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THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONALISM
IN MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambican nationalism, like practically all African nationalism, was born out of direct European colonialism. Mozambique's most specific source of national unity is the common experience (in suffering) of the people during the last one hundred years of Portuguese colonialist control. In order to understand the development of Mozambique nationalism, we have to study the main stages of development of Portuguese colonialism in our country and note the reaction of the people to these.

Before I outline these stages of the development of Portuguese colonialism and their relationship to the rise of nationalism, I wish to present a definition of nationalism. By nationalism I mean "a consciousness on the part of individuals or groups of membership in a nation or of a desire to develop the strength, liberty or prosperity of that nation." (The Chatham House Report, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1939). The above definition applies to nationalism in all circumstances or stages of development of any people. For instance, it might apply to European nationalism as a continental phenomenon, or French, American, Russian, Chinese, Brazilian, etc. nationalisms as expressions of the aspirations of given ethnic or national entities. The African context in which Mozambican nationalism finds expression might require further refinement of the definition offered above. In view of the recent historical circumstances which affected the lives of the various people within the continent of Africa, it is necessary to add that African nationalism is also characterised by the development of attitudes, activities and more or less structured programmes aimed at the mobilisation of forces for the attainment of self-government and independence. In the specific case of Mozambique, shared by all Portuguese colonies in Africa and possibly by all other remaining peoples yet to be free, these attitudes, activities and structured programmes have to include the establishment of military or paramilitary schemes for the final showdown before the actual attainment of independence can be assured.

If you could bear with me for a few more seconds in connexion with these preliminary remarks, I should like to sum up the definition of nationalism offered above in the following manner:

- a) a consciousness on the part of individuals or groups of membership in a nation - in our case, Mozambique

- b) a desire to develop the strength, liberty or prosperity of that nation, - the concept of the Mozambique Liberation Front (or FRELIMO as we are popularly known) of the future socio-economic structure of the country and how to go about implementing it;
- c) the specific goal of attaining self-government and independence, - FRELIMO's political and military programme;
- d) a concept of the people's unity - the Mozambican people's desire to rid themselves of Portuguese imperialism and colonialism so as to be completely free to develop their socio-economic structures as they wish; and,
- e) the establishment of more or less permanent political structures for the pursuit of national objectives in cooperation with other African nations.

In reference to African nationalism in general, it is necessary to stress four more points:

- i) that it is a reaction against political controls imposed by Europeans upon the African peoples; and,
- ii) that it is a reaction against foreign, especially Western, economic exploitation of the African natural and human resources.
- iii) In those areas of Africa where a combination of European and Asian populations have come to settle alongside of the African peoples, African nationalism has had to include also a reaction against local cultural and socio-economic barriers created by members of these non-African communities.
- iv) Concurrent with the rise of African nationalism, there developed another kind of nationalism, cultural nationalism, epitomised by the mushrooming of all sorts of theories of the African man, labelled "African personality" by Anglophones and "la Negritude" or "Africanité" by Francophones.

Mozambique is one of the remnants of an old Portuguese colonial empire which was established during the 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries in Asia, South America and Africa. In Africa the remnants of this empire still include Angola, Mozambique, Guinea (called Portuguese), the Cape Verde Islands and St. Tomé Island. The largest of these colonies is Angola, although Mozambique has the largest population of them all.

Contacts between Portugal and parts of what is now known as Mozambique began at the end of the 15th century, when Vasco da Gama, a well-known Portuguese navigator, reached the island of Mozambique in early March 1498. Since the main interest of the Portuguese

kings who had sponsored these trips was to open a safer route to India than the then dangerous Near East land route, for many years the Portuguese satisfied themselves with establishing filling stations along the East African coast, thus leaving the rest of the interior untouched. The Portuguese claim that they have been in Mozambique for over 450 years, implying that for all that time they have been controlling our country politically. If there is any truth in this Portuguese claim, it has to do with the fact that soon after the first contact with the people of the coastal region of East Africa, the Portuguese, envying the wealth and power which the Arab rulers of the time possessed, they plotted, connived and organised whatever forces they could muster and fought their way into the position of control. This enabled the Portuguese to monopolise the then very rich East African trade in ivory, gold and other precious stones. In order to accomplish this, the Portuguese took advantage of the rivalries which then existed among the sherifs and sheiks of such city states as Pate, Malindi, Kilwa, Zanzibar, Mozambique, Sofala, etc; which were famous for their "prosperity and elegance".

