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HELD AT

CHATHAM HOUSE

ON

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Subject: The Future of the Portuguese territories in  
Southern Africa

Speaker: Dr. Eduardo Mondlane

Chairman: Mr. Colin Legum

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SPEECH DELIVERED IN LONDON BY DR. EDUARDO MONDLANE,  
PRESIDENT OF FRELIMO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THURSDAY MARCH 7TH, 1968.

May I first say what a pleasure, and what an honour it is to be invited to speak to such a distinguished gathering here in London. To such a well-informed audience I do not feel it necessary to present an exhaustive analysis of Portuguese colonial rule. Rather I would wish to concentrate on telling you something of the positive achievements of the African nationalist movement in my country, Mozambique. But since I have noticed elsewhere that there is a widespread though fallacious view that Portuguese colonial rule is colonial rule in a peculiarly benevolent and non-racial form, perhaps I shall be forgiven if I dispose of a few myths before embarking on my main themes.

Metropolitan Portugal itself is controlled by a government which does not apply the principles of democracy and individual freedom within its own national boundaries. It is naturally inconceivable that such a government would voluntarily accept the idea that colonial peoples like ourselves should have even these basic rights let alone independence. In its total and absolute refusal to engage in a dialogue with African nationalism, in its total rejection of any concept of trusteeship, and of any kind of preparation for independence or majority rule, Portugal forfeits the right to be compared with a colonial power like Britain whose policies have been largely based on the acceptance of an ultimate right to self-determination. Portugal's fundamental assumptions are of a different kind: self-determination is of necessity excluded.

Nor is the Portuguese presence in Mozambique marked by any redeeming features as its apologists are prone to argue. I read recently that Portugal's foreign minister Franco Nogueira addressing American journalists, claimed that in terms of human rights and of race equality, and I quote 'Portuguese policies are not to be reproached'. He went on to assert and I quote again that 'the practice of colonialism is something which has always been alien to Portuguese principles and policies. Economic exploitation, (and I'm still quoting) race discrimination, cultural and social segregation have always been opposed by us during

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our centuries-old history in the African continent.'

What is the true picture? What is the reality of /((policy) the overseas "Provincs." of assimilado, of so-called Lusotropicalism, a phrase coined by one Brazilian theorist, Gilberto Freyre, to account for the supposed success of the Portuguese empire? I call as witness one of Mr. Nogueira's predecessors, if I may so term him, Antonio Enes, colonial theorist of the nineties whose term of office in Mozambique was perhaps more significant than any other in shaping future developments there. He stated the basis of Portuguese overseas labour policy in these words: 'If we do not learn how to make the negro work and cannot take advantage of his work, within a short while we shall be obliged to abandon Africa to someone less sentimental and more utilitarian than we.' Note the characteristic self-congratulatory tone, but note too the hard reality behind it. Nearly half a century later Vieira Machado, one of Salazar's Colonial Ministers expressed himself in not dissimilar terms. 'It is necessary to inspire in the black the idea of work, and of abandoning his laziness and depravity, if we want to exercise a colonising action to protect him.'

The machinery to 'make the negro work' was incorporated in a series of labour laws dating back to Enes' time, but revised and restated in the 1926 Labour Code. This machinery underwent only minor modifications until the 1960's. The tendency of these modifications including the most recent has been to find a formula which retains the obligation to work while at the same time appearing to abolish or restrict the practice of forced labour. Now for instance, article 146 of the Constitution states: 'The state cannot force the indigenous population to work except on public works or in the execution of a penal sentence or to carry out a fiscal obligation.'

