

sent them in the past. They thank you even more for all that you may do to aid them in the future to hasten their liberation, without which, Africa cannot be really free.

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SLAVERY AND LABOR IN MOZAMBIQUE

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It may sound a bit dramatic to use the term "slavery" to describe the condition of labor in this modern age. In America, perhaps, it would be overly dramatic. In Mozambique, a Portuguese colony in East Africa, the condition of the African worker is best described as slavery. As the British expert, Basil Davidson wrote in 1955; "Only the twisting of language can make this system differ from slavery."

The fact of the matter is that the entire economy of Mozambique and of the other Portuguese colonies in Africa is based on the use of forced labor. When an employer requires laborers, he has only to ask the colonial administration for them and they are promptly supplied. Most employers in Mozambique will not employ voluntary labor for the simple reason that the wage of 17 cents a day paid to voluntary labor makes it more expensive than renting the forced labor supplied by the colonial administration. For the use of "contract labor" or shibalos as they are called in Mozambique, the employer has only to feed them, pay the Administration a small fee, and pay the worker exactly enough to cover the "head tax" that every male African over the age of 16 is required to pay. The family of the forced laborer must shift for itself while he is away, and he can be sent hundreds of miles away to any part of the colony where his labor is needed for six to twelve months at a time.

The African of course, would rather stay at home with his family and work on his own farm, rather than to leave home for six months to a year and a half to work for the Europeans under conditions indistinguishable from slavery. Portugal, however, does not permit this. The Statute of Native Labor in Mozambique requires that "the un-assimilated Negro must be employed at least six months of every year." It states further that if he does not find employment of his own, then the government can draft him as a forced laborer and find employment for him. The African cannot satisfy this law by working for himself. It is required that he must work for a European. As more than 99% of the Africans of Mozambique fall under the control of this statute, and as the employers prefer forced labor the Mozambique African has only two choices, he can wait at home until the police take him away as a forced laborer, or he can sign up as a "contract laborer" to work for 18 months in the mines of South Africa or Southern Rhodesia. This alternative is possible because the Portuguese Administration has an agreement with the South African government to supply 100,000 "contract laborers" annually in exchange for the South African government's guarantee that 47.5% of the sea-borne trade of the Transvaal will be handled through the Mozambique port of Lourenzo Marques. South Africa also pays the Portuguese colonial administration \$6.00 a head for each "contract laborer" delivered to them. At present there are more than 500,000 "contract laborers" from Mozambique working in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia.

Mozambiques prefer working in South Africa to forced labor in Mozambique, because the English are more likely to fire their workers when dissatisfied, rather than to beat them or kill them, as is the Portuguese custom.

In Mozambique, the main instrument of labor relations is the palmatoria - a sort of thick wooden paddle with five conical holes drilled into it. When a person is beaten on the hands with it, the flesh is sucked up into the holes, leaving painful welts or sometimes removing the skin and bits of flesh. The usual sentence is 20 to 40 blows. It is generally considered that 150 blows of the palmatoria is enough to produce death.

Naturally organized labor is not permitted in Mozambique. The act of organization is treated as a crime. Labor organizers

when caught are executed by the PIDE (Portuguese political police) or sent to concentration camps on the island of Sao Tome. Nevertheless, the work of organizing Mozambique labor is still going on both within the country and among the "contract laborers" and refugees living or working outside Mozambique. There are about 1,000,000 refugees from Mozambique spread through the neighboring countries. Organization within Mozambique is very difficult however, and the unions can only exist as underground organizations.

The work of organization is being carried out by members of the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO). FRELIMO is the Mozambique nationalist movement and includes the representatives of organized labor in Mozambique. The position of FRELIMO is that the welfare of Mozambique has two essential basic requirements. These are: a strong, free and well-organized labor force, and the maximum education of the people. The pre-condition for both of these is the liberation of the people from Portuguese colonial rule.

In spite of the murder of union organizers and the slaughter of striking workers by the hundreds (500 were shot down in the strike at Porto Amelia in 1960 on the sisal plantations and docks, hundreds more have been killed since then in strikes in Lourenzo Marques and other areas of the country), the process of organization of labor and political resistance will be carried on by FRELIMO until Mozambique is independent of Portuguese rule and the Mozambican worker is free.