sight. On the road from Sa da Bandeira (formerly "Lubango") to Moçamedes, I saw groups of zebra grazing near the road, and further off, herds of springbok, leaping to get out of the way. There are very few springbok left nowadays. The Portuguese name for them is "cabra de leque." "Leque" means "fan," and when aroused, the hair on their backs stands up on end.

Near Benguela there were still quite a few kudu. Benguela itself still had the appearance of an old slave town, with the old walled enclosures still there, where the slaves were kept after their arrival from the interior until being shipped away. Other than that, the most striking things were the red-colored earth and the orange blossoms of the acacia rubra (flame tree).

On the ship which had brought me from Lisbon to Lobito, I had met two brothers who belonged to the Portuguese nobility, they were both addressed as "Count" (Senhor Conde). Their name was Sobral, and they were on their way to Nova Lisboa in connection with a maize processing factory that was being built there. There was also a Swiss engineer on board, involved in the same project, and I had a great deal of contact with these people during my stay in Nova Lisboa. One of the brothers, whom I felt to be the one who could have made something of the project, soon returned to Portugal, and left the business in the hands of the other, who did not have a good grasp of the matter. Right from the start there were all sorts of problems associated with the project. For instance, the walls were built far too thick, as a way to help another supplier get big orders for cement. Years later, a type of maizena was produced there, and ZUID was the sole agent for it. But it was all very up and down, it required a lot of capital, and maize was being produced throughout the region, mostly as a cash crop. Cornmeal is the main food of the native people ("fuba"). A lot of corn was exported to the Metropole (*Metropolitan or Continental Portugal*), and also cotton, but

that came mostly from the Malange area.

Among the non-Portuguese clients, the Dondi Mission (a Protestant American mission) was one of the most important. This was a big mission, providing teaching in a number of subjects including agriculture and other trades, as well as providing medical care, including a leper colony. The Mission was about 80 km from Nova Lisboa, near Bela Vista, and the Americans came often to Nova Lisboa to buy their supplies; they came to us to buy food, textiles and so forth. We tried to encourage them to buy from our clients locally, but they often complained that the Portuguese traders overcharged them, and that anyway they generally bought in bulk. Also, they found that the type of cooperation they got from the public authorities was not particularly good. Every now and then I spent a weekend at the mission, and it was always a pleasant change to be in a non-Portuguese environment. What I remember best is the choir singing led by one of the American missionaries. The Bantu have an exceptional sensitivity to sound and rhythm, and the choir master had, I thought, brought them to a high level of performance. Later on, my son and some other Luanda children also benefitted from the education provided there to the children of the missionaries.

The purpose of my stay in Nova Lisboa was to familiarize myself with the activities that the business had in Africa. Before the war, starting in 1928, I had worked in book-keeping under Mr. Beek, who kept a close eye on everything - financial, administrative, monetary - that happened in Africa, and with Niewenhoff, who took over after Mr. Beek's death, and also for a while with Suurhoff, who moved over to the union, and later became Minister (*of Social Affairs*). After the war, I moved into the commercial department.

In Amsterdam (Mr. Riemens, Director) and in Porto, where Mr. Polling lived (who was responsible for the Angola offices), there was increasing dissatisfaction with the policy of the Luanda management (one Dutchman by the name of Hansen, who had been sent out by Amsterdam soon after the war, and Mario Comenda, a Portuguese man who had risen to the position of co-manager). Luanda always brought in good year-end results, but paid very little attention to the advice and instructions coming from Head Office, causing continued conflict. I think it was around that time that Amsterdam could have got the Organon agency for Angola, but Luanda showed no interest, and it ended up going to another company. This meant that a couple of months after my return, I was asked whether I might accept a permanent position, this time in Luanda (four years on, six months holiday), where I would take over from Hansen, and Comenda would become sub-manager. After some hesitation, I accepted the proposal.

I left for Angola towards the end of June, and walked into the ZAH Luanda office on July 1, 1951. My wife arrived in September. In the meantime, our daughter had been born, and so my wife arrived with our little boy and our daughter. I had brought back otter skins from Nova Lisboa for a fur coat for her, but she was never able to wear it. I had also brought back a leopard skin with me, costing at the time a couple of hundred escudos, and the horns of a rhino, which someone had given me.

Hansen, who had been in an Indonesian prison camp for a long time, went to work for himself; he got a number of agencies, the most important of which was for Bayer medicaments. As far as I know, he has continued working with them, and also as agent for some other companies, like Solvay, and Naarden. ZUID was the agent for Bayer before the

war, and for a long time there was strife as to continuing with them, or to become agents for ICI, as Mozambique was doing. Mr. Gnodde, in Lourenço Marques, was very much in favour of ICI. In Angola, during the war and under the influence of Mr. Wandschneider, people were more in favour of Bayer. Both companies had important tropical medicine products, ICI especially in anti-malarials and anti-sleeping sickness.

Comenda resigned, and went to work for himself. He chose a product line which had always had high profit margins, boiled sweets, and he did good business in it. He was also lucky in the lottery: he won a prize of 250 contos in the Lisbon Misericordia lottery, which practically everyone in Angola participates in. The city always swarms with lottery ticket sellers. People said that some of them worked for the PIDE (*International Police for State Defence*) on the side.

When I arrived, there was no-one to hand over the business to me, because both Hansen and Comenda had already left. The exception was the Shipping Department, which the managers actually didn't have much to do with, and where business was mostly managed by Mario Comenda, the shipping clerk, with advice from the Holland West Africa Line inspector Hans Prijs, who gave me all possible assistance. Prijs remained inspector in Luanda for many years, and later moved back to Lagos, where he had been before. He became consul there, and later honorary consul-general. After having spent a number of years as a member of the board of H.A.L. in Amsterdam, he retired, and I believe he lives in Zandvoort. He was a bachelor, and very highly esteemed in Luanda.

Another Dutchman, a good friend of Prijs', was van der Schaaf, a former ZUID sub-manager. It was on the basis of these two men's letter of application to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that I was appointed Dutch honorary consul, replacing Hansen (who had succeeded the ZUID manager Van Heck, who in turn had taken over from the wartime German manager Leo Thieleke).

Everyone in Luanda knew van der Schaaf, and his name being what it was, people called me van der Schaaf for a long time. What was particularly striking about him was how fat he was. He was already very heavy when he was hired in Amsterdam (ex Phillips man), but things got steadily worse in the tropics. During the war, and after he had left ZUID, he bought and shipped rubber for the Allied Forces, and earned a great deal of money that way. He also obtained some important shipping agencies (Farrell and Delta) and representations such as Willy's Overland Jeeps. Though not Catholic, he became very good friends with the Archbishop and his secretary, who lent him significant amounts of money to set up his business, Luso Americana. He built one of the first big buildings on the Avenida Azevedo Coutinho (in the Miramar area), which the French consulate rented from him for many years. Their office is still there. He also bought a sisal plantation along the Benguela railway line, and a coffee plantation in the north. He died in his sixties of a heart attack, in his car. The French-raised Portuguese woman with whom he lived moved back to the coffee plantation after his death. The situation for the sisal plantation became dramatic when sisal prices plummeted due to competition from man-made fibres, and Luso Americana, a one-man business, went through difficult times, and finally disappeared from the scene.

The other Dutchmen in Angola were the Fathers of the Heilige Geest (*Congregation of the Holy Ghost*), who led most of the Portuguese mission stations. They always came for six

years, and the amount of work they represented for the Consulate was extremely limited, no more than renewing a passport, or giving a declaration for a driving license. They definitely needed cars, as the areas they served were larger than that of a Dutch province!