This last, the fiscal obligation, can be applied almost universally since the relationship between earnings and taxes is such that most of the African population is at some time in debt. Despite the basically unchanged nature of the system, these paper modifications were enough for Portugal to be permitted, in 1959, to sign the International

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*Labour Convention of 1955 and the Abolition of Forced Labour Code in 1957.*

An even more basic denial of Portugal's alleged non-racialism is to be found in the law itself, which separates the people of Mozambique into 'indigenous' and 'non-indigenous' or 'assimilated'. I shall come shortly to that famous 'assimilado' category. Article 2 of the 1954 legislation, which elaborated on the differentiation of legal treatment to be handed out to these categories contradicts the claim that these distinctions are cultural rather than racial. It defines the indigenous population as: 'Individuals of the black race or their descendants who were born or who habitually live in the said Provinces and who do not yet possess the education or social customs which will allow for the integral application to them of the public and private law applied to Portuguese citizens.'

Since 40 per cent of the inhabitants of metropolitan Portugal are illiterate and are not included in the above classification, it is clear that black race is a more important determinant than educational level.

More concrete evidence of basic inequalities is the difference between the earnings of a black African engaged in 'free labour', which in 1960 were estimated at a daily maximum of 5 escudos, and the minimum daily earnings of an unqualified white which were 100 escudos.

What then of the assimilados? I am an assimilado. I am one of the half of one per cent of the population of Mozambique who have been able to overcome the many obstacles to the educational advancement which is a necessary precondition of obtaining that status. Portugal's education policy in its colonies has favoured the education of the Portuguese with the education of the black man left almost exclusively to the churches, especially the Catholic church. This government-subsidised missionary education provides a very limited kind of instruction for Africans. Less than one fifth of primary school pupils in Mozambique are African. Half of one per cent of the children in the small number of secondary schools in Mozambique which

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provide a leaving certificate are African.

Even for this privileged half per cent discrimination in salaries and in social conditions is a daily experience. Nor should it be thought that Portuguese non-racialism is evidenced by regular marriages across the colour line. Even in Angola, which has a higher percentage of mulattos than Mozambique, there was only one marriage recorded between black and white, four between mulatto and black, and 30 between mulatto and white in 1955. I am sorry not to be able to provide you with more up to date statistics, but I see no reason why there should have been any dramatic change in the intervening period. The pattern is one of miscegenation but not of intermarriage.

Mozambique's economic system is uniquely Portuguese, but is none the less colonial. Cash crop exports are operated by monopoly companies who, allotted land by the Government, are entitled to force the peasants who previously worked the land to grow only the crop required. This crop, bought by the company from the producers at an extremely low price, is then sold to Portugal at a cost which, though still well below the world price for the commodity, enables them to make a profit. Thus Portugal too benefits from this system, one reason why she is so unwilling to relinquish any of her 'Overseas Provinces'. To show the extent of the monopolies I would like to cite the cotton companies, the largest of which - Companhia dos Algodoes - has control over more than 100,000 peasants. Between them, no more than a dozen companies produce cotton to an export value of over £7 million.

Another kind of export from Mozambique from which the Portuguese government profits is the sale of labour to South Africa and Rhodesia, for work in the mines. In 1960 there were no less than 400,000 Mozambicans employed in this way, and for each one Portugal received a fee of £2.6s.0. The respective governments also pay the workers' salaries directly to Portugal, which deducts taxes and hands over the remainder in escudos.

This account is of necessity impressionistic, but I shall be happy to furnish questioners with additional evidence if they find my picture unconvincing.

I turn now to FRELIMO. The intrinsic nature of Portuguese colonial rule shaped the response of the Mozambique nationalists. Our assumption from the beginning was that liberation would require the use of force. At the time of Tanganyika's independence in 1961 there were several Mozambique nationalist groups. The most important were: the Mozambique African National Union (MANU), the Uniao Democratica Nacional de Mocambique (UDENAMO), and the Uniao Nacional Africana de Mocambique Independente (UNAMI). My own associations had been with UDENAMO, but by 1962 I was totally convinced that the first condition for success must be to weld these movements into a united front, a single party. Thus, after months of negotiation, a meeting of parties was convened in Dar es Salaam in 1962 and the Frente de Libertacao de Mocambique was formally established on June 25 that year. The three constituent parties were dissolved and FRELIMO was established on the basis of complete fusion into a single movement with a unitary structure. Mozambicans who wished to be associated with the movement could commit themselves as individuals but not as members of the dissolved parties. Our first Party congress in September 1962, attended by many influential and representative Africans from Mozambique itself, drew up three major policy guidelines for the new movement.

