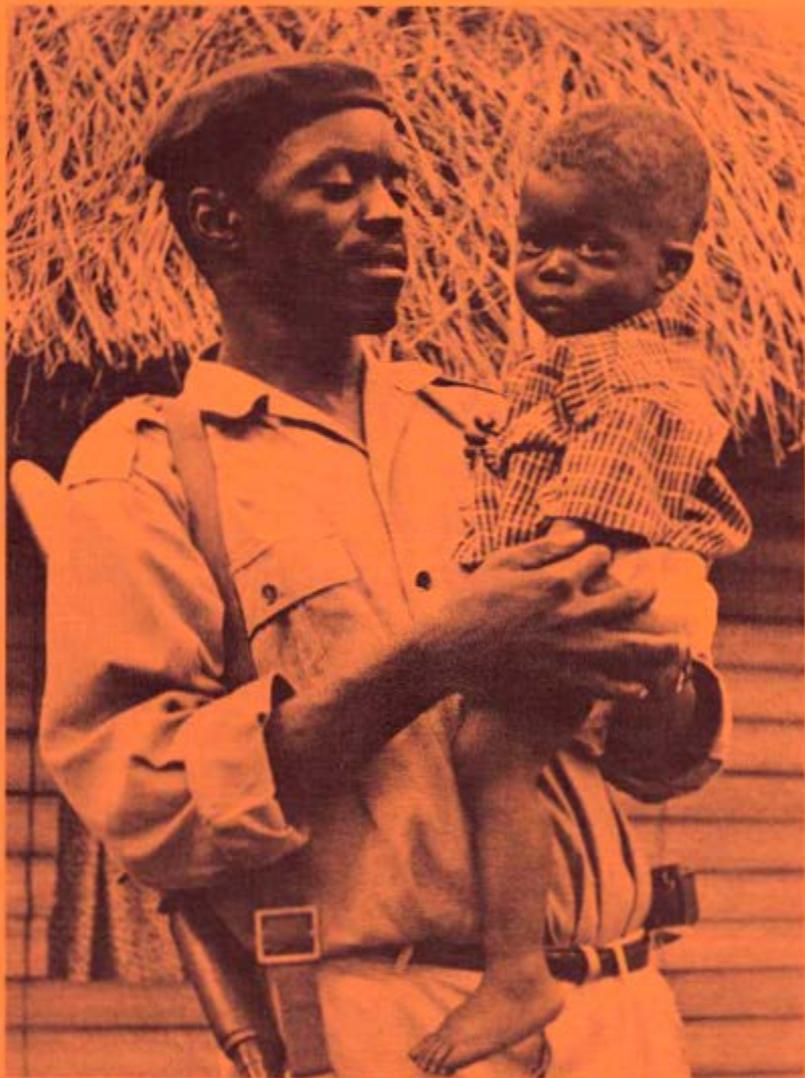


# MOZAMBIQUE:

Dream the Size of Freedom





**MOZAMBIQUE: Dream the Size of Freedom**

by

George Houser

and

Herb Shore

The Africa Fund  
(associated with the American Committee on Africa)  
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**Two Presidents: Eduardo Mondlane and Samora Machel, architects and builders of a new Mozambique.**

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How can we tell you the size of our dream?

During centuries  
we waited  
that a Messiah might free us. . .

Until we understood.

Today  
our Revolution  
is a great flower,  
to which each day  
new petals are added.

The petals are the land  
reconquered,  
the people freed,  
the fields cultivated,  
schools and hospitals.

Our Dream has the size  
of Freedom.

FRELIMO, 1969

A short time before his death, Eduardo C. Mondlane, FRELIMO's founding president, speaking of the war in Mozambique, said,

“The 25th of September—mark it. That day may well go down as one of the most important in the history of Africa—not just Mozambique. Our struggle is more than one nation. It is the beginning of the liberation of southern Africa, and. . .”

He laughed warmly, as if an idea reached deep inside him.  
He leaned his head back to look at the sky.

“... who knows, it may yet lead to the liberation of Portugal itself.”<sup>1</sup>

Three days later, Mondlane was dead, martyred by an assassin's bomb. Today, his words have the ring of prophecy.

In their declaration of July 29th, 1974, officers and men of the Portuguese army in Guinea-Bissau themselves stated:

“The colonized people and the Portuguese people are allies. The struggle for national liberation has contributed powerfully to the overthrow of Fascism, and to an important degree, lies at the base of the Armed Forces Movement, whose officers have learned in Africa to know the horrors of war without end, and so have come to understand the causes of the evils that afflict Portuguese society.”

1974—tenth anniversary of the outbreak of the war in Mozambique, marked the significant turning point. In the early hours of April 25th, an army uprising began in Lisbon which, by that evening, had deposed the Caetano government and was in full control of the country. During the months that followed, important and deep-rooted changes took place in Portugal, the independence of Guinea-Bissau was recognized as an accomplished fact, dates were set for independence in Angola and Mozambique, and FRELIMO was recognized as the rightful and sole legitimate spokesman for the people of Mozambique. These events also helped heighten the tensions in the rest of Southern Africa. White-minority rule in Zimbabwe found itself seriously threatened by the growing strength of the liberation movement, and white South Africa, responding to new pressures, formulated a policy of detente and separate development that it hoped would enable it to ward off revolutionary change and retain power internally and in Namibia.

For Mozambique, the challenge in the new period was clear. Samora Machel, President of FRELIMO, stated it directly in his speech after Mozambique's transitional government was established, on September 20, 1974:

“Mozambican Women and Men  
Frelimo militants and combatants,

The investiture of the Transitional Government opens a new phase of our history, the phase of the final march toward independence.”

A giant step had been taken from the day ten years before when FRELIMO had proclaimed “the General Armed Insurrection of the Mozambican People against Portuguese Colonialism for the attainment of the complete independence of Mozambique.”

Now, in 1974, Machel, looking to the future, outlined the long and difficult struggle which must begin to build a free nation. “We want to reconstruct our land, we are fighting to have a free nation.”

Independence is only a step along the way.

“A free Nation means: to have no more slaves, to have schools for all, health services for all, work for all, land for all . . .

FREE NATION is doing away with hunger;

FREE NATION is to end misery;

FREE NATION is to do away with illiteracy.

FREE NATION is doing away with the exploitation of the black man by the white man, of the national by the foreigner, *of man by man. . .*”

As Machel summed it up,

“We are engaged in a Revolution whose advance depends on the creation of the new man, with a new mentality. We are engaged in a Revolution and in the establishment of People’s democratic power.”

### *General Background*

It took the Portuguese almost four centuries to establish control over Mozambique beyond the coasts. By the time they had fully established that control, they faced the beginning of the end of Portuguese colonial rule. Mozambique’s history is marked by almost continuous struggle against foreign domination. The forms of resistance changed, but the resistance itself remained. Sometimes it was cultural in form, sometimes directly political, and sometimes it erupted into military action. Sometimes it was open and overt, at other times clandestine. Most often, it was all of these combined. The constant response from the Portuguese was repression—both iron-fist and velvet glove in form.

By the 1960s resistance reached the level of protracted warfare not only in Mozambique but also in Portugal’s other two African colonies—Angola and Guinea-Bissau, and, fifteen years later, the African people had won the recognition of their right to control their own homelands.

Mozambique is an elongated and fairly narrow country stretching along the southeast African coast from Tanzania to the South African

province of Natal. In width, it varies from 50 miles across in the extreme south to 700 miles at its widest part near the center. More than 300,000 square miles in area, it is eight and a half times larger than Portugal itself. Half the country is tropical lowland. In the north and the west, it rises to middle and high plateaus, the most famous and dramatic of which is the mist-covered Makonde Plateau in Cabo Delgado. Most of the land is forest and savannah, and although it is crossed by many rivers, only the Zambesi is navigable. Mozambique has been crucial in the defense planning and economic strategy of both Portugal and South Africa, and yet its resources and economic potential have still to be fully explored and developed.

Mozambique is the most populous of the former Portuguese colonies in Africa. Its population, estimated at 9,000,000, is only slightly smaller than that of Portugal itself. The non-African peoples number about 200,000. Most are Portuguese. A small number are Asians, principally Indian in origin, who held important positions as small traders, clerks and civil servants.

Like Angola on the other side of the continent, Mozambique is of strategic importance to the fate of all of southern Africa and to the future of African nations already independent and free of white rule. Although among the last of Africa's nations to win independence, there is a special significance to its achievement that will profoundly affect the rest of the continent. The three Portuguese colonies were the first in sub-Saharan Africa to achieve independence as the direct result of a long, protracted and successful war. They were the first to cause the fall of the government of the colonial power itself as a result of their wars of liberation. And they were the first born with concepts of social transformation that emerged out of the guerilla struggle. Mozambique, like Angola, is significant too because of its strategic geography. It points to the heartland of both Rhodesia and the Republic of South Africa, and cannot help but play an important role in the struggle to overcome white minority rule in these lands.

Mozambique shares borders with South Africa, Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania and Swaziland. Its ports of Beira and Lourenco Marques play key roles in the economy of Rhodesia and South Africa. Throughout its colonial history, it has supplied a vast amount of cheap contractual labor for South Africa's mines and industries. The high dam and hydroelectric project at Cabora Bassa, and its counterpart, the Kunene Dam between Namibia and Angola, were planned as keystones for the economic unification and centralization of vast regions across the boundaries of a dozen different states, under South African white-power domination. Now Mozambique may serve as a spearhead for southern African freedom.

The coastline of Mozambique is long, stretching some 1700 miles

along the Indian Ocean. Facing Malagasy, Reunion and the islands stretching to the East, it is linked to the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf regions. It may well serve as a key to the political and military future of that large ocean basin.

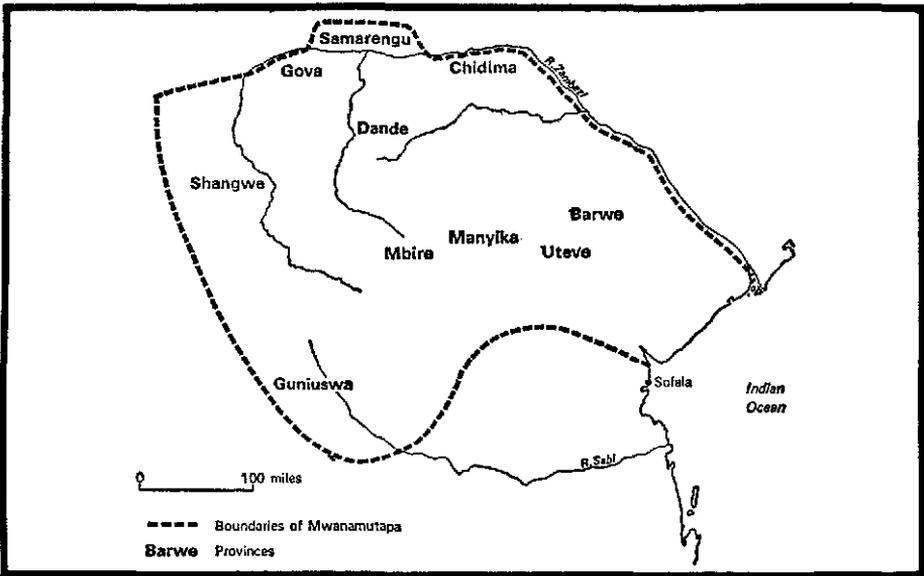
Poorest nation in Western Europe, Portugal was the oldest and the most stubbornly persistent of the European colonizers in Africa. Its holdings actually comprised the last remaining colonial empire in the world. Of the 28 million people estimated by the United Nations to be living in some form of "dependent status", half lived in the former Portuguese colonies of Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. In the years of decolonization after World War II, Portugal refused to beat any retreat. Instead, Lisbon waged a bitter and extended war that bled the economy, made the country itself a colony of Western Europe and the United States, and eventually led to the collapse of the *New State* that had been founded by Salazar.

### *History: From Exploration to Salazar*

Portuguese explorers were the first to round the coasts of Africa that led to India and the wealth of Asia. Portuguese slavers and traders of the late 15th and the 16th centuries were the first to traffic in Africa's humanity and its gold. In 1497, Vasco da Gama called at ports in present-day Mozambique. His interests and those of other explorers were principally commercial, and a system of European trade was developed from a few centers on the coast. By 1632, the most important of these centers was the town and island of Mozambique, from which later the entire country got its name. Until 1752, India was the focus of Portuguese interest. East Africa was linked to that part of the world via the Indian Ocean, and Goa was the capital for Portuguese activities in the region.

In the 15th and 16th centuries, Portugal took over the major ports on the Mozambique coast and challenged the Arab domination of trade with the interior. In the 16th century, the Empire of Monomotapa stirred the Portuguese imagination. Attracted by tales of wealth, including fables of King Solomon's mines and the Land of Prester John, they moved to conquer the hinterland systematically, penetrating up the Zambezi River valley to take Tete and Sena.

Africans resisted from the very beginning, but Portuguese superiority in the technology of warfare and the lack of unity among African states often made that resistance ineffectual, sometimes reducing it to no more than occasional raids, especially by the Monomotapa, on Portuguese settlements and trade routes. Portugal did not have the power to control *all* of Mozambique, but it was able to prevent the African states and kingdoms from developing unity and strength. In Mozambique, the Portuguese controlled the flow of commerce from the



The vast 15th century Empire of Monomotapa stretched across land now divided into Rhodesia and Mozambique.

interior to the coastal towns and then abroad. Great wealth flowed out of Africa to Portugal, but the repeated Portuguese claim that they were *masters* of Mozambique for 450 years is contradicted by the facts. They did indeed plunder the area, but they failed to establish a lasting political control over it.

By the 18th century, with the rise of the Spanish Empire and the domination of the Dutch over the spice empire, Portuguese interest shifted from Asia to Latin America and Africa, from ivory and gold to slaves.

The first Portuguese settlers of Mozambique were adventurers who acquired tracts of land from local chiefs and owned and administered them. These holdings became the basis for the *prazo* system. The settlers sought and obtained recognition as legitimate owners under Portuguese law and were issued grants by the Crown. The owners were overlords with unlimited powers, including that of life or death, over all the inhabitants of the *prazo*. They imposed and collected taxes, admitted and expelled people by decree, and sold slaves. In slightly modified form, the *prazos* continued through the 19th century and into the 20th, while the central authorities issued legislation and decrees to bring "peace, order, progress and law" to the system. For the ordinary African, *prazo* and oppression were synonymous terms.

The 18th century was a period of slavery, white dominance, established imperialism, and the frank admission that the colonies existed for the welfare of the European power. Although Angola was

the most prolific supplier of slaves for the New World, the cruelty and intensity of the traffic on the East Coast increased steadily. The number of slaves exported annually rose from 10,000 in the late 18th century to 25,000 in the early 19th. Britain abolished slavery in 1807, and by 1810, had entered into a treaty with Portugal for the gradual abolition of the slave trade.

