

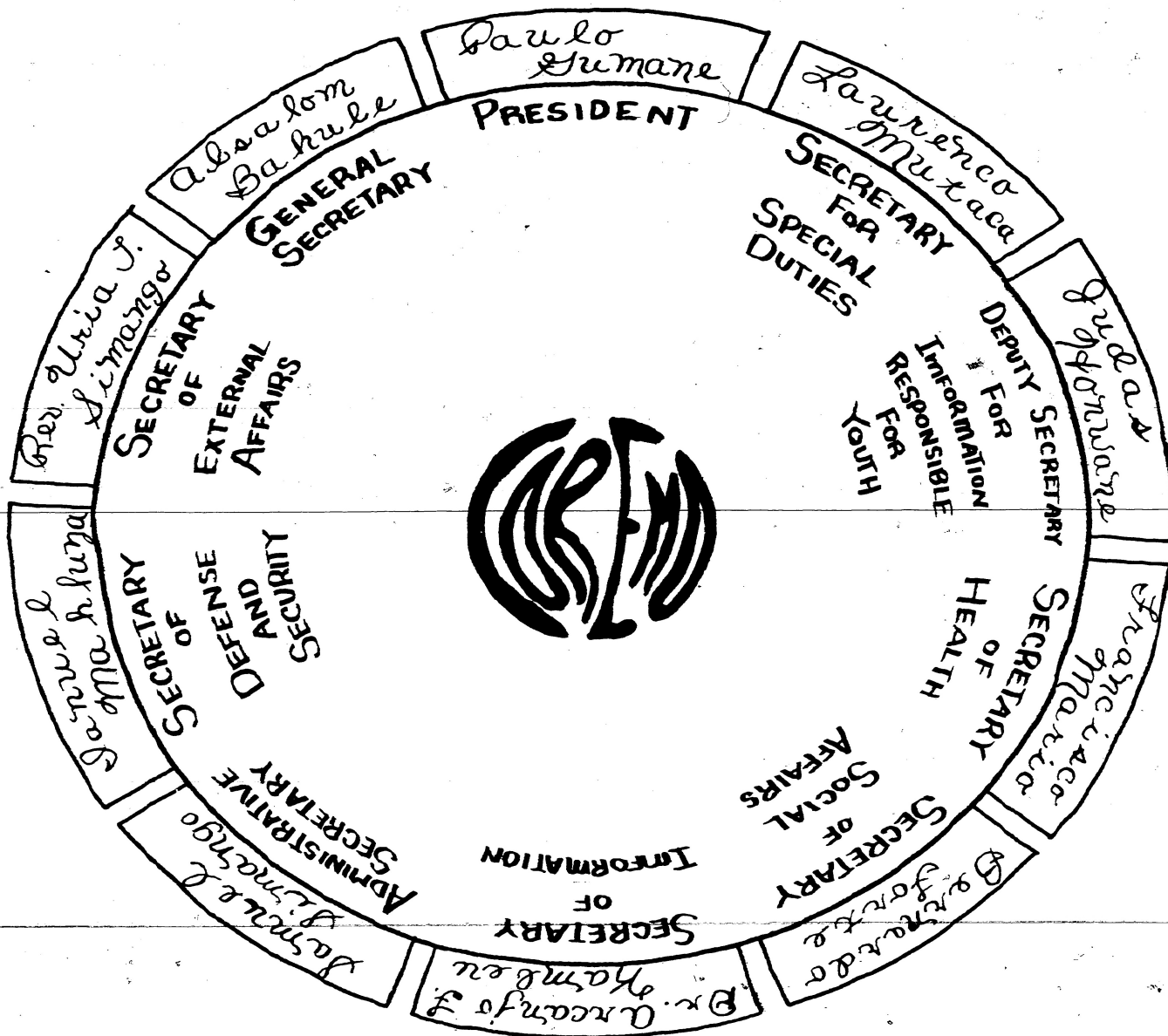
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COMITE REVOLUCIONARIO DE MOCAMBIQUE

"MOZAMBIQUE REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE"

(COREMO)

NEWSLETTER



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THE DANGER OF DEPENDENCY IN THE MOZAMBICAN REVOLUTION

Portugal in Mozambique

In the fourteenth century Prince Henrique of Portugal, called the Navigator, gave an order to his seamen to explore the new routes to the Eastern spice trade. In March 1498, Vasco Da Gama entered the mouth of the Quilimane River in present day Mozambique, which he called the "River of Good Portents". In the process of carrying out his mission, the Portuguese "discovered" not only new continents and peoples, but also new and lucrative sources of wealth: the slaves of West Africa, the ivory and gold of East Africa and the sugar, tobacco and gold of the New World. Because the peoples of the nations in which these sources of wealth were found were not willing to hand them over to the intruders, it became necessary to attack the natives and destroy their political machinery before they could build the empire they meant to establish. In this connection, it might be interesting to note that "for centuries the most common official term for the Portuguese overseas possessions was "conquistas," meaning conquests.