At that time, wealth and cultural refinement were at least favourably comparable with the best in Europe and Asia. From the reaction of the Portuguese sailors of that time, gleaned from their diaries, it is possible to suggest that East Africa as a whole "was a world comparable, if not superior, in material culture to Portugal in 1500". (Duffy, 1962, p. 75). However, political unity among these city states was then no easier than it is in the present East Africa. Let me quote Professor James Duffy: "Political unity among these city states was a transitory burden. Each local prince defended his city's political and commercial independence, and at no time was there an East African nation, although the stronger towns at one time or another dominated their weaker neighbours". (Duffy, 1962, p. 75).

Even though the Portuguese took advantage of this unfortunate situation, they were never able to impose a lasting political control, except for a very thin coastal strip running from Cape Delgado to the city state of Sofala. By 1700 a resurgence of Islamic influence in this part of Africa had been able to effectively eliminate Portuguese traders and soldiers, as well as scores of towns which they had held from time to time. (Op. cit. p. 77).

From the beginning of the 18th century, the Portuguese concentrated on conniving and cajoling their way into the control of the rich commerce of the area between Cape Delgado and the Zambezi basin, in an attempt to capture the flow of gold from the then famous gold mines of Monomotapa, which the Portuguese had believed

to be the proverbial "King Solomon's Mines". Again, in this instance, the imperialistic activities of the Portuguese affected an area which included what is today known as Zambia and Zimbabwe or Southern Rhodesia. The capital of Monomotapa's empire was located in Mashonaland and was part of the Makalanga confederacy of that time.

During a period of 200 years, the Portuguese were able to derive a great deal of wealth by the simple fact that it had been able to control the flow of commerce from the interior of the country to the coastal city states and abroad. During the 17th and 18th centuries, Portuguese authority was firmly enough established in the northern and central parts of Mozambique so that it was possible to introduce Catholic missionaries, first, the Dominicans, then the Jesuits, who were the first to introduce Christianity in East Africa. However, whatever success this first missionary effort was crowned with, was almost completely destroyed in the 18th century by the corrupting effect of the marriage which had naturally resulted from the association of commercial, religious and political activities of the Church and the State. It was during this time that the prazeiros system was introduced in Mozambique. Prazeiros were Portuguese white and Mulatto settlers and landowners who, not unlike European feudal lords, ruled those Africans who had the misfortune to fall under their authority and control. Their lot was worse than that of slaves. These prazeiros often controlled whole districts as personal properties and recognised no law but their own, and only occasionally paid their vassalage to the king of Portugal. Jesuit and Dominican missionaries of the time also came to own vast tracts of land, administering it like any prazeiro, collecting head taxes and when slavery became more profitable, they dealt in slaves. It was out of the prazo system that the great land companies, such as the Nyasa and Manica e Sofala companies developed. It can also be presumed that at least the peculiarly Portuguese and heartless concessionary company system which typifies the major economic enterprises of Portuguese colonialism derived its refinements from the prazos system of this period.

Corruption in the prazos system was so rampant that by the third decade of the 19th century even the Portuguese government felt compelled to outlaw it. Among other reasons for its abolition by the Portuguese colonial government, the prazos system was notorious for fostering insecurity for person and property, and for the excessive number of Africans who were compelled to leave the area altogether due to the slaving practices of the manor lords. All of this resulted in the almost complete collapse of the Portuguese administration. However, in order to reimpose Portuguese authority, it was necessary to recruit the cooperation of some of the prazeiros, which meant their reinstatement; therefore, the vicious circle!

All along, however, the financial benefits which accrued from the slave trade were so great that the prazos of central Mozambique had become the reservoirs for slaving. It must be noted here, even in passing, that although the slave trade was one of the most characteristic Portuguese economic activities, slavery per se in East Africa was practiced long before Vasco da Gama touched this coast of Africa. Most of the slaves from East Africa were sold in the Middle East and in South East Asia, including India.