In 1869, slavery was abolished by decree throughout the Portuguese empire, but the former slaves, now called *libertos*, were still bound to their former owners by involuntary contract. Even in 1875, when the status of *liberto* was abolished, these former slaves were still required to contract their labor. "The name was abolished but the fact remained."<sup>2</sup> The decree of 1875, a model for African labor laws in the decades to come, declared that the labor of all former *libertos* was free *in order to enable them to contract for their services*. Labor recruiters were allowed to contract workers wherever they could and in any way they could. They were permitted to ship these laborers anywhere they were needed. Any *liberto* convicted of vagrancy could be made to work for the government or a private employer for two years. This became the first labor code of Portugal in Africa. The *prazo* system, slavery, the conditions of the *libertos* and vagrancy laws formed the base for Portuguese policies of forced labor and molded the concepts that were advanced for its justification. In 1898, a government committee on "problems in Portuguese Africa" stated: "The state, not only as a sovereign of semi-barbarous populations, but also as a depository of social authority, should have no scruples in *obliging* and if necessary *forcing* these rude Negroes in Africa . . . to work."<sup>3</sup> Forced labor was seen as a part of Portugal's "civilizing mission." It enabled the *natives* "to civilize themselves through work." In 1899, another decree gave even stronger official and legal sanction to this policy. ". . . all natives of Portuguese overseas provinces are subject to the obligation, moral and legal, of attempting to obtain through work . . . the means that they lack to subsist and to better their social condition." If any African failed to do this on his own, the government would force him to contract his labor. He could be made to work for the government itself or for a private company. Heads of African states, kingdoms and tribes were pressured to contract their subjects and Portuguese government officials were given the power to draft labor contracts. Little free choice was left to the individual, and often entire villages were decimated or emptied of men in the hunt for workers. In 1958, Professor Marvin Harris wrote that less than 5% of the able-bodied males of southern Mozambique were entitled to remain in their own homesteads.<sup>4</sup>

Forced labor took several forms in Portugal's African colonies. *Correctional labor* served instead of prison sentences for a large variety of offences. *Obligatory labor* demanded that a "native", not otherwise employed, must give six months of work to the State. *Contract labor* required an African to work for a year or 18 months on roads, harbors, in mines, or on a plantation, under contract for a very low rate of pay. A special form of contract labor was that arranged for export. A convention signed with the Transvaal in the late 19th Century and ratified with the South African government when the Union of South Africa was formed, agreed that South Africa could recruit 65-85,000 workers annually for its mines, and these numbers have risen over the years. This labor recruiting is a highly organized system, controlled through the Witwatersrand Native Labor Association which combs southern Africa in search of cheap labor. The Mozambican quota has been a most important regular labor source. By 1961 over 400,000 men were working outside Mozambique as contract workers in the rest of Southern Africa.

The agreement with South Africa also permitted Portugal to tax its export labor, to freeze half the workers' wages for payment in *escudos* when the laborer returned to Portuguese territory, thus adding to Portugal's accumulation of foreign exchange, and required South Africa to pay a fee to Portugal for each laborer recruited. In return South Africa agreed that approximately half of its goods destined for export would be shipped through the port of Lourenco Marques.

The scramble for Africa that culminated in the division of the continent among the European powers at the Berlin Conference of 1884-5, led to the development of additional Portuguese strategies for economic and political/military control.

One such strategy was the absorption of the *prazo* holdings by large chartered concessionary companies. There were three in Mozambique: The Mozambique Company in Manica y Sofala Province, the Niassa Company in Niassa and Cabo Delgado Provinces, and the Zambesia Company in central Mozambique.

The Mozambique Company was the largest of the concessions. It grew out of a mineral-exploiting grant and had stockholders in South Africa, Portugal and other European countries. It was given sovereign rights to exploit and administer more than 62,000 square miles of territory and received a monopoly of commerce, mineral concessions, fishing rights, the right to collect taxes, rights for the construction of ports and communications, banking and postal privileges, the privilege of granting concessions to others, and the right to transfer land to other companies and individuals. It was exempt from paying taxes to the Portuguese government for 25 years. In exchange, the government owned 10% of all shares issued in the company and 7½% of the total

annual net profits. A similar charter was granted to the Niassa Company in 1891. The Zambesia Company held 80,000 square miles of land. Among its stockholders were companies and individuals in Germany, France, England and South Africa, in addition to Portugal. The Sena Sugar Estates, a British company, and the Paris-based Société du Mádal were among the sub-concessions granted by the Zambesia Company. These controlled the production of sugar, sisal and copra in Mozambique.

African lands were converted into plantations for growing cash crops and forced cultivation of specific crops became another part of Portugal's labor policy. Peasants of certain regions were forced to use all or almost all of their land to produce a single crop. In Mozambique this was usually cotton. The work was supervised by an exporting company with a concession in the area or region and that company held monopoly rights to buy the crop well below the world price. In 1958, for example, when cotton brought 20 to 25 *escudos* per kilo on the world market, it was bought in Mozambique for 2.7 *escudos* per kilo. The concessionary company, in this way, was able to make a huge profit and still sell the cotton to Portugal at a rate well below the market price. Cheap raw materials were thus made available to Portuguese industry and textiles could be sold at highly competitive prices and substantial profits on the world market. The same policy applied to other crops, such as sisal, copra, rice, and tea.

Peasants described this policy and its effects to FRELIMO: "We were forced to work on tea, but we didn't know what it tasted like—we couldn't afford it." . . . "The time of cotton production was a time of extreme poverty because we only produced cotton at a low price and didn't have time to cultivate our fields." <sup>5</sup>

Professor Marvin Harris called the system a form of "modern serfdom" in which "the role of the medieval lord is exercised by twelve Portuguese companies." In 1956, he says, "there were 519,000 African cultivators participating in the cotton campaign . . . the actual number of men, women and children being forced to plant cotton (on acreage taken out of food production) probably exceeds one million . . . the 519,000 sellers received an average of \$11.17 per person as their family's reward for an entire year of work." <sup>6</sup>

Samora Machel himself describes his first political education as coming "not from the writings in books. Not from reading Marx and Lenin. But from seeing my father forced to grow cotton for the Portuguese and going with him to the market where he was forced to sell it at a low price—much lower than the white Portuguese cotton grower." <sup>7</sup>

The Berlin Conference and the new economic imperialism of company control also required Portugal to establish effective

occupation of the territories granted to her, to defend her “historic rights,” and offer concrete evidence of her sovereignty through military action and treaties with local rulers. Intensive efforts of “pacification” began. Africans had consistently resisted Portuguese control. As early as the 17th century, for example, Monomotapa Gatsi Rusere raided Portuguese settlements and camps, disrupted the gold trade and denied the Portuguese access to the silver mines. In 1613, Chombe, with an African force equipped with firearms almost succeeded in cutting off the lower Zambesi from Portuguese settlements in the interior at Tete. Toward the end of the 17th century, Changamire turned against the up country settlements, destroyed Dambarare and ended Portuguese influence beyond the borders of present-day Mozambique. Resistance continued right up through the modern period. Twenty-four of the years between 1870 and 1911 involved intensive warfare and military action in Mozambique. And it wasn’t until 1918 that the Portuguese managed to defeat the Mokombe of Barwe in the Tete region.

The greatest challenge to Portuguese rule, prior to the FRELIMO-led war of independence, came with the uprising of the Ngoni people in Gaza in Southern Mozambique in the 19th century. They besieged Lourenco Marques, attacked Inhambane in 1834, Sofala in 1836, and overran the *prazos* south of the Zambesi. They established a kingdom from the Zambesi to south of the Limpopo River. In 1884, Gungunhana emerged as the leader of that kingdom. He tried to maintain relationships both with the Portuguese and the British, but was betrayed by both. His forces were finally defeated at Manjicaze, capital of the Gaza kingdom—and interestingly, the area in which Eduardo Mondlane was born. Gungunhana was captured and with the death of his great military leader Maguigana in 1897, this phase of military resistance came to an end. Armed opposition continued sporadically in various parts of the country and it was not until 1920 that the Portuguese were finally able to establish administrative control over all of Mozambique.

### *“Modern Colonialism”—The New State*

The regime of Antonio Salazar was established in Portugal in 1928. Salazar’s New State, (“*Novo Estado*”) which structured the establishment of a form of facism, required the integration of Portugal and the colonies. It required tighter administrative control from Lisbon and most important, closer economic integration to serve Portuguese needs. Those needs determined the raw materials to be produced and the availability and direction of capital investment.

To help achieve this integration and to justify it, a colonial mystique was created of a Luso-tropical community scattered around the world, but held together by spiritual bonds peculiar to Portuguese culture.

Economic exploitation could then be carried out under a philosophy of one-ness of the colonial peoples with the metropolitan center, the so-called common interests of the Lusitanian community.

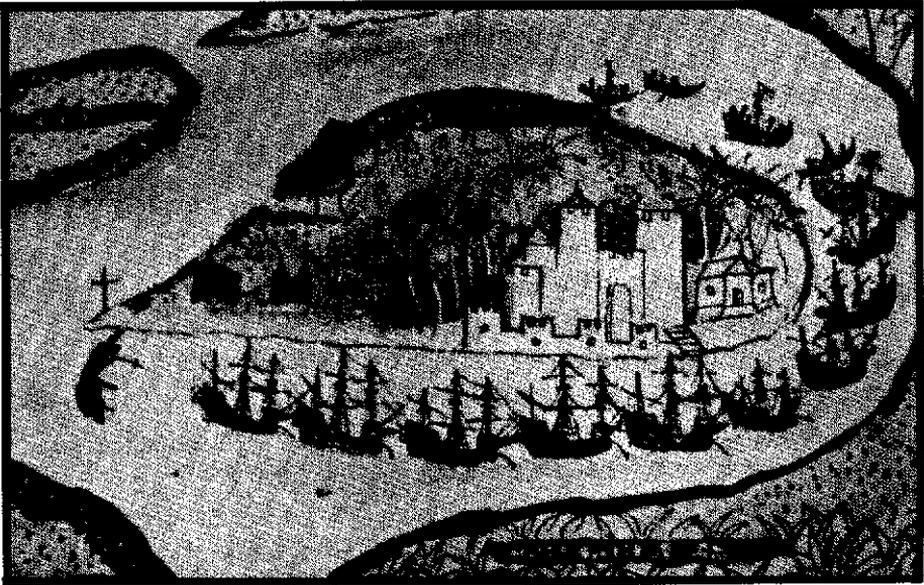
In 1951, this mythical community was tightened even further when the colonies were transformed into "overseas provinces." The revised Constitution proclaimed that it was "intrinsic in the Portuguese nation to fulfill its historic mission of colonization" and "diffuse among the populations . . . the benefits of civilization." In 1955 Portugal was admitted to the United Nations, and a year later, the government was able to reply to the query sent to all new member states that it had no territories that did not govern themselves, but that all its territories were integral provinces of Portugal. It asserted further that although political rights were dependent upon certain qualifications, these were the same for all inhabitants regardless of race or status.

In 1960, after four years of investigation and debate by the Fourth Committee, the General Assembly of the United Nations ruled that contrary to Lisbon's arguments the Portuguese colonies were in fact non self-governing territories in accordance with the charter. From then on conditions in the colonies became a matter of direct United Nations concern.

In spite of the Portuguese claim that its governing of Mozambique was not based on racial differences, there have been, from the beginning, two distinct administrative codes and practises, one for Africans and the other for Whites. Unlike the Europeans whose administrative center was the *conselho* or council as it was in Portugal, the African areas were governed by a *chefe de posto* and his administrators. African areas were divided into chiefdoms of sorts and the chiefs derived their power not from the people nor from their traditional roles, but from their appointment by the Portuguese authorities. They were expected to carry out instructions from above.

Culture, rather than color as such, was put forward as the determining basis for the rights and status of individuals. Inhabitants were divided into *indigenas* and *nao-indigenas*. The latter included both Whites and "assimilated" Africans. The Native Code of 1921 defined "assimilated" or "civilized" Africans as those who could speak Portuguese, had *rid themselves of all tribal customs* (author's emphasis), and were regularly and gainfully employed. If an African could not meet these qualifications, he was *indigena* with no rights of citizenship. He had to carry an identity card and was subject to the labor codes and other restrictions such as being barred from certain areas after dark.

Supposedly the *assimilados* had all the privileges of Portuguese citizenship. It is on this group and this theory that the Portuguese based their claims to being non-racist. This system of allowing a few privileged Blacks into European society was aimed at providing the answer to



**A Portuguese Fort built on the Island of Mozambique in 1507—a first attempt at control.**

African nationalism and was, therefore, the ultimate hope of Portuguese colonialism in Africa.

The test for acceptance was the absorption of Portuguese culture. Unless Africans would and could eliminate their own culture and adopt the Portuguese in full, they were not considered worthy of equal rights. As Eduardo Mondlane pointed out in his book, *The Struggle for Mozambique*, this system was designed to produce not citizens but servants of Portugal. “The most the assimilado system even sets out to do is create a few ‘honorary whites’, and this certainly does not constitute non-racialism.”<sup>8</sup>

For most Africans, assimilation was a false hope. By 1960, only .08% were assimilated *after five centuries of Portuguese presence*. The tests and standards set for the assimilado were stringent. They were tests that many Portuguese could not pass.

In a statute in 1954, *indigenas* were defined as persons of the black race who were governed by the customs of their own society and had not yet evolved to a condition of civilization that would enable them to be governed by Portuguese law. They were forced to work under the labor codes, were forced to cultivate specified cash crops, could not hold title to land nor engage in any commercial activity, nor did they have the educational opportunity to enter a profession. They could work only as agricultural or wage laborers and were treated as a colonial resource for the benefit of Portugal.

There was a continuity and consistency between the old patterns of

slave labor and the newer ones of forced or contract labor.

In 1961, following the outbreak of the first armed resistance in Angola, Portugal repealed the Native Statute, and made all Africans in the colonies Portuguese citizens. But reforms on paper and the colonial reality were not the same thing. Different identity cards were issued to those who had been citizens before 1961 from the ones issued to the vast majority who had not. Although political representation was permitted to Africans in the "overseas provinces," another clause prevented it—"transitorily in regions where the economic and social development deemed necessary has not been reached, municipalities may be replaced by administrative districts. . . ." In practice this meant that African areas were still governed by Portuguese officials under the old authoritarian system. In the 1964 election, there were only 93,079 qualified voters. The total assimilado and non-African population at that time was 163,149. Therefore, it is clear that not even everyone in these groups had the vote and it is virtually certain that no *indigena* did.<sup>9</sup>

The Portuguese Government could still legislate by decree for the territories or for an individual province. The Overseas Minister still nominated, transferred, promoted and demoted all administrators in the colonies. And general economic policy, including labor and the settlement or displacement of people were still decided upon by the government in Lisbon.

Inside the colonies there was still little or no provision for popular

**For Mozambicans Portuguese rule meant the worst kinds of servitude.**



African education. In Mozambique in 1954, only about 1/20th of all pupils in *elementary* schools were African. Health services were practically non-existent.

The colonial administrative system permeated every village and maintained close surveillance over the population. Where surveillance and control failed, there was free use of corporal punishment and corrective labor. There was constant pressure on Africans to accept work contracts, illegal extension of contracts and employment malpractices. Government and private corporations pressured the *chefs de posto* to fill labor quotas. The book which every African had to carry to record tax and labor records and which had to be produced on demand, coerced into service those Africans who did not flee the country. There was, right up to the end of the war, continued clandestine emigration of Africans fleeing the Portuguese labor system.

### *The Growth of Nationalism*

"In Mozambique," Eduardo Mondlane wrote, "it was colonial domination which produced the territorial community and created the basis for a psychological coherence, founded on the experience of discrimination, exploitation, forced labor and other aspects of colonial rule." <sup>10</sup>

With the defeat of Gungunhana and the death of Maguigana, the last of the powerful African states was weakened and demoralized and traditional forms of resistance collapsed. In the 20th century, new forms and new organizations of resistance appeared. People began to join together on the basis of common experience, common suffering and the issues of confrontation, rather than the old ethnic and regional relationships. Urban organizations were formed and worker actions took place in the cities, cooperatives and other forms of association came into being in the rural areas, cultural organizations and student groups were formed, and newspapers and journals appeared. The whole process quickened after World War II both inside Mozambique and abroad.

Already there was protest and resistance in the songs of the people, in their tales, dances, masks and carvings.

Contract workers in South Africa, as early as 1920, were singing

"O, O, listen to the orders  
Listen to the orders of the Portuguese,  
They want a pound for tax,  
This is wonderful, father,  
Where shall I find the pound?"

A Chope song of the same period expresses smoldering anger.

“ . . . its always the same story  
 . . .  
 Natanele tells the white man to leave him alone  
 Natanele tells the white man to leave me be  
 You, the elders must discuss our affairs,  
 For the whites-appointed man is the son of a nobody.  
 The Chope have lost the right to their own land  
 Let me tell you about it. . .”