First, we accepted as a fundamental fact of life that Salazar's Portugal could never accept willingly the idea of self-determination, and that there was no prospect of negotiating political advance towards independence. Thus it was necessary to set up a clandestine political force within Mozambique to prepare the people for the long and arduous task of liberating the country.

Secondly, we decided to establish a clandestine military programme.

Thirdly, we agreed to establish an educational programme that would emphasise the administrative training of potential and actual cadres.

In 1962 the only African state that had won its independence in a military struggle against a determined and

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well-armed colonial adversary was Algeria. It was natural, then, that Mozambique should turn to Algeria for assistance. The training that our first group of soldiers received in Algeria served as a basis for further training of Mozambicans in East Africa, and later in Mozambique itself. By September 1964, when FRELIMO launched its first military action, we had a force of 250 young men, well-trained and well-equipped. Since then, in the years of fighting, the Mozambican army has acquired experience of its own to add to the original Algerian advice and training. We have learned from other guerrilla struggles, but we have developed our own strategies and techniques, tailored to the specific problems of Mozambique. Guerrilla warfare, if it is to be successful, must be truly indigenous, taking into account the nature of the terrain and the nature of the enemy.

We now have more than 8,000 men and women, trained and well-equipped, and our army is fighting in 1/3 of the country. 1/5 of the total area of Mozambique, with a population of almost 1 million out of a 7 million population, is under our virtual control. Our primary targets in this war are the Portuguese army, the Portuguese police, not least the political police - PIDE. Secondly, we are concerned with certain administrative centres outside the army which serve to support it. We also regard as legitimate targets for attack certain economic projects which support the Portuguese army. But while exceptions need to be made for military reasons our aim is to do what we can to preserve such little economic development as has taken place in Mozambique. We do not encourage attacks on civilians of any kind, either black, white, coloured or Asian, so long as they are not armed to fight against us and are not collaborating with the Portuguese armed forces. Portuguese whites and Asians are welcome as FRELIMO members. In the areas we control we can guarantee the safe movement of Catholic bishops and priests where we know that they are not serving the Portuguese army.

The Portuguese, on the other hand, tend to define all black people in any given area as hostile guerrillas once  
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that area is affected by guerrilla action. Civilians subjected to Portuguese attacks and bombardments have thus been helped in overcoming any doubts they may have had about their commitment to the nationalist forces. At the same time, FRELIMO military action is increasingly effective in isolating the Portuguese administration from the bulk of the African population.

FRELIMO military control in a given area involves administrative responsibilities towards the people of that area. We do all we can to ensure the minimal requirements of normal life in the bush. This means drugs and medicines and bush clinics for their distribution. A series of clinics, both large and small, was established throughout the liberated areas, arranged so that serious cases could easily be transferred from a small first-aid post to a better-equipped centre. In the field of preventive medicine vaccination campaigns have been held, with the result that last year 100,000 people were vaccinated against smallpox. The staff of 400 is being augmented through courses for the training of rural medical aides, two groups of whom have already graduated, and our first Mozambican African doctor will finish his internship in the United States this year.

Particularly in those areas with experience of missionaries, but also in places where the people have never had the opportunity of receiving formal education, schools are important in establishing confidence. To some, liberation means schools for their children for the first time. There are now 11,000 children registered in our bush primary schools, studying under 120 teachers. Our aim is to have 1 teacher for every 100 children, a modest but realistic objective in view of our lack of trained personnel. This year we have launched a teachers training course, from which a further 45 teachers will return to work in Mozambique, but there are still 12,000 children registered who have as yet no teachers, and the adult literacy courses are also hampered for lack of personnel. The primary syllabus as taught by the Portuguese is largely unsuitable for our schools, but new curricula  
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are being written which will form the basis of the Mozambican educational system. All our schools are self-supporting agriculturally, but are totally reliant on what FRELIMO can supply them with for a minimum of blackboards, chalk, slates and the like.

