

EDUARDO CHIVAMBO MONDLANE:

HIS CONTRIBUTION TO RESOLUTION AND EVOLUTION

By

Shirley Graham DuBois

He was a man of peace, a man of strength and a giant intellect. He was an African patriot, a leader of his people, who served them always, unmindful of himself, of dangers - seeking no reward save that final accolade; "Well done!" He walked this earth with dignity, unbowed by adverse blasts, his spirit free and unfettered, proud of his people and his land, his eyes were lifted to a vision which pushed back horizons of time and place and unfolded the "immortal years of God." He died in the cause of freedom.

January, 1969. The place. Khartoum, Republic of Sudan. From all parts of Africa we had gathered there for a conference. Similar to, yet very different from the Pan-African Congresses called together by W.E.B. DuBois and others, in Europe, beginning in 1900. Those meetings assembled for the purpose of bringing into closer touch the peoples of Africa and of African descent throughout the world. They exchanged information and sought ways and means to free the enslaved continent from the chains which bound her. They appealed to the "enlightened" world for understanding, drew up countless statements and resolutions to place before every international body -- the first going to the Versailles

Peace Conference which met to draw up plans for continual peace after World War I. "Peace," declared the Pan-African Congress, "cannot be attained so long as Justice is denied vast numbers of the peoples in this world."

Until 1958, imperialist and colonial powers prevented any such gathering on the continent of Africa. But, when in 1958 I attended the first All-African Peoples Conference in Accra, designated by the then Prime Minister, Kwame Nkrumah as the Sixth Pan-African Congress, it seemed that this broad and diversified assemblage was spear-heading the triumphant liberation of our continent. To Accra had come representatives from every region -- across the deserts and plains from the Indian Ocean, and the Red Sea to the Atlantic Ocean. There were underground fighters from South Africa, and Patrice Lumumba came from the Congo. We rejoiced that the new Africa was truly "on the march."

But, eleven years later, the Khartoum All African Conference had to review a decade of frustrations, set-backs and coup d'etats. The Nigerian fratricide war was raging' the British Government had abandoned the people of Rhodesia to the fascist regime of Ian Smith- African territory was occupied by enemies and African cities were being bombed. Most of the delegates who came to Khartoum were discouraaed and disheartened. The way ahead seemed too long and difficult.

It was Dr. Mondlane, speaking from the platform on Mozambique, who inspired that gathering with courage and hope.

To many of us, Mozambique had been an obscure part of "Portuguese Africa" -- isolated from the struggles towards independence -- a land so tightly held by the Portuguese that other Europeans were generally excluded. But here- was the leader of the Mozambique Liberation Front telling of a movement which was wiping out tribal

differences and binding a battered populace together in a united

front of action. He told of victories won, of sections already wrested from the Portuguese, of the successful training of men and women. I quote Dr. Mondlane's words as they were later published*

"We do not choose war as our path to national independence. War was forced on us. Since we have no choice, it is worth recognizing and trying to exploit the constructive aspects of armed struggle. . . Liberation is to us not simply a matter of expelling the Portuguese; it means reorganizing the life of the country and setting it on the road

to sound national development. . .

"One thing is certain* the clock cannot be turned back. The changes that have taken place in the north cannot be reversed: and even in the south, where we are not physically fighting, the myth of Portuguese strength has been destroyed. The very fact that in over a fifth of the country the colonial state has been eliminated, has already radically changed prospects for the whole of Mozambique and perhaps even in the long run for the whole of Southern Africa."

Eduardo Mondlane: *The Struggle*

for Mozambique, Chapter 10,
page 221, Penguin African Library,
1969.

I recall Dr. Mondlane as he talked with us in small groups. Relaxed, genial, cordial, he listened, weighed and considered before offering his opinion on any question raised. Never dictatorially, always earnestly, with sound logic, out of his own varied experiences and broad knowledge, he counselled those who sought his advice. He was a brilliant conversationalist, was endowed with a fine sense of humor*, his deep laughter was contagious.

Later that month, I served on a panel of which he was Moderator at an Arab Conference in Cairo. Our panel had to wrestle with the problem of self-determination for the Palestinian people. It was Dr. Mondlane whose skillful handling of this question brought forth the resolution unanimously adopted in the final session of the Arab Conference.