Responding to the proclaimed liberalism of the new Republic in Portugal from 1910 to 1926, groups of Africans, mestizos (people of mixed racial heritage) and even whites in the cities, formed societies and issued publications to campaign against the abuses of the colonial system. Most organizations carried out their programs within the framework of social programs, mutual aid and burial societies, cultural and athletic activities.

An important role in the early protest was played by the journalists. *O Brado Africano* (The African Cry), established in the early twenties, was actually one of the first African newspapers on the continent. Its position was surprisingly hard-hitting and its view of the situation was clear, although it never actually demanded national independence. It forcefully expressed the spirit of the early protest movements in an editorial in 1932.

“We’ve had a mouthful of it. We’ve had to put up with you, to suffer the terrible consequences of your follies, of your demands. . . . we can no longer put up with the pernicious effects of your political and administrative decisions. . . . Enough. . . . We want to be treated in the same way that you are. We do not aspire to the comforts you surround yourselves with, thanks to our strength. . . . even less do we aspire to a life dominated by the idea of robbing your brother. . . . We demand bread and light . . . . we do not want hunger or thirst or poverty or a law of discrimination based on color. . . .”<sup>11</sup>

*O Brado Africano* was sponsored and supported by the Associação Africano, an organization that had grown out of a loose association, principally of racially-mixed peoples, the Grémio Africano (African Guild), formed in the early twenties, it now included Africans. Settlers and administrators, alarmed at the force of the association’s demands, countered by intimidation and infiltration. Eventually, with the cooperation of some of the leadership, they turned the organization in a more conservative and collaborative direction. The more radical Blacks broke away and formed the Instituto Negrófilo, later forced to

change its name, because of its Black nationalist tone and implications, to the Centro Associativo dos Negros de Moçambique.

By 1936, Salazar's government forced *O Brado Africano* to cease publication.

A third organization, the Associação dos Naturais de Moçambique, originally formed by white Mozambicans, by the 1950s had opened its membership to all other ethnic groups. It supported a policy of social integration of whites and Blacks and even began to lean toward possible independence from Portugal. Among other things, they also launched a scholarship program to support education for Africans.

In 1949, led by Eduardo Mondlane and other students who had been to South Africa, the Núcleo dos Estudantes Africanos Secundários de Moçambique (NESAM) was formed by secondary school pupils. Under the guise of social and cultural activities, it conducted a political campaign among students and youth to spread the idea of national independence and to develop resistance to the cultural domination imposed by the Portuguese. Its effectiveness was limited by its small membership—there were very few African secondary school students in Mozambique—and the close watch which the Portuguese police kept on the movement. But it did help to create a consciousness of national culture and the African heritage among young intellectuals. It spread ideas of independence, and, most important of all, it created a nationwide network of communication that was invaluable to the work of FRELIMO when it was formed. NESAM was banned by the Portuguese in 1964.

Student organizations, cultural organizations and journalism were not the only forms of protest adopted by intellectuals in response to Portuguese oppression. Resistance found expression in the arts as well, especially among writers. The roots of literary protest go deep into the oral literature and songs of the Mozambican people, and developed in a continuous line right through the war of liberation. Literary protest played mainly on three themes at first—the reaffirmation of Africa and its cultural heritage, the sufferings of Black people, and the call to revolt. Once the war began and parts of the country were liberated, poetry and prose began to deal with the armed struggle and with the shape of the future society as well.

The African heritage was often reaffirmed by sensitive poets who already felt cut off from it. They struggled to find their common roots and ties with the mass of Mozambican people and with the continuity of Mozambican history. Often they were in exile.

Marcelino dos Santos, now a FRELIMO leader, in exile in France, wrote

The land where we were born

goes back  
like time.

Our forefathers  
were born  
and lived  
in that land

and they, like the coarse wild grass  
were the meager body's veins  
running red, earth's fragrance.

Even more powerfully, Noemia de Sousa eloquently sounded a cry  
of identity.

If you want to know who I am  
examine with careful eyes  
that piece of black wood  
which an unknown Maconde brother  
with inspired hands  
carved and worked  
in distant lands to the North.

. . . she is who I am  
empty eye sockets that despair of living  
mouth slashed with wounds of anguish,  
enormous, flattened hands,  
raised as though to implore and to threaten,  
body tattooed with visible and invisible scars  
by the hard whips of slavery . . .  
tortured and magnificent,  
proud and mystical,  
Africa from head to toe  
—ah, she is who I am!

If you want to understand me  
Come and bend over my African soul,  
in the groans of Black men on the docks  
in the passionate dances of the Chope  
in the rebellion of the Shangaan

And ask me nothing more  
if you really wish to know me . . .  
for I am no more than a lump of flesh

in which the revolt of Africa congealed  
its cry swollen with hope.

The sufferings of forced labor, of peasant poverty and work in the mines, inspired many poems. Few of the poet-intellectuals had actually experienced the labor code, the back-breaking work on the soil, the misery of the mines—they wrote as sympathetic sensitive brothers and sisters, projecting their own thoughts into the minds of the African workers and peasants.

Later, with the organization of the liberation movement under FRELIMO, workers, peasants, guerilla fighters, themselves wrote poetry. The tones changed.

If you ask me who I am,  
with that face you see, you others,  
branded with marks of evil,  
and with a sinister smile.

I will tell you nothing  
I will tell you nothing

I will show you the scars of centuries  
which furrow my black back.  
I will look at you with hateful eyes  
red with blood spilled through the years.  
I will show you my grass hut  
collapsed  
I will take you into the plantations where  
from dawn to after nightfall  
I am bent over the ground  
while the labor  
tortures my body with red hot pliers

I will lead you to the fields of people  
breathing misery hour after hour

I will tell you nothing  
I will only show you this

And then  
I will show you the sprawled bodies  
of my people

treacherously shot

their huts burned by your people

I will say nothing to you  
but you will know why I fight.

Poets wrote of the rise of Black people and other oppressed people throughout the world, and of their vision of a new tomorrow, of a new society, of a dream that "has the size of Freedom."

The same themes and concerns found their way into the short stories of Luis Bernardo Honwana, the paintings of Malangatana and Craveireinha, and the new ebony carvings of Makonde sculptors. In the context of the struggle, a new literary and artistic tradition was being forged.

But more was needed to build a revolution. Among the peasantry, resistance crystallized into cooperative movements, organized in the North, and strongest in the province of Cabo Delgado. The major aim of these cooperatives, at first, was simply to improve the economic conditions of the farmers through better organization of cultivation and production, and better marketing procedures for the sale of crops. The Portuguese authorities recognized the incipient political dangers in the cooperative movement. They set tight restrictions on their activities, levied taxes on them, and kept their meetings and membership under strict surveillance. Actually, these measures served to raise the consciousness of cooperative members, increase their hostility to the Portuguese, and accelerate the politicization of the movement.

Workers also organized active resistance. The growing urban concentration of labor and the miserable working conditions produced protest actions and flare-ups of rebellion. There were strikes on the docks of Lourenco Marques and in neighboring plantations, and these culminated in an abortive uprising in Lourenco Marques in 1948. Several hundred Africans were deported to the Atlantic island colony of Saó Tomé and imprisoned. A dock strike in 1956 ended in the death of 49 stevedores, and dock strikes in 1963 in Lourenco Marques, Beira and Nacala spurred by Portuguese failure to pay a promised wage increase were brutally smashed by the police and the military. These actions were led by clandestine political groups for there were no African trade unions. The only unions permitted by the authorities were the fascist corporate unions, whose leaders were chosen by the employers and the state, and who extended membership only to whites and on rare occasions to *assimilados*. There was no organized outlet for protest against the poverty of the urban proletariat.

In the 1960s, conditions rapidly reached a head. The organization of political opposition became more rapid. Sometimes it was open; more often it was secret and underground, and most often it was local and provincial in its activities and point of view. In April 1961, the

Movimento Democrático de Moçambique, an organization of white Mozambicans, mostly doctors, lawyers, businessmen and other professionals, petitioned for civil rights for all Africans, an end to forced labor and more education for Africans. In November 1961, they called a boycott of the elections. As a result, the elections were cancelled, the organization was banned, and its leaders were arrested. Other local, and sometimes short-lived groups sprung up in 1961 and 1962 in Zambesia, Inhambane, Manica and Sofala and Porto Amelia.

The most important developments, those that prepared the way for more widely based action and the formation of a national movement, took place in the countryside among the peasants of the North. Until the peasants began to see the need for a national rather than a regional movement, no liberation force could hope to succeed. The cooperative movement of Cabo Delgado, doomed to failure in the face of restrictions, controls and oppressive measures placed on it by the Portuguese, "reached the conclusion that the Makonde people alone could not succeed in driving out the enemy. We then decided to join forces with Mozambicans from the rest of the country."<sup>12</sup>

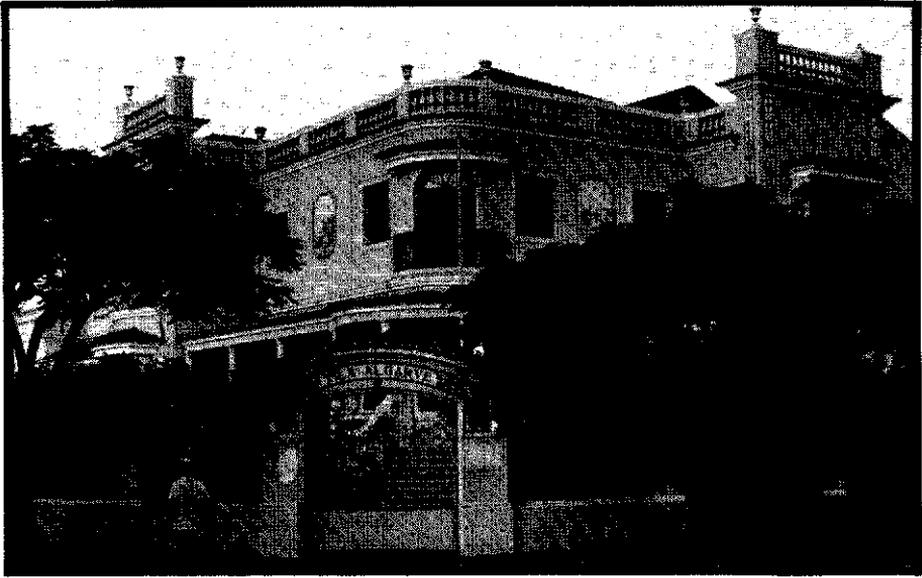
The turning point came at Mueda in Cabo Delgado on June 16, 1960. A massacre took place there. Unknown and unnoticed by the rest of the world, it was the counterpart of Sharpeville, South Africa and Pidjiguiti, Guinea-Bissau in rallying the people to a determined stand—never again to be unorganized and unarmed in the face of Portuguese violence.

### *Mueda*

The events of the Mueda Massacre are best told in the words of Alberto Joaquim Chipande, a FRELIMO militant, then only twenty-two:

"... It was in Mueda that the provincial governor decided to make an example of village headmen known or suspected of having supported one of the movements that was a forerunner of FRELIMO.... Some of these headmen made contact with the authorities and asked for more liberty and more pay.... After a while, when people were giving support to these leaders, the Portuguese sent police thorough the villages, inviting people to a meeting at Mueda. Several thousands came to hear what the Portuguese would say. As it turned out, the administrator had asked the governor of Delgado to come from Porto Amelia and to bring a company of troops. But these troops were hidden when they got to Mueda. We didn't see them at first.

Then the governor invited our leaders into the administrator's office. I was waiting outside. They were in there for four hours.



Van Lierop

**After the massacre at Mueda repression intensified—militants were often beaten or tortured in this building—the headquarters of the secret police in Lourenco Marques.**

When they came out on the verandah, the governor asked the crowd who wanted to speak. Many wanted to speak, and the governor asked them all to stand on one side. Then without another word he ordered the police to bind the hands of those who had stood on one side, and the police began beating them. I was close by. I saw it all. When the people saw what was happening, they began to demonstrate against the Portuguese, and the Portuguese simply ordered the police trucks to come and collect these arrested persons. So there were more demonstrations against this. At that moment the troops were still hidden, and the people went up close to the police to stop the arrested persons from being taken away. So the governor called the troops, and when they appeared he told them to open fire. They killed about 600 people. . . . I myself escaped because I was close to a graveyard where I could take cover, and then I ran away.”<sup>13</sup>

Alberto Chipande, one of the first FRELIMO volunteers for action against the Portuguese, explained why he joined the movement thus:

“I myself decided to join the struggle because every man should be free or, if he has to, should fight to be free. Ever since I was a child I saw the meaning of Portuguese rule. . . .”<sup>14</sup>

After the Mueda massacre, bitter hatred against the authorities

spread throughout the region and a growing awareness that petitioning, demonstrations and protests were futile. There was need for a national movement for freedom—the people were ready. Conditions inside Mozambique, however, made the organization of that national movement almost impossible. Repression was severe and the secret police were everywhere. Conditions outside the country were more favorable. The All-African People's Conference had been held in Ghana in 1958 and had called for unity and freedom for all Africa's peoples. Tanganyika and other African territories were nearing independence, and substantial numbers of Mozambicans—artists, intellectuals, workers and farmers—were now living in exile in adjacent countries. Three organizations were formed. Their common aim was independence.

The Uniao Democrática Nacional de Moçambique (UDENAMO) was established in Salisbury, Rhodesia in 1960. Its core was the Mozambique Burial Society, founded by Rev. Uria Simango, a Presbyterian clergyman from Beira, for refugees in Bulawayo. The organization had about 5000 members who paid a one-shilling monthly fee for burial insurance. About 250 of its members were engaged in underground political activity. The co-founder of UDENAMO was Adelino Gwambe, ostensibly a former member of PIDE, the Portuguese secret police, who had been sent to Rhodesia to spy on the activities of Mozambicans there, and who quit PIDE to join the movement.

MANU, the Mozambique African National Union, was formed in Mombasa, Kenya, early in 1961, from a number of smaller groups from Mozambique, principally the Uniao Maconde de Moçambique. It modelled its name on KANU and TANU, the independence organizations of Kenya and Tanganyika, adopted their structures, and was strongly supported by them. MANU's membership, about 2000 at its height, came from among sisal workers on the large plantations. Inside Mozambique, its activities were concentrated in the North, principally among the Makonde people of Cabo Delgado. The founders of MANU, Matthew Mmole and M.M. Malinga, had lived most of their lives outside Mozambique and did not even speak Portuguese.

The third organization, UNAMI, Uniao Africana de Moçambique Independente was set up in Malawi (then Nyasaland) by exiles from the Tete region of Mozambique.

### *The Birth of FRELIMO*

From the very beginning there was pressure for unity from all sides and growing demands for a single independence movement. In 1961, the outbreak of war in Angola brought about an intensification of repression in the Portuguese colonies and refugees from Mozambique flowed into neighboring countries, especially into Tanzania (then still Tanganyika). Tanganyika gained its independence that same year,

and with the encouragement of its government, all three Mozambican movements shifted their headquarters to Dar es Salaam. Tanzanian leaders and those of PAFMECSA, the Pan African Freedom Movement of East, Central and South Africa, actively participated in attempts to bring the three groups together. The Conference of Nationalist Organizations of Portuguese Territories (CONCP), held in Casablanca, issued a strong call for unity of all nationalist movements against Portuguese colonialism. CONCP organized itself into a continuing organization to promote and develop that unity, and Marcelino dos Santos of Mozambique was elected its General Secretary. A conference of all nationalist movements called by Kwame Nkrumah, then President of Ghana, urged the formation of united fronts, and Tanzania's President, Julius K. Nyerere, personally involved himself and high-ranking associates in attempting to bring about that unity among liberation organizations with headquarters in his country.

