

*From Mozambique, Paulo Gumane
Writes on*

SALAZARS' MISCONCEPTION

THE motive power of progress is the truth and nothing but the truth—truth which is sometimes bitter. Matters related to the liberation of those dominated by foreigners, the oppressed, the enslaved, the exploited, require men, women and children alike: those who have the courage of their convictions: UDE-NAMO will fail in its duty if it fails or hesitates to contribute fully to any question affecting the Mozambican people.

We, the Mozambique National Democratic Union (UDENAMO), speak as men and also as Africans. As men we freely and fearlessly speak for our people. We speak for the silent, the dead, the living and even the unborn. Above all, we have moral courage; and when moral courage knows it is right, it dares anything.

We therefore make no apology if the bitter truth we expose offends anybody. Men of goodwill and conscience throughout the ages have condemned the brutalities inflicted on the people—they have condemned class distinction and political injustice inflicted on people who, through no fault of their own, live under the iniquitous and evil system of colonialism.

We call upon men of goodwill, not only to condemn colonialism, but to help in eliminating it totally from the face of the earth.

The colonial mystique, so misplaced and meaningless today, not only hurts the people in the colonies, but vitiates the life of the people in the metropolis itself.

The problem of the Portuguese colonies in Africa has become not only difficult but tragic, because of the arrogant frame of mind of the ruling stratum of Portugal. We in Mozambique have full perception of Portuguese colonialism as distinct from that of the British and the French, of which too, we have some perception; and have learnt of the peculiar flavour or texture, as it were, of the Portuguese variety. It

is tenacious, purblind, pathetic, auto-intoxicated. It seeks and releases its *raison d'être* in tilting at the windmills of history.

The Portuguese are proud of their history, and they deem their country among the most gallant in the world. But instead of building an expanding future on their past, they have sought to convert the past into a prison. Those who pride themselves as being the greatest discoverers in the world strangely remain anchored in the stagnant pool of the unchanging, ossified past. They once made a mighty effort, and now they seem determined to petrify that effort.

The heroic element of Portugal's past continues to haunt and distort their destiny. This reminds us of another, more famous historical trial of ghosts: the holy Roman Empire, "a sharing of spiritual values": but the "sharing", no longer exist.

The Portuguese spokesman in their lucid moments are not unaware of the distortion and debasement of their dream—that of building a Portuguese empire out of varied and different ethnic, geographical and cultural groups of people—and beyond and beneath everything, this is economic imperialism.

One of them candidly stated, "It is often said that we Portuguese have the vice of history. Some even say we take refuge in the past to compensate for the smallness of the present—thus obeying the tragic law of empire, corroded by stagnation and decadence". It is this insistence on clinging to the tattered toga of yesterday that prevents modern Portugal from revealing the intellectual fecundity and the spiritual dynamism of her people. "Africa" says another of its colonial spokesman, "is for us moral justification and our *raison d'être* as a power. Without it we could be a small nation: with it we are a great country". Here is the nation; authentic idiom in the past, the self-mummification as it were, that makes the problem

of the Portuguese colonies one of unabating tension.

We have no doubt that when the people of Portugal discover their authentic idiom, they will speak from the depth of their understanding the wise words we wish them to speak now; for in seeking the liquidation of the Portuguese empire, we seek the realisation of a freer and fuller expression of the Portuguese people themselves.

The Portuguese colonialists proclaim their non-racial record. But they fail to understand that any claim to racial equality is reduced to mockery when it is overlaid by cultural inequality—nay, cultural genocide. The Portuguese empire is not geographical, not even purely political, but fundamentally a cultural one.

With strange obtuseness Adriano Morreira, ex-minister for the so-called overseas provinces of Portugal, observes in his book, "Portugal's Stand in Africa", on page 111: "Now, we Portuguese have always repudiated the philosophy of aggression and reprisal between cultures which inspired Nehru, Nkrumah, Nasser; and, likewise, we repudiate conflict between classes and races."

