

"OUR STRUGGLE AT HOME AND ABROAD"

Interview with Miguel Murupa
Deputy Secretary for External Affairs of Frelimo



Parallel with the people's war being fought in Southern Africa, goes a continuous campaign to gain international support and sympathy for the freedom movement, and to inhibit aid from the West for the white minority regimes. Just before Christmas, Sechaba talked with Miguel Murupa, Frelimo's Deputy Secretary for External Affairs, who was returning from a mission to the United Nations in New York. Comrade Murupa had presented a petition to the United Nations on behalf of his organization; shown Frelimo's film on the guerilla war to the members of the Committee on Colonialism; and lobbied delegates so successfully that Portugal found herself totally isolated (with South Africa and Brazil) in the most recent vote on Mozambique. The resolution was passed by 96 votes to 3. The NATO countries, including Britain, USA, France, Italy, Greece and Turkey, for the first time abstained rather than vote with Portugal.

Independence Not From UN

"There are those who say that the UN serves no purpose in the struggle for freedom," Comrade Murupa told us. "It is true, our independence will not come from the United Nations; but our struggle should not be on the military front only. We want to tell the world that there are still possibilities of peace, if Portugal wants it. If Portugal does not want it, we go on fighting. We don't want to be accused of loving war and disregarding other means of struggle. Independence will not come through the United Nations – but it is the best centre from which to speak to the world."

FRELIMO feels that a point has been reached in the Mozambican struggle, where it is important to speak to the world. The Frelimo Congress of 1968, held for the first time on Mozambique soil, and attended by foreign observers from East and West, marked a new stage. The fighting, which began in 1964 in one province, is now going on on three fronts (in the provinces of Niassa, Cabo Delgado and Tete); large areas of these provinces are now liberated zones, where Frelimo has taken on responsibility for administration, for setting up schools and health services, for reorganizing the agricultural system, and the system of trade to fill the vacuum left by Portuguese withdrawal.

New Democracy

A new democracy is being born in these liberated areas, where laws are being made by elected representatives at local level, and administered by judicial committees elected by the villagers.

This is a period of consolidation in the liberated areas, and of expansion of the war from news bases deeper and deeper in Mozambique; and it is a period of growing interest and sympathy in the outside world. "We want support on a broad basis now", said Comrade Murupa. "We want to concern people not only in our military struggle, but in the great human struggle involved in building a new Mozambique. We have groups of sympathisers not only in the socialist countries, which have supported our revolutionary purpose from the start, but in Europe and America – I have just come from a visit to Canada. We are convinced that we are going to amass support in the West, and that the near future will see more and more organisations supporting our struggle. And little by little, governments will begin to take notice. An effective expression of public support for us in Britain, for instance, Portugal's oldest ally, as they call her would be a real moral shock for Portugal. "Then we need practical support too – we need medical supplies, and school supplies, and agricultural supplies. We hope that the solidarity committees now springing up in so many countries will help to raise money for these, and organise schemes to send us drugs and field hospitals, books and writing materials, seeds and hoes and pesticides."

Helping each other

Sechaba asked Comrade Murupa what effect he felt the launching of guerrilla war in Zimbabwe had on Mozambique. "But Southern Africa cannot be separated – it is all one," he insisted, "Smith and Vorster and the Portuguese all recognise this unity, they fight for each other – so our fighting is one, too. If the African National Congress fight in their area, and the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union in theirs, and M.P.L.A. in theirs, and P.A.I.G.C. in theirs – we are all helping each other. But our policy is not to commit our troops to fight elsewhere, and not to accept people from outside to fight in Mozambique.

We feel co-operation is very important, for all the freedom movements – but we understand that the best help we can give each other is so pursue the struggle in our own countries. That is why it is very stupid nonsense for the Government of South Africa to be talking about A.N.C. and Frelimo troops massing to invade the Republic – they are just trying to win imperialist support for themselves, with their propaganda.

"We in Mozambique have already felt the effect of the intensification of the struggle in Zimbabwe. In 1965 and 1966 we were fighting against troops from South Africa.

Today, it is much more difficult for South Africa to send her men to Mocambique, because they are being held down in Rhodesia, and they cannot be spared in the Republic itself. This is not a small thing to us. It helps a great deal."

World opinion grows

One aspect of the inter-relationship of Southern Africa, is the Cabora Bassa hydro-electric scheme, which, though sited in Mocambique, "benefits South Africa in two ways – one, as shareholder drawing profits, and two, as the biggest user of the hydroelectric power." Cabora Bassa is guarded by Portuguese troops – who in turn are target for Frelimo forces, who are already fighting in the area. So the

war threatens the success of the Scheme, and the fight for freedom in Mocambique makes itself felt in the Republic too.

What of the end of Salazar's regime in Portugal?

Will that too make its effects felt in Africa? "In the short run," said Comrade Murupa, "that is not important. Caetano is weak, and will follow the old policy, because the military wishes it. But in the long run, Portugal has to change, because of our fight. Portugal cannot afford the enormous military expenditure needed to hold three African colonies, all in arms against her. And as world opinion grows in support of our struggle, the holding will become more difficult. So what we have to do is – strengthen our struggle. At home. And abroad."