In response to demands made by recent exiles, many of whom did not belong to any of the existing organizations, by younger militants with more recent activist experience within Mozambique, and by victims of Mueda, a conference was called in Dar es Salaam, which brought together MANU, UDENAMO, UNAMI and many unaffiliated Mozambicans, and led to the formation of FRELIMO, Frente de Libertação de Moçambique.

Mbyiu Koinange of Kenya, Executive Secretary of PAFMECSA, and Oscar Kambona, then Secretary General of TANU, chaired many of the meetings of that conference which took place during May and June. On June 25, 1962, FRELIMO was officially formed. In the election for its first President, Eduardo C. Mondlane won overwhelming support, achieving a 95% majority over the other contenders—Simango, Gwambe and Chagongo. Simango was then elected Vice-President; David Mabunda, Secretary General; Paulo Gumane, Deputy Secretary General; and Matthew Mmole, Treasurer.

Plans were made to convene the First Congress of the Movement in Dar es Salaam, September 23rd to 28th. The establishment of FRELIMO was one of the few successful efforts to set up a united front of competing nationalist organizations in any area of Africa.

But the seeds of division within were there from the very beginning. The younger group of militants under the leadership of Mondlane took the initiative in drafting the program for the new organization in September 1962, "at the very moment when the established organizations were hesitating to place even their existing material possessions in a common pool for the benefit of the new movement." As a tenth-anniversary editorial in *Mozambique Revolution* explained, "the early days of FRELIMO were marred by mutual recriminations, expulsion, withdrawal, as between exile politicians who refused to give

up the dead, futile in-fighting of an irrelevant brand of nationalist politics.”<sup>15</sup> There is no doubt too that provocateurs played a role in the splits which occurred during the first year of FRELIMO's life. Provocation, personal ambition and inexperience all played their parts.

Mondlane felt obliged to return to the United States to complete his contractual obligations as a faculty member at Syracuse University before returning permanently to Africa. During his absence, Leo Milas, Publicity Secretary, later revealed not to be a Mozambican at all, but an American cleverly posing as one, had Mabunda and Gumane expelled from Tanzania on the basis of a forged letter which he presented to Oscar Kambona, Foreign Minister of Tanzania. A short time later, Mmole and then Gwambe were also expelled. An array of splinter organizations resulted in Cairo, Nairobi, and elsewhere: a reformed UDENAMO and UNAMI and a short-lived FUNIPAMO (Frente Unida Anti-Imperialista Popular Africana de Moçambique).

At the urging of President Nyerere and of concerned militants of FRELIMO, Mondlane returned to Dar es Salaam immediately to assume in full the responsibilities of the presidency. His determined efforts to heal the breach with UDENAMO failed in 1963. Eventually, from the various splinter groups, another front, COREMO, *Comite Revolucionario de Mocambique*, was formed with headquarters in Lusaka, Zambia. In spite of sporadic attempts at armed action inside the Tete region of Mozambique, COREMO was never able to develop beyond a token membership and minimal program of action.

Actually it was the most self-seeking, small-visioned and politically ambivalent elements who split off from FRELIMO at this stage. None of their organizations ever received the support of the Organization of African Unity, which gave official recognition to FRELIMO as the sole liberation movement of Mozambique. The political and philosophic position of Mondlane and his associates was strengthened as a result of these defections. They now began the task of building an effective, cohesive organization from diverse leadership and a variety of political directions and tendencies.

#### *Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane*

Eduardo Mondlane was well prepared by his background and experience for the responsibilities that he undertook in FRELIMO. He was born in 1920 in the Gaza region of Mozambique, not far from Manjicaze, the place where the Portuguese forces finally defeated the forces of Gungunhana and Maguigana in the late 19th century. His father was a chief of a small sub-group of Tsonga people and he was raised on tales of Mozambican history, of heroes and chiefs and the struggles of the people.

As a boy, he spent his days herding goats and cattle like the other

boys of his village and absorbing the traditions of his people and his family. From his mother came a passionate determination to get an education. "That I went to school at all," Mondlane himself wrote, "I owe to the far-sightedness of my mother, who was my father's third and last wife, and a woman of considerable character and intelligence."<sup>16</sup> For her, education was the means of liberating the Mozambican people, and she was convinced that her son had a special role to play in their lives.

Mondlane was about ten years old when he started school, but he very quickly caught the eye of his missionary teachers, and in the face of "all the frustrations and difficulties in store for an African child attempting to enter the Portuguese system," he received his primary school certificate, went on to agricultural school, and for a time taught farming in his home area.

But Mondlane had a deep interest in social problems and the Swiss mission saw in him a potential African missionary of exceptional ability. Through their efforts, he managed to get to South Africa for secondary education. He was then already twenty-four. Four years later, he entered the Jan Hofmeyr School of Social Studies in Johannesburg for a brief time and then received a scholarship to the University of Witwatersrand which, at that time, admitted a limited number of African students.

Mondlane was not only an excellent student, but was an active and popular one as well. During this period, he and other Mozambican students laid the groundwork for the organization of NESAM, and his fellow students at Witwatersrand, white as well as Black, elected him as one of their representatives. Within a short time after that election, the South African Government withdrew his permit to remain. The action was followed by protests and demonstrations, but Mondlane was deported.

Upon his return to Mozambique, he was arrested by the Portuguese authorities, interrogated, and then kept under strict surveillance after his release.

The Portuguese treatment of Mondlane alternated between the carrot and the stick, as the authorities tried either to win him over or intimidate him. In 1950 he was offered a scholarship by the Phelps Stokes Fund in New York. The Portuguese countered with an opportunity for him to study in Lisbon. To come to know the colonial power better, Mondlane, after consultation with others for whom he had deep respect, decided to study in Portugal. The Phelps-Stokes grant was held in abeyance.

He lasted only one year in Lisbon, but it was an important year, actually a major turning in his life. He developed close relationships with a number of young men from the Portuguese colonies in Africa,

among them, Amilcar Cabral, founding President of PAIGC, Agostinho Neto and Mario d'Andrade, founders of MPLA in Angola, and Marcelino dos Santos, who later became a close associate and a leader in FRELIMO and in CONCP. It was a year of heady political education, but he was constantly hounded and harrassed by the police, interrogated and searched, and often threatened. At last, he took up the other scholarship offer and left for the United States. He studied sociology and anthropology at Oberlin and Northwestern, completed a Ph.D., did a brief stint of research at Harvard, and then became an officer in the U.N. Trusteeship Commission. He was one of the supervising team in the plebiscite in the Camerouns, and this too contributed significantly to his political development and to his understanding of some of the problems of self-determination in Africa.

Throughout the years in America, Mondlane kept in close touch with Mozambique and with Mozambicans abroad. His life, his education, and his activities were all centered on that future time when he would return to the land of his people. Throughout these years too, the Portuguese kept a watchful eye on him. They too were concerned about the day when he would return to Africa. They often offered him lucrative positions of prestige in Portugal and sometimes showered him with praise as an outstanding example of what the African could achieve under the Portuguese civilizing mission. None of this tempted Mondlane.

In 1956, he married an American, Janet Rae Johnson, herself a graduate in sociology and education, and increasingly committed to a life of service. Janet Mondlane dedicated herself to the liberation of Mozambique, and in time, came to identify with that country and its people as her very own.

In 1961, the Mondlanes—Eduardo on leave of absence from the U.N.—and their two children visited Mozambique. From that time on, the cause of the Mozambican people was indeed her own. As for Mondlane himself, he saw again at first hand the conditions of Mozambican life and Portuguese oppression, and came to the realization that the normal channels of political pressure, protest and petitioning were futile. He was committed to the cause of independence.

This visit home after an absence of ten years had another effect as well. He often spoke of it with enthusiasm and wonder. He was known throughout the country, wherever he went. People came from miles around to see him and to talk to him. They lined his routes of travel. He came to realize that he had a responsibility to and for his people, and that this was the meaning of leadership.

On his return to the States, he left the United Nations so that he could participate more openly and directly in political activity, and

accepted an assistant professorship at Syracuse University. He developed and maintained contact with all the separate nationalist organizations, but neither joined nor became identified with any one of them. His aim was the formation of a united movement and he campaigned strongly for that unity in 1961 and 62. His voice carried great weight in the deliberations that finally brought the movements together in FRELIMO and elected him its first president.

### *Preparation For the Struggle*

The Mozambicans who gathered in Dar es Salaam in September 1962 came from every region of the country and from all sectors of the population. All had experienced repression and almost all had gone through the experience of resistance in some form. All had come to know the reprisals which immediately followed small-scale resistance or peaceful protest. They were ready for unity.

Many, especially the younger militants, understood the developments that had taken place in other parts of Africa during the 1950s when the coming of nationalist movements to power often meant only the Africanization of existing colonial structures, the replacing of foreign colonialists with local representatives of the same kind of system.

Tanzania's Mwalimu Nyerere has clearly and frankly described the condition of many independent nations elsewhere in Africa, and the choices confronted by his own nation after the achievement of formal independence. There were leaders who wanted only to hold the positions of privilege formerly held by Europeans, while the masses of people were encouraged to see nationalism in simple black and white terms and Africanization as a significant accomplishment. Apathy and disillusionment often followed the achievement of political independence with political organizations, geared only to straightforward nationalism and agitation, unable to provide any real defence against the underlying structures of exploitation, and ultimately losing support and atrophying.

“... to build the real freedom ... is a very different thing. It demands a positive understanding and positive actions, not simply a rejection of colonialism. . .”<sup>17</sup>

The Tanzanian experience had a profound influence on Mondlane and on the First Congress of FRELIMO. That Congress of some 80 delegates and 500 observers declared “its firm determination to promote the efficient organization of the struggle of the Mozambican people for national liberation.”

The aims of the organization were set forth in a number of

resolutions:

“—to develop and consolidate the organizational structure of FRELIMO

—to further the unity of Mozambique

—to promote and accelerate the training of cadres

—to employ directly any effort to promote the rapid access of Mozambique to independence

—to encourage and support the formation and consolidation of trade unions, student, youth and women’s organizations

—to promote by every method the social and cultural development of the Mozambican woman

—to promote the literacy of the Mozambican people, creating schools wherever possible

—to organize permanent propaganda by all methods in order to mobilize public opinion

—to cooperate with nationalist organizations of other Portuguese colonies, with African nationalist organizations, and nationalist movements of all countries

—to procure diplomatic, moral and material help for the cause of the Mozambican people from the African states and from all peace and freedom loving people

—to procure all the requirements for self-defence and resistance of the Mozambican people.”

In short these resolutions set out the framework for the organization of FRELIMO, the mobilization of the people, education, the liberation of women, diplomacy and propaganda, and the preparation for war.

The outlines of FRELIMO as a movement of revolutionary transformation were all there at the very first congress, pointing the way to its growth and development and foreshadowing the internal struggles that were to come in the course of that growth.

The Congress did not call for armed struggle, but the assumption was clear that military conflict was inevitable. In fact, there were some who thought that certain types of armed actions should be launched immediately—hit and run attacks in many parts of the country, especially in the urban areas. Others argued for a careful and thorough period of preparation and mobilization.

Mondlane and his supporters on the Central Committee saw the preparatory period as necessary to create the conditions for a successful armed struggle. It was a time to prepare the population for that

struggle, to develop greater political awareness and create a sense of unity among the peasants in the countryside, and to recruit and train people for the responsibilities of struggle and mobilization. The period was necessary to establish an underground organization within Mozambique using the forces of previous organizations, the NESAM communications network and the cooperatives in the North, and to organize recruits into units. It was also necessary to form and train a core of military forces whose task it would be not only to fight the first engagements of the war but also to socialize and mobilize the people for long revolutionary struggle.

Gabriel Mauricio Nantimbo is one example of how the underground worked.

“Previously I was in a state of servitude, but I didn’t know it. I thought that was just how the world was. I didn’t know that Mozambique was our country. The books said we were Portuguese. Then about 1961 I began to hear other things. The old men in their cooperatives were also beginning to agitate. In 1962 even the children saw the truth. FRELIMO began operating in our zone. Some comrades explained about it and I wanted to join. By the end of 1962 even the government felt that the party was growing, and they started a great campaign of repression . . . The party gained strength. The leaders explained the truth to us, taught us our own strength, and we saw clearly how Mozambique, which belongs to us and not to Portugal, had been dominated.”<sup>18</sup>

It was important also to mobilize the large numbers of people who had fled Mozambique, many of whom had come to Tanzania.

From the very outset, Mondlane, aware of the destructiveness and waste of the Portuguese education system in Mozambique, strongly advocated education as an important part of the preparation for struggle, the struggle itself, and a precondition for social transformation after independence. He and Janet Mondlane had conceived of the formation of an educational center—The Mozambique Institute—during their joint visit to Mozambique in 1961. Many people had sought them out for advice on scholarships or other kinds of educational assistance, and they knew that sooner or later some kind of institution would have to be established. That conception now became part of the organization of the liberation movement. Its form and function grew and changed through the years, even as the movement itself grew in political ideas and the scope of its military action.

As a first step, the Mozambique Institute, established as a separate organization from FRELIMO, but working in complete coordination

with the movement and under the Directorship of Janet Mondlane, founded a secondary school in Dar es Salaam to provide education for Mozambican exiles. At the same time it arranged scholarships to foreign colleges and universities for qualified Mozambicans.

About fifty students entered secondary school in its first year. Gradually, the Institute evolved a network of primary schools as well, both inside and outside Mozambique, a resource center for the creation and publication of new educational texts more appropriate to a free Mozambique, an adult education and literacy network and a complex of health and social welfare units, including hospitals, clinics, paramedic teams, orphanages, etc., and a cultural planning and development center, with interest in the arts and other cultural activities.

Military training began in January 1963 when 50 Mozambicans were sent to Algeria along with recruits from Angola and Guinea-Bissau. These were followed by two more groups of about 70 each. According to Mondlane in his report to the Second Congress of FRELIMO in 1968 about half of the first group returned to East Africa in June and the others at the beginning of 1964. From these men came the unified military force, about 200 strong, which launched the war in Mozambique.

To follow up their Algerian basic training, coordinate the groups, and prepare them to fight inside Mozambique, the Tanzanian Government courageously permitted FRELIMO to establish its first camp inside Tanzania at Bagamoyo, a town on the Indian Ocean about 40 miles north of Dar es Salaam. Eventually this led to the creation of other training camps in the South, closer to the Mozambique border. In time, the secondary school and other Mozambique Institute activities were also moved to Bagamoyo, and the town came to have a special meaning in FRELIMO history.

Bagamoyo! Once it was a major port and capital of this East African area; later it became the first seat of German imperialism here, but for most Africans, it is deeply associated with the memories of slavery. "The town is a place where one feels a sense of history. There is an old Catholic Mission there which has a display of plaques and pictures giving some depth to the feeling. From the early 1800s to about 1873, Bagamoyo was a transfer point for slaves brought from the interior to the coast. There they were loaded into Arab dhows and taken the short distance to Zanzibar where the slave market was located. According to a plaque in the Mission, the Swahili word 'Bagamoyo' has two meanings. In one sense it means 'throw off melancholy'—for reaching the village was the end of a terrible march across Africa for slaves. But it also means 'crush your heart for all is lost now', for from here the slaves were sent to the market where they would be sold. For slaves, Bagamoyo was both a terminus and a starting point. This Catholic

Mission was founded in 1868, and the body of David Livingstone rested here one night as it was being transported from inland to its final resting place in London. The old slave dungeons are still to be seen at the water's edge." <sup>19</sup>

The name and the place have taken on different meanings for FRELIMO. The sad connotations are gone. Mondlane explained, "Notwithstanding these sad influences of its past, for us Bagamoyo has come to imply faith and expectation, because it was in Bagamoyo that the foundations of our revolutionary policy were set up. It was in Bagamoyo that the sieve of time helped us to select among the hundreds of Mozambican recruits those who were truly nationalist and were ready to do everything including the ultimate sacrifice of their lives for the liberation of their country. This selection and the toughening of the Mozambican fighters was realized after many months in which we experienced difficulties of all kinds: the scarcity of food, resulting in fighters spending days having little to eat and at times even eating nothing; shortage of clothes and shoes, causing many comrades to be dressed in rags, to do hard exercises including cross-country runs and crawling through thorny bushes, almost naked and without shoes and with very irregular medical supplies."