Most of the above colonialist-imperialist activities in East Africa took place primarily on the thin coastal strip, involving mostly contacts with the Arabs and the Swahilis, with only very superficial contacts with the bulk of the Bantu speaking people of present day East Africa and Mozambique.

It was with the proverbial scramble for Africa, which began in the second half of the 19th century, that we must date the start of the Portuguese conquest of what is now Mozambique. After the partition of Africa at the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, Portugal was impelled to capture and solidify what had been dished out to her. In order to accomplish this, the Portuguese used every technique known in the history of colonial conquests. Where it was possible she used infiltration by Portuguese traders, who disguised themselves as simple businessmen interested in the exchange of goods between equals; but later on, after having thoroughly spied and mapped out a whole region, they invited their military forces in, which subsequently wiped out whatever resistance might have been put up by the local rulers. At times, the Portuguese used white settlers, who pretended that they needed land to farm, but who, after having been kindly accommodated by the naive traditional rulers, claimed possession of the communal lands and forced their way to enslaving the African peoples who were originally their hosts. Sometimes even Portuguese missionaries were used as pacifiers of the natives, using the Christian faith as a lullaby, while the Portuguese military forces occupied the land and controlled the people.

Where the traditional political authority was strong and the military machinery was adequate to offer a serious resistance to European conquest, the Portuguese were more tactful, using techniques of initial contact which were more gentle. For instance, in these circumstances, the Portuguese were prepared to begin their contacts with strong African states by establishing diplomatic relations: sending Portuguese "ambassadors" to the courts of the most important traditional rulers. Then after having sufficiently spied out the internal strengths and weaknesses of the government, they proceeded on to attack, using the traditional excuses of "provocation" or "protection of the security of the white settlers or missionaries",

etc.

This is the way in which the war against the last of the Mozambican traditional empires, the Gaza Empire under Gungunyana, was justified. The war against Emperor Gungunyana began in 1895 and ended in 1898 with the death in battle of General Magigwane and the capture and deportation of the Emperor to Portugal, where he died several years later.

As to the kind of government which the Portuguese established after they subjugated all parts of the country, we have already described this in presentations which have been published elsewhere.

The Rise of a Mozambique Nationalism

As is clear from the foregoing, the success of the Portuguese in controlling the whole of Mozambique was due mainly to the lack of a cohesive political force to oppose them. Right from the first days of contact with the East African coastal city states in the 15th century, when the Portuguese were able, albeit temporarily, to defeat and control many of them, through the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, when they captured the main commercial wealth of northern and central Mozambique, up to the 19th century, when they proceeded to conquer and keep the present territory of our country, the reaction of our people was fragmentary. It was a piecemeal reaction which encouraged a piecemeal conquest of our people. Even as late as the second decade of this century, in 1917 and 1918 to be exact, when the Makombe of the Barwe, in an attempt to reestablish some of the power of his legendary predecessor King Monomotapa, staged a successful revolt, his success did not last long, for it was not a national Mozambican uprising: it was confined to one or two tribal kingdoms. (See T. O. Ranger, St. Anthony's African Papers, II).

Mozambicans had to wait for more than 45 years before they could seriously challenge Portuguese authority. I am referring to the national liberation war, launched on the 25th of September 1964 by the people of Mozambique under the leadership of the Mozambique Liberation Front.

Between 1918 and 1964, a number of minor local tribal uprisings took place in various parts of Mozambique, but they were easily crushed by the Portuguese, and their leaders were massacred or deported to the islands or to Portugal.

As the colonial system became steadily and firmly established in the whole country, a small class of educated African peoples slowly emerged, in spite of very meager educational facilities available to Africans as a whole. To these Africans, who were sometimes called assimilados or évolue, the Portuguese offered limited opportunities for social and economic advancement in the

colonial system, but only sufficiently to make them useful as instruments of contact between the European administration and economic interests and the masses of the black people. Among these assimilated Africans, and some Mulattoes and most Europeanised Asians such as Goans, there are those who believe that their socio-economic and cultural future, or even that of the whole country, belongs to a perpetual attachment to Portugal. But most of the educated Africans have no such illusion. They have seen over the years how their own people have gradually become poorer as the white man became wealthier. The more the black people tried to press upon the European privileged positions in the socio-economic structure, the more stringent the Portuguese colonial laws became. This, of course, brought about more frustration among the African people, especially among those who had education comparable to the Europeans.

