

AFTER THE MASSACRES OF MUKUMBURA...



FRELIMO
militant
Conescence,
whose father
was murdered by
the Portuguese.

**'FRELIMO IS
THE ONLY HOPE
FOR PEACE
IN OUR
COUNTRY, FOR
OUR PEOPLE'**

A VICTIM'S RELATIVES JOIN THE STRUGGLE

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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Gloria David

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-pyre 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 Chinoia 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.

«Later we learned that my father had been killed. We were told the details. The Portuguese asked him: 'Do you know why we are going to kill you?' He said he did not, and they told him: 'We are going to kill you because your son went to FRELIMO, he is a FRELIMO official. FRELIMO is killing us so we are going to kill you.' My father answered: 'You may kill me. My life is nothing -- and my son is where he must be. Yes, it is true that he went to FRELIMO.'

«The Portuguese gave my father a shovel and told him to dig a hole. He dug for a while and asked if it was enough. They told him to try to get into the hole. He got in. The Portuguese officer aimed at him but the gun got stuck. It fired on the second attempt. My father died immediately and they left him in the hole without burying him.

«My mother went to the spot later, but when she was taking the body out of the hole the Portuguese soldiers saw her. She ran away to the bush where I joined her. Then we met FRELIMO soldiers who took us to a base and took care of us. I

decided to remain at the base and join the Women's Detachment.

«My father was a peasant. He had a small plot of land, but in order to pay taxes he had to work for the Portuguese for at least three months every year.

«Besides my father, my uncle was also killed. He was beaten to death. I saw Portuguese and Rhodesian soldiers together in the massacres.

«My brother was the first of us to join FRELIMO. My father had gone to FRELIMO and told them: 'I have a son but the Portuguese will take him for the army. I want him to be in the FRELIMO army.' That was how my brother joined FRELIMO. FRELIMO is the only hope for peace in our country, for our people.»

Gloria David, Aroni's niece, said: I was in Rhodesia, where I had gone to visit my family. When I returned I learned that uncle had been killed, our village had been massacred and all the rest of my family was with FRELIMO. I decided then that I too would join FRELIMO and I am now proud to be a member of the Women's Detachment.»

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. . .