From the first hours of their arrival in Mozambique in 1498, the Portuguese sought to establish themselves as a power over the various East African communities which they came across. Since their main purpose in coming to East Africa was to find new sources of wealth and to control its flow to Europe, it was necessary that they should identify and destroy the military or political power of whomever they found in control.

At that time the people of Mozambique were divided into the following three socio-economic classes: the Arabs, who controlled most of the trade between the hinterland and the outside world; the Swahilis, who were the main traders between the continental Africans and the coast and insular Arabs, and the Africans, who composed the majority of the population. Each of these groups in turn became the target of Portuguese aggression.

Hostilities between the Arabs and the Portuguese broke out almost immediately over control of the trade. In 1508 a Portuguese official wrote to the King from the island of Mozambique advising him to use every means possible to do away with the "respectable Moors" from East Africa, since they were dangerous competition. The King accepted the advice and a fleet of six ships was dispatched to establish Portuguese power at Sofala. Two years later the Portuguese seized and fortified the ports of Mozambique and Angoche.

The same Portuguese official who wrote to the King found the African acceptable and thought they could remain without damaging Portuguese interests since "they are like animals and satisfied with gaining a handful of maize, nor can they harm us, and they can be used for any kind of work and treated like slaves."

After a number of years the Portuguese had managed to establish control over the East African coast from Malindi to Sofala using every means available, from being friendly to the African people when it suited their needs, to using force where peaceful means failed to achieve their purpose. However, after the political and economic influence of the Arabs had been thoroughly eliminated, the Portuguese turned against the Africans whom they had earlier considered harmless. The Portuguese now aimed to deal directly and hence more profitably with the mainland Africans who brought the gold and ivory from the interior.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, the control of East Africa by the Portuguese, especially the central part of present day Mozambique, was so definite, and the real purpose of the conquest was so certain, that Alexander Hamilton, a British chronicler of the time, had this to say of the relations between the Africans and the Portuguese:

"They (the Africans) have large strong bodies and are very bold in war. They will have commerce with none but the Portuguese, who keep a few priests along the sea coasts that over awe the silly natives and get their teeth (elephant tusks) and gold for trifles, and send what they get to Mozambique (Island)."

From time to time the service of priests and missionaries were harnessed to help pacify the African population through conversion to Christianity. When this did not produce a submissive population, an excuse could always be found to justify the use of force. General J.J.T. Botelho, an official historian for the Portuguese government, said the following of a sixteenth century military expedition sent to East Africa under two famous Portuguese navigators, Pedro Alvares Cabral, the "discoverer of Brazil", and Bartolomeu Dias, the first European to round the Cape of Africa:

"It is interesting to note the composition of the military expedition and its norms of procedure as given by the King. - Aside its outstanding captains, the expedition was accompanied by a Father, who later became Bishop Henrique, six Franciscan friars, ten chaplains and military forces. Although the expedition's main purpose was to conquer East Africa, the King's order for its procedure included the following specification: that the regiment of Pedro Alvares Cabral had to convert the idolatrous Moors to Catholicism and if spiritual arms should not succeed to utilize the material power of the sword."

The Portuguese have often said that the Africans are happy "to be under the Portuguese flag." History, however, shows that the Africans resisted the Portuguese control of their motherland since the time that the Portuguese put foot on their country. The Portuguese never knew peace in Mozambique from the fifteenth century until the present day.

Our forefathers united against Portuguese invasion of our country. They did not depend on outside support, instead they depended upon themselves and used all human resources available to them. Kings Manuicuse, Magaya, and Muwamba collaborated in 1843 when the Portuguese attempted to invade their people. In the Northern part of Mozambique, beginning in 1867, there were five Portuguese expeditions against the Massangano and their strong unity and self-dependence made it impossible for the Portuguese to conquer the Massangano as easily as they had thought.

Intensification of the resistance to Portuguese colonialism began once again when Mozambique, as well as other Portuguese colonies, were "officially granted" to Portugal during the Berlin Conference of 1885. At this conference the Western European powers of that time divided the African continent between themselves without even consulting the African people. This, of course, led King Ngungunyani and his general Mogigwain to organize his people in the Southern part of Mozambique to fight against the Portuguese in 1885. Although he was later captured, in December 1895, by the then Military Governor of Gaza, Mouzinho de Albuquerque, his people continued to fight. During the fight their unity and dependence upon themselves was emphasized.

