

## MONDLANE

## Our Chances

## AN INTERVIEW

**DAHLBERG:** *Dr. Mondlane, will you please tell me how many refugees from Moçambique are there presently in Tanzania?*

**MONDLANE:** At this present moment we have a little over 7,000 refugees from Moçambique, in two camps in the southern part of Tanzania. But originally there were more than 12,000 who came at about the same time, soon after the beginning of hostilities in September. But many of these have become absorbed in the population of southern Tanzania which is the same ethnically and linguistically as the people of northern Moçambique.

**D:** *But what about these 8,000 people whom you call refugees, and in what conditions are they living?*

**M:** They live in camps which were established by the Tanzanian government aided by several humanitarian organisations, such as the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and the World Lutheran Church Organisation, the World Catholic Relief Organisation and the Red Cross of Tanzania. But the total responsibility to carry out the programme of servicing these people and making them happy and so on is done by the Tanzanian government.

**D:** *What about the schooling of these people? I imagine that must be something of a problem.*

**M:** It is still a problem in that first the concentration of help for the refugees was to be for the purely material needs of these people, settling them into camps with shelters and homes, and then to establish medical services, food, supplies and whatever was materially of immediate need or immediate use. But later my wife who is running the Moçambique Institute in Dar es Salaam sent a team of teachers to find out, what proportion of the population was of school age and how many of the adults could be interested in an adult education programme, and she is still working out this. Nothing very definite has yet been

established, but plans are being worked out to help these refugees. There is another camp much more to the south where a school is already functioning for refugees, especially for the children of the refugees. And there is another camp at Bagamoyo in the interior... on the coast, in the old town of Bagamoyo where about 400 young men are camped where a full primary school programme is running now. It is being directed by the Institute also.

**D:** *And what means do you have to make this programme really work?*

**M:** It is very difficult to get the programme running, but my wife has — as for aid from various countries... originally when she established the Moçambique Institute, she had got a grant from an American foundation in New York, which made it possible for her to build a centre in Dar es Salaam, a whole building which now houses over 55 students, secondary school students, with a number of Moçambique teachers. She is now making appeals for this programme to continue to function as a secondary school training programme to make these young people able to accept scholarships overseas for technical and university education. But these funds have not been easy to get... The programme depends purely on charitable aid from charitable humanitarian organisations all over the world.

**D:** *I imagine that you calculate that these very highly educated people will some time return to a free Moçambique, but what about the bulk of refugees? Do you expect them to return, too? I think quite a few of them have settled here in Tanzania.*

**M:** Our policy is that as many of the Moçambicans who are in areas that are already affected by the struggle, by the armed struggle, stay inside as much as possible. The reason for the departure of these people, to become refugees in foreign countries, neighbouring countries, is the ruthlessness of the Portuguese police and army. But even then we feel that our people should do everything possible to hide within Moçambique and come back and work in Moçambique because the success of this struggle depends on their presence there. And it is much better for them to survive in their own natural home environment than

to go out to another country and then become a burden to others. But those who have been forced to leave the country, such as those thousands who have come to Tanzania and a few thousands who have gone to Malawi and other parts of East Africa, we insist first and foremost that they be adjusted to the environment in which they are, in other words that they be settled. They must try to achieve a normal life, as normal a life as possible, that is they must accept, for example, farms and work in the fields and produce their own food, build homes that look as much as possible like the homes they left in Moçambique. And with the help of the government of Tanzania and the foreign humanitarian organisations they adjust and become settled. Now we believe also — and we have good reasons to believe this — that after the independence of our country the largest proportion of these people will come back, because they are Moçambicans, their home is in Moçambique, their whole history and their whole life is tied with Moçambique. Even if it takes ten years, most of these people return to Moçambique and we will be happy to have them back.

**D:** *You talked about the campaign which started in September. Would you tell us a little about the scope of this campaign. First, where is this campaign taking place?*

**M:** Well, the campaign did start on the 25th September as arranged, after a number of years of trying hard to make contacts with the Portuguese to negotiate our independence in the same way that other African states have managed to emerge out of colonialism through negotiation... We failed, and on failing we decided quite early as a matter of fact, because we know the Portuguese, that there would be no conversation, so we prepared ourselves for war, fight, as a formal pressure on the Portuguese to force them to negotiate. Our total aim is really to talk with the Portuguese, to get them to make a compromise and give us complete independence in our country. Now we do not prefer war, we prefer peace to war, but in the present circumstances we have no other alternative but to accept the reality. If you cannot get freedom, you have got to fight for it, and our people have decided they will fight for it. So we began, on the 25th September our war — so far a

*Dr. Eduardo Mondlane, president of FRELIMO, the Moçambique freedom movement, was interviewed for Swedish Radio by Hans Dahlberg, to whom this transcript is gratefully acknowledged.*

guerrilla war. It will continue to be a guerrilla war until some other factors make it possible for us to use other techniques. We are fighting now all the way from the north to the middle of the country, and our plan of course is to fight in every part of Moçambique. The main problem for our not being ... not actually shooting in the very south of the southern part of Moçambique is logistics. Moçambique is 1,750 miles long on the coast and 1,500 miles long as the crow flies from north to south. It is not very easy to penetrate the deep south of Moçambique, but even then, just about three weeks ago the Portuguese government announced that it had arrested a large number of our freedom fighters in the southern part of Moçambique. Fortunately they only got one part of our forces. We are continuing to prepare ourselves, the people of Moçambique, southern Moçambique are angry. They are themselves going to pick up arms and join the forces that are fighting in the rest of the country. We are sure that this war will continue.