Three weeks later he was assassinated - killed instantly by a bomb hidden in a package of books.

Why?

The answer is clear, Eduardc Chivambo Mondlane, in the forty-nine years of his dynamic life, had become a very real threat to Portugal's power and exploitation of Africa.

By organizing resistance to Portugal he came into conflict with all neo-colonialist designs. Under his leadership, the people of Mozambique were claiming their land. They were

planting their feet firmly in the soil of their forefathers and fighting off enslavers and despoilers. In vain have the colonial powers thought that with the death of this inspired leader resistance in Mozambique would crumble -- that its people would fall back into despair and apathy, that they would submit because they saw themselves as helpless.

No! The spirit, the determination, the wisdom and vision of Eduardo Mondlane lives on -- not only in Mozambique, but throughout southern Africa and beyond. His name is on the lips of liberation forces whether they be in Namibia, Zimbabwe, Azania or Palestine. The struggle in Mozambique has now become the symbol of what men and women are working for, are planning for, and, if necessary, are dying for.

This is the Era of Liberation. In spite of warheads and cartels, in spite of intrigues, betrayal and coup d'etats, the peoples of this earth whether they be in Africa, Asia, the Middle East or South America -- are determined to throw off oppression, exploitation and aggression. And it was Eduardo Mondlane who placed his little-known country, Mozambique, in the front ranks of this world-wide liberation battle.

He was of the generation which grew up into a world already badly shaken by upheavals. Particularly unexpected was the aftermath of the two World Wars on dark peoples. During the course of their fighting, Whites had spoken eloquently about

FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY, COURAGE and FREE PEOPLES. Suddenly, these same words were being hurled at them from distant parts of their "empires." Pan-African movements were under way. Workers federations were being formed, and the Egyptians were causing the British so many headaches that in the final "clean-up" of the war, they were afraid to turn their backs on Egyptian regiments in their own army.

Faced with tremendous pressures from international bodies and from their far-flung colonies, most colonial powers began conceding some rights of self-determination to peoples under their control. They agreed to consider certain steps towards independence and began talking about democratic forms of government.

Not so Portugal. That government stoutly proclaimed that her African territories did not need "independence" since they were an integral part of Portugal, which "places on parallel lines the interests of Europeans as leaders in the transformation of backward regions and the interests of the natives as a mass prepared to become part of a future civilized people"

In 1923, this policy of "equality" and "assimilation" was so convincingly explained to W.E.B. DuBois that, for a short time, he was completely deceived. That year an organization of African and mulatto students of Lisbon had participated in the Third Pan-African Congress which met in London. Before

the close of the conference, this organization, known as Liga Africana, invited the Congress to hold a session in Lisbon. Dr. DuBois was surprised to learn that the Portuguese Government not only knew that the invitation was being extended but endorsed it. When some time later the Pan-African Congress did meet in Lisbon, a number of Portuguese officials attended, appeared to approve of the demands voiced, and invited Dr. DuBois in for extended discussions of their own "enlightened" policies.

These proclaimed policies, indeed, had little relation to Portugal's practices inside her African territories. "Assimilation" was supposed to mean official recognition of entry into the Portuguese "community" so that an African who attained the status of an assimilado enjoyed all the privileges -- educationally, professionally and socially -- of any Portuguese "citizen." In order to gain this status, an African must read, write and speak Portuguese fluently, must have sufficient means to support his family, must already have the education and habits to make him socially acceptable to Portuguese society, and must be of good conduct. These requirements, of course, demanded that the African reach a higher level of "civilization" than much of the white population for forty per cent of Portugal's population is illiterate and many lack sufficient means to support themselves. However, after the African has thus proven himself and his application has been received and approved by all administrative authorities, after he has agreed to cut himself off from all family and friends

who have not reached the status of an assimilado, never to use his own language and to live in an entirely European style -- even then

this aspirant may not use the public facilities reserved for whites, does not get employment on the same level as whites and any professional work he manages to do is strictly limited. Apart from the other failings of the system, its final condemnation is that very few Africans have been affected. Out of a population of over seven million, there are in Mozambique less than five thousand assimilados.