In the beginning, therefore, the Consulate wasn't much work; it also came under Leopoldville, with which there was little contact. But there were, of course, official activities. In the first year, I went to the August 15th celebration in the Fortaleza, the old fort which dominates Luanda, during which victory over the Dutch was celebrated. Given that in the speeches the "Holandeses" came up frequently and not in very laudatory terms, I decided not to participate in these festivities in later years, and I don't believe anyone took this badly.

However, the Dutch were disparaged only for one day of the year. The rest of the time the Dutch were much appreciated, and ZAH had an excellent name. Many still remembered the role ZUID had played in the coffee trade, when coffee was still of little value and we granted people credit. Other plantations were also indebted to ZUID, for example sisal and sugar plantations. On one plantation, Ricardo Pires at Icau, an avenue was named after the company in memory of "cooperation" at that time. Much earlier, there was the "handover" of the Quanza-to-Luanda canal, which the Dutch had begun digging during their seven-year occupation (1641-48), and of which there were still some remains, namely near Colombo. I did comment that it was a pity they hadn't given us the time to finish up the canal. In the Luanda city council the question still comes up from time to time about possibly completing the canal one day!

The only person who could tell me anything about the non-shipping side of things was the First Assistant, Norberto Neves e Sousa, who among other things, looked after cost price calculations and had a good insight into the business as a whole. His collaboration was extremely valuable to me, especially in the first years. One of Norberto's sisters, Dona Augusta, is still bookkeeper at ZUID, Luanda. The well-known artist Albano Neves e Sousa is one of their brothers.

The rest of the staff were a warehouseman/salesman, a travelling salesman, an insignificant man who kept the books and could never get the current accounts to reconcile with Amsterdam, a cashier, who seemed to be dishonest, a couple of typists and a few other young people.

In the '50s, business with Nestlé was developing very well, for which we held the monopoly. At first condensed milk was the main product, then milk powder replaced it, as well as all sorts of baby food. Nestlé had a gift system, which was highly effective in increasing turnover, but this "promotion" progressively developed into a department of its own, representing a great deal of work, and eventually became Norberto's entire job. Nestlé management often came to visit, later Sociedade Produtos Lacteos, Lisbon, under the leadership of Jean Lanz, a Swiss, who came to see us very often. Mr. Lanz wanted Neves e Sousa to transfer over to the Nestlé organization, so that all distribution and promotion could be done their way. There was a tremendous amount of correspondence and discussion about this. Finally, we resigned ourselves to having Neves e Sousa transferred over to Nestlé. We were not able to remain sole agent, in part as a result of pressure exerted by C.U.F. (*Companhia União Fabril*) on S.P.L. (*Sociedade Produtos Lacteos*); still, for a good

number of years we remained the biggest sellers of Nestlé products, and cooperation with Neves, as local representative, always remained exceptionally good. The big annual deliveries to the Angolan Health Care Services continued to go through us.

For many years it was only possible to import milk products from Portugal (significantly more expensive than Dutch milk powder, for example) as no import licenses were issued for foreign milk. Later on, this situation changed.

Only in later years was fresh milk available in the cities, and also sterilized milk, mainly from Cela.

Cela is a colony for white Portuguese settlers, situated in a highly fertile area of Central Angola, along the Cuvo River, most probably formerly a river bed. The first governor-general I met, Agapito, was nearly always in Cela, a pet project of Salazar's, so people said. A lot of money was squandered in Cela because things were done in a disorganized fashion (land planning took place when work had been on-going for over ten years, thousands of head of cattle were imported from Denmark and which were unable to adapt to the climate, colonists were recruited in Portugal more on the basis of connections than suitability). Still, it was an interesting project, to which we also contributed a good deal. One big client was the colonists' Cooperative, though unfortunately they were always short of cash, and couldn't pay their debts.

Cooperation is not a strong point in the Portuguese. They are too individualistic for that, they say so themselves. The only Cooperative with which we had no financial problems was one in which the members were mostly Germans. Here and there in Angola there were some groups of Germans, among them the Mannhardt brothers, for example in Calulu, where they very successfully grew coffee. Earlier, during the '20s and '30s, I had come across the name of their father in the Luanda records and correspondence.

Luanda was still small. Behind the Avenida Brito Godins, where our "residencia" was situated, there were a few residential areas, but otherwise nothing very much yet. There was no Avenida Marginal, just a sandy shore to the bay, and not far from there was the market, where now the Banco Commercial rises up. From the chaotic, stinking market, the quitandeiras (native women carrying food on their heads) spread out across the city. While the fish, vegetables and fruit made for a very colourful backdrop, there were also the beggars and the deformed (elephantiasis) around the market. Fruit: bananas, papaya, avocado, pineapple, custard apple, and so on. All kinds of fish, very few vegetables. Meals were prepared by a native cook, over a wood fire. Later came petroleum gas stoves, and after that, Butagas among others.

Among foodstuffs, dry yeast was an important product that we imported from the Portuguese factory of the Dutch Gist en Spiritus factory in Delft. Later, under the leadership of Dr. Barbas, director of the Portuguese factory, Cruz Quebrada, a factory was built in Luanda, for which we held the monopoly (in the north, only; we never held the monopoly for the south, there it was in the hands of a Portuguese bakery company). Cruz Quebrada built two storage tanks in the Luanda docks for "bagaço" (molasses) from the sugar mills. From these tanks the molasses was shipped to Europe; employees from the factory came to give training courses to bakers and bakers' assistants so as to promote the use of yeast. The

result was better bread, which was more hygienically prepared, something which often had been sorely lacking. The factory also delivered fresh yeast, but in the interior the most important product remained dry yeast in tins.

Pastas, such as spaghetti and so forth, first came from Italy or Holland, but when a big factory for processing these products was built in Lourenço Marques, we became sole agents for the factory, Matola, thanks to mediation through our Lourenço Marques office. This worked out very well for a long time, and in the beginning it was all very friendly. The big boss of Matola was Comendador Dias Ferreira, an old friend of Mr. Visser. I also visited him in Lourenço Marques with Mr. Visser. We were given a tremendous welcome, but the situation was a bit odd, because the Comendador, someone who considered himself as being the centre of the Portuguese Empire, wanted everything done in the light of the friendly relations which existed between him and ZUID, and this did not include any details on profit margins, commissions, and so on, all of that was beneath him. But that was where our profit margins kept being eaten away, so that a "delegado" such as Sr. Rogerio Pinto, on visiting us, always had to refer back to the Senhor Comandante (he really was a Commander), and we kept going round in circles. Relations worsened, in part also due to one of our own Matola co-workers, a salesman, was scheming with Matola behind our backs. Finally ZAH Lourenço Marques tried once again to come to an understanding, but failed yet again, and Matola then established its own depot in Luanda and started also taking orders from other suppliers in Mozambique. This is probably what they had been planning on doing all along. And that put an end to the Matola chapter.

We always had a very good relationship with the suppliers of "Ovomaltine," a product which even before the war was known far and wide in Angola. The producers of Ovomaltine, Dr. A. Wander, Bern, were, as far as I was concerned, the model of what a correct and well-organized business should be. Everything to do with their deliveries, documentation, billing and so on was always in perfect order. Their bills, current accounts, commission statements, really didn't need to be checked, there was never a mistake in them. The only problem we ever had with them was the name change, from Ovomaltine to Ovaltine. We knew that in England the name had always been Ovaltine, but we thought our clients would have a big problem with this change and advised Wander not to go ahead with it. The way they dealt with this was to go ahead and make the change, but to continue sending in each shipment some crates with tins with the old name on them. They had to keep on doing things this way for quite some time, because there continued to be users who were convinced that only Ovomaltine was the real thing. Of course, the competition took good advantage of this transition period. Later, I heard from Wander that in other countries there had also been strong resistance, and that they had then come to regret having made the change.

