

On the Necessity of a Prolonged War

FRELIMO

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During the visit of the Secretaries of Defence and Security of FRELIMO to the Province of Tete, in the first week of April 1968, they held several meetings with the people. At one of those meetings, in Fingoe, an old man spoke about the Revolution. Speaking of the war that had started in his province, he said: 'We must not have illusions that the war will last one week and that we will then be independent. No. This war will last for some time, it will be a hard one. We must be aware of this, and be prepared to fight as much as we have to.'

This old man, who never went to school, because the Portuguese colonialists did not allow him to, this old man, without book learning, knew the truths and the fundamental principles of our Revolution. He knew that a

prolonged war is necessary in order to defeat the enemy and to free our land.

But why is a prolonged war necessary? Some of our comrades think that we could win the war quickly. To do this, they think we should concentrate all our forces and throw them against the enemy.

It is clear that those comrades who believe this have not analysed the situation in Mozambique.

Our forces are far inferior to those of the enemy. We have only about one-fifth of the soldiers the enemy has. Besides the enemy has superior war supplies. He has got airplanes, tanks, bombs, cannons. If we gathered all our forces in a single battle against the enemy, he would send all his airplanes, tanks, and his 60,000 soldiers, and thus destroy all our forces. Therefore, this is something that we cannot do. It would mean sacrificing our soldiers uselessly and ending the Revolution. It would be adventurist.

What can we do then? We must conduct a prolonged war. Why? Because we can only free our homeland with a prolonged war.

In fact, we see that when we started the armed struggle in September 1964, FRELIMO only had 250 soldiers, and very few weapons. Today, there are over 12,000 soldiers equipped with modern weapons: FRELIMO has now got mortars, anti-aircraft guns, and even cannons. We can also see that the number of our troops is increasing, because each day there are more people who want to join the FRELIMO army. With further success in the struggle there will be further increases in the numbers until one day we shall outnumber the enemy. On the other hand, the weapons which we are capturing from the enemy, and those which the countries sympathetic to our liberation struggle are giving us, reinforce our military equipment.

We must also remind ourselves that Portugal is a small and under-developed country, involved in three wars simultaneously, in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea. On each one of these three fronts, Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea, there are Portuguese soldiers being killed every day by the guerrillas. Now Portugal does not have that many soldiers, that they shall be able to replace all the dead ones.

At the economic level, the cost of maintaining three armies, in lands far from Portugal, is destroying the economy. Today, Portugal is able to sustain the war thanks to the help which it gets from its NATO imperialist friends. But even such help is decreasing, because those countries – the USA, West Germany, England, France – have their own problems and cannot thus give Portugal too much.

As for us, international aid to our struggle is ever greater. It comes from African countries, socialist countries, and even from the progressive organizations of the imperialist countries themselves. At this pace, we are becoming stronger, while Portugal becomes weaker. All that has been said leads us to conclude that the final victory will be ours, if we know how to take advantage of our situation, and of the weaknesses of the enemy.

Our *advantages*, our strong points, are the following:

(a) Our war is a just one. We are fighting the invaders, in order to reconquer our land. The fact that our war is a just one ensures the participation of

all the people, and the support of all the progressive countries in the world.

(b) All our people, seven million Mozambicans, are united in a single front against the common enemy, the Portuguese colonizers.

(c) The morale of our people and guerrillas is high. All fight heroically in the defence of our country.

(d) We are fighting on our own land, in the defence of the interests of our people. Thus, our guerillas have three advantages: they know the terrain well, they are used to the climate, and they are supported by the people.

(e) We have many allies, in all parts of the world, who support our struggle.

Our *weaknesses* are the following:

(a) We have not enough weapons.

(b) Our troops are still inferior in number to those of the enemy.

(c) Our propaganda is very weak.

As to the enemy, these are his weaknesses:

(a) Their war is not a just one. Their aggression, oppression, and exploitation arouses the hatred of our people.

(b) The enemy is divided. Even in Portugal there are many people who are against the colonial war, and against the Fascist government of Salazar.

(c) The morale of the Portuguese troops is very low. In battle we see that the Portuguese soldiers are afraid to fight.

(d) The enemy is not fighting on their own land. Thus they have three disadvantages: they are not used to the climate, have no knowledge of the terrain, and are not supported by the people.

(e) The enemy has the support of only some of its allies, but these allies have their own problems and are thus not able to bear all the expenditures of the war. Even Salazar has complained of this fact, and accused America and England of abandoning him. On the whole, Portugal is isolated.

(f) The enemy must fight in three territories at the same time, in Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea. And in each one of these countries he must fight on several fronts. In Mozambique there are three fronts – Cabo Delgado, Niassa and Tete; in Angola there are four. In Guinea he is fighting in almost all areas of the territory. This forces the enemy to scatter its already weak forces.

The enemy's strong points are the following:

(a) He has large numbers of modern weapons.

(b) He has many troops.

(c) His means of propaganda are more sophisticated.

In comparing our strength and weaknesses with those of the enemy, we see that for now the enemy is still superior to us. He has more troops, more weapons, and better propaganda. *But this is only a temporary advantage*, since, as we have seen, our forces are gradually increasing, while those of the enemy are decreasing. With the development of the war thanks to the efforts of the whole people in struggle, our strong points will be consolidated and our weaknesses will disappear. On the contrary, the enemy's strong points, the advantages which he holds today, will disappear and he will become weaker

every day, isolated and discouraged. And thus, we will one day be stronger than the enemy. The Portuguese colonizers will then be defeated and we will finally free our land, Mozambique. The secret of our victory lies in the participation of the whole people in the struggle. We must be aware that we must continue to fight, to develop production, to train people, to mobilize the people. We must not expect that independence will fall from the sky, or that others may come to free our land for us. It is all of us, through a day by day, constant, continuous struggle, who will build independence of Mozambique, fighting as long as we have to.