our people FRELIMO also helps/with their agricultural activities and with marketing their products within the country. In the Cabo Delgado province we established, or rather we revived, agricultural producers' cooperatives which the Portuguese had deliberately discouraged or destroyed. A petitioner to the UN Committee of 24 in 1965, Mzee Lazaro Kavandame, testified to the difficulties he had encountered in Cabo Delgado in his efforts to help Mozambican peasants to establish agricultural cooperatives. Now, once again, Mzee Kavandame is back helping our people reorganise their economic life, and at the same time directing political and military programmes aimed at securing their political independence. Peasants of Cabo Delgado are now producing more cereals, beans, oilseed and small livestock than ever before, despite constant harassment by the Portuguese forces. They are free from the total dependence on cash crops forced on them by the concession system which in some years reduced them to famine conditions.

Both in Cabo Delgado and the other semi-liberated regions of Mozambique, the Niassa province, FRELIMO in order to sustain these new ventures into arable agriculture have imported for distribution among the farming population simple agricultural equipment such as hoes, hatchets and pangas. In 1966 we bought and distributed in Cabo Delgado alone 5,000 of each implement.

Not content with helping our people improve their subsistence agriculture, we are making an important beginning in organising the cultivation and marketing of cash crops under conditions very different to those obtaining under the Portuguese concession system. During 1966 FRELIMO was able to export from the liberated areas of Mozambique 500 tons of cashew nuts, 100 tons of sesame seed, 100 tons of groundnuts and 10 tons of castor oil seed. These levels were/

These levels were increased during 1967, but the figures were not yet available to me when I left East Africa. We are also working on ways of marketing the artwork of our famous Makonde craftsmen and are developing other cottage industries. In such modest ways the Mozambique nation is beginning to reconstruct its economic and political life.

As these activities are extended, so are the responsibilities of our revolutionary government increased. /'s FRELIMO structure is dictated by the necessities of the revolution. The main organisational body is the central committee, which has both administrative and legislative responsibilities. It is composed of 22 members, most of them also directors or executive secretaries of operational departments of the organisation. The central department is the president's office, which consists of the president and vice-president and a secretary for the presidency as the responsible officers. All actions - political, military, and educational - are coordinated here. In listing the other departments, I do not mean to imply that the order of listing indicates their relative importance.

Certainly one of the most important departments is the one responsible for clandestine political work within Mozambique. The executive secretary in charge of this department is assisted by a committee of associate secretaries, one representing each province. They prepare for action everywhere - ahead of the army, with the army, and after the army. They are responsible for formulating political lines and transmitting them to local leaders. They establish cells everywhere in Mozambique and make sure that each cell knows what it must do and how its function fits into the party's strategy for the liberation of the whole country. A department of organisation within Mozambique has the related task of preparing the people psychologically and politically for the long struggle that we face. We do not make facile promises to people, for it is absolutely essential that they share with us the knowledge that liberation from Portuguese rule may take many years and many lives. Every area of Mozambique has a team working clandestinely to train leaders and to provide the kind of civic education that will enable /

enable each Mozambican to understand how he personally relates to FRELIMO's overall strategy. Where the people organise themselves ahead of FRELIMO's organisational team, the staff seeks to link the existing set-up with FRELIMO, emphasising orientation on the need for coordinating activities against an enemy as powerful as Portugal.

The department of defence, which reports directly to the president on a daily basis, recruits, trains, supplies, and provides political education for the youth who are the guerrillas. It also plans and directs military activities. The department of external affairs, staffed with an executive secretary and an associate and other personnel, is concerned with solidifying ties with all foreign countries and organisations that are friendly to the Mozambique liberation struggle. It formulates requests for help, circulates information, conveys all gifts from outside into the organisation, represents FRELIMO in conferences abroad, and serves as the formal link between FRELIMO and COMCP, the organisation that coordinates liberation movements in all the Portuguese colonies.