D: I suppose that the best way to describe the method of war you are using is to say that it is about the same kind and type of war as the war in Algeria. ... Is that right?

M: It is true. In fact, it was Algerians who helped us to establish the first basis of our struggle by training our first few hundred men who were able to train others and are continuing to train others within and outside of Moçambique. It is really with the aid of Algerians that we were able to begin anything, so our techniques are exactly the same as those of Algeria, and those of Vietnam.

D: The Portuguese attitude in this case has been to deny that anything at all of importance is going on.

M: That of course is typical of the Portuguese. They just want to hide their heads in the sand, in Africa denying the existence of Portuguese colonies, just as they deny that they are racists and that they oppress and enslave our people, just as they deny every misdeed that they are engaged in in their colonies in Africa. So when the war began, we were not surprised to hear them deny that there was ever any fighting taking place in any part of Moçambique. We have

been watching their reaction to the Angolan war that has been going on since 1961, and the Guinea war in Portuguese Guinea has been going on since 1962. So we are not surprised that they are now denying that we are fighting in Moçambique. In fact they contradict themselves quite often, because weekly they issue dispatches of the casualties of Portuguese soldiers in Moçambique, while at the same time they try to minimise the situation saying that there was no war at all. We are quite accustomed to this: We continue to fight as we have decided to fight until the Portuguese actually admit it to themselves first and then to the rest of the world that they are not standing on a peaceful situation in Moçambique.

D: The outside world knows considerably less about the situation in Moçambique than they did about the situation in Algeria during the liberation war there. It was much easier for foreign journalists to go into Algeria. Are you planning to stimulate foreign press interest in this field?

M: Yes, we are. We feel that it is important for the peoples of the world to know from, let's say neutral sources, what is happening in Moçambique, especially in this struggle. But at this stage we don't feel that it is very wise for us to invite foreign journalists to come, because we cannot assure them the minimum amount of security that is needed for a journalist to be able to send dispatches home, especially because we began only in September 1964. We are continuing, and after three or four more months (June-July 1965, EDITORS) we should be in a position to invite foreign journalists to come. But there is one important thing that differentiates the chances for security in Moçambique from the chances of security in Algeria, and that is the racial problem. The Algerian people are white Africans. We are black Africans, so a foreign journalist — if he is European or American — would have an awful time to hide in the midst of the struggle that we are carrying out. We are part of the natural milieu of Moçambique, we speak the languages of the area, we pass for locals in every part where we are, but a foreign journalist would have an awful time to be able to camouflage and stay in the bush with us at this stage. Later, of course, we

are sure we will be able to invite foreign journalists, as we will be able to control areas that thus will be safer from Portuguese encroachments and therefore enable them to survive, at least give them a certain percentage of chance to survive.

D: May I finally ask a question about yourself. You were born and brought up in Moçambique. Why did you leave it?

M: I was born in the southern part of Moçambique. I was born actually in what you call bush. My parents were traditional people, they never knew any European language or European people in any way. I grew up there, and then I was taken to local schools by Swiss missionaries, Calvinist missionaries, and after which I went to the city of Lourenço Marques, where I lived from the age of fifteen until I was over 22. And then I went to South Africa at the age of 24 to finish my secondary school, and I went to the University in Johannesburg where I was expelled by the Malan government, the present Nationalist government in its second year of life in 1949. Then I went back to Moçambique and I got a scholarship from a foreign humanitarian organisation. I went to Lisbon University, where I studied a year. Because of the fascist system of Salazar I could not stand it, so I asked for a scholarship, and I went to America. And I was already 31 years of age when I went. I will be 45 this year. So I studied in the United States, did my Ph.D., my doctor's degree, and I worked five years for the United Nations, and I went home to Moçambique in 1961. I visited again to get in contact with my people again. Then after that I was sure the Portuguese position was unchangeable, and I talked to many Portuguese officials and I discovered they were not interested. The trends of change that were taking place in Africa, they were against them. So I felt that my job with the United Nations was not fruitful insofar as I hoped to help my people for freedom. So I resigned. Then I returned to New York, and I went into teaching for a year to prepare to come to Tanzania after the independence of the country, which I did in 1962. Since then I have been living here, working here.