Some of this frustration was expressed in plaintive poetry, such as the following lines by Noemia de Sousa:

"Oh Africa, my motherland, answer me:
What has happened to my bush sister,
that she comes no more to the city
with her eternal little ones
(one on her back, one in her womb),
with her eternal charcoal-vendor's cry?

Oh Africa, my motherland,
you at least will not forsake my heroic sister.
She shall live in the proud memorial of your arms."

Whenever the political climate in Portugal permitted it, the frustration was expressed in direct political journalism, openly voicing and defending the rights of the black masses, as illustrated by the success of the Albasinis in establishing The African Cry (O Brado Africano) in the early 1920's, as one of the first African weeklies in the whole continent. Although this paper is still in circulation today, and is still the only Mozambican African paper, it has been thoroughly emasculated by the fascist government of Salazar so that it no longer says anything meaningful.

Other forms of protest against the excesses of Portuguese colonialism and imperialism took the form of political or semi-political associations. In the beginning of this century, when the Portuguese themselves were groping about for a more democratic system of government, several African political groups arose, which later became political parties. But when Salazar finally established the present fascist system of government, these parties were wiped out, and in their place was substituted the present more racial and communal associations. I am referring here to the rise and fall of

such African organisations as the Gremio Africano, which later became Associação Africana. For quite some time this African organisation was the only Mozambican political grouping which served as the focal point of most African aspirations. When it was becoming clear to the settlers that the African people were rallying around one body against their interests, they connived with some of the leaders and helped to split them into two groups. This split resulted in the formation of another African organisation in the early 1930's O Instituto Negrófilo (The Negrophile Institute), which when the fascists took over the government in Portugal was forced to change its name to Centro Associativo dos Negros de Moçambique. The membership of these two organisations seems to reflect a division of the African people into two groups: the Mulattoes tending to predominate in the Associação Africana and the black Africans dominating the Centro Associativo dos Negros de Moçambique.

However, since these two organisations are no more what one might call popular movements, they no longer serve any visible social or political purpose for the masses of the oppressed African population. They are at best bourgeois social clubs, often called upon by the government to shout their part in the martial chorus of allegiance to Salazar and his fascist regime.

Another kind of semi-social, semi-political organisation which left some marks on the Mozambique political scene is the Associação dos Naturais de Moçambique (Association of Native-Born Mozambicans). The organisation was originally meant for European-born white settlers. Consequently, for quite a long time it openly discriminated in its membership against the so-called non-Europeans. But since about fifteen years ago, it began to allow some members of other racial groups to join the association. In fact, during the mid-fifties the Associação dos Naturais de Moçambique developed a policy favouring social integration between the two major racial groups, with a view to preparing the people for a future autonomous Mozambique under Portuguese leadership. At one point during the last ten years, the organisation launched a scholarship campaign to subsidise the education of some promising Africans in secondary and commercial schools. At first the government encouraged the efforts of this group, perhaps believing that its leaders were only interested in the social and cultural advancement of the African people; but when it began to note that there were some tendencies toward a more genuine Mozambican nationalism among them, the government took drastic steps to stop them. The government arrested all of the top leaders of the association and replaced them with fascist leaders and placed the whole organisation under direct government control.

Lately we have received information indicating that in the Centro Associativo the President of the Executive Committee, Sr. Filipe Tembe, has been arrested and is now in prison, apparently for deviating from the official fascist line set by the Salazar government.

The Rise of Political Parties

It was only after the second world war that political parties began to emerge on the Mozambique horizon. Since this was the case in practically all of Africa, I need not try to explain why it was so. Most of these parties, however, developed outside of Mozambique, in view of the fascist nature of Portuguese colonialism. About the only exception to this rule is the development of the Mozambique student movement, União Nacional dos Estudantes de Moçambique (UNEMO), which right from its inception had a definite political concern. This student movement began in Lourenço Marques in 1949, when a group of university students who were attending school in South Africa got together all the African students who were in secondary schools in that city and organised a group called Nucleo dos Estudantes de Moçambique (Nucleus of Mozambican Students). Even though this group had been established within one of the African associations referred to above, when the government began to sense its political inclinations, it pounced on its leaders, put them in prison and proceeded to try to purge it of all political connotations. I had just been thrown out of South Africa by the Malan government at that time, and having been one of the founders of Nucleo, I was also put in prison and thoroughly investigated by the State Police (PIDE).