The distinguished leaders of Afro-Asia need no defence against this blind and venomous attack, but one wonders at the intellectual temerity of a person denouncing cultural aggression while holding fast to the philosophy of total aversion to cultural confluence of any kind. Do the Portuguese not release the consequences, scalding and explosive, of the systematic debasement, and eventual denial, nay, obliteration, of the individuality of the Africans as a subject people?

It is this willful blindness of the Portuguese rulers, the topay-turvy logic of their Orwellian insouciance, their propensity to ignore the terrible beam in their own eye, while furiously focussing on the non-existent mote in their brother's, that constitutes a fearful threat to world peace and the world sanity.

What has been the record of the process of selective assimilation? After 465 years of Portuguese colonial rule over Mozambique only a

Continued on page 28

Continued from page 23

handful of the African population has been favourably affected. Dictator Salazar, with brutal candour says as much: "A law recognizing citizenship takes minutes to draft and can be made right away: a citizen—that is a man fully and consciously integrated into a civilised political society—takes centuries to achieve."

In order that the decadent ruling elite of Portugal may cling to their fond "vice of history", the helpless peoples in the colony must live for countless centuries in political serfdom and cultural thralldom—and such is the prospect offered us. Such is the prospect the agents of the imperialists are striving to perpetuate.

For 465 years the relationship of oppressed Mozambique African with the Portuguese has remained the same—of a servant; and 465 years, of variations on the persistent theme—that of a servant—demands, not further involvement in embroidery on the variation, but destruction of the theme itself, its perpetuators, and its agents. It is not necessary for us to recapitulate here the picture, dismal and disturbing, that prevails in Mozambique. That picture was drawn with precision and power by UDENAMO in its petition to other United Nations in November 1963.

Who does not know of the overwhelming illiteracy, the grinding poverty of the African people there? Who does not resent the constant surveillance under which the humblest African lives, where any African who changes his residence, in all innocence, from one district to another, is forthwith captured and penalised? Need one repeat in detail the story of repressive exploitation of the African by the ruling white minority elite? Furthermore, dare we forget the many thousands of Africans killed by the Portuguese forces, the many freedom fighters arrested and imprisoned, the stench of the concentration camps, the situation whereby the innocent and freedom-loving African has been turned into an export commodity, a domestic slave, a forced labourer?

Let us frankly and decisively recognise that what UDENAMO is involved in—the struggle for the li-

beration of Mozambique,—is something elemental, irrepressible and irreversible. UDENAMO knows that the African of Mozambique must emerge not only politically but psychologically and economically.

This assertion of the African personality, this determined quest for national identity, by us for whom the dominant Portugal has fixed boundaries, is of fundamental, world-shaking importance. The Mozambican African for many generations was warned against aspiring for excellence; he was asked to make peace, not only with mediocrity, but with meanness. Today he is unbound; he is resolute in face of the most stubborn and sustained brutality of the colonial powers. As the weight of the white man lifts in the African continent, and as the horizon of political freedom widens, his deeper and fuller assertion seeks unfettered expression. It is easy to wipe away tears: it takes, however, deeper sympathy to wipe away the invisible tears which continue to haunt laughter and speech and song. These inner tears will dry only when cultural continuity is regained, thus assuring identity and renewal at the foundation of our own lives.

Today UDENAMO is engaged in that miracle of rebirth: the joyous and triumphant reassertion of the individuality of the Mozambican, and the unfolding of the African personality. In the presence of that miracle of re-birth we of UDENAMO warn the world that the problem of Mozambique is deeper than political freedom. It is one of cultural emancipation.

It is the strife-torn confrontation between the Portuguese colonials and the Africans that make the situation in Mozambique so eminently fateful. The sheath of decadence cannot muffle or obstruct the expression of the awakened Mozambican. Either the scales are removed willingly, or they must be violently cast aside. The latter is our alternative.

It is futile to hope for a change of heart or of purpose among the Portuguese rulers. Only determined men, united in the pursuit of freedom, can solve the problem. The facts of life and the lessons of his-

tory brand these truths on our consciousness. To be with unlit lamps and ungirt loins at this critical hour in the history and conscience of the Mozambique people is to ignore our own peril.

Voice of Africa

Supports

Union

Government

For

Africa
