



NEWS AND NOTES #5  
COMMITTEE FOR A FREE MOZAMBIQUE  
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### THE DEFEAT OF THE PORTUGUESE OFFENSIVE

The incessant claims by the Portuguese military establishment to have defeated FRELIMO are getting slightly ridiculous! The latest exhibition, as broadcast through New York Times' Lisbon based correspondent Marvine Howe, quoted General Kaulza de Arriaga to the effect that FRELIMO's "infiltration points" have been sealed off and main bases have been captured. (New York Times, March 15, 1971). The highly touted Portuguese offensive masterminded by Arriaga and begun in June, 1970, according to the General, has succeeded in its aim to close off the Tanzanian border (Ruvuma River Region) from northern Mozambique and the vast liberated zone of FRELIMO and to wipe out FRELIMO supply and troop strongholds particularly in the more mountainous Cabo Delgado Province. Now General de Arriaga claims that the Portuguese are only continuing with small scale wipe-up operations, and such projects as paving roads in order to prevent FRELIMO mining actions (Rand Daily Mail, October 17, 1970).

It is extremely important to understand the real situation following the Portuguese offensive and victory claims, and the wider Portuguese/Western strategy for the African colonies. The historical content of the anti-FRELIMO offensive is revealing. It is led by the admittedly most-competent of Portugal's military leaders, a sophisticated civil engineer and nuclear specialist with close links to the NATO establishment. It is the same type of offensive mounted by the Portuguese in eastern Angola in 1968 when the military tried to isolate the expanding guerrilla activities of the Popular Movement For Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and prevent the onward march to central, more populated zones of the country. This parallel, with the Angolan situation, in which the Portuguese failed to defeat MPLA, was recently illuminated by historian Basil Davidson in a speech at Columbia University on March 5, 1971:

...In northern Mozambique it is quite certain that there was this autumn (1970) a major offensive by the Portuguese using helicopters on a fairly large scale for the first time... and this was temporary and fairly successful. I think that this is very clear just as it was in eastern Angola in 1968. On the other hand, all the evidence suggests that the guerrillas have survived and that the Portuguese claims to have eliminated them are greatly exaggerated. One may add that the regular armies, even the most technological armies, always greatly overestimate the effectiveness of their offensive... I think largely it seems to me because local commanders feel obliged to return what is nowadays called a large body count.

Mr. Davidson cited the importance of FRELIMO's ability to function in the strategic province of Tete, and to cross the Zambezi River, an extremely difficult task given the lack of physical cover near the river and the fact that FRELIMO "had not been active in the territory politically for very long on the south bank of the river." (For a report on the move across Tete see New York Times, January 31, 1971).

And Davidson concludes,

This (the Tete/Zambezi action) once again makes it clear ... that whereas the Portuguese like other anti-guerrilla armies elsewhere are undoubtedly able to score limited successes in certain places for certain lengths of time, if the movements are well-led these successes are counter-balanced by gains on the guerrilla side elsewhere...

And Davidson said that after 1968 in Angola MPLA regained and now holds the fundamental strategic initiative undermining such tactics of the Portuguese as herding people into "peace villages" and widespread bombing. He believes that is also occurring in Mozambique. A recent communique from FRELIMO affirms the strength of the movement where more than 350 Portuguese were killed in all three northern provinces in December 1970, (Guardian, UK, March 5, 1971). This strength is really verified by the fact that the Portuguese government has adopted a new tack as reflected in speeches by P.M. Caetano and also by Arriaga who, in his New York Times interview, admitted that "we can achieve a final victory if the accompanying psychological and social operations are successful...even more important than military success is the need to persuade the population that their best interests are with us." Caetano speaking before the Portuguese National Assembly in early December reflected the same perspective by saying that "...in this campaign the principal aspect is not the military operations...what matters is to convince the population to be faithful to Portugal." (Editorial, Mozambique Revolution, Oct-Dec, 1970, No.45).

FRELIMO, in the recent Mozambique Revolution praises the steadfastness and progress of the Mozambican people in the face of the Portuguese offensive, and points out that the onslaught entitled "Operation Gordian Knot" ended in September. And with that truth of failure the Portuguese have now moved into the propaganda front. As a British photographer recently in Niassa Province commented, "The Portuguese reports have begun to defeat their own objectives; for if FRELIMO had been wiped out in June, how could they be wiped out again in August, and now again in December?" (Mozambique Revolution, *ibid.*, p.19). FRELIMO says that the Portuguese are continuing with bombs and napalming as before, but that the forces are moving on with the operations at hand, national reconstruction and military zone actions.

