



NOVEMBER, 1974, #29

Information is ammunition for your struggle. A fighter without ammunition is not a fighter. And for you, a fighter without information cannot speak.

**Samora M. Machel, President of FRELIMO
to CPM delegation, Dar es Salaam, 8/71.**

The following article was written by Bill and Ruth Minter, our comrades who are presently teaching in the FRELIMO Secondary School in Bagamoyo, Tanzania.

Education "to win the war, to create a new society and to develop the nation". These have been the goals of FRELIMO education.

NEW DIMENSIONS-

In 1974 the war is won, years after it began. But the struggle to create a new society and to develop the nation takes on new dimensions as independence turns to reality. The new society must embrace the whole territory. The mentality and life styles of vast numbers of persons who have not experienced life in FRELIMO liberated areas must be transformed. A colonial educational system must be transformed and grafted on to the FRELIMO educational system built up during years of struggle, and there must be massive expansion, to serve the people rather than an elite.

In FRELIMO education is in order to serve the people better and to serve the needs of the nation. The needs of the whole people take precedence over the needs or desires of individuals. Thus the whole people build and advance together, contradicting the emergence of an elite which for whatever reason could benefit at the expense of the masses of the people. This stands in direct contrast to the colonial educational system, which, even when extended to somewhat larger numbers of people during the 1960's, was designed to benefit only a few, and to reinforce the colonial structures and mentality.

Even before the transfer of power to FRELIMO with the installation of a FRELIMO-led government on September 20, the colonial educational system in Mozambique had been paralyzed. The colonial structures were being rejected, and students, teachers, and administrators were eager to find out what the new directives from FRELIMO would be. Now the political power is in the hands of FRELIMO, and it is possible to begin the systematic transformation of the educational system. The lessons learned in establishing an educational system under conditions of exile and of war will have to be applied on a vaster, fully national scale.

A RADICAL NEW PHASE: EXPANSION TO A NATIONAL SCALE

What is the present situation of FRELIMO's educational system, now about to enter a radically new phase of its history? Everything is, even without considering the new shift to a national scale, in a crisis of expansion. In the liberated areas there are village schools, which cover the first two years of primary education. Then regional schools provide third and fourth years. The primary school course is completed in these four years. The fifth through eighth years are secondary school, located at present in Bagamoyo in Tanzania.

The village schools have tens of thousands of pupils, and are beginning to send so many students to the regional schools that these schools (often staffed by a single teacher) may have 300 or more students - a quite impossible teaching situation in which nonetheless, students struggle to learn and teachers are doing their best to teach. Despite the lack of teachers and the difficult conditions, last year about 500 students completed FRELIMO primary education, far more than could be admitted to the single secondary school.

The secondary school currently has nearly 300 students in the four year course. In addition about 150 of last year's primary school graduates are already selected and waiting for the secondary school to be able to accommodate them. The secondary course is still incomplete. Students who complete the four years will be prepared to enter middle level technical schools or continue in a pre-university course of two or three years, for which detailed curriculum is still being developed.

ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMS

FRELIMO has adult literacy programs wherever possible to complement the schools for the children. There are also numerous short specialized courses and seminars. Those held this year at the secondary school included a month long seminar, in cooperation with UNESCO, on adult literacy training. It was attended by 25 primary school teachers. Another seminar held at the Bagamoyo school was for FRELIMO women with children. Most participants were families of FRELIMO men assigned to Dar es Salaam or were in Dar for medical treatment. The week was a day-camp experience for the children, including participation during part of the time from the women. At other hours they were freed from their children to study and discuss the role of women in Mozambican society.



PRESSING NEEDS

But the facilities for the educational system, or for such special seminars, fall far short of the needs. Construction of more classrooms, dormitories, dining rooms, and other facilities has been under way at the secondary school. The new teacher training class in southern Tanzania has 60 primary school teachers, triple the size of previous classes. But the shortage of teachers, and the level of training the teachers have (most students) is a constant preoccupation. While a number of textbooks have been prepared, and mimeographed or printed, the shortage of these, and of other supplies, is also a persistent problem.

CHANGE-INEVITABLE, ESSENTIAL, and SUBSTANTIAL

As this structure becomes the nucleus of a nation-wide educational system, there are sure to be substantial changes. Village schools no longer have to worry about bombs falling from the sky. Transport of material to the schools can move on the roads in Mozambique, and not only by head portorage from the Tanzanian borders. Those parts of the educational system located in Tanzania can move south into Mozambique. The facilities previously available to the colonial educational system, in numbers more than ten times larger than the FRELIMO control. There will obviously be lots of changes.

But the basic orientation developed in the course of the struggle will continue. The educational system is to serve the masses, and so it must be open to them. The colonial pattern, in which schools, especially at the higher levels are available in urban areas and for families of higher economic status (particularly whites), will be eliminated. A recent speech of FRELIMO's President Samora Machel declared that the school must serve as "a base for the people to take power." "The primary aim of education," says President Machel in another speech, "must be to wage a vigorous battle against illiteracy, centered especially in the rural areas, which were almost completely neglected by the colonial education system."

And the organization of the schools must reflect the struggle in which they are to be engaged. The curricula must be reoriented, and aimed at diffusing national culture, and political, technical, and scientific knowledge. Manual work must be integrated into school life, and the whole program of the school related to the practice of creating a new society. This has implications for not only the content of material taught, but for the teaching methods and the way of running the school.

Collective working methods are central to the advancement of revolutionary education. In the FRELIMO secondary school, the students are organized within their classes and as a student body, and take responsibility for a great deal of the day-to-day running of the school. Within classes, small groups take collective responsibility for study, with the better students having the responsibility to help the others, and all the students the responsibility to criticize and help improve the working methods of teacher and students. The goal is not the individual success of a few, but the development of all, to serve the people of Mozambique.

AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE STRUGGLE

The educational system within FRELIMO has been conceived as part of the revolutionary struggle, and not as a separate, academic enclave. And those who participate in it, students and teachers, are above all militants. They have been assigned temporarily to study or to teach, but at any moment they may receive other responsibilities. Those who are studying at the secondary

school now might move in a group, as a school, to someplace in Mozambique, or they might be spread out among different schools in Mozambique, to serve as leaven, as cadre able to explain the FRELIMO line and revolutionary ideology. Or they might be called on to take up other tasks. Now, and in the future, education for FRELIMO is to be integrated into the process of building the new society, the new human being.



A NEW DIRECTION

In FRELIMO education national culture has also assumed an important part, particularly in the form of songs and dances. Just as in the guerilla army, culture derived from one area of the country becomes a national property, and those from all areas participate. Traditional cultural creations are recreated, and transformed. The content becomes revolutionary and national.

It would be idealism to claim that the pattern established by FRELIMO's educational system during these last years has solved all the problems that need to be solved. The material difficulties are tremendous, as are those of organization. And the goals of collective work, criticism and self-criticism, integration of theory with practice and productive work are only partially implemented in practice. But a new direction has been set for education, contrasting with the exploitation-reinforcing structure of the colonial system, and with the static reaffirmation of tradition of the traditional society. Now this new direction, this revolutionary process of transformation, must be applied to the whole of the territory of Mozambique. FRELIMO education now has the opportunity to begin in earnest the tasks of creating a new society and developing the nation.