



Comrade Jose Monteiro,  
FRELIMO representative in Algeria,  
answers questions on the

# MOZAMBIQUE REVOLUTION

1. Comrade Monteiro what progress has the liberation movement in Mozambique made in recent months?

The armed struggle was launched in Mozambique in September 1964. Since that time the struggle has been going on in the two northern provinces of Mozambique, Niassa and Cabo Delgado. Our action there has forced the Portuguese into the position of having to confine themselves to isolated military outposts and other weakened positions away from the centre of the areas. Furthermore, their movements from one point to another are severely restricted because of the extent of the action and control of our freedom fighters.

From mid-1967 we have been able to attack these military posts ourselves, due to increased firing power and heavier armament capability. Thus we have not only captured large quantities of material but have also destroyed some posts altogether. In these areas we are now able to create the conditions of real liberated life. About twelve strong positions have been destroyed. The military airport of Mueda, the strongest Portuguese post in Cabo Delgado, has been attacked several times and planes and fuel dumps there have been totally destroyed.

But the most important development in the armed struggle began last March — when the struggle was carried into the Tete province. A glance at the map of the Tete region will show the importance of this front, dissected by the Zambezi river and touching Zimbabwe, Malawi and South Africa. Recent statements by high-ranking members of the South African regime have conceded that the security of the white man and the maintenance of the present system could depend on the Zambezi area in Mozambique. Another important factor is that we are fighting in this province close to Zimbabwe, and thus there exists the capability of much more than moral support and solidarity alone between Frelimo and the freedom fighters in Zimbabwe, and a much stronger connection between the fighting forces in our countries may be created. We feel that in this area the way can be opened to the heart of white Africa and to the kindling of the entire region into a revolutionary situation.

The Tete province front is important not only to us but to the masses of Southern Africa and their militant movements. The Portuguese are planning to build on the Zambezi River a giant dam at Cabora Bassa. It has been calculated that electricity from this power source will be half the price of other supplies — and as South Africa has a financial interest in this project and will benefit directly from it, it means that the Cabora Bassa project will be used by the South African regime not only for their own gain and at the expense of the people — they will also be furthering their aim attempting to gain control of independent African states through economic bribes.

Furthermore, it is planned to settle one million white settlers in the region — and there is nobody who doubts that they would form a bulwark against the independence of Southern Africa.

The Portuguese, as I have told you, have been forced by our military action in the two northern provinces to leave large areas altogether. Furthermore, in areas where they still have posts, they have no control whatsoever over the area and cannot move through it with ease. It is in these areas that Frelimo had to organise a new life and help create new social relationships. It was necessary to build the basis of a democratic society. We are faced with immediate problems, for example the organisation of production and the protection of workers in the fields etc., from Portuguese attacks. We had to provide tools and implements to put the organisation of agriculture on a cooperative basis. A system of exchange of goods had to be organised, and means to carry any surplus production away to markets as trade items.

2. What is being done about the re-organisation of society in the liberated areas, particularly with regard to health, education and economic development?



3. What effects do you think will the struggle now unfolding in Zimbabwe and South Africa, have on your struggle?

4. In the difficult conditions of a black-out of news from Southern Africa, what is Frelimo doing to gain international solidarity for their struggle?

5. What does the future hold for Mozambique and Southern Africa?

Thus in 1966 for example, we imported into the two provinces a total of 9,000 hoes, 9,000 hatchets and 9,000 pangas. In the same year we were able to export 500 tons of cashew nuts, 100 tons each of sesame seed and groundnuts, and 10 tons of capor oil seed.

As soon as the armed struggle begins in any area, the Portuguese authorities order the closure of commercial establishments except for those which directly serve the Portuguese army. Since our people must continue to live as much of a normal life as possible, despite the war, we have established our own shops in as many districts as possible. Using proceeds from exports we import essentials, including salt, oils, textiles and some household equipment, which then pass through our shops to the local population. At the same time we are developing the traditional small craftsmen on an organised basis, and they use local iron, silver, copper and hardwood to produce simple household goods such as hoes, pangas, hatchets, bedsteads, needles, etc.

Sanitation and health services are a major part of our programme. Schools to train nurses have been created with the aim of building a network of health posts throughout the area for the population. An intensive campaign of smallpox vaccination is being carried out, for example, under which already by last year over 100,000 people had been vaccinated.

With regard to schools, we have of course great difficulty in obtaining teachers; we are using people who can read and write to teach others. In the Cabo Delgado province alone, last year's figures revealed that there were over 10,000 children in primary schools. Many young Mozambicans are away receiving higher education and technical training.

The launching of the armed struggle in Zimbabwe is the most important backing we could get from our South African and Zimbabwe brothers. We are faced with an enormous challenge that does not only concern South Africans against Vorster, Zimbabweans against Smith, and Angolans against the Portuguese. We have common borders and common traditions. A large number of Mozambican and Angolan workers go to South Africa and Zimbabwe (Rhodesia). Some militants have been working with South African and Zimbabwean workers not only through an analysis of the situation but also from the basis of a common tradition. Since the beginning of the national liberation movement, Mozambicans have been concerned with the struggle of the South Africans and Zimbabweans. I feel sure that in the future we will arrive at much stronger co-operation, and our common struggle will be victorious. After all, our enemies are united in oppressing us — and our fight is therefore against them as a whole. There should be no opportunity for them to concentrate their united front forces on a single front only.

We feel that international solidarity is very important for the struggle. But solidarity can only come out of an understanding or knowledge of the problems and struggle in our countries. That is why we attempt at all levels and through all our newspapers and other media, to denounce the Portuguese colonial war and to explain the aspirations of our people to freedom and independence. We publish much information, but a big part of information has to come from the progressive forces themselves throughout the world. Ideally, information must go so relaying centres to be further spread through organisations, media etc. It is particularly important that progressive forces in the West should act to limit their governments' support for the Southern African white regimes.

We have been saying that we really think our future is not determined by the white regimes. It is the sharp contradictions between the peoples' interests and the interests of the white settlers and international imperialism, that is the determining factor. This contradiction is not necessarily solved by the process of "de-colonization", as carried out in other regions of Africa.

The economic and strategical interests of imperialism involved in Southern Africa are important for imperialism, too important for them to let go of Southern Africa easily. They will not withdraw readily.

The struggle will therefore be long and hard. Although we have not had long experience in armed struggle, we can see through the struggle to a successful conclusion. The progressive world and all progressive people are with us. Our cause is just. It is inevitable that, in the whole of Southern Africa, foreign domination and racism will be eliminated once and for all. This I am confident of.