On the international diplomatic front, FRELIMO organized a program of information to break the wall of silence that surrounded Mozambique and to destroy the myths of the contented and blissful Lusitanian community spread by the powerful propaganda services of the Portuguese. It was important too to rally support of all kinds for the Mozambican struggle and become actively involved with international organizations, and in representations to the governments of various countries. Offices of FRELIMO were set up in cities such as Algiers, Lusaka and Cairo, and encouragement was given to the formation of support groups in Great Britain, Scandinavia, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Canada and the United States. Contacts were established with the socialist countries of Europe and Asia, and publication began of *Mozambique Revolution* in English from Dar es Salaam and a periodic bulletin in French from Algiers.

The two years of preparation before the outbreak of hostilities was marked by continued internal struggle as well, all of which shaped more clearly and more concretely the principles to which FRELIMO was committed. In the first two years, the potential danger was aggravated by the inexperience of its leaders in working together. *Mozambique Revolution* pointed out "the causes which kept these organizations separate in the past—namely, tribalism, regionalism, lack of a clear and detailed set of goals and of agreed strategies—continued to exist." <sup>20</sup>

Mondlane knew the conditions out of which that first unity had to be forged. "We came from all over Mozambique and from all walks of



Van Lierop

In 1964 the first armed guerrillas began the long hard years of military struggle.

life: different language and ethnic groups were represented, different races, different religions, different social and political backgrounds. The occasions for possible conflict were unlimited, and we found that we had to make a conscious effort to preserve unity. . . ." The defections that took place during these first two years and the formation of splinter groups "seemed mainly due to the conjunction of certain personal ambitions with the manoeuvres of the Portuguese and other interests threatened by the liberation movement. . . . None of these splinter movements was, fortunately, serious enough to interfere with work inside Mozambique. . . ."

By 1964, when its first military units crossed the Rovuma River from Tanzania, FRELIMO was genuinely ready to launch armed struggle.

### *The Armed Struggle Begins*

In February 1964, an advertisement appeared in *The New York Times*.

African Safari  
Mozambique  
42,000 sq. miles  
Peaceful, competent natives  
Experienced white hunters.

In August of the same year, world traveller Volkmar Wentzel wrote in *National Geographic Magazine*, "I found Mozambique, to all outward appearances at least, an island of tranquility."

On September 25, 1964, FRELIMO issued its call to arms:

MOZAMBICAN PEOPLE, workers and peasants, workers in the plantations, in the timber mills and in the concessions, workers in the mines, on the railways, in the harbors and in the factories, intellectuals, civil servants, Mozambican soldiers in the Portuguese army, students, men, women and young people, patriots,

### IN THE NAME OF ALL OF YOU

FRELIMO TODAY SOLEMNLY PROCLAIMS THE GENERAL ARMED INSURRECTION OF THE MOZAMBICAN PEOPLE AGAINST PORTUGUESE COLONIALISM FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF THE COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE OF MOZAMBIQUE.

Our fight must not cease before the total liquidation of Portuguese colonialism.

### MOZAMBICAN PEOPLE,

The Mozambican revolution, the work of the Mozambican people, is an integral part of the struggle of the people of Africa and of the whole world for the victory of the ideals of Liberty and Justice.

The armed struggle which we announce today for the destruction of Portuguese colonialism and of imperialism will allow us to install in our country a new and popular social order. The Mozambican people will thus be making a great historical contribution toward the total liberation of our Continent and the progress of Africa and of the world.

The date had been set some weeks in advance and all units had notice.

On 20 September we received this information—the struggle was to begin on the twenty-fifth. We immediately began to organize ourselves. We alerted the chairman of each zone . . . to organize groups of saboteurs. Their task would be sabotaging bridges, railway lines and roads. . . . My task was to direct the

attack on Chai . . . I left Mueda for my zone, where I arrived on 23 September. I informed my comrades of the day when the struggle was to start. . . . On the morning of the 25th we arrived at the township of Chai. . . . At 19 hours we advanced until we reached the house of the chefe de posto. . . . The attack took place at 21 hours. When he heard the shots, the chefe de posto opened the door and came out—he was shot and killed. Apart from him, six other Portuguese were killed in the first attack. . . . We withdrew. On the following day we were pursued by some troops—but by that time we were far away, and they failed to find us.<sup>21</sup>

This was the beginning, launched by an “army” of only 250 trained FRELIMO men. Although a number of posts in several regions were attacked that day and in the few days following, the brunt of the war’s opening was concentrated in the northern province of Cabo Delgado, separated from Tanzania by the Rovuma River. By the end of 1964, it had extended into Niassa Province, and for the first two years of hostilities, these economically underdeveloped northern territories were the main theatres of war, although there were forays into Tete and even Zambesia.

By 1965 the trained guerilla army had grown almost tenfold to 2000. By 1967, there were 8000 trained and equipped men in the field. There could have been more if arms and equipment had been available. By the time of Mondlane’s death in 1969, there were 10,000, and when the war finally came to an end, there were more than 13,000 and two to three times that number organized in people’s militias. Against them, the Portuguese had sent some 70,000 troops.

The beginning of the war in Mozambique did not catch Portugal totally unprepared. When hostilities broke out in Angola in 1961, they took certain precautions in Mozambique and were confident that they could squelch any attempts at rebellion. As late as September 12, 1964, the Portuguese newspaper *Diario da Manhã* wrote, “It is clear that we Portuguese are forewarned and it will not be possible for agents . . . to repeat in Mozambique the vile exploits of agents in Angola. He who is forewarned doubles his defences.”

People were evacuated *en masse* from the area along the southern bank of the Rovuma. Air strips were built in the extreme north of the country and fortified villages were set up. In the days that followed the first shots of the war, thousands of Mozambicans streamed into southern Tanzania as the Portuguese launched reprisal raids and air attacks, burning and decimating villages in the war zone.

Official Portuguese public policy denied the existence of a war. At most they admitted to a few “terrorist” attacks from across the river

and claimed that they were in complete control of the situation. A mantle of silence was dropped across the Mozambican struggle. They allowed in few “outsiders”—especially journalists—and carefully screened out those who might be too inquisitive about events in the north. The world press and even the African press rarely mentioned Mozambique.

But in 1965 the curtain of silence lifted a little. Lord Kilbracken, journalist with the British *Evening Standard*, a man of conservative political views, with little sympathy for FRELIMO, visited Niassa under Portuguese sponsorship and with their escort and assistance. If confirmation was needed of the seriousness and effectiveness of FRELIMO’s actions, it came from the series of articles that he wrote. He reported what he saw. The result was a description of full-scale guerilla warfare.

“The scale of fighting in this bitter, unsung war has steadily increased since the first minor incidents just a year ago. . . . In 3,000 terrorized square miles the Portuguese, both civil and military, are now confined to five small isolated garrisons.”

Of FRELIMO he wrote:

“(they) are a tough and elusive enemy. They generally operate in small units, often of only half a dozen men. . . . They are at home in the jungle and the bush, where they live off the country, striking silently by night, withdrawing quickly into the dense cover if the Portuguese reply in strength. . . .”

In spite of their much larger and better-equipped military force, it was a difficult and increasingly impossible war for the Portuguese to pursue. Only a fraction of their total army could be used on a fighting front at any one time, and wars of the same kind were being waged in Angola and Guinea-Bissau as well. The cost of the war was staggering. It consumed almost half of the country’s total annual budget, an increasingly difficult fact to explain away to the Portuguese people who were themselves in dire need of economic development.

Casualties too became increasingly difficult to hide. In the first three years of the war, the Portuguese admitted to a total of about 4,000 killed and wounded; FRELIMO sources placed the figure closer to 9,000. And the attempts of the Portuguese to win the Mozambican people to their cause was another historical case of too little, too late, and too false. The psychological advantage was increasingly with FRELIMO in combat terms as well. “The guerilla forces always have the initiative in choosing the time and place to mount an attack.

FRELIMO forces are fighting on their own ground, in a terrain they know, among a people who know and support them. A defeat for the Portuguese means that the struggle is pushed into a new area, and that as a result they have to bring up more combat troops there, weakening still further their overall position. A defeat for FRELIMO is more easily retrievable, as it involves only a temporary reduction of strength in one area.”<sup>22</sup>

By the end of 1965, FRELIMO announced that it controlled large areas of Northern Mozambique. It claimed virtually complete control of Cabo Delgado, and Lord Kilbracken reported that the movement also controlled a significant portion of Niassa stretching inland from Lake Malawi as well.

Today's mission  
comrade

is, dig the basic soil of Revolution  
and make a strong people grow  
with a P.M., a bazooka, a 12.7. . . .

These lines from a poem by Marcelino dos Santos actually summarize the issue around which FRELIMO's next internal conflict took place. What kind of a war was to be fought? Was it a rebellion or a revolution? Would it happen quickly or was it to be a long protracted war? What new responsibilities would such a war demand, especially in the zones of Mozambique that were liberated from Portuguese control?

Some in the leadership wanted the military confrontations extended as rapidly as possible. They pushed for a policy of many actions, all over the country, arguing that the people would rise to join them once the actions took place. Mondlane and his associates argued for building the revolution as the war progressed, for consolidating FRELIMO's position in Niassa and Cabo Delgado, building new structures of society in the liberated areas, intensifying recruitment, strengthening and improving the organization, and extending the activities of political preparation through the other provinces of Mozambique. The struggle was essentially a political one, they argued, in which the military was only one aspect. They prepared for a long protracted war.

Military actions in the two provinces resulted in the withdrawal of Portuguese civil administration and the movement of almost all Portuguese settlers to military posts and the larger towns.

By the end of 1967 FRELIMO control of Niassa and Cabo Delgado was consolidated and conditions were created for the war further south. Political preparation for extending the conflict to the region of Tete had been carried out by militants who had been left behind to work

underground after the opening days of armed struggle in 1964. Most important, Zambia, the only country on the western border of Mozambique that was sympathetic to the liberation movement, now felt it could give increased cooperation to FRELIMO. Moving supplies and heavy equipment from Tanzania down through Cabo Delgado and Niassa was still a formidable task. But in March 1968, military operations began in Tete province.

Tete is one of the richest provinces in Mozambique. Its soil is fertile. Its agriculture is developing and it is abundant in cattle. About half a million people live there. It has recently been the scene of intensive mineral exploration by U.S. and South African Corporations and first surveys indicated that it contains extensive deposits of a wide range of minerals. The main road from Salisbury, Rhodesia to Blantyre, Malawi crosses the province, and the Zambesi River flows through it on the way to the Indian Ocean.

For many reasons, Tete was a key region in the war of liberation and in the Portuguese plans for Mozambique. When FRELIMO began its operations there, it was faced by a heavy concentration of Portuguese troops along the river as well as in the western area bordering on Rhodesia. For the first time, FRELIMO was approaching possible confrontation with Rhodesia's military forces and its South African allies along the border.

Central to the strategic importance of Tete, both to the Portuguese and to FRELIMO at this time, was the projected dam and huge hydro-electric project at Cabora Bassa on the Zambesi River, and the plan to bring one million white settlers into the valley. Cabora Bassa was one of the most important targets in this phase of the war.

### *Cabora Bassa*

Cabora Bassa was intended to strengthen the ties between South Africa and Mozambique. Almost all its power was to be sold to South Africa to provide important cheap extra energy for that expanding economy. Actual work on the dam began in 1969 and its cost was estimated at between \$350 and \$450 million. The site of the dam is approximately 100 miles northwest of the city of Tete itself. Its output was designed to be among the highest in all of Africa, producing 50% more electricity than the Aswan dam. A concrete wall 510 feet high and a thousand feet wide was built across the Zambesi River to form a reservoir 1600 square miles in size, reaching all the way to the Zambian border. The Portuguese estimated that about three million acres of land could be irrigated by the project.

A company called ZAMCO was set up to finance and run the scheme, backed by a consortium, headed by the South African financier and entrepreneur, Harry Oppenheimer. At first there was a

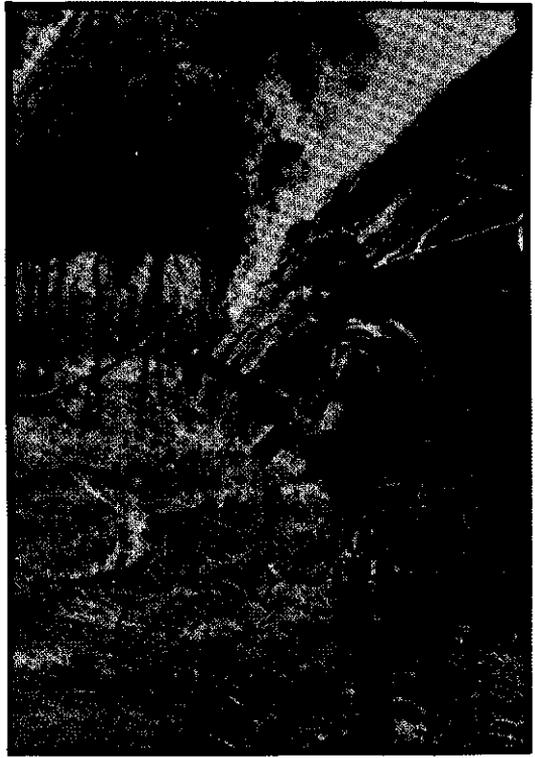
rush of interest from companies in Britain, the United States, Japan, West Germany, France, Italy and Sweden. But FRELIMO protests, taken up by organizations throughout the Western world, forced several companies to withdraw their support. The project was ultimately financed primarily by South African capital, through the Anglo-American Corporation of Johannesburg. South Africa had planned to benefit most from the project as the principal recipient of its electric power. The African people of Mozambique would have benefited the least.

The continued construction of the dam and the hydro-electric project and the redistribution of its benefits will present the government of independent Mozambique with some fundamental and significant decisions.

FRELIMO was strongly opposed to the dam and all it represented, calling it a "crime against humanity" because instead of being a genuine development scheme Cabora Bassa was being built as a way of stopping the liberation struggle, e.g. pitting massive western interests against FRELIMO. Its construction site and supply lines became chief targets in the war. In preparation for the conflict, the Portuguese rounded up almost half a million Africans and resettled them in *aldeamentos* or fortified villages similar to those set up by the United States in Viet Nam. These villages formed an outer ring of defense around the dam site. Beyond these villages the Portuguese saturated the land with defoliants so that guerillas would have little cover in which to hide from aircraft surveillance. A middle ring of defence consisted of carefully laid minefields. Eighty-five thousand mines protected the approaches to the dam. An inner ring was heavy artillery, manned twenty-four hours a day.

FRELIMO never planned a frontal attack upon the dam, nor did they ever assume that they could stop its construction. But as Samora Machel said in June 1970, "We'll eat away at the project making it more expensive and taking longer to construct."<sup>23</sup> The construction became an additional drain on Portugal's resources and man power, another part of a war of attrition.

FRELIMO's principal weapons were ambushes and land mines. All travel in the vicinity of the dam was by military convoy. Bruce Loudon of the London *Daily Telegraph* travelled through the area and described the experience in some detail in an article February 2, 1973. The route was the main and once much-used road from Rhodesia to Malawi, passing through the heart of Tete near the dam site. By now it had earned the name "Hell's Corridor." Loudon said that it took the military convoy five hours to go twenty miles. Portuguese soldiers had to precede the convoy on foot to search for mines. According to Loudon, "just how hard FRELIMO has hit the supply lines to Cabora



**To isolate FRELIMO from the people the Portuguese burned and bombed villages and herded the population into aldeamentos.  
(strategic hamlets.)**

Bassa may be judged from the fact that contingency plans exist to fly all supplies for the dam if the road and rail links are closed." Before the war ended, supplies were being flown in and both South African and Rhodesian forces had become involved in the fighting in Tete to protect the dam.