The new policy at so-called autonomy for the colonies should be placed in the proper light as well as other statements of the Portuguese leader that such regional reorganization is definitely not a first step towards independence (Le Monde, February 17, 1971). The policy of autonomy, the attempts at psychological tactics, the repeated large-scale attacks at the elusive FRELIMO are attempts to divert attention away from the internal crisis in Portugal. The evidence of the internal crisis and increasing anti-war movement in Portugal lies in the fact that the secret police activities has recently expanded to include many arbitrary arrests and imprisonment of Portuguese citizens (New York Times, March 28, 1971).

Finally FRELIMO comments upon the importance of understanding the Portuguese maneuvers. The fact that Caetano is now stressing peoples' fidelity to Portugal in the colonies is an "authoritative indication that this (the Portuguese offensive) was a failure. Moreover the Portuguese army can never defeat the FRELIMO forces for precisely the reason given by Caetano. If strength of manpower and fire-power were the decisive factors we would have (been) defeated long ago. No the reason is that our strength lies in our base among the people. With their support, we cannot be defeated and the Portuguese know this." (Moz.Rev.P.24).

Letters from our Members:

Dear Sir:

This is to inform you that I no longer wish to support the FRELIMO movement in Mozambique. My 10-year-old daughter recently pointed out the inconsistency in my philosophy of pacifism in regard to south-east Asia while supporting war in south-east Africa. Mondlane is quoted on the back of the FRELIMO Vencera poster as saying, "And it must be war because we want it to be war, we who want to assert our identity over any form of violence. Only through a struggle to death can we come out as a new people with a real strength."

The people of Mozambique have my strong support in their desire for nationhood, but I find further support of FRELIMO's military actions philosophically untenable.

If you care to respond to these remarks, I shall be most pleased to hear further from you. Sincerely, Paul E.

P.S. "There is no way to peace. Peace is the way."

Dear Paul,

We received your letter withdrawing your support for our Committee.

All of us who try to identify with non-violence as a way of life have to live with our inconsistencies. I agree with your logical philosophical conclusion. You were inconsistent and so am I. Inconsistency is not the point; the problem is to decide in what ways one will be inconsistent and in what ways one will not.

Non-violent philosophy is built on the idea of choice. The non-violent protester makes several choices of action available to his oppressor so that, via correct consideration and conscience, the oppressor will rise to his humanity and choose the most human response, identifying with the oppressed.

By withdrawing your support, you are helping to take away from the people of Mozambique one choice in the avenues of action open to them. You are saying, that since you do not agree with that choice, you are not willing to let them have it as an alternative of action. The result is to have you side with the Portuguese who agree with you that those people should not have that alternative of violent action.

In this country we have moved and are moving to a non-violent philosophy of action and thought (as characterized by your letter), but we are doing it from strength and out of fat stomachs. That is where we are at, as they say. And perhaps we are on the verge of making an example for the world if we succeed. But you condemn the oppressed, hungry people of Mozambique to your non-support because they do not have the means to follow your example.

From your letter, I believe that you are familiar with the strong non-violent movement emerging in South Vietnam. That movement emerged, not full grown from a forehead but after years of the struggle for nationhood there. Only, I would submit, after a national identity had been achieved into which the ideas of Ghandi and Buddha could be put for examination.

So, I feel, must it be for Mozambique. And the struggle there is so critically joined that the people of Mozambique do not yet have time for our leisurely and essentially middle-class philosophical examinations of the boundaries of consistency.

Of course, there is one other factor which is extremely important and that is that your 10-year-old daughter is much closer to you than either the struggle in Mozambique or the one in Vietnam. She may not yet have reached the age where she can begin to understand that philosophical inconsistency is something that when

one becomes an adult one has to live with and constantly work out with an everyday aléxtness. (Can one pay a cent of taxes to U.S.A. thus to Portugal via NATO & the Azores rental and seriously tell FRELIMO that he is withdrawing his support because they have military actions?) (Is supporting the strong with funds, the USA, in Vietnam by buying goods which make profits which are taxed while withdrawing support from an NFL action really consistant?)

Well, I don't know what the answer is. We'll try, that's all. You try too. Peace is the way. For us here. For Mozambique too. But they have to find that. Meanwhile, their 10-year-olds need us--desperately. Jim W. for the Committee

NEWS FLASH \* \* \* NEWS FLASH

GENERAL ELECTRIC PARTICIPATES IN CABORA BASSA

The General Electric Company has requested financing from the U.S. government Export-Import Bank for the sale of \$55 millions of dollars worth of transformers to the Cabora Bassa Dam project. The Export-Import Bank has not yet made a commitment. General Electric has refused comment.

Members are urged to write Secretary of State William Rogers, Dept. of State, Washington D.C., and protest any financing by the U.S. government for the Dam project which can strengthen Portugal's grip on Mozambique. (More in our April newsletter).