Portugal itself is a poor and backward country, with an area a fraction of that of Mozambique. She has scarcely any mineral resources, a shortage of cultivable land, her per capita income is perhaps the smallest in Europe. Slave labor in Africa is essential to her well-being*, complete exploitation of her African colonies is seen as the only means of maintaining her "prestige" and the high standard of living of her ruling class.

Portugal sends her poor and unemployed to work in Africa, rewarding them with land. She is thus building up a strong class

of industrial, white workers in these territories.

Having brutally crushed resistance to political control in Mozambique, the Portuguese handed over to the Catholic Church the responsibility for the "pacification" of the people and then distributed its natural resources to the various economic interests anxious to explore and exploit them. Large tracts of land were leased to foreign companies, which, in addition to acquiring rights over the resources, were allowed to control

directly the lives of Africans living within the areas.

The slave trade had been the most profitable form of commerce in Mozambique and persisted in various forms even after traffic in slaves was legally prohibited. In 1899 a decree was issued which smoothed the transition from slavery to "forced labor." This decree stated that "all natives of Portuguese overseas provinces are obligated to obtain through works the means to subsist and better their social condition." In case one failed to obtain such work, the government could force him into its own service or into that of an individual employer. "Forced labour," therefore, assured plenty of "hands" on Mozambique plantations but was found to be even more profitable if exported to the mines of South Africa.

Here, then, are the main characteristics of Portuguese colonialism: a centralized net of authoritarian administration-

a firm alliance with the Catholic Church* armed repression of native aspirations* the use of foreign companies to exploit natural resources*, forced labor and extensive export of workers to South Africa.

These methods have never been carried out in secret. Countless reports have been made to all international bodies, and from time to time Portuguese atrocities in Africa make "world news."

Why, then do they continue? Why is Portugal not condemned by the "family of nations"? Why is it wholly left

to the impoverished, suffering "natives" to throw off such repression?

Dr. Mondlane himself has told us:

"The new phase of development in Mozambique has been dominated by South Africa and the United States, although Great Britain,, France and Janan have been important, and small Western European countries, such as Belgium, Sweden and Switzerland. The extraction of minerals, processing and manufacturing industries have taken precedence over agricultural production. The search for oil has taken an important place: American owned Gulf Oil started prospecting as early as 1953. . . The company made a number of successful strikes in Southern Mozambique. . . Another American company prospecting for several years is the Pan-American International Oil Corporation. . .

"In 1967, prospecting rights were granted to three new American companies -- Sunray Mozambique Oil Company, Clark Mozambique Oil Company and Skelly Mozambique Oil Company -- and a group of South African and French companies. . . In the last two years, the discovery of metal deposits has been attracting foreign funds. . . recent discoveries include copper., malachite, gold and a new vein of diamonds at Catuane on the South African border.

"The Zambezi Valley scheme is the king*pin of Portugal 's plan for development in Mozambique. The Zambezi Valley itself is already one of the richest agricultural areas, and recently a number of important minerals have been discovered there.

"The most important aspect of the plan is the construction of a giant dam at Cabora Bassa. This is a joint project with South Africa, with considerable backing from Western Europe and the United States.

"In 1977 the Mozambique Cotton Institute announced plans to settle 3,000 families in the Zambezi valley. Employment preference will be given to Portuguese soldiers who have completed their service in Mozambique.

"The main beneficiary of the plan will not be Mozambique, but South Africa, the largest consumer of power. . . The plan draws South Africa closer to Portugal and gives her an important stake in the future of Mozambique."

Eduardo Mondlane: The Struggle for

Mozambique, Chapter~T!

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This is the land in which Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane was born on the 20th of June, 1920 -- three years before the Portuguese officials in Lisbon were explaining to the Pan-African Congress the advantages enjoyed by Africans born in their "over-seas provinces."

He says of himself, "Like most Mozambique children, I began life in a village, and until the age of ten I spent my ^ays hording the family livestock with my brothers and absorbina the traditions of my tribe and family."