*Principles Binding FRELIMO, Affirmation and Crisis*

In July 1968 FRELIMO held its Second Congress, significant in that it was held in Niassa, inside liberated Mozambique. It had been announced months in advance for all the world and for Portugal to know that the meeting would take place inside the country. If further evidence were needed that FRELIMO indeed had a firm foothold in the northern provinces, the holding of this Congress supplied it.

In spite of the advance announcement, in spite of the fact that delegates came from all over Mozambique, and observers and journalists from many foreign countries were also present, in spite of the fact that the political and military leadership of FRELIMO were all gathered in one place in Niassa at the same time, the Portuguese were not able to locate the site of the Congress until it was over. In fact, Mondlane was just finishing his closing address when the first spotter plane flew

overhead. The Portuguese dropped their bombs the next day, but the Congress had already adjourned and the area had been evacuated. Mondlane wrote of the event, "Here for the first time in our history Mozambicans from all over the country were gathered, to discuss together problems of the whole nation and take decisions which will affect its future. Delegates were from different tribes and different religious groups, and there were women participating as well as men. This in itself is an indication of the distance we have come in the last four years." <sup>24</sup>

The Congress discussed every aspect of the struggle and of social transformation in the liberated zones. It clarified policy, developed programs and plans of action, and made detailed decisions. Delegates from each region, heads of departments, and representatives from various FRELIMO units presented reports describing work and activities over the years since the First Congress and outlined plans for the future. Full discussions were held on each report and a series of resolutions were adopted which outlined policy and aims for the next four years. They reaffirmed the need for protracted armed struggle and for simultaneously developing new structures and ways of life in those areas which, as a result of the armed struggle, came under FRELIMO's control.

Mondlane was re-elected as President, and Simango as Vice-President and the party structure was reorganized. The Central Committee, previously a body of twenty people combining executive, legislative and judicial functions, was expanded to forty and its role was confined to the legislative one. Most of the Central Committee were and remained inside the country. To facilitate the day-to-day operation of the organization, executive power was placed in the hands of a newly formed Executive Committee, composed of the President, the Vice-President, and the heads of the various departments such as External Affairs, Finance, Commerce, Information, Social Affairs and Education and Culture. A Political and Military Committee was also set up to exercise legislative power between meetings of the Central Committee.

As the war expanded, the organization of the army became more complex. Unity between the political and the military aspects of FRELIMO's work was maintained by having both represented in the higher bodies of the party and all participate equally in decision making.

In addition to the guerilla army, by the time of the Second Congress, FRELIMO had developed a people's militia as well. The militia was composed of villagers who were trained by the military and undertook the defenses of the area in which their village was located, freeing the liberation army to extend the war. They cooperated with the guerilla

army but were not officially incorporated into it.

The principles and program hammered out in the discussions of the Second Congress formed the basis for resolving the next internal crisis to confront FRELIMO.

In the period from 1964 through the Congress of 1968, a renewed wave of tension was building up within the leadership, tensions which would have doomed a movement less firmly established. Marcelino dos Santos describes it in this way.

"... The unfolding of the struggle itself ... revealed a number of contradictions which became particularly evident from the moment our guerrillas ... established liberation zones, free territories. From that point on we had to solve the problem of building a new life. That is to say, not only did we have to continue the fight against Portuguese colonialism, to destroy the repressive forces, but we also had to start building and producing and creating wealth. It is precisely from that moment that there appeared the fundamental contradiction which existed—not in the Mozambican population, but within the governing leadership of FRELIMO and between a faction of that leadership and the people as a whole."<sup>25</sup>

One aspect of this contradiction centered on the question of education and the role of the educated within the institutions of a free Mozambique. Conflict with overseas students and graduates had occurred earlier. Many elitist Mozambicans, at universities abroad, wanting to go on for second and third degrees, were hostile to FRELIMO's policy of having skilled nationals return to the struggle and to the interior of Mozambique as rapidly as possible. Eduardo Mondlane explained the policy in this way:

All students must regard their training as a means of fitting them to work in Mozambique, and they must be ready to return at any time that they should be called upon to do so. There have been considerable problems with students who pretend not to understand, or who refuse to accept this policy. This is partly due to the fact that the educational program began before the armed struggle. . . . Several students sent abroad in 1963 have refused to return at the end of their courses, and a number of students from the secondary school objected violently against going back to work in Mozambique, demanding that they should be sent to continue higher studies immediately. . . . As far as possible, young people will be selected for further studies outside Mozambique only after they have spent some time working either in the army or in the civilian services.<sup>26</sup>

The most critical conflict on this issue took place at the Mozambique Institute's secondary school in Dar es Salaam.

Father Mateus Gwenjere, a priest who claimed to have escaped from Cabo Delgado to join FRELIMO, added fuel to the fire of potential rebellion among the students by convincing some to resist the Central Committee's decision that all students spend at least a year inside Mozambique actively participating in the struggle after completing secondary school. He encouraged them to view themselves as different and more valuable than those Mozambicans without a secondary education. Furthermore, he demanded that the medium of instruction be English rather than Portuguese, since most scholarships for higher education were available in that language, and that certain progressive white teachers and Portuguese Mozambicans be fired from the staff of the Institute.

When Gwenjere first joined FRELIMO, Mondlane had welcomed him warmly and enthusiastically. Gwenjere was even sent to New York with a FRELIMO delegation to testify at the U.N. and Mondlane sent a message to the American Committee on Africa asking it to give him as much assistance as possible. Shortly before his death, Mondlane came to believe that Gwenjere was an agent acting on behalf of the Portuguese.

The conflict at the school escalated to the point of violence and the school was closed by FRELIMO and the Tanzanian authorities for approximately two and a half years before it reopened again at Bagamoyo. When it reopened, the school was stronger than ever. FRELIMO had learned from the situation. It was not some form of external discipline and control that made the school at Bagamoyo united and strong, but rather a full internal understanding of the purpose of the educational program and a commitment to that purpose.

Gwenjere was ejected from the party for his part in the student rebellion, but not before he was involved in another incident of violence, an attack on the FRELIMO office by a group of non-FRELIMO Mozambicans resident in Dar es Salaam, in which a devoted member of the Central Committee, Matheus Muthemba, was killed.

A second area of tension with broad implications for the liberation policies of FRELIMO centered around Lazaro Kavandame, a former member of MANU and leader of the cooperative movement among the Makonde of Cabo Delgado for many years. He became a prominent FRELIMO political leader with a base in the area. But as the struggle developed the nature of his kind of leadership became clear. It was economically self-serving, and politically divisive, the very type of leadership that FRELIMO had seen cripple liberation in other areas of Africa. It was a leadership that would simply replace colonial power

with African power, retaining the patterns of exploitation. He tried to turn the new commercial structures to his own use, skimming off large surpluses for himself and his supporters. He secretly sold goods from FRELIMO stores and kept the profits. As he came under pressure from committed militants in his own area and from other members of the Central Committee, he began to play the tribal game of "Makonde consciousness" and Makonde separatism.

Afraid that he might have to answer to these and other charges, he refused to attend the Second Congress in Niassa, claiming that he would be killed if he went. In a letter that sounded a note of sadness as well as anger, Mondlane in January 1969, informed him of the decision of the Executive Committee to expel him from FRELIMO. In April of that year, suspected of having been involved in the assassinations of both the military commander, Kankhombe and of Mondlane, himself, Kavandame defected to the Portuguese and called on all the Makonde to lay down their arms. Newspaper publicity from Lourenco Marques played up this defection as a major split in FRELIMO's ranks and referred to Kavandame as a "Makonde chief". In fact he had long lost any position of importance and any popular support.

But the major crisis of this period was the murder of Eduardo Mondlane. February 3, 1969, began as a bright, sun-filled Monday morning in Dar es Salaam. Mondlane, only recently returned from international conferences in Cairo and Khartoum, picked up his mail at the FRELIMO office and then went to the home of a friend to work undisturbed on reports for the Executive Committee. In the mail was a small parcel containing a volume in French of the Philosophic Writings of George Plekhanov, a Russian Marxist of the late 19th century. The book apparently had been delivered on Friday and had waited for him in the office through the weekend. At 11:20, as the police later estimated the time, Mondlane unwrapped the parcel and opened the book. The shattering explosion of a plastic bomb shook the room, blew bits and fragments around the house, down a corridor into adjacent rooms, and left the lifeless body of Eduardo Mondlane in the chair.

The killing of Mondlane was a desperate attempt to break the liberation movement. His was a dynamic leadership which had held together the diverse forces within the movement. To know Mondlane or to hear him speak over the years was to become acutely aware of the constant growth of his own understanding and practice.

The rumors flew, but careful and extended investigation ultimately revealed that the bomb had been made in Mozambique, carried into Dar es Salaam by infiltrating agents of the Portuguese secret police, delivered by hand to the Post Office and placed in the FRELIMO private bag without ever having been sent through the mail.

Mondlane was buried with the full military honors due a head of

state. President Nyerere and both vice-presidents of Tanzania were there, as were foreign ministers of many of the African countries, representatives of the OAU, and ambassadors of nations throughout the world. Representatives of the other liberation movements were there too, especially those of Angola, Guinea-Bissau, South Africa and Zimbabwe. And people in their thousands—Mozambicans, Tanzanians, South Africans—lined the roads and packed the cemetery to pay tribute.

“A great sadness enveloped our people,” Jorge Rebelo wrote in *Mozambique Revolution* (1970) “Confused, they wondered how it could have happened. . . . For a few weeks the military offensive slowed down, the militia stopped cultivating and the people stopped transporting material. Each of us asked ourselves about the future of our struggle. And there were many who thought that with Mondlane a whole heritage of possibilities had been lost.”

But if the assassination was meant to destroy FRELIMO, it failed. The war of liberation was intensified in his name. Mondlane himself had once said, “We all have to die sooner or later. . . . The question that arises is whether we are going to live in freedom or slavery.”<sup>27</sup>

Each year on the anniversary of his death, FRELIMO has held a ceremony at Mondlane’s grave. A brief speech and tribute to him have been made. In 1973, the simple statement, addressed to the departed leader, reported that the movement “is constantly growing and becoming stronger . . . the Mozambican nation already exists. The enemy hoped they could disorganize the liberation movement and halt the struggle. . . . But they failed.”

“Still it was Mondlane leading us,” Samora Machel often said. “It was his faith and belief in the people, his vision of free Mozambique, his ideas of revolution.”<sup>28</sup>

### *FRELIMO Principles*

It was by no means easy for FRELIMO to develop a commitment to a common goal among its adherents. Two societies existed side by side in Mozambique. One was the Portuguese structured society, generally within the capitalist framework—of plantations run for the profit of the owner with the exploitation of the cheap labor, small business enterprises, trade and commerce based in urban centers. The other society was traditional to Africa. Forty-two tribal groups live in Mozambique. The great mass of people, although affected by Portuguese society and economy, were of and from the traditional society. Only about 5% of the people were permanently urbanized. Within a fractured environment, as dos Santos pointed out, “you can imagine how easy it is for opportunistic elements to prey on sectional fears.” The danger comes from some who want to occupy the privileged positions that the oppressors previously held once independence is

achieved. Furthermore there is the tendency for African nationalism to degenerate into racialism. FRELIMO makes a distinction between "flag independence," a kind of bourgeois nationalism, and their own aim to build a new society which they call revolutionary nationalism. The purpose of FRELIMO is to have all its people committed to building a new life.

In May 1971, Ferdinand Ruhinda, news editor of the Tanzanian newspaper, *The Nationalist*, spent several weeks with the FRELIMO forces in Niassa province. He described a meeting held at a regional base about 130 miles south of the Rovuma River when Samora Machel spoke to several hundred people who had gathered under a canopy of trees. Machel said, "Our war of liberation must be accompanied by the radical transformation of the socio-economic structure of the country. We are thus engaged in a revolution."

The relation of the army to the rest of the people who make up FRELIMO illustrates the principles which guide the organization. Marcelino dos Santos said, "We approach the problem of the relationship between the army and the party in a way which should apply not only at this stage of the guerilla war but even after independence . . . we must aim to achieve a situation in which armed activities are essentially no different from other activities, from people who are nurses, teachers, workers, peasants, people who are all carrying out tasks which are linked to the one aim based on a political line."

The distinction between the military and the civilian is simply a difference in function. Although the army had to live off the land and therefore had to receive whatever assistance it possibly could from the non-military elements in the population, the FRELIMO forces, most of whom were peasants themselves, were able to grow a considerable amount of their own food. In fact, when guerillas went into Mozambique from Tanzania, they frequently carried seeds with them for planting crops.

Every effort was made to see that there was no distinction between the military and the political function within FRELIMO itself. The army was never a law unto itself. Both the political and the military leadership were finally responsible to the total organization of FRELIMO, and both military and political were represented at every level in the organization. Ruhinda reported that FRELIMO's Peoples Liberation Army was "an army with a difference." Titles of rank such as major, captain, sergeant, were scorned. Everyone referred to everyone else as "comrade", and people in positions of leadership were referred to as "responsables" rather than as "leaders."

FRELIMO did not attempt to idealize the war or to universalize its methods. They made no assumption that their path to liberation would be applicable everywhere. Methods used in the struggle always had to

be adapted to concrete situations. Marcelino dos Santos pointed out emphatically, "It is not because you give a Mozambican a rifle that he becomes a revolutionary—the basic problem is a political one. Political consciousness is the base. So just to start an armed struggle does not mean you will obtain independence.

The change in the role of women in the order of things further illustrates the principles which guide FRELIMO. Mondlane said, "By accepting women in its ranks, it has revolutionized their social position." Women are in the armed forces. Women played an important role in the transportation of goods, supplies and equipment. They were responsible for much of the movement of vital supplies to the fighting fronts. Women also did and continue to do extensive duty in the fields of social welfare. Some serve as medical assistants in the health centers, and many are active in the literacy campaigns and in the primary schools. And women have served and continue to serve as active organizers and mobilizers of the people.

The Women's Detachment of FRELIMO was first organized in 1967. As an experiment, women were given both political and military training. The experiment was a great success. A League of Mozambican Women was organized to care for orphans or children who were temporarily separated from their parents. They formed the basic organization of units that may well become the future child care centers of free Mozambique.

In 1972, all the women of FRELIMO, in special units or not, were united in the Organization of Mozambican Women, and in 1973, the first Conference of Women was held to analyze the social and psychological factors that made it difficult for women to function fully in the struggle and in the new society that was being built. Origins of these difficulties were found both in colonial and in traditional structures and practices. It was agreed that "the only road for women to take was to engage in the tasks of struggle, in the revolutionary process . . . (They must create) the conditions for participating in the exercise of power, taking destiny into their hands."<sup>29</sup> A leading figure in the mobilization of women and in the struggle for the transformation of their status in society was Josina Machel, wife of Samora Machel. She became head of Social Affairs and of the Women's Section of the Department of External Affairs. She died tragically, still in her twenties, in 1971, and in tribute to all she represented, FRELIMO has set aside April 7th, the day of her death, as Mozambican Women's Day.

FRELIMO has continually been committed to building a new life for all the people. Elitism in any form is shunned. The movement strives to realize a society in which all will have an equal chance to grow. Tribalism and regionalism are vigorously opposed. Racism is rejected. It was colonialism, not the Portuguese people, that was seen as the enemy

during the years of struggle. And FRELIMO attempted to avoid tactics the purpose of which would have been simply to terrorize the Portuguese civilian population. Mondlane stated the reason for this policy quite explicitly. It had importance "for the future, when we shall be trying to establish a society that can absorb the different people living in Mozambique without racial bitterness. . ." <sup>30</sup>

Even as the war progressed, the seeds of the new society were being planted, and in the areas that were liberated the shape of things to come appeared. In his message of September 25, 1970, the Sixth anniversary of the armed struggle, Samora Machel was able to say, "A mango does not become a great tree in its first day, but like a growing mango tree, we are deeply rooted in the soil that is our people, and the masses are now tasting the first fruits."

