

# FRELIMO FIGHTS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." This is the first of 30 Articles which constitute the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and it is sad to reflect that, 20 years later, it is impossible to see any of them upheld anywhere in Southern Africa. In Mozambique, Angola, Rhodesia, South West Africa and South Africa anyone can expect persecution, discrimination and, if he shows any signs of objecting to this treatment, violence and imprisonment. The result of this has been that many of us have been obliged after all attempts at negotiation have failed, to take up arms in the struggle to give the masses of the people their basic human rights.

The Mozambique Liberation Front was founded in 1962, and the armed struggle began on 25 September 1964. Let me explain in some detail exactly what we are facing in our fight against Portuguese colonialism, and what it is we are fighting for.

## PORTUGUESE CONTROL

Since 1898 Portugal has been in virtual control of Mozambique. This control has been enforced through the breaking up of our traditional kingdoms and their replacement by carefully selected chiefs, who work under Portuguese administrators to carry out the political, social and economic policies of Portugal.

Political participation in the affairs of our country has been denied us; we have also been denied the right to education and other facilities of a free society, and economically the right to free choice of employment and just and favourable conditions of work have been replaced by what can only be called a system of slave labour.

Because of unfair working laws and conditions many Mozambicans left the country to work in the mines of South Africa and Rhodesia. In order to cash in on this the Portuguese Government entered into a series of agreements with these white racist countries, aimed at the maximum benefit of the colonialist to the detriment of the African. Laws exist which force Africans to employ themselves in European homes, farms or plantations, or for the government or in industry — or face arrest and forced labour, which the Portuguese cynically call *contrato voluntario*. With no bargaining power Mozambicans are thus forced to accept jobs at well below subsistence wages.

## "OVERSEAS PROVINCES"

Although the Portuguese concept of an "Overseas Province" is that it is part of the mother country, and therefore its inhabitants should have rights equal to any Portuguese, they



*Mozambican women in the liberated zones of Mozambique work hard in the present difficult conditions for the freedom they know is coming.*

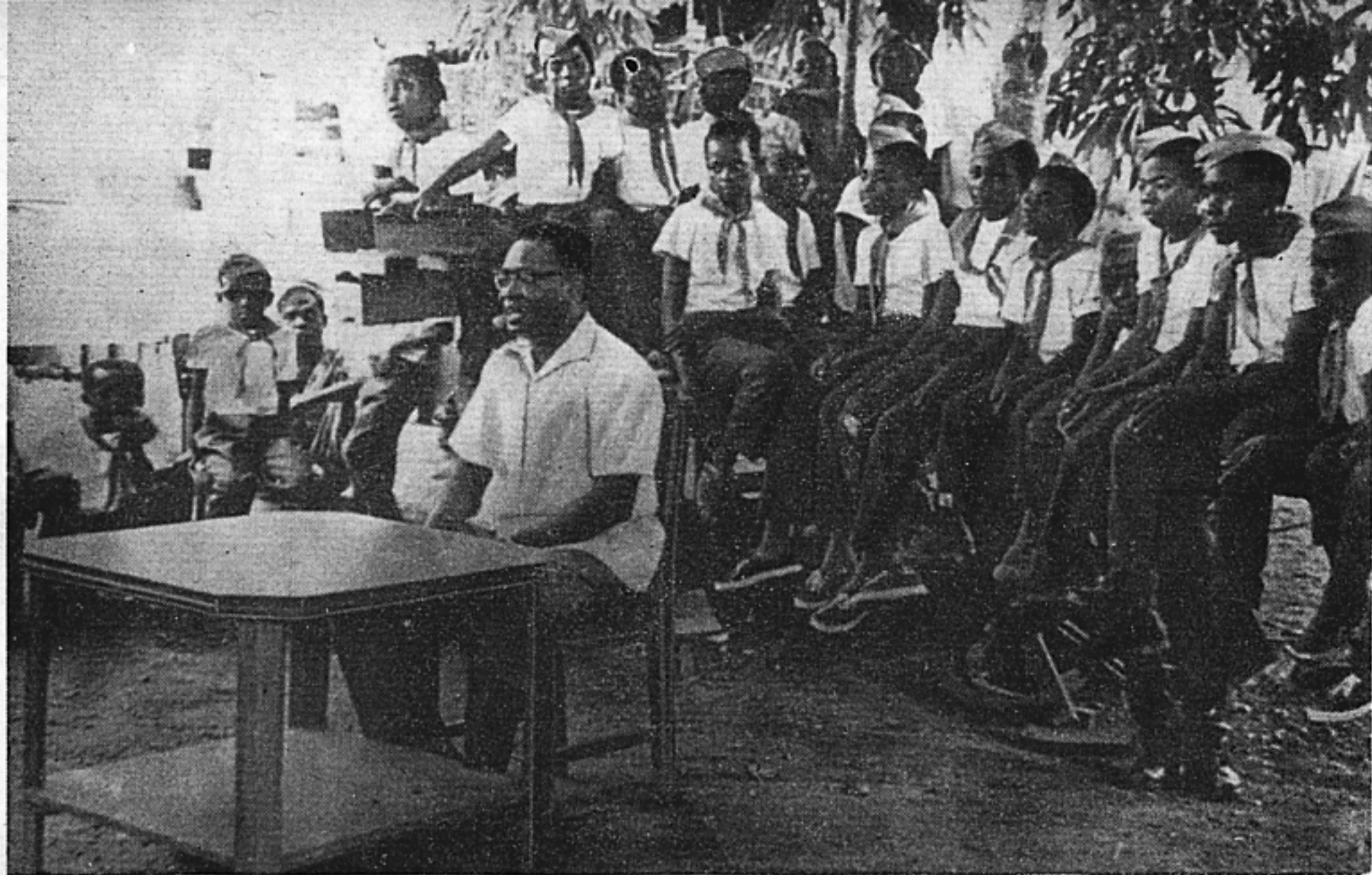
were sufficiently nervous of the possibility of the Africans in Mozambique being on equal terms educationally and technically that their policies have resulted in a 95% illiteracy rate among Africans. In 1942, in response to pressure from the white settlers who visualized their source of cheap labour vanishing into schools, the Portuguese Government signed the Missionary Agreement, which handed over the entire responsibility for the education of Africans in Mozambique, Angola and so-called Portuguese Guinea to the Roman Catholic missions.

