

**This Interview by DR. EDUARDO MONDLANE, late President of FRELIMO, was perhaps his last detailed statement on Mozambique and his own background. It was published in the Egyptian Gazette on January 20, 1969, exactly two weeks before his assassination.**

# MOZAMBIQUE NOW ONE-FIFTH UNDER AFRICAN RULE

"There is guerrilla war in one-third of Mozambique. One-fifth of the country, in the north-west provinces, is under our control. The Portuguese have moved out completely and we run our own schools, hospitals and agricultural co-ops there. We administer the area, in fact. And the second FRELIMO congress to be held – it took place in July 1968 – was held in Mozambique itself. The Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organisation sent delegates – one of them an Egyptian."

The man speaking obviously had a greater respect for facts than for oratorical abstraction that so often besets people with a mission, but this is hardly surprising in view of his background. For Eduardo Mondlane, President of FRELIMO, Front for the Liberation of Mozambique, is an ex-university professor turned freedom-fighter. He studied sociology and holds a Ph.D. in anthropology which he taught in Syracuse University, USA.

## Recognised Risks

A tall man – well over six-foot high – who spoke quietly, laughed well, but quietly, Dr. Mondlane gave the impression of having considered all the personal risks involved and quietly categorised them along with those to do with crossing a road, for instance, or driving a car, as an inevitable part of life and work that aren't worth bothering about.

"At that second FRELIMO conference", he continued, very obviously deeply proud of the achievement in having been able to hold it on liberated Mozambique territory, "we discussed the war, of course, and trade and our administrative projects. You know Basil Davidson – the British writer. Basil Davidson was there."

One could feel his happiness. The oppressors had been flung out of that particular part of his country and the people of Mozambique were so confident of the security of the area under their control that they had a well-known British friend of Africa to their conference. And Basil Davidson had gone to Mozambique and discussed the liberation struggle with the Mozambicans rather in the way that Dr. Mondlane was himself now in Cairo discussing Arab liberation at the Second Conference in Support of the Arab Peoples.

## Tete Province

"Two months earlier", he said, "in March '68, we had opened up a new military front in Tete Province. Tete Province

is where the Portuguese have their Cabora Bassa central dam scheme. They're planning to build a dam bigger than the Aswan High Dam on the Zambesi and export electricity to South Africa and Rhodesia. They say it will enable them to settle one million whites in Mozambique within ten years. Now there are only 150,000 whites against 8 million Africans. The idea is to form a great white barrier across southern Africa.

"The dam will cost 300 million dollars. Imagine, the money was subscribed within six months: America, Britain, France and Japan – they all rushed to pay up, though they know that a war of liberation is going on. The Portuguese colonialists didn't have the struggle that Egypt had to get financial aid for the High Dam. The imperialists help each other. "This is what we're up against. The Imperialists are in an alliance to stop the advance of freedom to Southern Africa. Our struggle is crucial and our people as a whole have decided to fight."

## First Congress

Asked about FRELIMO's early activities, Dr. Mondlane said that in 1962 when the organisation was founded, it decided at its first congress in September of that year to establish a clandestine political organisation throughout the length and breadth of the country, and to start military training for the people.

"In 1963 and '64 we sent people abroad for military training and by mid-1964 we had a sufficient number of trainees to launch our first guerrilla attack on September 24 of that year. We started like the Palestinian guerrillas first started – in a small way. We had few trained people; little equipment. But the spirit to fight was there. And today, with the exception of a few officers who go abroad for training, all the training is done in our own country.

"And what about your own personal struggle for a education? It surely wasn't easy to come by in a Portuguese colony?"

"No, it wasn't. After going through primary education I had to join an agricultural school because the Portuguese blocked the way to African secondary education. But I was looking around all the while to get a scholarship. I wanted to get on. The English missionaries taught me English. Then the Swiss missionaries gave me a scholarship to a secondary school they had in Transvaal.

## South African Background

"When I returned home from Transvaal, I wanted to go to university, I got another scholarship. This time to Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg. I was there from 1945 to 1949 when the South African Government threw me out."

"Dr. Malan?"

Dr. Mondlane laughed. "Precisely. Malan discovered my existence. I was the only "foreign" African in the University and one year after Malan came to power on his apartheid programme he threw me out."

The same American Negro foundation which had helped Kwame Nkrumah to study in the United States – the Phelps-Stokes Fund – then helped the young Mondlane to continue his studies in Lisbon. "But you can't study sociology in a fascist state", he said, laughing again.

"And in '51 I got another scholarship to the United States. I went to four colleges. After I got my Ph.D. in anthropology I worked as a research officer in the United Nations. I did that for four years – from 1957 to 1961. In the autumn of 1961 I started teaching at Syracuse."

## Tambo, Mandela, Piliso

"When you started off to get an education, did you have any idea that you would one day be doing what you're doing now. Did you know you'd be involved in the African liberation struggle?"

"Yes", he said reflectively, "I did know I would somehow be involved". He spoke more slowly, rather sadly. "You see my father had 15 children. My father and mother and all my brothers were illiterate. I was the youngest. My mother died when I was 13. She was dying of cancer and had to go away to hospital. I wanted to stay with her, but she wouldn't let me. She said I must get an education. I must learn the white man's magic. Only that way could we fight him. Of course, later, at Witwatersrand, I met Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela and Piliso. They and the activities of the African National Congress sharpened my political views. But I was committed long before that."