As far as Dutch products were concerned, Verkade biscuits were a permanent item until local biscuit factories were built, first in Mozambique and then in Angola (among others Vilares), with subsequent high import restrictions. Still, now and then we were able to import small shipments, keeping the name of the product. Cheese (Edam), from Kroon en Zoonen, Alkmaar, exclusively known as "queijo corôa" ("*crown cheese*") was very popular, and when cheese began to be made in Angola, the Edam shape, and especially its red layer of wax, was an absolute must. The local cheese therefore looked exactly like Edam from the outside, but the taste resembled it hardly at all, as was also the case with the "Pinheiro

Manso" cheese, made in Portugal. Tinned Zwanenberg sold also sold quickly, but variety became more and more limited due to import restrictions. We also had Klaver beer for a while (and before that "Holsten"), Karel I cigars (charutos "Karel"), etc.

For a while in the 50's there was resentment against the Dutch. This was during the dollar shortage in Europe, and people resented the fact that the Dutch bought using guilders and tried in every way to get paid in dollars. Gradually this eased off, and we didn't have too much trouble with it.

From Germany we imported mainly bottles for the cool-drinks industry. Other than one incident where the client (Teixeira) apparently hadn't made a definite order, this was a pleasant type of business, always with pretty good receipts of a few hundred contos (*1000 escudos*).

Codfish came mainly from Norway, and the traditional supplier was Astrup & Co, Kristiansund, with occasional shipments from Iceland and Scotland. Bacalhau (*dried cod*) the way the Portuguese like it, is Clipfish, dried on rocks (Stockfish is dried hanging on wooden racks). Angola is generally a "price market," but Bacalhau is an exception to this rule. For dried cod, or "o fiel amigo" (*the faithful friend*) as the Portuguese call it, quality is the top requirement, since they are so fond of Bacalhau that no feast day may be celebrated without it, e.g., Christmas. It also has to withstand transportation into the farthest regions of the interior, and then still the time stored in the shops or kitchens, where bits are cut off as needed. When the fish was finally eaten, it was best not to think of all the flies that had been sitting on it, and the number of times it had been handled by the native cook. During the early years, Bacalhau was always imported in large flat wooden boxes. Later a test was done with Bacalhau packed in jute sacks, with good results, so that soon after that we imported in sacks only. This was before there was any air-conditioning, and for this reason it was dangerous to have large stocks around. Since there was no cooperation between importers, it was certainly possible that every now and then there would be too much, because in times of scarcity, people would place big orders and a couple of months later large shipments would come in for each company. This led to a number of anxious moments and sometimes sleepless nights, but fortunately losses from spoiled fish were limited. With excessive exposure to damp heat, the fish would start turning red, and then it couldn't be kept any longer. The refrigeration chambers which were later installed in Luanda, Lobito and Nova Lisboa, significantly diminished this risk.

Another much-loved article at Christmas time was round, decorative tins of sweets from Mackintosh, called "Quality Street," after the well-known book. The name was confusing: the product was often ordered with "Street" being indicated as the quality required.

Dried fruit and nuts were also important around this period, because in Portugal they were associated with the Christmas tradition. We calculated that what hadn't been sold before Christmas would have to be discarded soon after, for by then they would be infested with worms and beetles. The remainders were therefore sent to charities before they became spoiled. In later years, a lot of dried fruit came from South Africa, packed in plastic, making it last far longer. It was often quite a challenge to get shipments in "well before Christmas," when much of it had still to be shipped inland.

What with one thing and another, the months of November and December were always

exceptionally busy for anyone who had anything to do with the "armazem" (*warehouse*). It was also the time for Christmas bonuses to staff, Christmas boxes for clients and business relations, check lists from messengers and all the other boys who had anything to do with the business, masses of official blue-lined forms ("papel de forma"); and it was also the time to prepare the yearly inventory. Finally, Christmas was over before we knew it, as Boxing Day was not a holiday.

During this period, a great deal of work was done by the native assistants in the warehouse, and when the bonuses were handed out, they were given extra consideration too. There were some very strong men among them, I especially remember "Maximbombo," a big black man, who was also extremely strong. "Maximbombo" is the native word for "bus," and is commonly used in Angola. Many of the natives have Portuguese, or Portuguese-derived names, but there are exceptions to this. For example, Van Dunen harks back to the Dutch administrator Van Duinen; Fançoni to Van Zon, etc. One particularly good tribe came from the Bailundo area, who didn't speak Kimbundo, as they do in the North, but Umbundu.

As employees, the natives were still very subservient, something which was to change a great deal in the next decade; they also had very few rights, notwithstanding the official policy of equality and assimilation. The economic colour barrier was enormous.

During our trips into the interior, we would often see women and children busy repairing the roads, after the rains. These groups and other groups of natives would then stand along the edge of the road, hat or head cloth in hand, as we drove past.

When I arrived in Luanda, the peak demand for foreign imported cotton prints had already passed. Before the war, ZAH had had a big share in the exports to Angola and Mozambique of woven fabrics from Twente, but when industry in northern Portugal gradually took over production, ZAH switched to exporting these fabrics from Portugal. These exports came mainly via Brunner & Cia Lda and later Polling & Cia, Oporto.

They were mainly coloured, woven materials ("riscados") of which one kind, namely the one known as Luanda South, was still very much in demand, especially among the fishing communities of Luanda and other places along the coast, even long after other fabrics had appeared on the market. It was a cotton cloth with criss-crossed lines of different colours, blue (sometimes yellow) on a white background. The fisher folk drape these cloths around their bodies. But otherwise, the riscado had progressively been replaced by European clothing. Native women wore other patterns, and one or more 12-metre long pieces of material needed for a "dress" was part of a woman's dowry, and paid for by her prospective husband.

For a while, importing second-hand clothing from America was interesting business, but when import duties were imposed, calculated according to weight, we could no longer compete, because our biggest competitors entered far lower weights on their invoices, so that they paid far less in import duties.

In Luanda, ZUID had started importing synthetic fabrics from America (\pm '49), especially printed materials. This was very lucrative, and imports were practically free, as long as one found one's own foreign currency with which to make payment ("sem carencia de divisas").

The foreign currency of course came in the end from the country's coffee exports, and it was expected that some day a stop would be made to this. But for a couple of years this system really did work. Other textile fabrics were: "haircords" from England, blankets and other unprinted materials from Portugal, mosquito-netting, fishing nets, etc. The above-mentioned riscados were made in Portugal, but the patterns were developed in Amsterdam, by a designer especially sought out from Twente, who had earlier been working on these full-time. In those days, so before the war, Stork Hengelo also had hundreds of workers working for ZAH.

Around Sá da Bandeira you didn't see very much textile, for there the native people kept mostly to their traditional dress, a loincloth, some arm rings, beads and buttons. In this cattle-rich area, the women wore leather strips, onto which sawn-through cone shells had been added. These cost about "an ox" each, and from the number of these shells you could calculate the financial status of the native family. In the surrounding area, Huila, and Cuanhama, there is still a great deal of traditional life to be seen.

Besides food (Mozambique tea - chá licungo - , and cashew nuts should also be mentioned), drinks and textiles, there was an assortment of other articles, which pretty well matched the range of articles in the "mercearias" (*general stores*) in the interior and in the city. These were: storm lanterns, primus stoves, chopping knives, hoes, corrugated panels, plumbing, floor covering, sewing machines, iceboxes, bicycles. In the shop window was a graphic poster of a Raleigh bicycle, with a native on it, chased by a lion. Many Velosolex (*motorized bicycles*) were also imported, but more in Lobito than to Luanda, where the roads were too steep. In the first years, copper wire, beads and other decorative articles were important. Importing of beads was arranged through Amsterdam from Italy ("missangas"), and from Czechoslovakia ("contas").