The present Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) arose out of the merger of the three major political parties of Mozambique, which, in June 1962, decided to join into one movement. The three parties were: União Nacional Democratica de Moçambique (UDENAMO), which was first organised in Southern Rhodesia by Mozambicans working in that country; Mozambique African National Union (MANU), organised by those Mozambicans who had been working in East Africa; and União Nacional Moçambicana de Independencia (UNAMI), first organised in Malawi.

Since both the history and programme of the movement have been dealt with by me in other publications, I need not repeat them here, except to underline the following facts:

- 1) FRELIMO is the only popular nationalist movement for the liberation of Mozambique;
- 2) FRELIMO has one definite goal, the complete and unconditional liberation of our country with a view to developing it politically, socially and economically for the benefit of all the people of Mozambique as part of the total

- liberation of all the peoples of Africa;
- 3) FRELIMO is a part and parcel of Africa, therefore, it adheres to all the programmes and policies of the Organisation of African Unity; therefore, being the only Mozambican nationalist movement supported by the OAU through the African Liberation Committee, it cooperates with this body and all other African nationalist movements for the liberation of all of Africa;
 - 4) FRELIMO is part of all the progressive forces now guiding the revolutionary programmes of southern Africa. In this connexion, it must be pointed out that FRELIMO is now in the vanguard of all the southern African revolutionary forces now engaged in actually driving out the last vestiges of colonialism and imperialism in Africa.

At this stage one might ask: What is the reason for the present unity among the Mozambican people? Is this unity a durable one? In order to answer these questions we have to return to the definitions presented earlier in this paper and affirm that there is a Mozambican nationalism which unites all the various peoples of the vast territory from north to south, regardless of their languages, religions, races and cultures. In other words, there is now a consciousness on the part of the people of our country of belonging to a nation - Mozambique, and a desire to develop the strength, liberty and prosperity of that nation. The Mozambican peoples, after many years of facing a common enemy, have coalesced into one solid people, ready to free themselves from bondage. The Mozambican people have come to consider themselves a nation in the same way that the peoples of India, China, the Soviet Union and other multi-linguistic and multi-religious societies now consider themselves one nation.

It was mainly in the last 75 years that the Mozambican peoples learned their lesson in unity. Immediately after destroying our traditional rulers, the Portuguese confiscated our land and natural resources, putting them under the control and direct use of large European economic interests, and harnessed our man-power for the benefit of these interests and the European settlers. The Mozambican national unity was born out of common experience in suffering together while working as forced labour on the large sisal plantations, while clearing thick forests for planting cotton, while picking cotton together, baling it, carrying heavy loads of it for hundreds of miles to the market centres monopolised by Portuguese and foreign concessionary companies, while sweating together, some with blood, cultivating peanuts, sugar cane and tea, or loading and unloading cargoes of these products and of heavy machinery from transoceanic liners to trains or vice-versa for the benefit of Portuguese, South

African, Rhodesian, European and American white interests. Mozambican unity was born out of toiling together in the deep, hot, narrow and dust-ridden shafts of the gold, diamond and coal mines of the Transvaal and Orange Free State to help enrich the South African and British Harry Oppenheimers and their American Engelhardts as they cooperate with the Portuguese to maintain a southern African economic empire for the white man stretching from the Katanga to the Cape. Our national unity was born out of the common experience of trying to escape together from Portuguese prisons, forced labour, palmatoria beatings and political persecutions.

After finding ourselves in all of these places and circumstances together for so many years, and in some parts of Mozambique, for so many centuries, we had no alternative but to unite into one solid people and organise a countre-force, the Mozambique Liberation Front.

Eduardo C. Mondlane
President
Mozambique Liberation Front

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