



land
of ideas

Why We Fight

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After the death of Eduardo Mondlane, President of FRELIMO, the press in the service of imperialist interests displayed great activity toward undermining the prestige of the Mozambique revolutionary movement. A thousand versions of the case of the traitor Lázaro Kavandame were fabricated for the purpose of presenting the FRELIMO guerrilla groups as disintegrating bands. The directors of this maneuver made themselves visible enough from the very beginning: the colonialist Portuguese Government and North American and European intelligence services.

The facts themselves were what frustrated and ridiculed this maneuver. The armed struggle that the Mozambique people wage against Portuguese colonialism, far from being deterred by crisis, today finds itself travelling the road of full development.

In this work, Moisés Machel Samora, current President of FRELIMO and Secretary of the Department of Defense, explains the position of the leadership and the members of the Front on the most important questions in the country's present situation. The work is the result of long conversations held with comrade Samora at FRELIMO headquarters.

THE DAILY struggle taking place in our country is essentially a political struggle and we must first of all consider it to be such in order to understand the development of the military operations. Without political development, military activity cannot exist. Without political content, military operations are criminal wars like that the Portuguese wage against us, or the North Americans in South Viet-Nam, where they carry out military operations and not political operations. The aggressors are isolated from the people and fight against them.

For FRELIMO it is fundamental to create a national consciousness, to develop it and to transform it into a revolutionary consciousness that allows for an understanding of the objectives of our struggle, the reasons for our revolution, its propelling force, and which also knows who our enemies are and against whom we fight. This is the primary concern of each leader, of each militant, and of our people in general.

In 1968, in the province of Cabo Delgado when we began to undertake battles of great scope, assaults on military posts, seizure of Portuguese matériel and soldiers, we could differentiate between the revolutionaries and the nonrevolutionaries. The latter thought that independence consisted of hoisting the flag, having ministers, a black president, and a

national anthem, and that this moment had now arrived. These individuals began to struggle against the leadership of FRELIMO. They took advantage of the difficulties created by the war, the lack of arms, ammunition, clothing, shoes, even of the lack of food in certain cases. At this time the tasks are so diverse and so numerous that our structure cannot produce enough to feed all the guerrillas. The reactionaries took advantage of this situation as if it were the fault of the revolution, without remembering that these conditions were created by the Portuguese colonialists themselves and are a consequence of the war against them.

The enemy reaction to our actions was quite strong: massive bombings, the dispatch of agents to the provinces and even to FRELIMO's headquarters. Father Mateus Pinho Gwenjere appeared one day in Dar es Salaam introducing himself as a nationalist, but the struggle proved him to be a reactionary, a counterrevolutionary. When this priest arrived, FRELIMO gave him the responsibility for teaching. But instead of teaching his students what he should have taught them, he slowly began to inject poison, stimulating reactionary ideas among our students, such as racism, saying that we should not have whites in our organization because we are

fighting against the white man. He also said that the students should not participate in the war because the war is waged by illiterates, the students must be concerned about becoming engineers, doctors, professors in order to form an elite within independent Mozambique, in order to be directors, heads. That is to say, he did not prepare them to serve the interests of the broad masses.

This priest stimulated ambition, which is normal in the capitalist system, and he stirred up individualism and egoism. If he urged the students not to participate in the struggle, where they could better learn about the people's problems, it was because he had understood that we exist to make a revolution, and he used racism and ambition to stimulate reactionary ideas.

Our people are very religious and the word of a priest is the word of God for them.

The Colonialists' Error

The enemy had considered our armed struggle to be a simple mutiny, small revolts that he could easily put down. He had not calculated on the reach of our strategy. He had not thought of the grandeur of our plans, our perspectives, when we founded FRELIMO and began the armed struggle.

He based himself on the fact that we have no tradition of war, that we have no culture. He himself had created these conditions among our people, because culture is more developed in a country with a common language, and we do not have a national language. The enemy utilized Portuguese to inculcate his culture, but in our country not everyone speaks Portuguese: more than 90% are illiterate. He had not calculated that we would be, or were, capable of leading an armed revolutionary struggle because of all these factors: ignorance, illiter-

acy, lack of culture, lack of a fighting tradition, of means of communication, of a common tongue. So he thought that what occurred in the north of the country were simple mutinies, simple revolts that it would be easy for him to crush. When he became convinced that FRELIMO is a solid organization, a serious organization with clear objectives, he stepped up the number of agents sent, taking advantage of contradictory elements such as Lázaro Kavan-dame, an exploiter infiltrated into revolutionary ranks. Through his agents, he tried to stimulate reactionary ideas within the movement. But the FRELIMO fighters, certain of our objectives and of our line, take up arms convinced that only armed revolutionary struggle can bring happiness and victory to our people.