Other Portuguese expeditions took place in the northern part of Mozambique beginning in April 1901, at this time against the Baruwe King of Makonde. The Portuguese call this

period, which lasted many years, the "Campanha e Pacificacao de Barue" meaning the pacification of the Baruo. The temporary defeat of our forefathers was due to the fact that Europeans in 1884-1885 advanced colonialism in Africa, helping the Portuguese to conquer our country.

Modern Nationalism

Many sons and daughters of Mozambique have lived in Tanganyika, Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), former Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) Malawi. From the end of 1950 to the beginning of 1960 they formed Liberation Movements such as:

- a. Mozambique National Democratic Union (UDENAMO)
- b. Mozambique National Union (MANU)

These two movements did not believe in relying on outside help but in self-reliance. For example, people contributed financially, with their labor, with whatever they could to meet the needs of their struggle. Hence, people had more to say in the movements.

The above movements merged and formed FRELIMO in 1962, and then Dr. Mondlane was invited to join the party. The formers of the party had strong intentions of depending on themselves and being masters of their own situation, not guests at their own revolution, and not ignorant of their own struggle.

Later on a disease came to this newly formed party - financial dependence on outside sources, which led first to money-politics, that is that who has money has power. Secondly, the sources of financial support became involved directly in the internal affairs of Mozambique to the point of claiming to be more revolutionary than Mozambicans themselves, although their feelings are not based on first-hand knowledge and experience.

By 1964 most important leaders and founders of FRELIMO were "illegally" expelled because of being "radicals". In the same year, 1964, President Kenneth Kaunda called a meeting of the then FRELIMO leader Dr. Mondlane and Valentino Ruto Sithole, together with the expelled leaders to study the disease which infected the newly formed party. During the meeting a committee was formed called the Mozambican Revolutionary Committee, which was to study the problems of revolution. However, in the same meeting the late Dr. Mondlane and Sithole refused to sign the agreement. Later on this committee became a party which has been known as COREMO, and which became a vanguard of Mozambican Revolution by initiating the fight which broke out on September 25, 1964.

These two liberation movements (FRELIMO and COREMO) have completely different strategies. One believes in self-reliance, using all Mozambicans in all walks of life, educated, non-educated, with very little financial support from outside, gaining experience constantly. On the other hand, another liberation movement has established a network of fund-raising groups. This, for example, can be found in the U.S.A., England and probably here in Canada to mention only a few. Some of these supporters use their influence not only to further the cause of FRELIMO but also to attempt to deny aid to COREMO. This goes way beyond the bounds of humanitarian aid. There are specific examples of outside interference in the Mozambican Revolution by those using their financial power as visas to interfere. Interference of this kind can sometimes act as artificial respiration on a dying organization prolonging our revolution. This foreign interference perverts energy from the cause of unity and struggle in our country. For example, the policy of the slogan "Kill COREMO and then the Portuguese" is a perfect illustration of how our energy and vitality can be sapped by infiltrators. This, of course, has led this movement to open an operation once called, "Guerrilla Tours, Inc." turning a revolution into another Hollywood in Africa, taking motion pictures and slides. And, indeed advertising the Mozambican Revolution as if it were advertising Cherrios or Coca Cola on T.V.

Again as an example, in the U.S.A. there are five different organizations which seem to be working separately but are quite inter-connected, and they channeled their funds to only selected Mozambican movements. Perhaps it is their hope that these leaders shall someday become political leaders of free Mozambique. Should this occur I am not sure if this will be in the best interest of Mozambique. Perhaps we need not worry about this possibility. During colonial periods of now independent African states there were parties that were favored by Europeans over other groups, however, in the end it was not these favorite parties that led people to independence despite their financial advantages.

Because of the dependency on the outside, one of the parties allowed outsiders to get involved directly in the internal affairs of Mozambique, which even led them to engage representatives outside who are not even Africans or Mozambicans as if among eight million Africans there is no one with experience in their own problems. If this policy of allowing foreigners to interfere in internal affairs of Mozambique is taking place during armed revolution, what then will happen after independence?

It is no doubt that dependence on outside financial support has created chaos in one of the parties, assassinations and the loss of many important leaders.

The only way in which our country will be free is through self-reliance and not through money, for even though one of the Mozambican parties has money in a Swiss bank, Mozambique will not be freed by money. Expensive films and literature will not free us from the colonial bondage. In order to win our freedom we must not base it on what other people do, on other people's efforts. Self-reliance is the basis of genuine freedom.

This paper was prepared by COREMO Representative for the Canadian Association for African Studies Conference held in Ottawa February 1973.