Gaza district in southern Mozambique was a burnt-out, depopulated area. The bare maintenance of life was difficult for its people. One can see this little black boy, his bare feet

kicking up the dust, guiding his few goats and sheep into the best

possible pastures, and then, finding a shrub or knotty tree under which he could sit, protected from the sun. There was little attractive in the landscape, but as he lay back, looking up at clouds moving slowly across the blue sky, he could think. He recalled the stories he had heard when the fathers of the village assembled in the evenings. The boy heard them talking of the "old days" -- days of plenty when the Deople came together for feasting - of how the hunters came in with much meat -- cf sing-ing and dancing, when the drums were hanpy and gay. He heard about

how his arandfather, a Big Chief, had led the people against

strange enemies who had come from "outside" -- how these evil ones had killed many, and burned their village. Now the Hruns

were always muffled and sad. The boy thought on these things*, he had heard the tired bitterness in the old ones' voices when they spoke and his own heart was heavy.

He tells us that the fact that he went to school at all, "I owe to the far-sightedness of my mother, who was my father's third and last wife, and a woman of considerable character and intelligence."

"Bush schools" was what the Portuguese called them, speaking contemptuously of these efforts of some few valiant missionaries. But to many African mothers these schools brought a ray of hope, since they provided a possible "way through" for their sons, whose traditional futures had been so drastically cut off.

From the time he was ten years old, young Eduardo worked and studied at Swiss Presbyterian bush schools. He listened and learned and read everything that came to his hands. Part of this time he lived in the home of a Swiss missionary, who appreciated the boy's exceptional capacity. Meanwhile, the Second World War was fought and won for "Free Peoples." Eduardo was in high school when in 1945 the Pan-African Congress met in Manchester, England, and ignited the torches of liberation which were carried from that Crossroads into the remotest parts of Africa.

Until that time the work of the Pan-African Congress had emphasized the important role of "coming together." of disseminating

information, of discussions and of 'rawino ud resolutions, petitions and pleas which were presented to international bodies.

But by 1945 the Pan-African movement had reached a new and more mature stage. With representation from the African Railway Employess Union, the Trade Unions of Nigeria and Sierra Leone, the Pan-African Federation of Workers in Europe, representatives from Tanganyika, and South Africa, the tcone of the Congress was more positive and even militant.

Its Declaration to Colonial Workers, Farmers and Intellectuals *

"We affirm the right of all Colonial Peoples to control their own destiny. All colonies must be free from foreign imperialist control, whether political or economic. . . We say to the peoples of the Colonies that they must fight for these ends by all means at their disposal."

From this 1945 Congress, representatives returned to their countries fired with the ideas and aspiration of Pan-Africanism which now began fermenting in its natural habitat.

Among those who went back were Jomo Kenyatta, who began the struggle for independence in Kenya and Kwame Nkrumah, who, after a long absence, returned to Ghana, then known as the Gold Coast. "Liberation of Africa" and "Development of Africa for Africans and not merely -For the profit of Europeans" were slogans which were sounded throuahout the continent.

Thus it was that when Eduardo Mondlane managed to obtain the Matriculation Certificate of the Joint Matriculation Board of South Africa, which allowed him to study at the Jan H. Hofmeyr School of Social Studies in Johannesburg, the African Congress of native peoples had been formed in South Africa and black people there were shouting "Free - dom!"

It was inevitable that Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane responded to these activities. Above the traffic of Johannesburg streets, he heard the beating of his village drums. He remembered! He remembered! But he persevered in his studies and had reached Witwatersrand University in South Africa when, with other students, he formed a student resistance organization.

"In 1949 the secondary school pupils, led by some who had been to South Africa to study, formed the Nucleo dos Estudantes Africanos de Mocambique (NESAM) which was linked to the Centro Associativo dos Negros de Mocambique, and which similarly under cover of social and cultural activities, conducted among the youth a political campaign to spread the idea of national independence and

encourage resistance to the cultural subjection which

the Portuguese imposed. From the first, the police-kept a close watch on the movement. I, myself, as one of the students returned from South Africa who had founded NESAM, was arrested and Questioned at some length about our activities.¹¹

Eduardo Mondlane: The Struggle for Mozambique,

Chapter 5, page 113.