Revolutionary Unity

Our struggle in the provinces of Cabo Delgado, Nyassa, and Tete is fairly well advanced in various aspects: in Cabo Delgado we have succeeded in uniting the village people, creating a common feeling among them, destroying divisions that had been created and stirred up by the Portuguese colonialists. We succeeded in eliminating tribalism and racism, the Portuguese's chief weapon in oppressing the people.

FRELIMO succeeded in creating unity and this permitted the struggle to begin from nothing, with simple ambushes and surprise attacks by groups or sections composed of 12 or at most 15 individuals. This is how we worked and the struggle succeeded in reaching a stage in which we could organize squads.

Two years later, we developed a military structure and increased our armed forces. Thus we began to work with two squads and sometimes with companies. But at this level we were still not capable of carrying out operations of great

scope; we were not capable of attacking the bases of enemy resistance; we always waited for him to leave his centers, to leave his forts so we could attack him while he was moving in vehicles or on foot, or with minor sabotages.

Three years later we began to perfect our structure and our forces were progressively augmented until we were able to combine artillery and infantry. From this moment on we began to attack the enemy's bases directly.

Military and Political Advancement

While we were working on and improving the military structure, we formed the political structure, we created a Provincial Council with a secretary who represents the Party in the province and interprets its policy, implementing its resolutions and decisions. Under this representative we have a provincial subsecretary directly responsible for military work with an aid specifically in charge of operations. There is also a Political Commissariat composed of various sections, which directs the district, local and community political commissariats.

The Commissariat is also responsible for the political instructors who live on the bases. Other militants are in charge of the work of the Political Commissariat and those who are on the bases because of the necessity of maintaining a political line of support for the guerrillas, daily explain the reasons for the struggle. Those who live with the military personnel on the bases are the political instructors, and those in the cities who live directly with the population are the political commissars of districts, of regions, or of groups and are at the same time part of the Political Commissariat.

There are sections concerned with sanitary questions, with recruitment, training, and formation of cadres. In the Political Section there is a militia leadership and a women's detachment which works

closely with the village peoples organizing and mobilizing them and participating in production, in the transport of materials and also of wounded. If we succeed in implanting this organization in all our villages, in each province, we will have a blaze and the enemy won't have any ground to walk on.

Production, cooperatives, and education too depend on the Political Commissariat. This work was carried out particularly in the years 1967 and 1968 and its advance is due to the consciousness of the peoples and to the denunciation of those who depart from our line. This explains how the peoples were able to denounce Lázaro Kavandame and his group.

Facing Intrigues

When we began the struggle, we thought our only enemy was Portuguese colonialism and that we were undertaking armed struggle to liquidate it and to win our complete independence. As the struggle evolved, the moment arrived when FRELIMO had to reestablish a definition of the enemy, because in Mozambique there now existed liberated zones in which the people produced and governed themselves, and were planning their own future; thus within the Central Committee of FRELIMO there began to appear political divergencies, divergencies concerning the definition of the enemy.

At this time Lázaro Kavandame, who was Provincial Secretary of Cabo Delgado and also had the responsibility of directing the commercial agricultural cooperatives and others, began to react against the FRELIMO leadership because it tried to destroy the system of individual production, of private property, in order to give it a collective form.

Lázaro began to exploit the work of the people and to rob

their products. Then the FRELIMO Central Committee met to discuss whether this was really the idea with which we had established the cooperatives in the liberated zones. Lázaro and his group were trying to establish the old system in this zone — that is to say, they wanted to substitute for the colonial exploiters, they wanted to continue the robbery the same as the Portuguese colonialists. Our people approached the FRELIMO leadership and explained that the FRELIMO stores and cooperatives were not serving collective interests, the interests of the masses but were benefiting a small clique of individuals who were robbing the produce, who were robbing the people's toil and sweat. FRELIMO began to investigate and from that time on Lázaro reacted actively against the leadership of Comrade Mondlane.

It must be understood that we are a broad movement made up of individuals who come from diverse social strata in Mozambique, some come for personal reasons, others because the very Portuguese would not let them be exploiters (because the Portuguese want to be the only ones who exploit the population), others because they had old debts to the colonialist society. When they come to an organization such as FRELIMO, a poor organization which demands that everyone work for the people, these individuals do not agree to fight against the internal weaknesses inherited from the old society.

We believe that Lázaro is an accomplice, that he may have served as the imperialists' agent, even in the assassination of our President. In December 1968, when Comrade Kankombe was sent as national chief of operations to organize the integration of a commission which would regularize the life of the peoples in the interior and especially in the commercial coopera-

tives, he was stabbed in the back by a group headed by Lázaro. Immediately afterwards, and it is interesting to note this, in February Comrade Mondlane in turn was assassinated.