In connection with this type of trade, every now and then there would be the purchase of consignments of products, elephant tusks, etc., though we went along with this pretty much only if clients had nothing other than products with which to make payment. ZUID, pronounced "Zoid" in Angola, had been the largest coffee exporter before the war; however, when the bottom fell out of this market during the war, under these new circumstances, we didn't see the point of getting into coffee again on our own account. But still, from time to time we continued to export crocodile skins, for which Amsterdam had a keen interest. The buyers in Luanda stored these skins under a layer of salt, and when they had collected a good number, we reached an agreement with them on the price (while nowadays this is done by measuring the skins), and then they were shipped off in big drums.

The travelling salesmen took as many samples with them as possible of everything that we sold. There was a good variety, and therefore our men were always welcomed by the clients. Still, they always had to keep in mind the custom of never being over hasty. The first day had to be seen as the lead up to the real business visit. First, time needed to be patiently spent on "cumprimentar" (*greetings*) and "conversa" (*conversation*). The next day was the day for business. Only then were the boxes of samples brought out from under the canvas of the carrinha (pick-up), and opened.

Of course, with large firms, things happened differently. This was the case, for example, with C.A.D.A., the largest coffee plantation in Africa, in the region of Gabela, and with

Marques Seixas in Novo Redondo and Porto Amboim, who were our Shipping sub-agents. "Diamang," in the Dundo region, was also visited from time to time, and also the C.U.F. copper mines in Mavoio, in the extreme north, from where often big orders came in. ZUID was the best established foreign company. There were two older foreign companies, the oldest being Casa Inglesa, and the other Robert Hudson, but these companies focused mainly on other sectors. We had exceptionally good relations with both companies, though with R. Hudson there was a dispute with regards Unilever products, for which they were the agents.

We had a good deal to do with Casa Inglesa with regards transport damage claims, since they were Lloyd's agents. Shipments often suffered damages, mainly due to pilfering, and the number of surveys was exceptionally large. Most often things were probably stolen during storage at the docks.

Finally, there were also medicaments, among which quinine, from the Quinine Factory in Amsterdam, was the most important. Many mercerarias (*general stores*) were allowed to sell medicines. Fewer did so, of course, once there were more pharmacies around.

The best travelling salesman we ever had was Raimundo Valador, who later became Warehouse Head, before moving further up. I accompanied him on his trips on a number of occasions, and my wife sometimes came too, for instance when we had the opportunity to visit the Duque de Bragança Falls, and I was always amazed at the way he handled his clients. There were three main routes: along the railway line as far as Malange, the area around Gabela, Cela, Porto Amboim and Novo Redondo (later taken over by Lobito office travelling salesmen), and the northern route of the coffee areas of Uige (capital: Carmona) and the Dembos.

The roads were appalling. Heading inland, there was asphalt only as far as Catete (60km), and on the way to Malange, around Zenza, there was a 30 km stretch of very fine sand, all very well for growing cotton, but not quite the right thing for a road. Driving through those 30 km would take a good three hours. There would always be cars and lorries stuck along the sides of the road.

But these trips also had a very attractive side as well. Astonishing vegetation: baobabs ("imbondeiro"), and candelabra-euphorbias along the road to Dondo, and further along perhaps coffee plants in bloom. Towards the south, instead, you would see different types of acacia, and then dry savannah. Along the way, we sometimes stopped at a Mission station, where the Dutch fathers, such as Father v. d. Hurk in Quibala, always gave us a big welcome.

The hotels along the way were pretty shabby, but they sometimes made good meals: feijoada (a bean stew), guisada (stewed meat and greens), churrasco (piri-piri chicken). Breakfast was "sem garfo" or "com garfo" (with or without a fork). "With" was with meat, almost a full meal, and "without" was coffee and a couple of rock-hard buns with very salty butter. For the lorry drivers there was still another "matabicho" (matar o bicho = to kill the animal; the official Portuguese word for breakfast is "pequeno almoço"): a strong cup of coffee with brandy upon departure at dawn, followed later in the morning with a "matabicho com garfo." Another delicacy of the "mato" was muambo (palmoil stew).

In 1952, I was given a Dutch assistant, Stanley Kusters, and this man took a lot of the daily contact with the warehouse and the travelling salesmen out of my hands. I always had an excellent working relationship with him. This was to a large extent due to his unassuming way of doing things, his thorough and fast way of working, and his exceptionally good rapport with the Portuguese staff. Other assistants came after him: Boersma, also very much appreciated by everyone (it was a terrible shock for everyone when his wife died in a car accident during a vacation in Holland); van der Werff, who at first had some trouble adjusting to life in the tropics, but did in the end, and a few years later he was transferred to the east coast; Hoornstra, whom I very much appreciated, but whom I still felt would fit in better in a bank or some other large organization. He later went to Nedbank, Johannesburg. We also had a few complete failures: in Lobito, Zuur couldn't be kept on (he did have an exceptional talent for languages – he spoke fluent Portuguese within six months – later he taught languages at Portuguese schools); in Luanda, Zwolle, who returned to the Netherlands. Actually we had him to thank for the Eutectic agency. We were already dealing in electrodes, and he told me, from his experience in Java, that Eutectic was the best make in the world. I let him write to the company, and we got the agency. In the beginning we couldn't get things moving, but the enthusiastic Eutectic man from Johannesburg kept encouraging us, and, in contrast to what happened with other agencies, recommended that we increase our prices, giving us a bigger margin for this specialized piece of equipment, and this was in the end successful. At first we had just one salesman for Eutectic, Alves, who showed what could be achieved with hard work and enthusiasm. Later we needed to add more salesmen, and, with the help of the Eutectic man, Mr. Wach, sales kept going up.

In the early years, medicaments were handled as part of general goods, but then we needed to create a separate department, and so part of the ground floor was set up for this (at that stage we had not yet rented the second floor). Mendes became the salesman (he had earlier been a pharmacy assistant), and for the first time we also hired someone to make visits to doctors. This was Vaz, who obtained for us a large share of the deliveries to the Public Health Service, for which tenders were held each year. This led to a significant increase in turnover. Vaz did the promotion for all our medicaments. Later we had to hire more people to visit doctors, and each of them handled one or more laboratories. This was done in consultation with the suppliers, who kept insisting that they wanted one "delegado" for each of them, and they were generally also prepared to cover the related costs. This meant that we ended up with separate people doing doctors visits for ICI, Wander, MSD and so on. The government was also busy setting up a number of health "brigades" in order to combat a number of endemic diseases, e.g., sleeping sickness, which they practically did get under control. These brigades need for medicines led to a significant increase in the Government's budget.

It was through the Medicaments Department, and especially through contact with ICI, which in the beginning was particularly important because of Paludrine (their product which began to replace Quinine), that we came into contact with the South African branch of the African Explosives and Chemical Industries Company (50% ICI, 50% de Beer), and began an entirely new activity, the chemical, veterinary, pesticides and fertilizers sector. Mozambique was already agent for A.E. & C.I., and the Luanda office was put forward as agent for Angola following a visit by the Managing Director and three managers to Angola.

