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PRESS CONFERENCE

FRELIMO Action Forces Portuguese Ban  
on African Organisation

As was announced in the press, the Centro Associativo dos Negros de Moçambique, the most important African civic organisation in Mozambique, was recently banned by the Salazar Government. This is the latest in a series of desperate, oppressive measures carried out by the Portuguese authorities as a show of power in a country that for the last ten months has been besieged by the liberation forces led by the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO).

In trying to justify the banning of this non-political organisation, the Salazar regime said that it was disturbing the social and political order, and that many of the leaders and members of the organisation were involved in the politico-military activities of FRELIMO.

Previous to this statement, the Portuguese Government arrested the entire Executive Committee of the Centro Associativo, after the authorities had tried in vain to load it with government stooges. They trumped up charges against the Executive Committee, and accused them of being members of FRELIMO, which they consider a terrorist and subversive movement.

Among the Centro leaders thus arrested were the following:

Luis Bernardo Honwana, author and journalist  
Malangatane Valente Ngwenya, artist and poet  
Domingos Antonio Arouca, lawyer  
Abner Sansao Muthemba, medical assistant  
Daniel Tome Magaia, municipal clerk, etc.

and other well-known civic personalities, such as:

João Correia dos Reis, founder of "The Tribune",  
a leading Lourenço Marques paper  
Rui Nogar, author and poet

These arrests were part of a series which resulted in the arrest of more than 2,000 Mozambican citizens and which began soon after the start of the armed struggle in September 1964.

The mass arrests of innocent Mozambicans is one of the many high-handed tactics of the fascist regime of Salazar. Before the armed struggle began, the Portuguese colonialist government tried to instill fear in the people by increasing its armed forces, importing more than 35,000 European soldiers into our country; by establishing a network of well-paid PIDE spies all over Mozambique; by creating the "Psycho-Social Branch" of the police force to organise anti-FRELIMO communities all over the country, as well as pseudo-nationalist organisation abroad, aimed at creating con-

fusion, hoping to weaken the struggle. From time to time the colonialist government of Salazar herded several paramount chiefs to Lisbon to try to drug them with the splendour and material luxury of metropolitan Portugal.

Then, having failed to win the sympathy of the people of Mozambique, and after the launching of the armed struggle, the Portuguese Government resorted to naked force.

As is common knowledge among the representatives of the press, there are thousands of refugees in Tanzania, Malawi, Swaziland and elsewhere who have fled their homeland in the last ten months. These refugees tell many stories of persecution and horror. Since the beginning of the armed struggle, their villages have been surrounded by the Portuguese army and police, many of their homes were napalm bombed, their crops were destroyed and their food stores burned. Our militants in the FRELIMO guerrilla groups tell hair-raising stories of atrocities perpetrated by the Portuguese army against the innocent civilian population.

It is against this background that one has to understand the banning of this non-political, social organisation. To FRELIMO, this banning obviously means that the Portuguese Government has become so fearful of the civilian population that it is resorting to extraordinary civil repression. It started by suspecting certain Africans of wanting to be free. It extended this suspicion to larger and larger numbers of people, imprisoning thousands of Mozambican black men. In the last couple of years, since the establishment of FRELIMO, the Portuguese Government has been shocked by the realisation that the whole population of Mozambique adheres to the FRELIMO programme of action for the total liberation of the country. Thus it feels compelled to include among the people and organisations to be suspected all the black men of Mozambique and all the non-Europeans and Europeans who do not show enthusiasm for the fascist regime of Salazar.

The banning of the Centro, as well as all the above-mentioned repressive measures, are an indication of the effectiveness of the armed liberation struggle being carried on by FRELIMO.

Our struggle continues.

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President  
Mozambique Liberation Front