FRELIMO never considered Lázaro's flight to the Portuguese side as a defeat; on the contrary, we consider that our revolution itself, in virtue of its rapid advance, has eliminated him as an impure element, and that a stage of development has been reached in which an exploiter, whether he be white, yellow or black, has no place in our Front.

Mondlane's Presence

After the assassination of Comrade Mondlane, the last session of the FRELIMO Central Committee, which lasted eleven days, carefully studied Lázaro's surrender and the significance of the assassination of our President. We easily verified the fact that Comrade Mondlane was assassinated because he defended the interests of the masses, because he was against the exploiters in the heart of the organization, because he was for unity and fought to maintain and consolidate it. At this time FRELIMO has a solid base and has formed a Presidential Council, so that each one of us will try to assume that responsibility, that scope that Comrade Mondlane had; we try to define our line, or better to redefine the line laid down by the Second Congress of the FRELIMO Central Committee. Those who do not want to define our struggle as a revolutionary struggle, a struggle for reconstruction, a struggle which seeks to establish a new society, cannot be members of FRELIMO.

The assassination of Comrade Mondlane did not liquidate FRELIMO even though it liquidated the individual physically. All of us in FRELIMO are trying to transform this blow, which was a very sad one, into a living force,

a revolutionary force for fighting the enemies of the revolution and overcoming our internal difficulties.

For example, in our country we still lack transportation facilities; the peoples are organizing the transport of material, food supplies for the guerrillas, and sending medicine and educational matter to the interior.

FRELIMO is much further along in Cabo Delgado due to the greater density of population in that province and to the direct contact it had with the Portuguese colonialists. It suffered oppression and repression directly, it saw massacres (in June 1960 the Portuguese killed close to 600 men in Mueda) and this served to stir up the people's hatred of the enemy. The people understand that our struggle is not racial, but one of national liberation. The Portuguese deserters that we have captured were cared for by the population in Cabo Delgado. We are not fighting against the Portuguese people but against Portuguese colonialism.

In the province of Nyassa the struggle is also developing favorably although we have difficulties, due first of all to the enormous size of the province and secondly to its low population density (around 280 000 inhabitants in 120 000 km²). Without a population, the guerrilla is deaf and blind. He receives neither information nor orientation and doesn't know what the enemy's situation is.

Because of its size, FRELIMO divided this province into three military regions: eastern, western, and southern. Military operations are intensifying in all these regions and our army is carrying out the three tasks set by FRELIMO which a guerrilla detachment must understand and accomplish: The importance of fighting, the importance of producing, and the importance of working.

When we say that a guerrilla detachment must be a detachment of combat, production, and work,

we mean first of all that it must rely on its own forces. What we receive from our friends must be secondary; the basic factor must be what we ourselves produce.

Our comrades understand this and because of it the fight continues. Evident proof of it is that the Portuguese brought in new battalions to occupy Vila Cabral, to establish their settlers along the Milanje River, which is very fertile.

This Portuguese plan began in 1968 but the FRELIMO combat forces redoubled their actions, especially at the beginning of 1969 after the assassination of Comrade Mondlane, when they began to understand that there really is nothing to negotiate with the enemy, that our thoughts must be oriented toward war. We are convinced that our independence will come from the barrel of the rifle. Only by firing more cartridges, only by striking and reducing the enemy's forces, only by destroying his posts and his means of transportation will we attain independence.

In Nyassa FRELIMO faces major difficulties because the enemy, in addition to using the river, uses other countries for launching incursions and attacking our rear-guard forces.

New Enemy Tactics

He has now adopted a new operative dynamics of direction and coordination. In the provinces of Cabo Delgado and Nyassa he is changing his tactics using reconnaissance planes, bombers, helicopters for strafing and for dropping parachutists. But in these two provinces we have already succeeded in creating the first liberated zone where we are producing and teaching. The schools that FRELIMO created in Cabo Delgado and Nyassa teach not only reading and writing but also politically prepare the

future heroes, the future fighters, and those who will carry on our struggle.

Time is not important. What is important is to achieve our objective of total independence, the freedom of the individual, and the complete liquidation of the exploitation of man by man. This is what we are inculcating today in Cabo Delgado and Nyassa provinces. This is why the enemy is intensifying his attacks and bombardments in these zones in order to disorganize the population, prevent the development of the struggle and the consolidation of these zones. He tries to prevent little states from springing up within the State.