The department of finance, which is also the treasury, collects all funds, prepares budgets, and, in collaboration with the president's office, supervises the disbursement of funds to every department. It is also responsible for planning the economic action programmes that must be undertaken to assure the welfare of the people in the liberated areas of Mozambique.

The department of education is responsible for FRELIMO's growing programme of academic, political, and technical education. It maintains a number of schools within and outside Mozambique and co-ordinates all scholarship programmes for our students abroad. It contacts foreign governments, friendly educational and philanthropic organisations, and other potential sources of scholarship assistance. It also screens and prepares students, transmits their qualifying documents, and arranges travel documents, clothing and transportation as necessary. This department is also the liaison between FRELIMO and the Mozambique Institute

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in Dar es Salaam, which is the main educational body within the Mozambique liberation struggle. A directorate of health, composed of a number of doctors and nurses, operates FRELIMO's medical programmes. It is responsible, in cooperation with the Mozambique Institute, for training all the nurses who are required to go into Mozambique every year to help man our several clinics; it also supervises these clinics, solicits or buys the drugs and medicines required, and conveys these supplies where they are needed. A department of social welfare is primarily concerned with the feeding and clothing of refugees and displaced persons within Mozambique, and with soliciting help required to deal with these problems.

A department of information, located in our Dar es Salaam headquarters, collects and digests information on FRELIMO activities and issues weekly press statements; it also prepares documents and pamphlets for circulation abroad and publishes a monthly English-language magazine called 'Mozambique Revolution'. Other pamphlets are prepared for use within Mozambique to keep the people informed and to explain the line of action required by the party. Radio news and announcements are beamed to listeners in Mozambique through friendly countries in Africa and elsewhere.

FRELIMO is not simply an administrative machine. It is a democratic party. I have referred to the legislative responsibilities of the Central Committee. It meets as a legislative body every six months, and such meetings may last for anything up to two weeks, depending on the issues involved. Each department reports on its work and there is free discussion from which policy decisions emerge. It is in these Central Committee sessions that our problems are aired and the views of the people of Mozambique are expressed through their representatives. Discussion is not only free but forthright, and policy decisions are reached by consensus.

I am often asked how all this activity is supported. I want to emphasise that the principal and most important source of support in all our efforts is the hard work and commitment of the Mozambican people. However important the role of aid from Africa and further afield it is the political determination of the Mozambicans and the organisational framework that FRELIMO provides for them which sustain our action.

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Having made that clear I can say that support for our whole programme of liberation, the complete range of political, military and educational activity now comes from three broad categories. First Africa. Most help for the political and military programme comes from independent African states, either in the form of money or equipment obtained for us by the OAU's African Liberation Committee, or as individual offers of material and financial aid. The Liberation Committee designated FRELIMO as the only channel for OAU aid to Mozambique nationalism in 1963. African aid composes more than two-thirds of our total resources.

Second, we receive aid from Asian and socialist states, including India, the People's Republic of China, Indonesia, Japan, and the USSR. This aid includes both funds and equipment useful in the struggle.

Third, we also get aid from Western countries. This is mostly from churches and humanitarian pro-African committees, and is designated for our educational, refugee, and other humanitarian programmes. The Mozambique Institute has received a great deal of financial support from Western countries and school equipment from Eastern Europe.

But there are several kinds of support that we urgently seek, which we are not at the moment getting. We do not have, as we would wish, the outright political and diplomatic support of the Western powers in our struggle. The USA, France, West Germany, Great Britain, and most of the NATO powers, are apparently content to give tacit support to the status quo in Portuguese rule of Africa. The USA under Kennedy moved through a period of equivocation which seemed to be giving way to a policy of more positive support. After President Kennedy's death this direction was reversed. More recent US policy seems to be one of support for the status quo. At last year's vote in the General Assembly on a motion condemning Portugal and urging UN action against her, the USA and Britain, together with Australia, New Zealand and the Netherlands, joined with South Africa, Portugal and Spain in a negative vote. Other NATO countries such as  
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Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Greece, Italy and Norway at least chose to join the small number who abstained. The vast majority of the third world, including the Afro-Asian Commonwealth, voted for the Resolution with Russia and Eastern Europe. It is impossible to exaggerate the comfort that Portugal draws from such votes on the part of the Western Powers.