Industrial chemicals were the main focus, and since there was still very little industry and production very primitive, it was very difficult to arouse an interest in these chemicals. Only with bigger industries, such as sugar factories, did we do better. Sometimes, unexpected obstacles arose, for example, with "Alfloc," a product which, when mixed with boiler water, kept the boiler and pipes free from calcification. The Benguela Railway used it with great success, but the Malange railway carried out tests and analyses again and again, but nothing further came of it. Finally we discovered why their reactions remained negative. At a number of different spots along the railway line, the railway personnel traded boiler water for eggs offered by native women; Alfloc spoilt the taste of the water, thus becoming a threat to this little business. At first, the chemicals all came from England, but later South Africa took over their manufacture and export, causing us a lot of problems, as people there had little experience in exports, and made all sorts of mistakes. In one case, the goods were sent to Luanda, the invoice to Beira, and the commission to Lourenço Marques – with many other variations of the same. Contacts between us and the people from ICI-AE&CI were very pleasant. They often came to Angola and we visited them from time to time in Johannesburg. In those days, Angola was still terra incognita in South Africa – most people didn't even know whether Angola was on the east or west coast – and their tales about Luanda, and everything to do with it – e.g., Mussulo (the "south sea island" along the coast), the Portuguese, etc., must have gone down well when they arrived back home.

For South African exports in general, it was early days as well. For example, I remember how the first shipments of tinned fruit came in: pears and peaches, partly unripe, and poorly-peeled. In Angola, people were accustomed to Californian fruit (Libby's) and at first rejected the South African tins out of hand. When the South Africans became more interested in exports, these failings were gradually overcome. One helpful influence here was the intensive contact we had with the South African consulate, as soon as it became established in Luanda. Taswell, the first consul, former High Commissioner in Rhodesia, was very interested in these business relationships, and went to a great deal of trouble to solve our problems.

From South Africa we also imported tannin for the tanneries, obtained there from a type of mimosa, and glucose, from maize. From there we also imported the complete bronze-aluminium facade for one of the largest buildings along the Marginal in Luanda.

In the 1950, interest began in Angolan mineral resources, and Petrofina was the first to start drilling for oil. Some two dozen Dutch drilling engineers came to Angola with their families, sharply increasing the Dutch community. Oil discoveries remained limited, but oil did bring with it all sorts of other activities to Angola, and "Angola has never been the same again." Some years later, Petrofina built a small refinery just outside Luanda, and in spite of a difficult relationship with the government (which imposed all sorts of restrictions, royalties, and bureaucracy), production capacity kept increasing.

In 1957, Gulf Oil was given rights to drill off the coast of Cabinda, and in 1958 large-scale shipments of equipment came to Cabinda from America, for which we shipped large consignments with Nopal and Gulf West Africa Line ships.

The Consulate also felt the effects of the interest in oil; more chancellery activities, but also more interest from the Netherlands. For example, Billiton Mij came to visit for the first time

in 1957, and we provided them with assistance with their prospecting. ZUID would have become their agent, but they came to the conclusion that the bauxite seams they found were not economically viable.

American firms, such as Union Carbide, came to Angola to carry out soil resource studies, but their reports, to the extent that they were known, were not very positive. Work on iron ore had already begun, e.g., near Vila Salazar, at the mines of Mrs. Berman, the German widow of a former Robert Hudson manager, as well as in the south, near Nova Lisboa and Sá da Bandeira.

One unpleasant matter involving a good deal of legal consultation was the "Faria claim." This was a claim for overtime compensation for a ten-year period, which this warehouse manager/salesman filed against us after we let him go. Faria had certainly worked very hard for many long years, but as he got older he became more intractable and difficult. When we began to lose important clients as a result, something had to be done. I reached an agreement with him that he would leave, with payment of an extra bonus. That's what happened, but with the above-mentioned result. It began with a claim through the union, and then through the court. These legal proceedings lasted for years, and in the end we lost. It was difficult to prove that his overtime had been done entirely on a voluntary basis, often without direct necessity, and more out of habit, and in the end we were sentenced to pay a large fine.

In any case, the way was finally free to make Valador responsible for sales. He had already replaced Faria during his absence, and this immediately brought extra momentum to warehouse sales.

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In 1960, the revolution took place in the Belgian Congo, which meant that many Belgian refugees, but also those of other nationalities, came to Luanda.

Many had already spent holidays in Luanda, a place that was popular among the Belgians for its beaches.

There were also some Dutch families among them, families of employees of Borsumey, and of other Dutch firms there.

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The first sign of political unrest in the Portuguese African territories was the hijacking of the "Santa Maria" in January 1961.

People thought that this ship, taken over by Galvão (who had held prominent positions in

Angola), might come to Angola, but this did not happen.

However, soon after that, during the night of the 3rd and 4th February, a bloody attack took place against whites and blacks in the northern coffee area, during which many hundreds of people, including women and children, lost their lives in the early hours of the morning. It was an act of frightful terror, in which the most appalling acts of cruelty took place.

Most certainly elements from the Congo were involved in this, who had gained influence over the local people, and many of the killings were carried out under the influence of drugs, marijuana, etc. This area of small coffee plantations was perhaps one of the most fertile areas for rebellion, for the conditions under which the natives worked were bad, and there had already been signs of dissatisfaction, but to which government officials had paid no attention. At the same time, there was an attack on the Penedo jail in Luanda, with a number of people killed, and some days later more clashes during the funeral for one of the victims.

By March, people were already talking about organized terrorism in the northern areas, and refugees streamed into Luanda from those areas, mainly women and children.

Luanda was in a state of great agitation, and many families left for Portugal or elsewhere at the first opportunity.

The population also turned against the Protestant mission in Luanda, smashing all the windows of its buildings in the city.

For months and months you could hear machine-gun fire at night, coming from skirmishes at the city limits and the outskirts, the native neighbourhoods. Since there was very little military power to protect the people should a large scale attack by the natives take place, people were in a high state of anxiety, aggravated by all kinds of alarming rumours doing the rounds, such as imminent slaughtering of children in the schools, mass poisoning of the drinking-water supply, and so on.

From the cotton districts of Cassange, to the east of Malange, again and again came news of mass uprisings, and there were people who believed that a complete encircling of Luanda by the blacks was not impossible.

When mass attacks failed to take place, and with an army slowly being built up, the situation in the city became calmer, and business life could get going again. In the meantime, the government had brought in a moratorium, a freezing of debts of firms with companies in the terrorist zones. Fortunately the total amount of our claims falling under this provision was not very large, because we had visited these areas very little due to the drought-related poor harvest, and had therefore deliberately sold very little.

After that we were not able to visit those regions for some time, as it was too dangerous to travel there independently, and even in convoy it was hazardous. Many clients were still unreachable, as they had entrenched themselves behind walls and barbed wire. In Mavoio, the copper mines, it was a Dutchman, Korpershoek, who led the defence, with good success.

We had a consignment of "Jacaré" machetes, from Martindale, in our stocks, and these had to be handed over to the police.

Luanda's needs increased with refugees and soldiers swelling the city's population, and it was a matter of adjusting as best possible to this situation.

Values for land and buildings remained very low for quite a while, as a result of the general uncertainty. For the land that we had bought at the Barre de Corimba, it would have been impossible at that time to find a buyer.

Progressively the areas around Luanda were cleared, and people could once again travel in the direction of Cacuaco, and later as far as Caxito, but further north, so some 100 to 150 km from Luanda, travel remained unsafe.

In July 1961, I visited Elizabethville (now Lumumbashi), where a trade fair was being held, and the Portuguese exhibit was opened by Tshombe.

In August of that year an American "Observer" Mennen Williams (Soapy Williams) came to visit.

In December there was dismay over the annexation of Goa.

By 1962, Portugal started to get over the 1961 scare, and Adriano Moreira, Minister for the Ultramar, was working on the Lei Organico do Ultramar, which was to lead to the creation of a Common Market for the Portuguese territories. Work was also being done on the Statute for the Indigenous People, which was to grant them more rights.

Governor Deslandes ran up against friction with Lisbon, where people felt that he wanted to govern in too autonomous a fashion.