In Tete Province we have a new front which we consider the third front of FRELIMO. There the situation is different; the struggle is harder because the province is a strategic point that serves as a bridge to carry the fight not only to other Mozambique provinces, but also to Rhodesia and South Africa. For this reason we consider it to be a strategic point. Moreover it is a fundamental political point because the Portuguese want to build the big Cabora Bassa dam in this province. If they achieve their objective, they will have a political triumph of international magnitude, because it will mean that the Portuguese still control Mozambique, that armed struggle does not exist, that the guerrillas are still not consolidated, and that what we say is nothing but propaganda.

There is also an important economic aspect due to its numerous natural resources, which include cobalt and other deposits. It is in this province that the population is most conscientious because it was directly exploited, attacked, assassinated, and submitted to forced labor.

The struggle of Tete, despite the fact that it is still not two years old, is at the same level today as

that in Nyassa Province; this is also due among other things to its greater population density.

A Balance for the Future

Our perspective is to form a new society in Mozambique. Our options are various: in the first place we are against exploitation, we want to wipe out misery which in our country means hunger, the lack of hospitals and products.

In order to carry out our actions we must start from an objective understanding of the reality that exists in Mozambique. This is what our struggle teaches us.

In summary we can say that the political struggle in Mozambique is at a high level where it needs cadres; the military fight is also very developed. The major contradiction of the struggle in Mozambique is the lack of cadres, although the struggle itself is quite well advanced and the consciousness of the people is high.

On the other hand in the southern cone of Africa, the racist regimes and Portugal, even though their interests are different, are allied to confront what they consider the common danger: communism. Faced with the upsurge of a revolutionary struggle, they have been forced to concentrate their forces in order to liquidate it.

The struggle in Mozambique is a peoples' struggle and as such will not permit exploitation nor the presence of the Rhodesian and South African racists. Nor will it tolerate neighbors who oppress, kill, rob, assassinate the people, and join together against them.

South Africa is giving direct material and moral aid to Portugal. It has already given airplanes, ambulances to transport the sick and those wounded in battle, and in 1967 it offered an enormous quantity of diverse articles, among them uniforms and medicine, to the Portuguese soldiers in Mozambique. In the hospital in Nampula, South African doctors take care of the

Portuguese soldiers evacuated from Nyassa, Cabo Delgado, and Tete. But this does not affect our struggle in any way; on the contrary, it obliges us to redouble our forces, our efforts, our vigilance and to constantly watch our strategy and our tactic.

It is a question of an alliance of reactionaries. The racist regimes are not defending Portugal but themselves, because they know that once Mozambique is free it will be a base from which to attack South Africa, Rhodesia.

We are fighting Portugal. But this aspect has in no way impaired the struggle; we are prepared for whatever circumstance, including the possibility of soldiers disguised as technicians coming to build the Cabora Bassa dam. They may even send mercenaries. We are prepared, because we believe that the important factor in war is man, the man who is determined, conscientious; for when man is conscientious, he is ready to make any sacrifice and carry out every kind of task for the benefit of the people. For one day to pass without fighting is the same as for one day to pass without eating; for one day to pass without hearing the shot of a bullet is the same as living a lonely life.

In the next years we will spread our revolutionary policy through the entire country so that our whole territory will have a common consciousness, and we will extend the unity we have in the three provinces today throughout the entire Mozambique people.

Our interest at this point is to make everyone feel the war situation, for all our people in the nine provinces that make up Mozambique to know why we are fighting, and against whom we are fighting. We want to make the revolutionary struggle, the flame of revolution ignited on September 25, 1964, illuminate our entire country so that the spark struck in the forests of Cabo Delgado, Nyassa, and Tete will catch fire throughout our ter-

ritory. And we do this so that tomorrow, even after independence, our comrades who continue the struggle, will be alert and prepared, to fight every enemy maneuver, and prevent Mozambique from becoming a base from which the imperialists attack other countries. And also for the future — and this is important — that the next generation may take from imperialism the hope of winning over our people and enslaving them again. This is our fundamental perspective: to broaden the political struggle, elevate the consciousness, consolidate our unity, and extend the guerrilla war to our entire territory.

Revolution is the best school for the oppressed peoples, the best university of all times, the best instrument for destroying colonialism and serving the people. We want our people to really be the ones who govern their country in the future.

The Tricontinental Struggle

On the other hand the struggle developing in Asia and in Latin America is a contribution, a support to the struggle of the people in the Portuguese colonies; it is a direct contribution to the struggle that the Mozambique people are carrying out today against the Portuguese colonialists. Our best allies, our best fighters are those who are fighting against man's exploitation of man in Asia and Latin America. Although in Asia and Latin America the major part of the countries are already independent, this independence does not benefit the peoples, does not benefit the masses; it is no more than a formal independence since all it has is a flag, ministers, and a president. The peoples of those countries fight to achieve true independence. We consider that this is the way to proceed when a people has reached the profound understanding of what independence is.