

AFRICA 1964

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ZAMBIA—A LAST ACT AND A BEGINNING

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NEWS OR VIEWS?

Zanzibar, Cairo and Mozambique

There has been much speculation on the report that Russian military advisers and men of the former Zanzibar People's Liberation Army (PLA) have arrived in Mtwara, South Tanganyika, to take part in operations against Mozambique. However, our information from Dar-es-Salaam is that the 100 PLA men who, with six Russian military advisers in plain clothes, boarded the former Sultan of Zanzibar's yacht (renamed *Afrika*) on October 11 were being moved to Southern Tanganyika primarily for *training purposes*. The yacht carried with them light anti-aircraft guns and anti-tank weapons. At a distance, the PLA commander on the *Afrika* looked very much like 24-year-old *Ali Mahfud*. He is PLA's second-in-command and has just recently been elected to the Revolutionary Council. Mahfud came to Britain as a student in May 1958. He later opened Zanzibar's office in Cuba in 1962. He is a close friend of Mr. Babu.

Originally, the Zanzibar target for the PLA was a force of 1,000 men. But reliable current estimates put the figure at around 500. About 300 of these are now training in Tanganyika; with 100 just moved to Southern Tanganyika, that leaves only 100 behind in Zanzibar. Integration with the Tanganyikan army has been slow and hard. Although it was to have taken place at the time of Union (April 27, 1964) it has in fact only just technically taken place. Meanwhile, the PLA has had some 30 to 40 Russian advisers and a dozen military experts from China.

It is natural that the United Republic should feel nervous about the border with Mozambique now that anti-Portuguese rebel operations there have begun, and now that refugees are arriving in large numbers across the Ruvuma river. The Portuguese could attack refugee camps on the border (the largest is outside Lindi). They could also retaliate if freedom fighter border crossings increase. This is another reason for the movement of PLA troops to assist the battalion of the United Republic's army stationed in Nachingwea. Anti-aircraft weapons in particular are needed in case the Portuguese—who have reacted strongly to the first border raids—send over planes to attack the camp. But the presence of Russian advisers near a theatre of fighting is a gift to Portuguese propaganda.

A correspondent writes:

Most of the Mozambique freedom fighters have been trained in Algeria [see AFRICA 1964, No. 10]. About 80 of them were used in launching the first thrust on the night of September 25-26. This action came after seething frustration which was caused by:

(a) The Committee of Nine's inaction.

(b) Dr. Banda's good-neighbourly relations with Portugal. Dr. Eduardo Mondlane's Liberation Front (FRELIMO) was closer to Chipembere and Chiume. With them out of the Malawi Government, hopes for a second base and HQ were dashed.

(c) The failure to hit at Portugal on three fronts at once—Angola, Guinea and Mozambique. The Angolan collapse [see AFRICA 1964, No. 20] has allowed Portugal to move more troops into Mozambique, where they now have five military stations with airstrips near the frontier.

(d) Not many of the refugees coming away from Mozambique were the type to make good freedom fighters.

(e) Increasing evidence of Portuguese alliance with South Africa, both economic and military.

But this month, liberation movements, and in particular Mozambique's FRELIMO, got a booster in Cairo from the Non-Aligned Conference (October 5). Evidence of new militancy was:

(i) "Many nations expressed willingness to help the OAU in its move to liberate the whole of Africa"—to use the words of Mr. Odaka, Uganda's Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Minister added that the OAU needed help *especially in view of the present trend of events in Mozambique*.

(ii) At Cairo, President Tito spent some time talking to representatives of the Conference of National Movements for the Liberation of Portuguese Colonies—especially to its Secretary-General, Marcelino Dos Santos. *He also asked the FRELIMO representative about the latest position in Mozambique.* He preached unity to all freedom fighters, and told them: "We are deeply aware of the fact that you need not only moral but also *material support*, for a soldier cannot fight without arms."

(iii) Point One in the Conference's final declaration on "concerted action for the liberation of the countries still dependent" states that the process of liberation is irresistible and irreversible. It goes on to declare its determination that "the peoples of these territories accede immediately to independence without any conditions or reservations." In addition the declaration "urges the participating countries to afford all necessary material support—financial and military—to the freedom fighters in the territories under Portuguese colonial rule; takes the view that support should be given to the revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile, and to the nationalist movements struggling for the independence of the Portuguese colonies, and assistance to the special bureau set up by the Organisation of African Unity in regard to the application of sanctions against Portugal."

Operation Mozambique

The recognition that Mozambique was the next place to feel the weight of a liberation struggle led to the rush of some 7,000 refugees into Tanganyika. Many of these are dazed and do not know exactly what they are fleeing from. Then came the official announcement by Eduardo Mondlane that military operations had started, spearheaded by six commando groups of Mozambique freedom fighters.

This week Oscar Kambona, the United Republic's Foreign Minister and Chairman of the Committee of Nine, announced formally that "resistance in Mozambique has started and no amount of intimidation from Lisbon and NATO powers will stop it." But the question remains whether the operation will increase in size or whether it will continue as a series of gadfly attacks which the Portuguese can easily contain.

Another question is how far Tanganyika will give wholehearted support to the commando groups, despite Mr. Kambona's words. The Tanganyika *Nationalist* is reported as denying that the commando raids came from their country. Further, the refugees, particularly those who have received some military training, have been kept isolated in Tanganyika camps as far as possible. However strongly Nyerere and Kambona feel, it is not a pleasant prospect to face open hostilities with Portugal—as Mr. Kaunda and Dr. Banda have indicated. This bears out our view that the Zanzibari force sent to Mtwara is potentially defensive on its training mission, rather than that it has been moved south to join in the attack on Mozambique. ●