Economic activity took off. In Portugal itself there was now far more interest in Angola's economic potential, and in the following years many government projects were started, such as building roads, airports, schools, hospitals, and so forth. The government also became interested in oil production and iron-ore mining. Industry, fisheries, and tourism all began to be given more attention.

Coffee exports got going again, and some year's later production reached around 200.000 tons. The services of the Instituto de Café (formerly Junta de Café) were improved, and it became an institution guaranteeing the quality of exported coffee.

Commercial banks in Portugal also began to show an interest. Up until then, the Banco de Angola, as both issuer and commercial bank, held the monopoly. However, with the arrival of the Banco Commercial de Angola came an influx of Portuguese banks, followed by the English/Portuguese Banco Totta Standard de Angola. The latter asked me to become a member of the Board, and this offer I accepted, following consultation with Amsterdam.

More banks meant more competition, with, over time, faster bank transactions, more possibilities for discounting bills of exchange, and for getting credit. Since ZUID was

growing all the time, we very much needed these facilities, especially since Head Office kept insisting on making use of all transfer authorizations. These existed, because for every import authorization, there was also a valid transfer authorization. In the trading sector there were no difficulties with transfers, at least not with foreign countries (though there were with the "Metropole"). With capital movements, though, problems and delays did occur.

In August 1962, our turnover (stocks) was 3275 contos, an all time record. In 1951, turnover was around 1000 contos. In 1953, we celebrated reaching 2000 contos by having a "churrasco" (*piri-piri chicken, grilled over the coals*).

In 1962, at his request, Mr. Peterson was transferred to Metropolitan Portugal, where his family had been living since terrorism had broken out. Koster took over from him as manager for the Lobito office. As sub-manager, he had Martins, a good, experienced man. In Luanda, I still had Boersma and Hoornstra. Towards the end of the year, Stroemer arrived, with his wife and very young baby. Practically as soon as they arrived, the baby (Johnny) became seriously ill, but in the end he pulled through. It meant a year-end full of upheaval, but fortunately everything worked out, thanks to the continual help of Dr. Castelbranco, brother-in-law to our employee Abreu.

It must have been around this time that we began to do business once again in Nova Lisboa. Earlier on, with the establishment of the Lobito office, we had had to close the office in Nova Lisboa, as Amsterdam didn't see the point of working in both places, and our main competitor there, Socorel, had taken over the rent for our building there, as well as practically all of the business. However, in practice it seemed important to also have a sales point in the centre of Angola, especially with regard to our agricultural products. However, business remained limited for many years.

In Luanda, we installed some air-conditioners in the office building; and also in the "residencia," in the bedroom, where, during the hot season, it was much appreciated.

March 1963 was important because of "Jomba." The "Empresa das Aguas do Jomba" had always been one of the most faithful clients of the direct order division. They pretty regularly placed orders for all kinds of packing materials and raw materials for the manufacturing of boiled sweets, and a very good relationship had developed between ZUID and Jomba's managing partner, Mr. Fernandes.

The problem Fernandes had was with his older partner Martins (50 % partner), who was not at all interested in expanding the company, and wanted as much to be transferred to Lisbon as possible. While Mr. Visser was visiting Luanda in March 1963, we held a meeting with Fernandes in the Continental Hotel, and he then suggested that ZUID take over Martins' share, whereby ZUID and Jomba would become equal partners.

We spent the rest of the day exchanging ideas about this matter, and on the basis of the balance sheets that Fernandes had brought with him, we came to the conclusion that this was a very attractive proposal.

The next morning, Mr. Visser decided to accept the proposal in principle, and with that the first step was taken towards ZUID's participation in Angolan industry. ZUID had not moved

in this direction before, for it required all its finances and manpower to fulfil its commercial tasks.

When Mr. Fernandes had returned to Lobito, and Mr. Visser had left for Lourenço Marques, the whole agreement had to be settled in legal and formal terms – it all became extremely complicated.

From then on, a good deal of my time was taken up in bureaucratic red tape, made particularly complex because this matter involved the participation of a foreign company, for which approval had to be obtained from Lisbon, etc.

This quick decision on Jomba, taken by Mr. Visser on his own responsibility, was much criticized in Amsterdam, and the repercussions of this in Angola were that Jomba's investments had to be curtailed, and where possible profit transfers were to be arranged. This issue was the subject of a great deal of correspondence and discussion in Lobito, Luanda, and Amsterdam.

It was very difficult for me, during this period, to maintain our good relationship with Fernandes, since from the start of our association he had had very different ideas about our future collaboration. During this period, though I personally was convinced of the value of the Jomba connection for ZUID, I had to seriously water down, or even ignore instructions and communications, so as to limit the damage.

In Jomba itself, business developed well, though more slowly than Fernandes had hoped. Turnover rose, and new articles were added to the range.

1963 was also the year of the floods in Luanda. It was towards the end of the rainy season, and exceptionally muggy for days on end. On March 26, everyone rushed home at 12 o'clock because the weather looked very threatening. At 12:30 it started to rain, and an hour later it was a disaster. Masses of rain, mixed with red earth, poured down from the higher neighbouring areas and flooded the shops downtown. Some had water over their rooftops and were buried under the red earth. Parked cars were washed away, or had to be dug out. No-one died, but there was a lot of material damage. One of our warehouses was flooded, but most of the stored goods in it were in drums, and our losses were quite limited.

In that year, we transferred the Holland West Africa Line agency to Van Ommeren. We had kept this option in mind since Van Ommeren had set itself up in the Congo, and in the meantime we had obtained important agencies from Scandinavian lines. Still, HWAL had become a part of our lives in ZUID, since we had worked together for twenty years. The way in which the end took place, at three months' notice, was not much appreciated, especially given the trouble we had gone to in order to keep everything running smoothly when inspector Houtman was away for a year for health reasons, and during which period Kusters to a large extent took over the inspection tasks.

Positive news came from Gulf's oil drilling off the Cabinda coast, forecasting a great future for Angola, but during the first few years nothing much came of this. However, new reserves kept being discovered, so that other oil companies became interested in concessions. Oil production gradually increased, but there was certainly no spectacular

development.

In the meantime, Cabinda underwent a great change. The days when people called for the taxi (as there was only one) instead of a taxi, were over. Banks, shipping companies, and trading companies became established there. With the expansion of oil exploration, terrorist activities tailed off in that area. The interior of Cabinda, a tropical wilderness with various hard woods, including mahogany, was also once again accessible. From time to time the border between Cabinda and Congo was closed off due to political disturbances, but a lively smuggling business continued across the border, making Cabinda a good market for all sorts of products, and our travelling salesmen therefore sold a lot. An exceptionally good article was Congo prints, originally made by van Vlissingen, later Texoprint; these were worn by women throughout the Congo, but also in Cabinda. These prints could be imported into Cabinda - but not into the rest of Angola - due to the Enclave having a separate import regime, the Congo Basin regime.

In the northern coffee regions, the terrorists were able to stand firm, though practically all the connecting roads were in Portuguese hands. Even on these roads, attacks took place on troop columns and convoys. To reach Carmona, in the centre of the coffee production area, the detour via Vila Salazar was still used.

A by-product of the Gulf invasion was that the English school, which had been set up some years earlier by a number of foreigners (including myself), had to cope with a flood of American and other children. This meant significant expansion. Later an entirely new school was built, in the Luanda suburbs, with much support from Gulf.

In September I travelled to Europe because my daughter had to have an operation (scoliosis) in Edinburgh. My wife and daughter had already been there for some months. The operation was successful, but she had to stay in plaster for another six months, so my wife stayed on with her, with family, in Amsterdam. We were much helped by the company during this difficult time.

