

COMITE REVOLUCIONARIO DE MOCAMBIQUE

"MOZAMBIQUE REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE"

(COREMO)

NEWSLETTER

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Portugal, a small country in the corner of Western Europe which covers 92,000 square kilometers and has a population of approximately 9 million, controls African possessions 24 times larger than Portugal itself. Since 1951, these territories are "officially" considered to be an integral part of the Portuguese mainland and are administered as such in order to circumvent the United Nations requirement that reports be submitted on non-self-governing territories. In spite of this semantic game the area is the largest colonial empire left in the world today.

Portugal is also the largest surviving Fascist dictatorship in Western Europe. The corporate Republic established by the late Salazar in 1933 (as the constitutional heir to the military dictatorship set up in 1926) has outlived the dictator's demise in 1968, remaining virtually unchanged under his successor Marcelo Caetano. The regime relies strongly on the army and the secret police, and enjoys the backing of an industrial and financial "oligarchy" as well as the Catholic Church in Portugal. Until recently, the government has successfully managed to stifle all dissent at home and in the overseas territories.

There is an obvious relationship between the continuing existence of an oppressive political regime in Portugal and the perpetuation of an anachronistic colonial empire in spite of recurrent outcries in the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and other international organizations. During the brief experiment of the liberal Republic between the years 1910 - 1920, various political organizations arose in the colonies which might have eventually engineered an independence movement similar to those of other African States. However, the military dictatorship followed by Salazar Estado Novo put the lid on any form of social and political activity which did not follow the path laid down by the regime. Opposition could not be silenced indefinitely and as the world scene changed and Europe freed herself of her dictators and Africa of her colonizers, it became clearer that some form of revolution was the only alternative open to the oppressed. The ruthless repression of largely

spontaneous popular protests (with large-scale arrests of urban workers, miners and railwaymen in Portugal, and widespread killings of peasants, dockworkers, and plantation workers in the African territories) has driven the opposition increasingly underground and led to the realization that organized guerrilla warfare is the only effective way of dealing with the system. This conclusion was painfully reached in Mozambique and led Mozambicans to form the Mozambique Revolutionary Committee (COREMO).

COREMO, with its previsional headquarters in Lusaka, Zambia, was formed in 1965 and since that time has been fighting inside Mozambique to liberate our oppressed people from Portuguese colonialism.

Despite this fact, many people have not heard about the work of COREMO mainly because for the last few years the primary goal to the party has been to establish its roots within Mozambique and to become as self-reliant as possible. Strict adherence to this program meant that efforts to publicize the party to the outside world were necessarily kept to a minimum.

This policy proved wise and began to bear fruit, when in July, 1971 a meeting was held in Lusaka, Zambia with participation of members of several political parties such as the United Front of Mozambique (FUMO), the Mozambique Liberation Movement (MOLIMO) both based in Nairobi, Kenya and the Mozambique National Students Union (UNEMO), Nairobi Section. Persons unaffiliated with any party were included as well as a representative of those who has lost sympathy with FRELIMO (The Mozambique Liberation Front). Those who has resigned from or were forced out of FRELIMO were represented by the Rev. Uria Simango, the former Vice-President of that party. COREMO accepted the task of working out a solution whereby the Mozambican people could once again be united in their common cause.

The conference was successful and a unity among these elements was created under COREMO adding strength to the sound base already established by the party.

This event was a source of satisfaction to Mozambicans everywhere who prize unity in our struggle. Those who had previously worked under FRELIMO leadership had been disappointed with the steady deterioration in that party since the assassination of Dr. Eduardo Mondlane in 1969, and welcomed an alternate solution to their problem. Many followed Rev. Simango's initiative in pledging themselves to COREMO, especially since Simango has been one of the few leaders of FRELIMO that had

been popularly elected and not appointed to his position in that party. Student groups were also pleased with the outcome of the conference and with the chance to channel their energies in a meaningful way. The Nairobi Section of the Mozambican Students Union (UNENMO) took note "with great satisfaction of the agreement of unity with COREMO negotiated by Rev. Uria Simango, proclaims its full support of unity with COREMO, affirms its intention to collaborate in all means to strengthen and consolidate our unity, strongly condemns all anti-unity elements and factors applied and manifested by those elements to divide the people of Mozambique, and requests all Mozambicans to unite and fight the Portuguese colonists to free our country."

A group of Mozambican refugees meeting with Simango in Nairobi on July 25, 1971, expressed the feelings of many when they stated: "the most powerful weapon which can guarantee and accelerate the attainment of freedom and independence for ourselves is the unity of Mozambican people. The meeting was concerned that such unity had not been realized. The meeting concluded, however, that the people of Mozambique want unity and they are capable of bringing it about."

