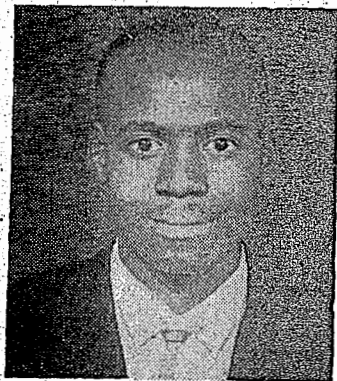


Dangers of new Colonialism in Mozambique

by A. C. Gwambe (National President, Union Democratic Nacional de Mozambique)



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THE "Diploma Legislativo" No. 36 passed in Lourenço Marques in 1927 by the white members of the Mozambique Legislative Council, created the "Law of Assimilation", which is a system of making Africans stooges of the Portuguese Colonial Government.

Any African who satisfies the following requirements becomes a "Portuguese Assimilado":—

- (1) Must be proficient in the Portuguese language.
- (2) Must not adhere to the customs of the indigenous people.
- (3) Must hold a professional post in commerce and industry, and earn enough money to be able to lead a decent life.

These three requirements form the basis of conditions one must satisfy before he can be assimilated, and this system leads Mozambique to a new form of neo-colonialism.

It was not until 1940 that the oppressed Africans started to engage in movements which aimed at the overthrow of the Portuguese imperialist government.

From 1940 to 1950, there was a total of about 4,349 Africans who still adhered to the policy of assimilation which gave them certain social privileges which differed from those enjoyed by the Mulattoes.

People of Asian origin, Portuguese and all the Mulattoes are not expected to satisfy the above mentioned con-

ditions as they are by law not affected by the system of assimilation.

Asians together with the Portuguese control the country's economy along a tight system of capitalistic monopoly backed by the English, Americans and Germans. The 1955 official records indicated that the biggest agricultural enterprises amounted to about 1,283 and that of this total, 1,088 belonged to the Portuguese colonial masters, 59 to Indians, 34 to the Germans, and 14 to the Pakistanis.

In accordance with the rules of assimilation, all Africans who have undergone this process, are regarded not as Africans but as "Portuguese", and yet not a single one of these people is in possession of a farm. This applies equally to the Mulattoes.

The Portuguese and the Mulattoes number about 50,000 as against 6½ million Africans. The chief occupation of this minority group is to execute Portuguese colonial laws which compel Africans to work under slave conditions in the plantations.

These people are beaten in a savage manner while they toil in the plantations.

The Assimilados and the Mulattoes act as a medium through which the Portuguese slave owners issue orders to the oppressed and humiliated Africans who have not qualified to be regarded as Assimilados.

The 1954 statistical records showed that the Portuguese slave owners

earned about £25 a month through agriculture and allied pursuits. The Assimilados earned about £13, while the Mulattoes got a little' over £17, and the Africans who worked under the system of forced labour received only £1 19/- and no allowance was made for the two basic necessities of life—shelter and food.

The people of Mozambique are clearly aware of the fact that Mulattoes and Assimilados are puppets who execute Portuguese colonial instructions of slavery without question. One Mulatto or Assimilado can take charge of about one hundred African plantation labourers.

This arrangement has created animosity between the African labourers on the one hand the Mulatto-Assimilado group on the other.

Nor is there any co-operation between these groups which only work together when they have to execute oppressive measures over the African labourers. The Mulattoes still continue to look down upon the Assimilado because of the difference in salary scales, for Mulattoes get more than the Assimilados.

There is social discrimination, too. All so-called Assimilados must produce identity cards or certificates of exemption before they can be admitted into cinemas and dance halls. This does not apply to Mulattoes who have free and unhampered access to all public places. The people of Mozambique are today uniting to overthrow the Portuguese oppressor government in the country. The fact that the people do not

seem to be prepared to follow the Mulatto-Assimilado political leadership retards the national liberation struggle. They exclaim with anger that this group cannot do them any good for it has always been a collection of Portuguese stooges who aim at retarding national progress towards total freedom and independence.

Education

Discrimination in education is worse than in all other spheres of life in Mozambique.