In early August, Mr. Visser came again to Angola, this time accompanied by someone entirely new to us, and with whom we would have a great deal to do over the following years: Mr. Nanninga. It was a short visit, after which the two men travelled on to the East coast, via South West (*South West Africa, today Namibia*) and Cape Town.

In 1964 came the merger between Agfa and Gevaert.

We had held the Agfa agency for a long time, yet another result of the earlier Bayer connection. Together with the Rollei agency, these were the basis of our photographic department. Earlier it had been a part of the general department, later part of the pharmaceutical division, and later, a department of its own. The articles were cameras, films, paper, and in the later years, especially "copyrapid."

The merger raised the issue as to who would become agent for the combined company: Lusolanda (Gevaert's agent) or ourselves, and it was in this connection that we needed to take the matter very seriously. In any case, everything to do with this aspect of the merger was still very vague, and we believed that the best thing to do was simply to continue as

usual, as other agents had done, we believed, in other countries. But Amsterdam wanted to settle matters quickly, and correspondence on the subject led in 1964 to a meeting in Luanda between Agfa, Gevaert and their representatives. Agfa was represented by Mr. Benenson, who had already visited us on a number of occasions, and Gevaert by Mr. Brusselaar. The manager and sub-manager of Lusolanda were also present, and on our side was Mr. Nanninga, and Mr. de Jong, a photo technician, who had in the meantime been sent out to us by Amsterdam, and myself. The idea was to reach a joint ZUID/Lusolanda operation, and days went by discussing the conditions that suppliers would demand of the combined company, profit margins, commissions, and so on, for which in the beginning Lusolanda had the upper hand. I wasn't particularly happy with the way the discussions were going, but Mr. Nanninga, who had the lead for our side, fully empowered by Amsterdam, assured me each time that he had a confidential agreement with Mr. Benenson whereby the agency for the combined company would in the end come to us.

This appeared to be a miscalculation, for the agency went in the end neither to ZUID, nor to Lusolanda, nor to the planned combination of the two, but to the José Pinto, an upcoming Portuguese firm, which already had a number of other German photo agencies, and specialized in photography.

On losing the Agfa agency, we liquidated the entire photo department. De Jong, who didn't seem to us to be quite the right man for the job, returned to Holland.

Around this time, we obtained a number of other agencies, including Reckitt and Coleman. For years we had already been buying from the firm's English subsidiary (i.e., Nugget articles), but import restrictions had limited this considerably. When R. and C. began to manufacture these products in Lourenço Marques, we imported from there, and this led to ZUID becoming the sole agent for all production from the Reckitt and Coleman factory they were going to set up in Luanda. This led to a significant increase in turnover. Stroomer was the driving force behind this cooperation.

We expanded our range of goods by including other articles, such as Unilever products, and products from local industry: shoes, batteries, plastics, preserves, bicycles, corrugated panelling. On the other hand, the Tokheim agency went to a technical firm. A start was made with hotel installations. We also sold many kinds of scales: Howe, Detecto, Olland. We sold a series of weighing instruments to the Municipality of Luanda, for checking the weight of heavy-goods vehicles. They weren't in use for very long. They are probably lying somewhere in the storage areas of the Obras Publicas (*Public Works*), and overweight lorries continue to ruin the roads.

The additional work involved in all of this, including extra Consular activities, and more contact with the authorities (tax issues, profit transfers, etc.) was in part compensated for by the presence of Mr. Chargois, whom Head Office had previously sent out to us temporarily on a number of occasions. He always adjusted quickly, and got a tremendous amount of work done. Especially when we received visitors, such as Ambassador Flaes in 1964, whom I accompanied during his visit through Angola, it was important to be able to hand over to a competent, experienced person.

In September 1964, I went on vacation to South Africa, and at the request of Head Office,

handed management over to Mr. Nanninga, who in the mean time had spent quite some time on the East coast, and visited Angola from time to time as Amsterdam's general representative. He was incredibly active, day and night writing reports, long letters, aide memoires, etc., at the office, at home, during flights, and so on. The secretaries just couldn't keep up.

When I returned in March, many changes had taken place, especially with regards the department that dealt with agricultural and veterinary products.

Under the leadership of Abreu, this department had grown considerably, and now included a broader range of products and more agencies. We had taken some knocks, for example, the cattle poisoning in Bocoio, where much too high a dose of Gammaxene had been used, for which the client claimed us to be responsible. Otherwise, business was good, and turnover progressively rose.

Mr. Nanninga felt that there were great opportunities in agriculture for us, and that it was a matter of thinking big. This involved hiring four "regentes agricolas" (meaning, in Portuguese, young people with a diploma in agriculture) to provide advice to farmers, as well as purchasing four diesel Land Rovers for their transportation. This was a costly matter, because these men's salaries were higher than those of the majority of our highest-ranking employees. Maintenance for the Land Rovers was also high, especially as these "regentes" couldn't stop themselves from driving above the maximum speed for these vehicles, which kept breaking down. We had to replace these agriculture consultants on a number of different occasions, because usually they knew more about cork and olives than about tropical crops, having obtained their diplomas in Portugal. Also, we had very little control over what they did.

Whenever I asked whether this was not all becoming too expensive, Mr. Nannenga answered that it was the only way in which to achieve results quickly, and that as far as financing was concerned, he could count on the Robaver (*Rotterdamse Bank Vereniging-Rotterdam Bank Association*) with full support from Mr. Plantenga. So that was no problem, and it was a matter of making an in-depth study into the Agriculture Department's potential. Two "regentes" were stationed in Luanda, and two in Central and South Angola. The products we dealt in were pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, veterinary articles.

Turnover for these products did go up, but not in proportion to the increase in costs. One of the reasons for this was that we couldn't get the regentes to do sales themselves, nor to accept orders. This they felt was beneath them. They were just advisers, there to arouse people's interest: sales had to be done by other people. That meant more trips to the interior for our sales staff, and if they didn't go right away, other suppliers moved in and snapped up the orders, especially if asking a slightly lower price.

Overall, it was not a success, and in 1965, we moved quickly to cut back this system. The best results we achieved were with the German coffee growers in the Calulo area, who, with Abreu's help, were very successful in adapting the weed-killers we had brought onto the market to coffee growing, and they obtained big coffee harvests.

Travel in the interior became progressively safer, and faster with the new asphalt roads. The

asphalt road Luanda- Dondo- Quibala-Nova Lisboa-Lobito completed, and link between Luanda and Lobito (600 km), and Luanda and Nova Lisboa (700 km) were excellent. Moçamedes got a railway link to the iron-ore mines, which had been almost completely taken over by the government. Railway equipment was delivered by Krupp, against payment in iron-ore deliveries over a number of years. A modern ore transfer harbour was built in Moçamedes.

In the meantime, disturbances were felt from Zambia, meaning that the eastern border areas to the north and south of the Benguela railway became dangerous because of various terrorist groups, especially the MPLA, led by Agostinho Neto. In the North, it was the group under Holden Roberto which was most active in terrorist activities.

The eastern districts were very suited to terrorist activities: they were far away (some of them were called "terras do fim do mundo" (*lands at the end of the world*) and rich in cattle, especially red buffalo (pacassa) and various types of antelope. "Aldeamentos" (native housing regroupings) were set up in these areas in order to provide some protection for the population. The capitals remained accessible by Fokker Friendship or other airplanes.

In August 1965, the shipping department was strengthened with the arrival of Teerling, an active man, with a strong attachment to shipping, and who took quite a few initiatives. He was much appreciated by captains and officers. Temperamental as he was, he was not always easy to get along with, but I valued him for his energy. Nothing was ever too much trouble for him.

With Stroomer and Boersma, stock business and administration respectively were in good hands.