The Portuguese colonies are the only ones in which the state abdicated all responsibility for the education of the majority of the people — and as a result it was not until 1960 that a black African was able to obtain a secondary school-leaving certificate in Mozambique. Even today there are not more than ten black Africans who have completed secondary education there. So much for Portuguese observance of Article 26 of the Declaration of Human Rights, which begins: "Everyone has the right to education."

In view of all this it may seem surprising that Portugal is still a member of the United Nations. When she was admitted in 1955 she said she had non-self-governing territories overseas under her control, and this statement was unfortunately accepted.

Since then resolutions have been passed and continue to be passed condemning her policies, but nothing positive has been done. Portugal, as a member of NATO and EFTA, receives aid from such Western powers as England, America,





*School in a liberated zone in Angola . . . a job South African students are also preparing to do (see also next article).*

France and West Germany, whose economic interests are also bound up with hers, and they are therefore unwilling to exert pressure in the form of sanctions and other concrete ways, to show their distaste for Portugal's inhuman and fascist colonial policy.

Portugal herself is of course an underdeveloped country with a complete lack of civil liberties for the people. So no vociferous protest from within the country itself is to be expected against a policy which involves more than 60,000 Portuguese soldiers, many of them conscripts, in Mozambique alone, and a rapidly increasing military budget (between January and May 1967 the war cost the Portuguese government about £ 7,500,000).

### **SOUTHERN AFRICA LINKED**

One word on the economic situation in Southern Africa. It must be remembered that business interests from almost every western country are involved in this part of Africa, benefiting from the economic exploitation of the African. The pressure exerted on the respective governments is considerable, and could be considered as one of the decisive factors in the lukewarm stand taken by some governments on these issues of human rights.

The fate of the whole of Southern Africa is inextricably linked, and this fact is also realised. With the independence of Mozambique, for example, the Smith regime in Rhodesia will be cut off from their main outlets to the sea through Lourenco Marques and Beira, and will be left with only South Africa open to them for export and import. Fully aware of this, the progress of the liberation struggle is being anxiously watched from further south, and as it gains ground pressure mounts in the newspapers to give material support to Portugal in Mozambique, as South Africa has recently done in Rhodesia when she sent men to help Smith suppress the freedom fighters.

An unholy alliance is being formed with the aim of the complete suppression of freedom in Southern Africa; and against this there is no choice but recourse to arms to defend ourselves and gain our rights.

### **FRELIMO FORCES AND PROGRAMME**

The Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo) believes in the right of each individual, regardless of race, colour, religion or birth to freely choose their own leaders, to participate in government, to have the opportunity of education, and of social, economic and cultural development.

What are we doing to achieve these aims?

Frelimo's fighting forces have grown from less than 200 guerillas in September 1964 to an army of over 8,000 trained and equipped men and women. Fighting is taking place in a little more than one-third of the country, and will expand southwards as the Portuguese retreat. The two northern provinces of Cabo Delgado and Niassa are virtually under Frelimo control, and it is here that we are beginning to implement the policies which will eventually be those of free and independent Mozambique.