### *FRELIMO Liberated Areas*

To the day of the overthrow of the Caetano government itself, the Portuguese steadfastly denied the existence of any such thing as "liberated areas", despite the increasing flood of evidence to the contrary. An OAU delegation had visited Niassa, many foreign journalists and observers had spent weeks with FRELIMO inside Mozambique and had written about it. Films were made by crews from England, Holland, Yugoslavia, the United States and elsewhere. In August 1972, for example, Lord Anthony Gifford and three others from the British Committee for Freedom in Mozambique, Angola and Guiné spent 16 days in Tete province. His party travelled some 160 miles into a district of Tete where about 7,000 people lived under FRELIMO administration. Lord Gifford described the journey to the United Nations Committee on Decolonization. "FRELIMO's control over the area which we covered is complete," he said. "The Portuguese say there are no liberated areas. I have been to a fully liberated area. . . . In a region where four years before the people were crushed beneath a brutally exploitative colonial yoke, they now have the opportunity to live in freedom, to rebuild a new society."

In increasingly larger areas of the country as the armed struggle progressed and at an increasingly rapid rate, FRELIMO had to fill the vacuum left by the departure of Portuguese civilian administrators. Even more, they were laying the foundations for independent Mozambique. Village structures, including chiefs and traditional councils, were permitted to function at first, but gradually they were integrated into the FRELIMO structure of popularly elected committees. And FRELIMO had to develop economic, health and social service, educational and cultural programs, applicable to each liberated area as rapidly as that liberation took place. The national war for independence became a revolution, a process of social



FRELIMO

**In the liberated areas armed militants and population worked side by side growing food for all.**

transformation.

*The Economic Program:* Agriculture was completely reorganized and shifted from the colonial structure of cash crops produced on plantations. Food production was the first priority; even FRELIMO military units became responsible for raising the bulk of their own food. To food were added cash crops that could be used for limited export. Principal among these were cashew nuts, sesame seeds, peanuts, and castor oil seeds.

Agricultural production units were organized in three ways: *Cooperative fields*, organized on a mutual aid basis under the general supervision of the Political Commission of FRELIMO; *National or FRELIMO farms*, where army units worked along with village communities and the Women's Detachment—the produce was primarily to feed the militants; *individual plots*, farmed by an individual family for personal use.

FRELIMO also established a system of stores deep inside Mozambique and along the Tanzanian border where barter commerce was encouraged. Sometimes walking for several weeks and covering hundreds of miles, people carried the products they raised to these centers and exchanged them for hoes, hatchets, salt, matches, clothes, blankets, etc. FRELIMO then sold the agricultural produce which it collected this way in Tanzania and was able to purchase more goods for the peasants of Mozambique.

Traditional crafts and cottage industry were also encouraged by

FRELIMO, and organized into cooperatives both for local use and for export. The carvings of the Makonde people have achieved international recognition for their quality and there was a regular and growing flow of these to the retail markets in Dar es Salaam. The production of soap and candles was also developed.

*The Education Program:* Under the Portuguese virtually all education was done through mission schools, primarily Catholic. And only about 4% of the budget was spent for education. Little or none was available for the African child. At the outbreak of the armed struggle, it was estimated that 95% to 98% of the African population of Mozambique was illiterate.

When FRELIMO was still in its first year a group of old men came to President Mondlane and said: "We know that the war will be a long war and we are already old. We don't ask anything for ourselves, but it is necessary that our children go to school . . . this is the only thing we ask of FRELIMO." The Department of Education and Culture and the Mozambique Institute set out to tackle the task vigorously. Primary schools were set up in Tanzania and in the liberated areas of Mozambique. A secondary school and teacher's training program were established. By 1971 there were some 20,000 children in the schools inside Mozambique. By 1973, 40 new primary schools had been established in Tete alone and by the end of the war, about 30,000 children between 9 and 15 years of age were getting an education.

The school center in Tunduru, Tanzania began in 1966 with 25

**FRELIMO saw education as a part of the war—"a front in our battle against illiteracy, ignorance . . . the colonial-capitalist mentality."**



FRELIMO

children. By 1973 there were about 1200 children and 800 adults enrolled. An important part of the education program was to teach women to read and write.

Actually Tunduru began with a group of children who were either orphans or who had been separated from their parents by the war. In a Mozambique Institute brochure, Janet Mondlane wrote, "One of the liberation front fighters, disturbed by the plight of these children began 'collecting them'. In 1966 he and others walked out of Niassa with children in their arms and children following behind—about 25 of them—and deposited them at the camp site in Tunduru." "Villages for children" were also developed throughout Mozambique. Ferdinand Ruhinda visited one in Niassa in 1971. The FRELIMO leader who accompanied him spoke to the adults who gathered and told them: "the children should never be referred to as orphans. You are the mothers and we are the fathers of these children. Their parents should not have died in vain."

The primary school program faced constant shortage of supplies, of teachers, and of textbooks. Students often wrote with sticks of burnt cassava on sheets made of wood. Most of the first and second grade teachers had themselves only completed part of the primary school course. FRELIMO's teachers' training program began to turn out teachers for Mozambique in 1968, but the demand continually grew at a rapid rate. With the assistance of the German Democratic Republic and non-governmental groups a program was developed that began to create and publish textbooks prepared especially for the FRELIMO schools.

Until independence, the pilot secondary school was located in Bagamoyo. The school grew steadily but throughout that growth, conditions remained simple and tough.

They want to approximate conditions inside Mozambique. No running water, a well by the sea with an engine pump, no electricity, petrol lamps. Water must be carried up the hill from the well for baths to three stalls in rather crude enclosures—three each for men and women. There are outside privies. The dormitories are pre-fabricated materials as is the dining hall . . . The students raise some of their own food. The kitchen is a somewhat open enclosure and cooking is done over an open fire. There is a small dispensary and a medical aid. There are three classrooms. In addition there is a laboratory and attached storage. It is a beautiful setting looking over the Indian Ocean. On a clear day one can see Zanzibar. <sup>31</sup>

The students followed a rigorous schedule, beginning at dawn and

lasting until 9 or 10 P.M. The program included not only intensive study, but work in the fields. During the long vacation period between terms, the students went into Mozambique where they helped in any way that was assigned to them, teaching and raising crops.

In 1974, the school had 269 students, with a hundred more waiting to come.

At the Second Conference of FRELIMO's Department of Education and Culture, Samora Machel spoke of Culture and Education as "fundamental problems of our people on which the creation of a new mentality ultimately depends." He paid tribute to Eduardo and Janet Mondlane as two comrades who "were among the first to understand that the destruction of obscurantism, of ignorance, was a fundamental task in our struggle." He criticized the harmful elements of both colonial and traditional education, and then outlined the aims of education for the new Mozambique.

“. . . education does not mean teaching how to read and write, creating an elite group of graduates, with no direct relationship to our objectives. . . . We do not want to form an educated elite at the service of an exploitative group. We do not want science to be used to enrich a minority, oppress man and stifle the creative initiative of the masses. . . . He who studies should be like a spark lighting the flame which is the people. . . .

Education must prepare us to internalize the new society and its requirements. Education must give us a Mozambican personality which, without subservience of any kind and steeped in our own realities, will be able, in contact with the outside world, to assimilate critically the ideas and experiences of other peoples, also passing on to them the fruits of our thought and practice. We need a consciousness of responsibility and collective solidarity . . . open and free from the dead weight of superstition and dogmatic traditions.

We need to create a new attitude in women, emancipating their consciousness and behavior, and at the same time instill in men new behavior and attitudes toward women.

We must make everyone aware of the need to serve the people, to participate in production, to respect manual labor, to release creative initiative and to develop a sense of responsibility . . . what we want is a revolutionary mentality. . . . Today there are young people growing up away from colonialism, away from dogmatic traditions. There is a generation, the first, which is being formed in the heat of revolution.

*The Health Program:* The Portuguese did not produce a single

African doctor in Mozambique. Mozambicans are plagued with the diseases endemic to tropical Africa—yaws, malaria, bilharzia, hookworm, leprosy, sleeping sickness, trachoma. FRELIMO and the Mozambique Institute developed a health service program both in Tanzania and throughout liberated Mozambique. Its center was the Americo Boavida Hospital in Mtwara, Tanzania. The hospital, named for the Head of the MPLA Health Services in Angola, who was killed by a bomb in the eastern part of that country in 1968, was officially opened on June 16, 1970, the tenth anniversary of the Mueda massacre, with a staff of 37. Although funds for its construction came mainly from overseas, the hospital itself was built by the physical labor of many Mozambicans who volunteered their services. The hospital served three important functions. It was responsible for taking care of the seriously sick and wounded Mozambicans who could not be properly cared for in the war torn interior. It was the organisational center for medical services which FRELIMO began to develop inside the growing area of liberated Mozambique, and it was responsible for training the young men and women who could carry such health care to the people.

The training program at the hospital reflects the FRELIMO philosophy, linking health care and medical services in a very direct way to the general economic and social conditions of the people. By 1974 there were 45 students involved in an intensive one year course. Trainees had to learn to recognise and treat the most basic and common diseases that beset the population—malaria, parasites, bilharzia; they had to know how to treat the shock and trauma associated with war wounds, how to set bones and prevent infection; they had to be able to provide preventative medical care, carry out vaccination campaigns, encourage better sanitation; they had to be able to explain to the people the links between nutrition and health, and be able to show the people, very practically, how to grow the crops that could help build better health.

A central feature of the work at the hospital was the deliberate involvement of everyone who came there, patients, students, staff in learning new techniques and skills that could help in creating a better life when inside Mozambique. Convalescents were encouraged to work for a short time every day on the hospital shamba (vegetable garden), and were shown new crops and new methods of farming; literacy classes were established, in which both patients and staff could participate.

FRELIMO also established a system of health care in the liberated areas which started at the level of single health assistants at local dispensaries or clinics, then small regional and larger provincial hospitals. A campaign of smallpox vaccination was undertaken, and more than 150,000 people were vaccinated in the first three years.

As an example of the type of health services that were developed, by

1971, Niassa province had two regional hospitals, 14 district medical posts, 18 first aid posts and two quarantine stations for lepers. Cabo Delgado had one provincial hospital, 17 district medical posts, and 60 first aid posts. Programs for the training of para-medical teams were undertaken, and preventive medicine and public health became part of the village adult education and literacy programs.

Through economic development programs, education, and medical work, a nation was being built by FRELIMO. The forms of activity were all developed to bring people together, to develop the sense of collective effort and nationhood. A FRELIMO statement at the time of their tenth anniversary said,

At the beginning of the struggle, when elements from other regions came to participate in the struggle, they were considered as strangers. . . . Yet in the process of struggle and in the contact among people which it demanded, the population started to feel that there were no foreigners, but that we were united in a common struggle.

*The Cultural Program:* An impressive aspect of nation building has been the effort to develop and recreate the cultural heritage of Mozambique. Dance troupes, singing groups, and artistic activity of various kinds have been encouraged and developed in the villages, in units of the army, in training camps, hospitals and rehabilitation centers and in the schools. Makonde sculpture has been guided toward the revolution and the building of a new Mozambique. And poetry is a popular form of expression in the struggle. The English language *Mozambique Revolution* and *25 de Setembro* in Portuguese devote many of their pages to poetry written by guerilla fighters, peasants and workers.

In late 1971 and early 72, FRELIMO held an important cultural seminar in Mozambique. Delegates came from educational centers in Cabo Delgado, Niassa and Tete, to speak of their own culture, traditional and revolutionary, and to formulate ideas for its development. Commissions on dance and song, drama and poetry and other cultural subjects were created. Several dramas written by FRELIMO militants were discussed: Among these were *Monomotapa*, which told the story of that great empire in Mozambique's past, *The Witchdoctor*, a play about superstition and the real motives of the witch doctor, and *3rd of February*, which presented moments in the life of Eduardo Mondlane.

Other fields were also studied and discussed—sculpture, the plastic arts, painting, drawing, journalism, legends and tales, rites, rituals, forms of dress, the role of women in cultural activities and how old

people can contribute to preserving the positive aspects of traditional culture.

There was also an exhibition of toys made by children.

Samora Machel spoke of culture and the arts in his address to the Conference of the Department of Education and Culture:

Mozambique's cultural wealth does not belong to any one region. The contribution of the Zavala marimba players is as much a source of pride to us as Makonde sculpture and the gold filigree work of the Tete goldsmiths. . . . we should like to hail the decision to invite Mozambican sculptors to teach the boys and girls at the Tunduru Pilot School the wonders of their art. We hope that there will be more and similar initiatives in the fields of painting, goldsmithing, iron and copper working, artistic handicrafts, mat-making, basketry, etc.

Let art seek to combine old form with new content, then giving rise to new form. Let painting, written literature, theatre and artistic handicrafts be added to the traditionally cultivated dance, sculpture and singing. Let the creativity of some become that of all, men and women, young and old, from the North to the South, so that the new revolutionary and Mozambican culture may be born of all.

### *The Crisis in Leadership*

Following the death of Eduardo Mondlane, FRELIMO was threatened both by internal crises once more and by intensified Portuguese offensives on the field of battle.

This time the internal conflict centered around Uria Simango, Vice-President of FRELIMO, who had expected to succeed to the presidency automatically. Even before Mondlane's assassination, it began to be apparent that Simango had given his support to Kavandame and to Gwenjere, in spite of the fact that he voted to expel them both when their cases were presented to the Central Committee. This, his position against the FRELIMO strategy of protracted war and his espousal of a racial type of nationalism, led to his being blocked from assuming the Presidency. Instead, the Central Committee voted to set up a Council of the Presidency, consisting of Simango, dos Santos, and Samora Machel. By November 1969, this attempt at collective leadership had disintegrated and Simango issued a public thirteen-page document called "Gloomy Situation in FRELIMO," in which he accused what he called the "Samora Group" of murder and assassination, expressed his sympathy and support for the positions of Father Gwenjere and Lazaro Kavandame, attacked Janet Mondlane, and

called for a non-ideological nationalism for FRELIMO. A second document presented by Simango at a meeting of the OAU Liberation Committee a few months later contradicted many of the positions taken in his first statement and made his shifts of position seem essentially opportunistic. Simango was expelled from FRELIMO and in February 1970, he was ordered to leave Tanzania. He drifted to Cairo, visited Zambia and the United States, and then entered COREMO.

On May 22nd 1970, the Central Committee met again and elected Samora Machel, President and Marcelino dos Santos, Vice-President of FRELIMO.

### *Samora Machel*

A short, dynamic, bearded man, who once was called the "Giap of Africa", Samora Moises Machel, like most FRELIMO leaders is loathe to talk about himself. His usual response to questions about his personal background is "That is not important. What is important is the movement." He will discuss FRELIMO and Mozambique in depth but will go out of his way to avoid personal stories about himself. In fact, at the time he was elected, he was little known outside FRELIMO and Mozambique. To all who work with him in FRELIMO, he is "Samora".

Machel was born in the Gaza district of southern Mozambique in 1933. He came from a peasant family, and says that his first political education came from seeing his father forced to grow cotton for the Portuguese. "I learned from the way he was cheated when he brought his crop to sell. From my own life I was led to FRELIMO. . ." <sup>32</sup> His primary education was in a Catholic mission near Lourenco Marques, and following this he went on for training as a medical assistant. He never completed that training because his family had no money for fees and needed whatever income he could bring in by working. He began to work at a Portuguese hospital. He met Eduardo Mondlane in 1962, during Mondlane's trip through Mozambique, and not very long afterward made his way north to join FRELIMO. He was a member of one of the first contingents that went to Algeria for military training.

Samora Machel was a commander in the field when he was elected to the presidency of FRELIMO and he continued to spend most of his time inside Mozambique. He says that he travels with the headquarters in his pocket.