A conference held on Oct. 24-25 by people representing 12 regions in Mozambique also supported unity under COREMO and expressed their wish to collaborate with the new structure.

In addition to the unity talks, many problems of the liberation movement were discussed and several programs initiated. The participants agreed that no person or groups can be discriminated against within the movement, that there is no place for oppression within COREMO. Therefore, the new structure of COREMO must insure the participation of people from all regions and from all walks of life. Unless a liberation movement is widely based, its success is doubtful and even should a narrowly based movement succeed, its desirability is questionable. Such a movement would fall victim to the same vicious systems it purports to overthrow.

Hence, COREMO considered of prime importance the creation of open channels for all interest groups. These took the form of a Women's League, Youth League, Workers' Syndicate, etc. The Central Committee of COREMO was also enlarged to include representatives of these sub-groups, including a representative of students overseas.

Of interest to sympathizers of the Mozambique liberation movement is the formation, in addition to the above groups, of a department to deal with the educational and social welfare programs of the party. It is well known throughout the world that Portugal has done little or nothing in the field of education and community development in its colonies or in the metropole for that matter. In Portugal itself there is a

40% illiteracy rate. In her colonies, the schools at all levels are primarily agencies for the spread of the Portuguese language and culture. Everywhere in Mozambique they reflect the Portuguese government's concept of its "colonial responsibility" to integrate the "savages" into the mainstream of Portuguese culture and society. Broadly stated the Portuguese ideal has been that carefully controlled education would in time produce an African populace that speaks only the Portuguese language, embraces only Catholicism, and is as intensely nationalistic as citizens of Portugal.

According to last official reports, even this questionable policy has not been pursued too vigorously, there being 2,311 educational establishments in Mozambique including government, Catholic, Protestant, and private schools. Of these, 2,041 were rudimentary schools with a total enrollment of 242,412. Most of the schools at this level are bush schools with poorly trained personnel and inadequate equipment. There were in the same year 190 elementary and complementary schools for Europeans and Asians, (who comprise less than 100,000 of the country's total population). Sixty-nine schools at the third and fourth grade level served the eight million Africans, while there were 121 schools at this level for white and Asian students. The inequalities become more gross as one goes up the educational ladder.

Since our fight is not only military but is also a war against ignorance, the party has increased its efforts in the field of education. And since our new structure includes persons from all sectors of the population including the "intellectuals" our department is being staffed by persons who have had experience in this field.

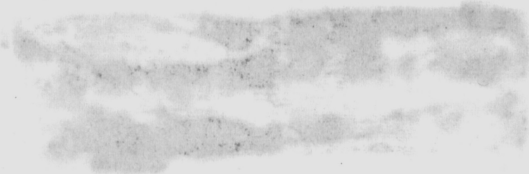
The program also includes work in the area of social welfare. Because of the nature of the Portuguese tactics (bombing from planes and helicopters of civilian areas) many people have been left homeless and many children have been orphaned. Elderly people too are left with no one to care for them. It is one of the priorities of COREMO to provide assistance to these persons in the form of food, clothing, medicine, etc. It might be appropriate to state here that relief assistance is dispensed by the party, but not along party lines. COREMO exists to aid all Mozambicans, not just party members. To make a parallel, what would one think of the Republican or Democratic parties in the United States if they worked only for the good of party members and not for the nation as a whole.

During his recent trip to Europe and America, the Rev. Uria Simango met with many groups, including students and faculty groups, church groups, Africanists and civic groups and discussed with them the efforts of COREMO and the struggle for liberation in Southern Africa. One student at Columbia University challenged Rev. Simango's reasons for coming to the United States since the U.S. government supports Portugal through NATO. Rev. Simango answered that he didn't come here to sell his ideas for freedom and independence to those that were perpetrating atrocities through their active support of

structures such as NATO, but he does believe that the American people can do much to help our cause if they are well informed about the situation. They can try their best to change their government's stand on the Portuguese colonies and some may feel inclined to help us materially. Both moral and material support are needed and they will only be forthcoming when the American people themselves are informed about this "forgotten war."

We firmly believe that only Mozambicans and no one else will liberate us from Portuguese bondage. We must do this ourselves. However, your support is nonetheless important. Pressure on your government to stop supplying arms through NATO will save many African lives. Your humanitarian concern for our cause is welcome! Won't you help?

PATRIA OU MORTE!



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