In local administration for the first time the people are having a say in their own future. We make use of traditional African experience, marrying it to modern democratic principles, and in spite of the war conditions under which the government operates, the administration adjudicates in local disputes and handles trade and agriculture. Fields are worked co-operatively, and excess produce is exported in exchange for such essential goods as salt, textiles, simple farming tools etc. During 1966 cashew nuts, ground nuts and sunflower seed were the chief exports.

As the Portuguese administration has completely abandoned these areas, and all commercial and trading establishments run by Europeans and Asians were closed, it was incumbent on Frelimo to set up the machinery for supplying the people



with essentials, and this is now being carried out with the direct participation of all concerned. Although it is only a fraction of the freedom they will have, it is still a new experience for most of the population.

Another major responsibility of the administration is the care of the hundreds of thousands of men, women and children who have left their traditional homes to escape Portuguese reprisals, and now live in the forests and on the grassy plateaux. These people are displaced, but because they have chosen to stay in their own country rather than flee across the border they are not eligible for assistance from any of the official refugee organizations. They are therefore entirely dependent on what help we can give them for welfare services, health, education, and the maintenance of law and order.

## EDUCATION AND HEALTH

At the founding Congress of Frelimo in September 1962, it was decided that education should be placed on the same priority level as political organization and military action. One result of this was the birth of the Mozambique Institute in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, where young Mozambicans are prepared for higher education and technical training. There are now 130 students at the school, and it is the center of a large network of programmes which include primary schools in the refugee camps of Tanzania, a nurses' training course, and an administrative training course, and will shortly launch a primary teachers' training course.

Inside Mozambique itself there are more than 15,000 children in primary schools in the liberated areas receiving at least an elementary education. Although these schools are still rudimentary, they are more than has been known before, and are the first step towards the rights of education, and of the ability to have independent thought.

Another factor essential to the free development of the individual is the freedom from sickness and ill health. Portuguese medical services for Africans were always minimal, and are now non-existent in the liberated and semi-liberated

areas. Frelimo has replaced this with a series of health centres, manned by dedicated Mozambicans, where members of the local population can be treated, as well as those wounded in fighting. Graduates from two courses of training in Dar es Salaam have already returned to work in the clinics, and they will shortly be joined by a third group. With a shortage of trained personnel and the difficulties of importing drugs, health care is a constant struggle, but it is happening. An intensive campaign of smallpox vaccination is being carried out, for instance, under which already more than 100,000 people have been vaccinated, and statistical data is being collected on which future plans will be based.

## THE LONG STRUGGLE

There are now more than 800,000 Mozambicans, living in an area of 75,000 square miles, who are beginning to taste the first fruits of freedom under the guidance and care of FRELIMO. This is only a beginning, and our struggle will not be over until the whole of Mozambique is liberated. The people are now fighting to free themselves from the shackles of colonialism and economic imperialism, and are building by their own efforts a new and democratic society in which personal merit and hard work, and not the birth or colour of an individual, are the qualities upon which society can depend.

Mozambique will be governed in the best interests of all the people. Under Frelimo the government will endeavour to establish schools for all children, medical services for all people, and to help the people to produce sufficiently to pay for these and maintain a decent standard of living.

The people of Mozambique know that the struggle will be long and hard, and will not end with independence, but they also know that the ends are worth fighting for. Our battle is part of a larger one being fought all over Southern Africa, and in every other part of the world where the human rights of the people are being suppressed; but we are sure that the voice of the oppressed peoples will be heard. We have not only the will and determination to win, but also the certainty of eventual victory.

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# OUR ROLE AS STUDENTS

Edited version of a statement to progressive students' organizations, issued by SIPHO MBENQWANE and THABO MBEKI, External Representatives of the AFRICAN STUDENTS ASSOCIATION (SOUTH AFRICA)

The fact of discrimination in education on racial grounds in South Africa is now generally known. The structure and content of education from primary school up to university are determined on racial grounds.

At the primary and secondary stages, there is absolutely no mixing of the different races. At university level, what non-racial institutions there were have almost completely been denuded of the non-white student population. The latter are now in ethnically-exclusive "bush colleges."

Education for the white child is free and compulsory up to the age of 16. For the rest of the population it is not, the poorest section of the population being made to pay for educating its children.

In ten years of 'Bantu Education', the picture is one of unrelieved depression of African education.

In 1963, only 1,040 African children reached matriculation. This is out of 211,620 who had started their schooling in 1951.

Of 2,000,000 Africans in school in 1965, only 3% were in High Schools. 75% leave school before completing their primary education.

*(Editor's Note: — Detailed figures of white and non-white education were published in our issue Vol. 1, No. 9.)*

The guidelines of 'Bantu Education' are: "There must be unquestioning acceptance, by the white man of his superiority, by the Afrikaner (Boer) of his right to leadership, by the