

Self-Criticism

FRELIMO

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Committee on 11-21 April.*

The Central Committee of FRELIMO met in ordinary session from 11 to 21 April. The agenda included the discussion of the main problems of our struggle. The work of the different Departments was analysed exhaustively, lines of orientation were drawn up for each one and their respective programmes of action were approved. So far, this meeting of the Central Committee was no different from any of the previous meetings.

But something completely new happened at this meeting, distinguishing it as an historical landmark in the development of FRELIMO: like a fresh wind there appeared a completely new element of criticism and self-criticism, resulting in the elimination of erroneous conceptions enabling us to lead some misguided comrades back to the correct revolutionary line, and to re-establish a sense of reciprocal confidence among us.

This confidence had been prejudiced by differences among the leadership. We were not very clear about where the basis of these differences lay, but we perceived that, when important decisions had to be taken there was a clash of standpoints, revealing the existence of two lines, each represented by a certain number of comrades, defending different positions.

All of us were conscious of this division – but, because we thought we would aggravate the situation if we brought the question into the open, because we were convinced that it was necessary and convenient to present at least an appearance of unity in the FRELIMO leadership, we never discussed the problem.

These divergences were manifested in many important instances. For example, in the definition of who is the enemy, in the question of deciding on the strategic line to take (a protracted people's war), on the importance to be given to the armed struggle in relation to the other forms of struggle, etc. This situation had become more evident since 1966, when we started having liberated zones in our country. Certain events had taken place since March, 1968, which seriously affected our organisation. We all felt that the origin of this situation was the division existing within FRELIMO – but we were unable to locate the roots of the contradictions and consequently, we were

even less able to solve them.

On 3 February, 1969, Comrade Eduardo Mondlane, President of FRELIMO was murdered. The assassins used a bomb, hidden in a book sent to him through the post. It was not possible to discover the immediate agent of the crime: but the same preoccupation plagued us, might not this crime be related to the differences existing amongst us?

The Central Committee analysed this problem. For several days the items on the agenda concerning this matter were discussed. The ideological lines motivating the behaviour of the divergent groups was discovered. For example, one of the most active representatives of one group was Lazaro Nkavandame, Provincial Secretary of Cabo Delgado, Member of the Central Committee, responsible for the Commercial Section in that Province. His attitude and mentality are typical of the group to which he belonged. Lazaro was opposed to the strategy of a protracted war. According to him, we should concentrate all our forces in Cabo Delgado, drive out the Portuguese from the Province and proclaim the independence of Cabo Delgado. We thought at first that this position stemmed from ignorance, or from a distorted outlook of our real situation, confronted as we are with the enormous military power of the colonialists. But then we started receiving complaints from the people of Cabo Delgado. They complained that they were being exploited – the value of the goods they received from FRELIMO in exchange for their products was scandalously disproportional. These accusations were directed against Nkavandame who was in control of the commercial activities. Things then became clear. It was not ignorance. Nkavandame and his group had a precise objective when they demanded independence of Cabo Delgado alone. What they really wanted was to substitute themselves for the Portuguese colonialists in exploiting our people. Similarly, the preoccupation with a quick victory, before the people were politically mature: because then they would oppose resolutely any form of exploitation. The development of the struggle, the existence of liberated areas had thus made appear a specific category of persons – the exploiters of the people.

Certain other comrades opposed the correct solution because of their empirical conception of nationalism. This made it impossible for them to distinguish our friends from our enemies. For them, all Mozambicans of African origin were 'nationalists', and as such should be accepted in our movement, without any investigation of their political orientation, or of their possible connection with the enemy. Thus, when enemy agents like Mateus Gwenjere appeared in our midst perpetrating a series of actions aimed at destroying FRELIMO, these comrades opposed any action by FRELIMO against them, or at least abstained, alleging that 'they are also nationalists'. Thus, the enemy, taking advantage of our contradictions and erroneous conceptions, could strengthen its action against us.

Yet other comrades, by the bureaucratic nature of their functions coupled with their lack of a solid political base, were overtaken by the Revolution. Living outside, wrapped up in their small world of comfortable routine and papers, they lost contact with the reality of the war and became unable to

distinguish the principal from the secondary, the immediate from the long-term tasks. So, they opposed measures aimed at the intensification of the war, at the subordination of all activities to the armed struggle.

Almost from the very beginning of FRELIMO there had been comrades with those erroneous conceptions. Some of them deserted in the course of the Revolution: they formed splinter organisations, through which they hoped to satisfy their personal interests; or, because they were weak, they surrendered to the Portuguese; or yet again, because their ambitions or greed for money could not be satisfied in the Revolution, they chose an easier way of life and sought employment in the neighbouring countries or gave themselves up to the Portuguese as did Lazaro Nkavandame. Gradually, therefore, it was seen that 'the Revolution itself ensures the rejection of the impure load it carries'. But other elements remained amongst us carrying their mistaken ideas. It was on the latter that the last meeting of the Central Committee had a decisive influence, bringing them back again to the Revolutionary path. This action was the work of a group of comrades who have always kept themselves faithful to the interests of the masses, respecting collective values and fighting individualism and personal ambition that foment opportunism, comrades linked with the concrete reality and immersed in the realisation of the principal tasks of the struggle.

Through criticism and self-criticism each one of us vowed to correct our conceptions and behaviour that do not conform to the exigencies of the Revolution. This is why we say that this meeting of the Central Committee had extremely important results, and has opened a new page in the history of our struggle for National Liberation.

Of course, we are aware of the difficulties that lie ahead of us. This unity we have now achieved will have to be implemented each day, with all its difficult implications. We shall need all our attention and all our strength. We shall have setbacks, but we shall know how to learn from them, how to improve ourselves and our work. We do not deceive ourselves with false hopes of an easy path: because it is not a mechanical process, it needs our complete and active engagement, our constant efforts. Our experience has shown us that it takes an endless process of criticism and self-criticism to eliminate the residue of the colonial system that still persists in us, for us to place ourselves decisively on the right side of history, for us to discover and implement the *necessity* of the Revolution.

While reaffirming our decision to fight with more determination, based on a new understanding of the situation and in the certainty of expressing more fully the will of the people, we wish to stress that all these innovations are in fact a continuation; and that all of them are linked with the policy of our late President, Comrade Eduardo Mondlane, whose work is not only being continued, but is being taken to greater heights by the Movement. The unity he came to represent has now reached a higher stage: it is unity at the service of the Revolution.

A luta continua