A recent issue of Mozambique Revolution (No. 48) contained extracts from a document in which the White Fathers described atrocities carried out by the Portuguese against the Mozambican people in the Province of Tete. One of the assassinations reported by the White Fathers in the document was that of a Mozambican named Aroni, who was buried by the missionaries themselves three days after his death. To escape the massacre, Aroni's family fled into the bush and received the protection of FRELIMO. His daughter and a niece are now members of FRELIMO's Women's Detachment. Aroni had a nephew under his care and this young man had joined our ranks even before the massacres took place.

This is how Conescence, Aroni's daughter, describes the assassination of her father:—

"The Portuguese came to the shamba where my father was cultivating, and by the time I took notice they had encircled him. They approached my mother and me and told us: 'We are taking Aroni and he will not come back. You will never hear of him again.' They tied my father's hands and took him away in a car. My mother tried to follow on foot, but was left behind. Then she ran to the PIDE office, but they refused to let her in and she came back home.

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A PRIEST DESCRIBES PORTUGUESE BUTCHERY

In a letter directly addressed to Premier Caetano and published in the Spanish Catholic weekly “Vida Nueva”, a Portuguese priest, Father Henrique Fernandes reveals the atrocities committed over the past year in Mukumbura district, in northern Mozambique.

Still under the shock of what he has seen, the priest cites precise events and names, in order that the Portuguese propaganda response should not, yet again, be that these are “fanciful and utterly groundless accusations liable to harm the understanding between the overseas communities”. It is for this reason, feeling that it was no longer possible to be silent before the innocent victims of this shameful war, that Father Fernandes wrote directly to the Head of State. According to the facts reported, all civilians suspected of helping the FRELIMO guerrillas or of merely sympathising with the nationalist movement, are executed and thrown into hastily dug pits. Last May, 26 persons were shot. In September, 15 others were killed by Rhodesian troops called in to help the Portuguese high Command. A teacher at the Mukumburu Catholic Mission the father of three small children, was mowed down by one of the bursts of shots fired without any warning.

In the course of that same day numerous women as well as children were also massacred. When the butchery was finished, the soldiers made a human funeral-pry with the bodies.

“On 10 October” continues the priest’s hallucinatory account, “Portuguese commandos entered the village of Dak and massacred 19 innocents on the spot. After arresting teacher Damiano Conca, who also belonged to the local Catholic mission, they dragged him into the school and, in the presence of his pregnant young wife and their two children, beat him for an hour and a half with pickaxe blows until all his limbs were smashed.

In November, a group of 40 commandos from the special forces transported by helicopter, were given the order to burn and kill throughout the region situated between Chinoa and Buxo. Within a few hours there were dozens of victims, among them 13 children. All the African huts were systematically burnt. In the village of Antonio, Portuguese troops put 16 women and children in a hut and they burned them alive.

A Portuguese Priest, Father Henrique Fernandes who witnessed the massacres which took place in Mukumbura in the southern region of Tete in May 1971 as a reprisal for the death of three Rhodesian soldiers wrote a letter to the Portuguese Head of State denouncing the crimes...