Only Portuguese children can acquire secondary and high school education, with a small number of Mulatto and Assimilado children who must give an assurance before they are admitted into schools that they will act as Portuguese spies and stooges after completing their studies. Even as we write this, there is not a single university graduate in Mozambique, with the exception of a few Portuguese, Mulatto and Assimilado children who have completed their secondary school education.

Immediately after completing the secondary or high school education, these people are taken to Portugal where they undergo a thorough training as future Portuguese spies and stooges in Mozambique.

Education for African children is limited to Primary Catholic Mission Schools where they are taught Portuguese language and catechism. In 1954 only 400,000 African children were attending the mission schools. Protestant missions produce better results than the Catholic ones.

Assimilados and Mulattoes attend their own private and separate schools, and this arrangement again is fraught with danger for the ultimate aim is to bring about a feeling of hostility and racial superiority and inferiority between the African children on the one hand and the Mulatto-Assimilado children on the other. A Mulatto-Assimilado pupil who has passed standard I is far better than an African child who has passed standard III. A Mulatto-Assimilado child is not compelled to do catechism at schools while this rule is rigidly applied when it comes to African children.

Most people have never understood the reason why our Party is

so solidly backed by all the oppressed people of Mozambique.

The reason is simple. At the age of 13 in 1952, I was already working as a forced labourer. I worked with about 700 senior forced labourers, and as the only person who had received little education, I used to render them some assistance by writing their letters and giving them an idea of the colonial problems confronting them.

As a result of this, I was thrashed every single day and imprisoned on a number of occasions. At one stage I was sentenced to seven years imprisonment, but the labourers were able to raise a sum of £25 for me which was paid to the goal guard and I was released.

Two members of our Party's National Executive have also worked under the system of forced labour. The Vice-President of our Party, F.C. Mahluza, was at one time sold to the South African Round Gold Mines, while the Party's Publicity Secretary J.R. Siguake was always strictly policed by the Portuguese authorities in Mozambique.

Immediately after the formation of our Organisation, I received many congratulatory messages from many people thanking and admiring our courage and determination for having launched a Party under such difficult conditions.

We got more help and messages of solidarity from some of our old friends who had seen our picture in one newspaper. This resulted in many people from Mozambique itself giving tremendous support to our Party.

From my own experience I have realised that what the oppressed people of Mozambique want is not a highly educated leader but just a determined and dedicated leader armed with the principles of Pan-African Nationalism, because the political leadership of the Mulatto-Assimilado group will never be accepted by the people of Mozambique.

Nothing can shake us from the conviction that the policy of Multi-racialism would lead Mozambique to a new form of colonialism, i.e., Neo-colonialism.

The dangers of neo-colonialism in Mozambique became clear recently when a Portuguese Minister of

so-called Overseas Provinces made a declaration that all Africans in the Portuguese colonies are citizens of Portugal. This means that the same stooges who have always been dominating the legislative Council will still be regarded as the representatives of the oppressed people.

No Mozambican can be elected to the Legislative Council if he is not a Portuguese stooge. Like in all colonial countries, all Mozambicans who are backed by the majority of people are declared traitors. Orders of arrest are issued against them, and if arrested they are sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

The National Democratic Union of Mozambique rejects any type of government or representation in the Councils of State if such representatives were not democratically elected by the majority of the people in the country.

Our aim is immediate and unconditional national independence with a government democratically elected by the working class majority.

The National Democratic Union of Mozambique draws tremendous support from all Africans working under forced labour conditions in the country, i.e. mines, plantations, farming industries, railways, manufacturing industry, and stevedoring and dock workers.

We are determined to resort to any measure which will result in the overthrow of the Portuguese colonial government, and which will result in the country attaining national independence.

We make an open declaration to all people that we are fundamentally opposed to the system or policy of multi-racialism.

It is not our aim, however, to attack those who believe in multi-racialism, despite the fact that multi-racialists are instruments of imperialism.

We will never allow racial representation in our national government; for we shall consider individual merit as sufficient. A rule by the majority is our only aim, and individuals who become intolerant to a rule by the majority will be dealt with accordingly by our Immigration Ministry.

We propose the name "Monomotapa" in the place of a colonial name "Mozambique".