Yet I tend to be asked by Western audiences whether FRELIMO is pro-East or pro-West, pro-Communist or pro-capitalist. My answer as President of FRELIMO is that FRELIMO is quite simply pro-Mozambican. But we are fighting and our people cannot help but see the West, through NATO, assisting with the training of the Portuguese army, training which extends even to counter-insurgency techniques. They cannot help but know that French, German and British weapons are being used by the Portuguese. They are only too aware that it is Western countries who vote with Portugal in the UN, who establish military bases in Portugal, who do nothing to discourage private investment in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea.

It is not that a change of attitude on the part of the West will alter the outcome of our struggle. But it could, we feel, help to determine the length of time it may take for us to win. I can only leave you with the question: What will the West expect of us when we are ultimately victorious, if it maintains its present policy?

For let there be no doubt of Portugal's vulnerability. Her 1967 military budget reached a record £67 million, an increase of 30 per cent on the previous year, no less than 47 per cent of the total Portuguese budget. In 1967 the age limit for conscription was extended down to 18 years, and the period of service extended from two years to three. In 1968, those unfit for active service are being drafted into auxiliary services. Portugal has 60,000 troops serving in Mozambique alone, a further 50,000 in Angola and 20,000 in Guinea, where there are indications that she may be considering withdrawal. On the vexed question of casualty figures, I do not ask you to accept our figures. In August 1967 a South African newspaper - the Sunday Tribune of Durban - quoted Portuguese figures of 5,000 killed and injured in Mozambique since 1964.

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Again, a recent Portuguese communiqué announced that 12 Portuguese soldiers had been killed in 3 days, on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th January this year. During my last visit to the liberated areas of Mozambique less than 2 weeks ago, I saw piles and piles of Portuguese weapons which we had captured, mostly of German and Belgian make. These figures underline that it is the support that Portugal derives from Western countries, support to which I have already referred, - the foreign investment in concession companies and development projects, the military aid she receives from NATO, and the economic advantages she derives from EFTA - that serve to prop her up.

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So far I have made only passing reference to one of Portugal's most important sources of support. I refer to the Republic of South Africa. After the events of last summer, when South African security forces entered Rhodesia despite British protests I do not need to remind a London audience that henceforth it must be assumed that South Africa reserves the right to intervene in any of the neighbouring territories in southern Africa in defence of what she construes as her long-term interests. Vorster then commented that it was not necessary to wait for a formal defence agreement between South Africa, Portugal and Rhodesia, because friends in danger must defend each other. It is clear that the lines are being drawn for the final power struggle in southern Africa. I am aware of, and in common with a significant number of British people, deeply regret, Britain's heavy economic involvement in South Africa. It is only too clear that this involvement has seriously hampered Britain's efforts to deal with the illegal regime in Rhodesia, in whose survival the role of Portuguese-ruled Mozambique has been crucial. While I appreciate that there is little chance of an immediate change of policy on Britain's part I can only say again that here, as in Mozambique, the ultimate outcome of the struggle is not in doubt. Do Britain and the West really feel that it is in their long-term interests to be identified in the eyes of Africa and of the whole Afro-Asian world, and not least in the eyes of the people of the territories concerned, with the racist minority regimes of southern Africa? May I respectfully suggest that for Britain at least the beginnings of disengagement lie not only in the achievement of majority rule in Rhodesia, to which Mr. Wilson's Government is now committed, but in the withdrawal of her tacit support for Portuguese colonial rule in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea.

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