

Mozambique: One of Three?

“A war on three fronts” is what they talk about in Mozambique freedom fighter circles in Dar. This envisages concerted military action by Angolan, Mozambique and Portuguese Guinea liberation armies. But the bugle call is clear in the distance only. In reality this is the grim situation of the Mozambique Liberation Front, better known as FRELIMO.

A correspondent writes:

Dr. Eduardo C. Mondlane, a scholar and former UN research officer, is the President of the most important Mozambique liberation movement. His *Liberation Front* has been recognised by the Committee of Nine and the Tanganyikan government, who have given it protection. It has both unofficial US backing and official Chinese support. But all this adds up to very little. Last month Mondlane, who was visiting Tunis, complained of the Committee of Nine's red tape; of the money which was rotting in the bank while Freedom Fighters were desperate. But nothing could be done to change this mechanism (he suggested a committee of four rather than nine) until the July OAU meeting. Meanwhile he, like Holden Roberto [see AFRICA 1964, No. 8], was skirting round the Nine and trying for aid wherever it was proffered. He was particularly grateful to Algeria and the UAR.

The Pen is more popular than the Sword

While Dr. Mondlane is travelling around, seeking UN support for his case and arms for his men, his American wife Janet is hard at work in the Mozambique Institute in Dar. Her life has been threatened three times by Portuguese sympathisers. The Institute, which has a generous Ford Foundation grant, is trying to provide education for Mozambique refugees. (The illiteracy rate in Mozambique is 95 per cent with not much hope for immediate improvement.) And Janet is now supervising the erection of a hostel for some 50 students.

The top men in FRELIMO are men of stature—Mondlane, the Rev. Uria Kimango (Vice-President) and Marcelino dos Santos. Below them the drop is considerable. There is, too, the ambiguous problem of what to do for refugees who are non-political and not keen freedom fighters. Communal agricultural schemes which might help the situation in Southern Tanganyika, where there are tribal ties, are not favoured by FRELIMO. This is because they might make refugees too comfortable—thus less willing to join the fighting ranks.

When they come out of Mozambique, the sad band of men, women and children refugees are fleeing from beatings, bad working conditions or imprisonment for non-political offences. It is only when they get to Dar that some form of political education begins. Then the brightest are picked for training in guerrilla warfare. Not much training is now carried out in Tanganyika and when trainees return they are kept in isolated camps. The best training goes on in Algeria; Cuba and the UAR have been mentioned too. Algeria has been training Africans to fight the Portuguese in a training camp at Tlemcem since 1961. Lately they have also trained South African freedom fighters. Though they have mainly concentrated on Angolans (with some 500 being trained at the beginning of this year and 1,500 passed out last year), Mozambique freedom fighters are there now. The course is fairly comprehensive, even down to wireless operators.

There is the inevitable problem of maintaining discipline in Freedom Fighter ranks. In the Southern Congo, where Holden Roberto has his men, the lack of any other authority is so complete that Angolan mutineers can be dealt with firmly—even shot—without much ado. This is not possible in Tanganyika, where Kambona is following the problem closely. [Last year some Mozambique troublemakers were expelled from Tanganyika. They moved camp to Cairo.] Today there are quite a number of Freedom Fighters who, after training, feel that they would like to be educated for a liberated Mozambique rather than die liberating it. Ghana has noticed this, and now beams a hot freedom fighter programme to them to whip up enthusiasm.

Looking to the future, Tanganyika must face up to the fact that when the “ war ” begins—and in FRELIMO circles they rather optimistically talk of within a year*—the Portuguese might well bomb FRELIMO camps in Tanganyika. Tanganyika will not then be able to be at peace with Mozambique and Portugal as well as offering FRELIMO a base.

NOTE: FRELIMO, which was set up in 1962 (September 23-28), is a union of elements from the Mozambique Africa National Union (MANU), the National Union of Independent Mozambique (UNAMI), and the Mozambique National Democratic Union (UDENAMO). To-day, like all liberation movements, it has its rivals. But it is very much on top of these—UDENAMO again is split into two, with one base in Northern Rhodesia, another with offices in Kampala and Cairo. The Northern Rhodesian end enjoys Adoula's support. The other wing is linked up with FUNIPAMO (the Mozambique African People's Anti-Imperialist United Front, which gets Nkrumah's blessing. Head of this is Gwambe.) ●