### *The Struggle Continues—to victory*

The turning point in the test of the military and political staying power of FRELIMO came between May and September 1970. A new commander of the Portuguese forces arrived in Mozambique in March. His name—General Kaulza Oliveira de Arriaga. His objective was to launch a massive offensive against FRELIMO in Tete and in the north. Called "Operation Gordian Knot", it was planned to wipe out the



Van Lierop/UN

**Ending narrow sex roles was a vital part of the process of liberation—in FRELIMO women were fighters too.**

liberation movement—or as he called it, “the terrorist gangs”—once and for all. According to *Newsweek*, 50,000 Portuguese troops were involved in the offensive. The attack was launched May 17th in Tete. It was aimed at proving that the Portuguese were capable of counteracting the “terrorists” whenever they wanted to, and at undermining international support for the liberation movement and its programs in the liberated areas. The Portuguese tactics were to mount large-scale aerial bombardments followed by the use of artillery, helicopters, and then infantry. The objective of the campaign was not merely to bomb and harass the people in the FRELIMO-governed areas, but to reoccupy the territory and destroy FRELIMO as a force. The campaign was carried out in Tete, Niassa and Cabo Delgado provinces.

On March 15, 1971, an article by Marvin Howe in *The New York Times* reported that General Arriaga claimed that the Portuguese troops had taken all the main FRELIMO bases in northern Mozambique and sealed off the northern border from Tanzania so that further infiltration of forces was impossible. Thus Arriaga was announcing the successful conclusion of the “Gordian Knot” campaign to wipe out FRELIMO. According to the Portuguese, they had deployed 35,000 troops with 15,000 tons of military equipment in this campaign. They had used specially trained units (*cacadores especiais*), the “special hunters”, in the field and had thrown jet fighters, bombers, helicopters, anti-mine cars and armored cars into the battles. Crops were destroyed in the bombings and there was a food shortage in the area until the next harvest. But the offensive was a failure in terms of its own objectives.

Symbolic of its failure on the front of international public opinion was the fact that in early July of this same period, Pope Paul VI accorded an audience in Rome to leaders of the liberation movements in the Portuguese African colonies—to Marcelino dos Santos, Amílcar Cabral, and Agostinho Neto. It was a failure too on the military front. FRELIMO had learned about the offensive in advance from its own intelligence sources and from deserters from the Portuguese army. It shifted bases, relocated supplies, and moved far to the south with renewed strength. It was so active in Tete in 1971 that by the end of that year the Portuguese army had 20,000 men engaged in that region alone. Samora Machel reported at the end of that year that FRELIMO now governed more than one-fourth of Mozambique, had more than one million people living in liberated areas, and had increased the size of its military force to 20,000.

In July, 1972, FRELIMO crossed the Zambezi River and carried the struggle into the province that was then called Manica y Sofala. Later this was divided in two by the Portuguese, into the Beira district to the east and the Vila Pery district to the west. In less than two years Portuguese control was being challenged throughout the entire province. Manica y Sofala, at the very center of the elongated country, was of critical importance. It has Beira, the second largest city in Mozambique and a major seaport. It is critical for its roads and rail links. The principal rail outlet for Rhodesia to the port of Beira goes through this province, as do the rail links to Cabora Bassa and to Malawi. Gorongosa National Park, the largest game park in Mozambique and a major tourist attraction, is sited there as well.

The military attacks on this new front were preceded by nearly a year of intensive political work. FRELIMO organizers slipped across the Zambezi from Tete and made contact with the villagers to prepare them for the struggle to come. By the time the first shot was fired, the local people were FRELIMO supporters, and the FRELIMO militants had become part of the general population. FRELIMO established itself firmly on both sides of the important railway and road linking Beira with Umtali (in Rhodesia). By the middle of February 1974, the Beira-Malawi line had been the scene of 19 separate incidents, causing the railway workers to strike in protest against the army's inability to protect them. Inhaminga, a railway town in the north of the province became the center for some of the fiercest fighting of the war. By the end of April, ambushes were being laid on the Beira-Lourenco Marques road, leaving Mozambique's second largest city increasingly isolated in a sea of FRELIMO territory and threatening the capital itself.

The British *Guardian* in January, 1974, reported that "Guerillas are now directly threatening one of Rhodesia's major import and export lifelines through the Mozambique port of Beira, and if the Portuguese

armed forces are unable to contain the situation, Rhodesia may have to extend her already strained military force deep into the Portuguese territory to protect the road and the railway."

New SAM VII missiles, which can be launched by a single guerilla soldier, were made available to FRELIMO and increased immeasurably their effective anti-aircraft action. The other more northern provinces were also scenes of FRELIMO offensives, as they consolidated their control and reduced the presence and maneuverability of the enemy. In Cabo Delgado, the district capital of Mueda was attacked by large scale units, 21 aircraft were destroyed, and on a later occasion Portugal's top combat pilot, Lt. Col. Alvares Pereira, was shot down in a Dakota reconnaissance aircraft as he took off from the airport.

In February 1974, a correspondent from South Africa's Johannesburg *Star* wrote, "Even their most ardent detractors now grudgingly admit that the FRELIMO guerilla attack on Mozambique is making formidable strides."

Surprised by FRELIMO's strength, their presence throughout Mozambique, and the support the people were giving them, the Portuguese speeded up their *aldeamentos* program of herding villagers into strategic hamlets, thus allowing the countryside to become a "free fire zone." In a six month period, 146,000 villagers had been moved to these armed concentration camps in the Beira district alone. But according to the district governor of the region himself, this did not stop FRELIMO's progress. The *Daily Telegraph* reported militants attacking six or seven *aldeamentos* a night to free the people.

In a two year period, the liberation struggle had progressed into the heartland of the country. South Africa became increasingly concerned about the advance southward. An editor of the *Star* Africa service, Wilf Nussey, wrote . . ."suddenly South Africa is taking worried notice because the Transvaal is not much further south and the African National Congress guerillas could also travel with FRELIMO."<sup>33</sup> And the Rhodesian government was faced with the important development of cooperation between FRELIMO and ZANU as the border between Mozambique and Zimbabwe was infiltrated by guerillas on both sides.

The Portuguese found themselves more and more trapped by their own policies and faced with dissension and discontent in their own ranks. They had been forced by the war and the need for greater economic exploitation of Mozambique to build roads, railways, etc. These now had to be defended. This in turn meant more soldiers and a larger defence budget. There was an increasing manpower shortage for the army because there were three colonial wars going on simultaneously, and in Portugal itself, manpower was being siphoned off by emigration of young men to jobs in other European countries. Africanization of the army, seen as a solution, was a failure, for African

troops were unreliable defenders of Portugal's "civilizing mission." Desertions became frequent. In October, 1973, for example, in the region of Douga, Manica y Sofala, an entire unit of African soldiers deserted to FRELIMO because they refused to fight against their own people.

There was dissension among whites as well and increasing desertion of white troops from the army. In early 1974, because of successful FRELIMO attacks on the Beira railroad and on farms in the area around that city, there were three days of protest demonstrations against the Portuguese armed forces which culminated in marches on the homes of white officers who were accused of failing to fight properly. *New York Times* correspondent Henry Kamm visited Inhaminga, in May 1974. He reported that, "whites once looked upon blacks as primitives, but now they regard them as enemies." The only safe way to get to Inhaminga was by chartered plane and "security forces rush to the airport every time a plane is landing. . . . Blacks and whites fear and avoid each other."

The Portuguese response was more intensive reprisals. In the first four months of 1974, 221 civilian Africans were reported to have been rounded up and killed by Portuguese forces in reprisal for their aid to FRELIMO. The *aldeamento* round-up, with its life of overcrowding, fear, starvation, enforced curfews, and destruction of traditional and family life, was further extended. Anyone outside of a strategic hamlet was automatically considered a guerilla. The result was the slaughter of more thousands of Mozambicans, intensifying a policy long implemented by the Portuguese colonialists. In July 1973, news of a massacre of more than 400 men women and children in the village of Wiryamu flashed across the news media of the world.

Representatives of the churches in Mozambique reacted strongly to Portuguese atrocities. In 1971, the Catholic White Fathers had closed their mission work after 25 years in protest against the policies of the government. In 1972, 30 Presbyterian church leaders were arrested by the authorities for suspected disloyalty. In April 1974, the Portuguese Bishop of Nampula was expelled from Mozambique for accusing some of the church hierarchy of servility toward the Government and failure to denounce atrocities. Nine Italian and two Portuguese missionaries were expelled. The Vatican openly criticized the Portuguese government for these actions. In early 1974, Dutch missionaries reported that 113 Africans were killed and buried in a mass grave which they had been forced to dig before being shot. This story was carried in *The Times* of London on May 4th. According to Henry Kamm in a dispatch to *The New York Times*, May 16, 1974, the last massacre reported by missionaries was on April 26th, one day after the coup in Portugal. The Dutch had closed their mission and left Mozambique in

March.

The Portuguese were clearly in disarray. The Mozambique war of liberation had entered a new phase. Victory was certain and close. The rumblings of discontent in Portugal itself were becoming louder and clearer, culminating first in the abortive coup in March, and then the overthrow of the Caetano regime on April 25th.

Since then, events have moved swiftly both in Portugal and in Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola. A smokescreen of calls for a ceasefire by the first post-coup leader, General Antonio de Spínola, offers of gradual independence and elections in the three African areas, threats of unilateral declarations of independence by white minorities, warnings of armed intervention by South Africa, the formation of puppet groups and divisive organizations such as the Grupo Unido de Mozambique (GUMO), activities of defectors from FRELIMO, and violence in the streets of Lourenço Marques, were firmly resisted by the liberation movement.

At the negotiating table, Samora Machel made FRELIMO's position of complete and unconditional independence clear and chided Mario Soares, then Portugal's Minister of Foreign Affairs for thinking that it might be otherwise. The result was victory, peace, the beginning of a new phase in Mozambican history. As Samora Machel put it, "for the first time the Mozambican people have a Government of their own, a Government of their representatives, a Government to serve them."

### *The Path Ahead*

Mozambique has reached the time at last when, in the words of FRELIMO militant and poet, Jorge Rebelo,

"In our land  
bullets are beginning to flower"

The path from independence to freedom is long and hard. The tasks are difficult. But Machel says, "the difficulties were even greater when we started our thrust toward national liberation. We do not hide the difficulties, nor do we shut our eyes to them. But nothing can make us forget that we are . . . entering upon an exalting phase of our history."

FRELIMO and the Mozambican people are faced with the giant tasks of national construction, of building a new nation, and a new society.

"We have inherited a difficult and serious social, economic, financial and cultural situation resulting from centuries of oppression and colonial plunder, aggravated by decades of colonial-fascist domination and repression. . . .

We are faced with a heritage of widespread illiteracy, disease, poverty and hunger. We see our people, and particularly the people in the countryside, living in sub-human conditions of poverty and exploitation. We see destruction, resentment and hatred created by centuries of oppression and instigated by the colonial war of aggression the reactionaries, colonialists and fascists launched in order to divide and confuse us.”<sup>34</sup>

FRELIMO and the Mozambican people are faced with the problems of their role in southern Africa, the area that may well hold the key to the destiny of the entire continent. They have a special relationship to the peoples of Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa in their struggles for freedom. They also face the problem of a powerful white-ruled South Africa—which has developed extensive control over much of the Mozambican economy. There are enormous problems ahead in disentangling the network of dependency created by the long history of Mozambican contract labor in South African mines and industry; in turning Cabora Bassa, designed for the welfare of colonialism and apartheid, into a force for the welfare of the Mozambican people. The new government will have to face the whole question of peace and war in the southern African region. It will have to confront the problems of white minority rule in Zimbabwe, and the Rhodesian government's use of Mozambican railways and harbors.

Most important of all will be the task of building the Mozambican

**“Like a growing mango tree we are deeply rooted in the soil that is our people.”**



FRELIMO

Revolution, building it on "the foundation of our own *originality*, basing ourselves on the specific conditions of our country. We shall thus also enrich the revolutionary heritage of humanity, a duty we have been fulfilling over these hard years of struggle."

Decolonization is no vague and empty phrase for Mozambique.

"Decolonization does not mean the geographical transfer of the decision-making centers from Lisbon to Lourenco Marques, which the deposed regime was in fact already proposing to do, and neither is it the continuation of the oppressive regime, this time with black-skinned rulers, which is the neo-colonial pattern.

To decolonize the State means essentially to dismantle the political, administrative, cultural, financial, economic, educational, juridical and other systems which, as an integral part of the colonial state, were solely designed to impose foreign domination and the will of the exploiters on the masses.

The decisive factor for our success is the unity of our people from the Rovuma to the Maputo. . . . We will make relentless use of the same liberating fire that wiped out colonialism in opposing racism, tribalism and regionalism. . . . These are the essential instruments which weakened our people in the past and allowed them to be dominated.<sup>35</sup>

Like the war itself and nation-building in the liberated zones, the creation of the new Mozambique will be rooted in the countryside.

"The overwhelming majority of our people live in the countryside and it is in the countryside that are to be found the natural resources which must be developed so as to make our country prosper. It was the countryside that suffered most from the destructive effects of the war and it is in the countryside that the clearest signs of hunger can be seen. It is therefore toward the countryside that our main efforts to improve the living conditions of the masses will be directed. . . .

Agriculture will therefore be the base of our development and industry its galvanizing factor."<sup>36</sup>

As it has in the history of FRELIMO from the very beginning, education will have top priority in free Mozambique.

"The blood of our people was not shed only to free our land from foreign domination, but also to reconquer our Mozambican personality, to bring about the resurgence of our culture and to

create a new mentality, a new society. The schools must be fronts in our battle against illiteracy, ignorance and obscurantism. They must be centers for wiping out the colonial-capitalist mentality and the negative aspects of the traditional mentality. . . . There should be no place in them for social, racial or sexual discrimination. Above all the masses must have access to and power in the schools, universities and culture.

We are engaged in a Revolution whose advance depends on the creation of the new man, with a new mentality. . . .

Pupils and trainees must play a responsible part in creating a school of a new type in which manual labor is accorded its due value as one of the sources of knowledge.”<sup>37</sup>

Mozambique has inherited a situation of poor health, malnutrition and little or no medical care.

“We must throw ourselves enthusiastically into health work among the broad masses, so as to wipe out the causes of disease, improve eating habits by enriching the diet and eliminating unhygienic traditions . . . priority must be given to preventive medicine.”<sup>38</sup>

In his speech of September 20, 1974, at the time of the investiture of the transitional government in Mozambique, Samora Machel outlined the role of the army, the liberation of women, and the struggle against racism as well. Of the army, he emphasized that it is not a barracks army, but that it has an important role in production, education, political development, and culture as well, and it must remain closely linked with the people. “The People’s Forces for the Liberation of Mozambique must be well aware that they come from the people, that it was the people who built our victory, and that they are our only heroes.”

As it was throughout the ten years of liberation war, one of the major fronts in the struggle for the genuine freedom of the country after independence must be the liberation of women. And Mozambique must be a nation for all Mozambicans without distinction as to race, color, ethnic group or religion. “. . . all superiority and inferiority complexes created and reinforced by centuries of colonialism must be completely eliminated. . . . *There are no minorities* . . . we are all Mozambicans with the rights that work gives us, and with the identical duty of building a united, prosperous, just, harmonious, peaceful and democratic nation.”

Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane, who Samora Machel described as “the true inspirer and driving force of our struggle”, will have his dream

fulfilled at last. He will return to rest in an independent Mozambique. The Mozambican people will continue to sing "FRELIMO VENCERA". The war is over, and the struggle has begun for a Mozambique that is truly free.

*The Dream still has the size of Freedom.*



Van Lierop

For the people, knowledge and understanding are strength. A party wall-newspaper, 1975.

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- 4 Marvin Harris, *Portugal's African Wards*. New York: American Committee on Africa, 1958.
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- 6 Harris, *op.cit.*, p. 31.
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