The young man had by this time attained the status of an

as similitude. But it took the combined efforts of his teachers, plus his own stubborn application, to get him admitted to Lisbon University in Portugal. In the final analysis, it appeared that

the Portuguese assumed that this additional "privilege" would so separate the aspirations of this "native" from his own people that he would be satisfied with his personal opportunities. It soon became evident, however, that Eduardo Mondlane had not separated himself from his own people, and he was advised to try to complete his education in the United States.

I am glad he was accepted at Oberlin College. Oberlin is my school, and that fact gives me another link with this truly great African patriot. Oberlin is a small college in Ohio with educational standards as high as its anti-slavery traditions are long. The college boasts that the basement of its sedate church was one of the stations of the "underground railway" before and during the Civil War, and that here runaway slaves were hidden and helped on their way to Canada. It also tells how in the gallery of this same church the Fisk Jubilee Singers were first introduced to a conference of ministers. I know the welcome given the young black man from far-away Mozambique and I am sure the warmth and cordiality which he found at Oberlin intensified his efforts to find a peaceful solution to the struggle in Mozambique.

As always, Eduardo Mondlane worked while he studied. While a graduate student at Northwestern University, he served as a teaching assistant in the Departments of Sociology, Anthropology and Psychology. In 1954-55 he taught a course on African Cultures at Roosevelt University, Chicago- and in 1960 he taught a course on African Anthropology at New York University. That same year

he obtained the Ph.D. degree from Northwestern- then came his great opportunity. The United Nations named him to the Economic Commission for Africa to do research in African urbanism.

In this capacity he came to know African ambassadors, statesmen and nationalist leaders with whom he compared notes and experiences, he broadened his knowledge and grew in understanding. And in 1961, with his bride, he was able to take his leave in Mozambique. Though traveling on a U.N. passport, this was a risky undertaking, for already Eduardo Mondlane was a "marked man." But though the police dogged his steps and harassed his movements, the Mondlancs traveled over much of the country and were enthusiastically received by the native peoples. What he saw and heard during that trip, plus the eagerness with which his people flocked about him, burned deep into his heart.

He left the country reluctantly.

Not long after returning to the United States, Hr. Mondlane accepted the appointment at Syracuse University and was a founding member of the Program of Eastern African Studies.

Syracuse University's creation of the Eduardo C. Mondlane Memorial Fund, your gathering today to remember and honor a former colleague, your resolution to increase efforts to solve the problems to which this scholar dedicated himself, bear witness to his life and work here.

Yet, his time at this University was short. For now his mind was on fire with ideas of organizing a movement to

liberate Mozambique. He had served as researcher, as teacher, as diplomat. He had placed detailed information before commissions.

He had framed petitions and resolutions. But the oppressor's heel still ground his people into the dust. The world still turned a deaf ear to all their cries. Alliance with South Africa was bringing that fascist state nearer. And so Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane, having attained his full stature, reached the decision that he must return for positive and direct action to free his beleaguered land.

He was fully prepared to do the job: he was knowledgeable- he was dedicated. In the words of our poet, Walt Whitman, Eduardo could say without sham or boasting-

When I give

I do not give words

or a little charity,

When I give,

I give myself.

I am greatly honored in having this opportunity to make my contribution in perpetuating the name of one who has done so much in furthering the cause of freedom. My sincere thanks to Syracuse University, and particularly to the Program of Eastern African Studies. In this ceremony you not only share fond memories and appreciation of a noble African Patriot, but you also give encouragement and hope to the heroic Mozambique people who are carrying on under the banner on which he- inscribed the words:

25th September, 1964 -

Mozambican People- In the name of all of you,

FRELIMO today solemnly Proclaims the General
Armed Insurrection of the Mozambican People
against Portuguese Colonialism for the attainment
of the complete independence of Mozambique.

Logically -- without haste - thoughtfully -- Eduardo

Mondlane made the transition from Resolution to Revolution,, until

now the African poet Jorge Rebelo can say:

.... forge simple words
that even the children can understand
words which will enter every house
like the wind

and fall, like red hot embers
on our people's souls.

Thanks to Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane,

In our land

bullets are beginning to flower.

Shirley Graham DuBois
February 10. 1971