

DR. EDUARDO C. MONDLANE - AN APPRECIATION

- SPARTACUS

Dr. Eduardo C. Mondlane has paid the ultimate price for his unyielding opposition to Portuguese colonialism. His untimely assassination in DAR ES SALAAM is tragic testament to his success in leading FRELIMO in its armed challenge to Portuguese rule in Mozambique. That Lisbon almost openly and shamefully celebrates his murder confirms anew the services which Dr. Mondlane performed in the anti-colonialist struggle as the first President of FRELIMO. Africa mourns his death, the loss of Frelimo and the sorrow of the African liberation movement.

The story of Dr. Mondlane's struggle for education and progressive immersion in revolutionary politics highlight both the insuperable obstacles to African advancement within the Portuguese colonial system and the inevitable challenge to that system which must come from the few allowed education within it. Born in 1920 in the Gaza district Southern Mozambique, Eduardo as a young boy never dreamt of going to school. Yet his widowed mother, the pillar of strength in his family as in so many broken families in Southern Africa, was determined that he should be the first to obtain education. Thus at the age of

even, Eduardo Mondlane left his cattle herding and enrolled in one of a few government schools open to Africans. Transferring two years later to a mission school Mondlane caught the attention of his teachers who arranged for him to go to Lourenco Marques in 1936 to work for his primary school certificate, the highest academic level open to Africans in Mozambique at the time. Although further academic study seemed close to Mondlane after he had obtained his primary school certificate, he refused to accept that his education had come to an end. He managed to secure a place in an agricultural school where he completed a course in dry-land farming. For two years Eduardo Mondlane then taught dry-farming in his home district - and thus his continuing interest in the problems of his people on the land.

He had not, however, abandoned his desire for further education. As he had fortunately learned English while in agricultural school, he was able to accept a private scholarship to attend secondary school in the Northern Transvaal, South Africa. Successfully completing matriculation, he then enrolled in the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg in 1948. In South Africa Mondlane experienced the South African version of racism first-hand, yet he was also in Johannesburg at the time that young militants of the ANC Youth League were organising their successful campaign to radicalise the parent body in its opposition to apartheid. Mondlane directed his political efforts to organizing his countrymen into a Mozambique student association - and as a result the Portuguese authorities intervened to have his South African residence permit revoked. Forced to return to Lourenco Marques after one year of university in Johannesburg, Mondlane was arrested and interrogated. The Portuguese authorities were convinced that Mondlane's embryonic spirit of African nationalism could be stifled and redirected into service of the Portuguese state through direct exposure to the Portuguese motherland. Mondlane was allowed to enroll in the University of Lisbon.

In Lisbon Mondlane formed close associations with the few other students from the Portuguese African colonies. Instead of becoming closer to Portugal they became more antagonistic to her. In spite of close surveillance Mondlane and other African students formed an embryonic anti-Portuguese network from which came many of the leaders who today are in the forefront of the anti-colonialist struggle against Portugal in Africa.

When Mondlane was offered a scholarship to study in America he seized the chance to pursue his higher education outside of Salazar's Portugal. He rapidly completed his B.A. in 1953 and then continued for graduate work in sociology at Northwestern University from where he obtained an M.A. and a Ph.D. From 1957 until 1961 he worked for the United Nations as a research officer on trust territories - thus becoming acquainted with the problems of the independence struggle in other parts of Africa and the world.

Dr. Mondlane's eyes were still fixed upon Mozambique. With the

independence of Tanganyika in December, 1961, Mondlane saw new opportunities opening for the creation of a national movement to challenge the Portuguese. He had maintained contact with Mozambican groups outside of the country which had been formed to struggle for independence. Convinced that only a single united body could create the effective organization necessary to challenge the Portuguese Mondlane worked with other Mozambican patriots to bring all groups together in Dar-es-Salaam in mid-1962. At this meeting it was agreed to dissolve the existing three groups into a new organization, FRELIMO, the Liberation Front of Mozambique. Dr. Mondlane was chosen president of the new organization. Henceforth his educational achievements were to be channelled completely into the struggle for Mozambican freedom.

At its first party congress under Dr. Mondlane's leadership in September, 1962, FRELIMO formulated a far-reaching program for the liberation of Mozambique. The experiences of FRELIMO's leaders under Portuguese colonialism had convinced them that Salazar would never accept the idea of self-determination or negotiation of changes leading towards independence. Accordingly they decided to focus their short-term efforts upon the creation of a direct challenge to Portuguese rule through 1) the setting up of a clandestine political organization within Mozambique and 2) the establishment of a military training program to produce a corps of freedom fighters to undertake armed struggle. Yet the vision of FRELIMO extended beyond the immediate struggle. Centuries of Portuguese neglect had left Mozambique with few literate and trained persons; FRELIMO endorsed a crash educational program at all levels to prepare leadership cadres for the needs of a liberated Mozambique.

Within the matrix set by the September, 1962, party congress FRELIMO moved to the start of confrontation with the Portuguese colonial regime. Political organization was extended underground within Mozambique. On September 25, 1964, the first detachments of the FRELIMO freedom fighters opened the initial phase of the armed struggle in northern Mozambique. Advancing slowly against the well-armed and expanded Portuguese forces in Mozambique the FRELIMO guerrillas have freed substantial areas of Mozambique. Within the liberated areas the cadres from FRELIMO-supported schools have led in the establishment of a revolutionary administration which has brought schools, medical services, and economic organization. In 1968 FRELIMO held its first party congress within liberated Mozambique - a practical and symbolic act showing to Mozambicans, the Portuguese, and the world the growing strength of the liberation movement of Mozambique.

Yet the struggle ahead is long and costly - a fact always recognised by Dr. Mondlane. He believed that guerrilla tactics and the administration of liberated Mozambique had to be adapted to the specific problems of the country with careful attention to the elements of the experiences of other liberation struggles as they were relevant. Long before his death he argued that FRELIMO must make no "facile promises" to the people, "for it is absolutely essential that they share with us the knowledge that liberation from the Portuguese rule may take many years and many lives." In this spirit FRELIMO under Dr. Mondlane's leadership advanced the slow, hard struggle against entrenched Portuguese colonialism - and now one of the "many lives" lost is that of Dr. Mondlane himself. His martyrdom must provide a new spur to all patriots of Southern Africa to achieve the liberation of their peoples.