In October, we were visited by Mr. Plantenga, Chairman of the Board. Up until then visits from Amsterdam had been limited to visits by the directors Visser and Ratelband. From Mr. Visser, with his fatherly manner, we always received the greatest moral support. Mr. Ratelband was more of a details man. These visits were always very useful in running the business.

Mr. Plantenga's visit was the first in a series of visits; the idea was that each Member of the Board was to become familiar with the African business. This meant that later Dr. Littaur came from "de Bijenkorf," and Mr. Kranenburg, from the "Amstel Brewery." These were interesting visits, but they did have the disadvantage that each time the business was viewed from an entirely different angle, which we had to adjust to, i.e., big banking, retail or industry.

In Mozambique, Mr. Plantenga was accompanied by Mr. Nanninga, who had had an operation to his throat in South Africa, after having had a number of close calls. Mr. Nanninga returned to Europe at about the same time as Mr. Plantenga, and from then on made no further visits to Angola.

Then members of the Amsterdam staff began to come to Angola: Mr. Goinga in 1966, Mr. Los came various times, especially in relation to bookkeeping issues.

In February 1967, I was in Amsterdam for Mr. Visser's farewell, and during that visit I was introduced to Mr. Kuiper, who had been appointed Deputy Director. Mr. Kuiper came to Angola in September, and I made a few trips with him. He was probably not very interested in the country, and we shortened the trip by travelling by plane. Later I heard from Amsterdam that Kuiper had been let go.

June 1967, a new employee arrived: de Gee, who had experience in shipping. He replaced Teerling, in his absence. Lopes was doing the day-to-day harbour work, correspondence, etc. Still, I didn't see de Gee as a real shipping man, and also his wife had some trouble adjusting. It was not a great success.

September 1967 – my visit to the Lorentzen conference, Oslo.

In November of that year, the official signing finally took place making Jomba a "sociedade anonima," (*limited liability company*) under the new name "Jomba Industrial SARL." This happened after a long preparatory phase and an awful lot of "papel selado" (*stamped paper; i.e., bureaucracy*).

Jomba had begun working on new products, in particular tinned fruit, especially pineapple, which up until then had only been used, along with other fruit, for "fruta cristalizada." Financing remained the problem, and much discussion on the subject took place in Lobito, Luanda, and Amsterdam. Turnover and profits rose.

Some time later, Pinto, our head bookkeeper was let go as he was too attached to his own systems, and his cooperation with the rest of the staff was worsening. We made Dona Augusta head of bookkeeping; she had for years taken it on herself to act as his assistant.

January '68: visit to Amsterdam to celebrate Mr. Ratelband's jubilee, to discuss Jomba, and other issues. In the meantime, Mr. Back from Rees Burcksen en Bosmans was visiting Luanda, to plan coffee exports in cooperation with us.

End March, I left for Cape Town for my vacation, where on April 30 I received a royal distinction from the Dutch Ambassador Baron Lewe van Aduard. After visiting contacts in the Cape and in Johannesburg, I returned to Luanda in June.

On November 13, '68, we received the longest telegram we had ever had in Luanda, with news of the merger between ZAH and CTC (*Curaçao Trading Company, later Ceteco*).

This was a completely unexpected development, and everyone was stunned. The Dutch staff was split in its opinion on the matter, the Portuguese as a whole were negative (the Portuguese version of "rather the devil you know, than the devil you don't" came up again and again), and I had my hands full trying to get everyone to see things from the bright side; after all, you never know what a good Portuguese worker will do when beset by doubts. Convincing some exceptionally good people to stay with the company, when they received offers from other companies, had been a constant concern before, and this might well have been "the last straw." But there were no mishaps, and I believe everyone felt encouraged by Mr. Van Driel's visit soon afterwards (January 1969), accompanied by Mr. Ratelband.

I reached an agreement with Mr. Van Driel that I would stay on for a while. A period of adjustment and new initiatives began, which it was interesting to be involved in. Later in the year, Mr. Kruseman came to visit, and after that, Mr. Van Geuns. 1969 was the year in which full integration took place with the CTC organization, as regards administration, finance and business.

In the meantime, I was also visited by the new Dutch Ambassador in Lisbon, Mr. Van Ittersum (and wife), with whom, at the invitation of the government, we visited Diamang, Cabinda Gulf, and other projects. With the Consular Corps, I also made a few trips to the interior, which were intended to provide some clarity as regards the military situation.

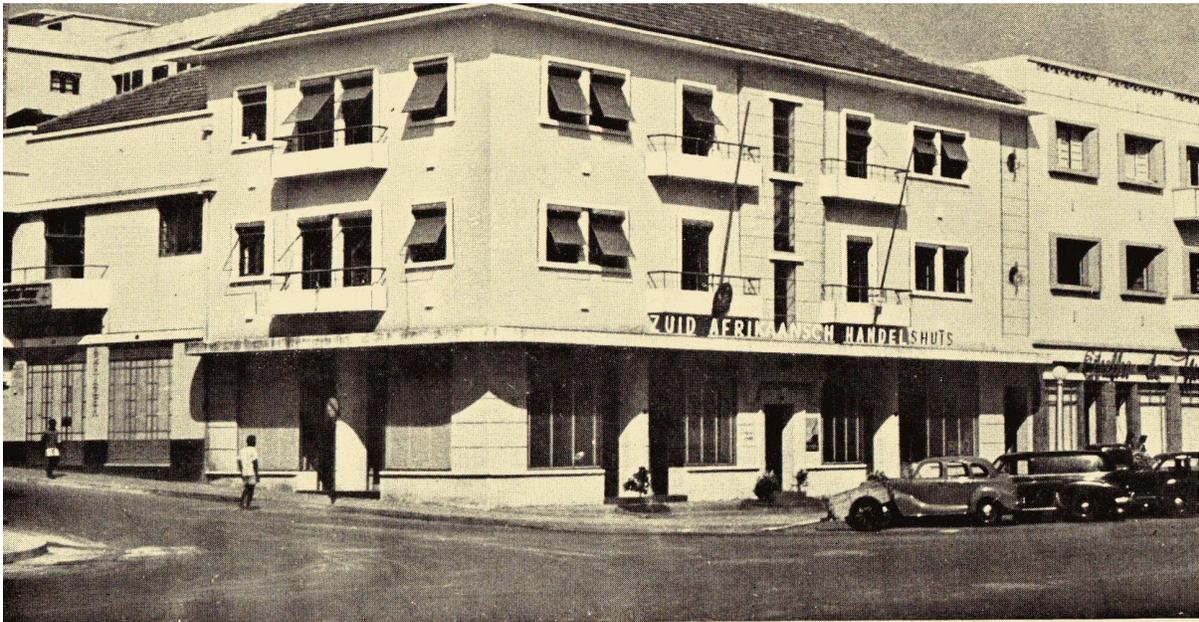
The last important event in my Angolan career was the opening of the new Jomba factory. Mr. Van Driel, and his wife, also came over for the event, and I need therefore say no more about it.

End January 1971 I handed business administration in Angola over to Mr. de Groot.

It was a pleasure for me to be able to hand over a good, profitable business, with a staff that undoubtedly still had a lot of untapped potential. The Dutch, but also the Portuguese that I recall are energetic men such as Valador, Candeias, Alves, Abreu, Durão; and then the women, Dona Stella, D. Augusta, D. Lourdes, D. Olga. Among the men, also Lino, and Nunes. Then also less spectacular, but reliable people, such as Vieira, Gomes, Pinheiro, Veras, Campos, Faria (Lobito), Pirinhas, Passos, Neto, Ribeiro, Dona Ceu, and others. It is with great pleasure that I think back to the times when we worked together.

A.P. van der Graaf
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Translated by Elizabeth Davies (van der Graaf)
(Text in italics added by the translator)
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"ZUID" Luanda Office